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# Book Reviews

## **CREATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT** edited Bernhard W. Anderson

Issues in Religion and Theology 6

Fortress Press, USA 1984

SPCK 1984 178 pp. £3.50

ISBN 0 8006 1768 1

ISBN 0 281 04100 8

This book, one of the series 'Issues in Religion and Theology', is a collection of nine essays with an introduction by Bernhard Anderson, who also provides the final essay. Seven of the authors held chairs in OT and one a chair in Hebrew and cognate languages, and the essays range in date from 1895 (the first, on 'The Influence of Babylon Mythology upon the Biblical Creation Story', is from Hermann Gunkel's monumental book *Creation and Chaos*) to 1983 (Bernhard Anderson's closing essay on 'Creation and Ecology'). They therefore represent a good sample of the major contributions to the subject. The most interesting I found to be Gerhard von Rad's essay (1936) on 'The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation', 'Biblical Reflection on Creator-Creation' by Claus Westermann (1971) and 'Creation and Liberation' by George M. Landes (1978).

The concern of von Rad was to relate the doctrine of creation to that other great doctrine of the OT—redemption. Are the two independent, or what? His conclusion was that the doctrine was late: 'In genuinely Yahwistic belief the doctrine of creation never attained to the stature of a relevant, independent doctrine ... Either it remained a cosmic foil against which soteriological pronouncements stood out the more effectively, or it was wholly incorporated into them.' Interestingly, this conclusion is strongly challenged by H. H. Schmid's essay (1973) on 'Creation, Righteousness and Salvation'. 'To be sure, it is not as Gerhard von Rad perceived: that Israel first of all began with a more or less purely historical faith, and later combined with this ... other Near Eastern traditions, such as the creation faith. Just the opposite ...'

The conservative will not find here any formal recognition of the OT Scriptures as revelation; nevertheless there is an encouraging feeling that, in the passage from Gunkel to the present day, the biblical doctrine has been coming to be recognized more and more as the wonderful and immensely relevant thing it is. 'When the astronauts read out the story of Creation from the first chapter of the Bible before setting off for the moon, this was neither emotion nor enthusiasm. Rather, the words of the Creation narrative were suited to the event', writes Westermann. 'The achievements of science and technology ... gave rise to arguments for questioning the belief in Creation. An achievement in the same area ... provides the occasion for the recitation of the Creation Story.' George Landes, in his essay, noticeably un-German in style, echoes the same thought. He deplores 'the unhappy losses suffered when creation-faith is cut off from liberation-faith' and emphasizes the vital contribution it can bring.

The volume is well produced and documented, and the price is reasonable.

**AT THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD: Story and Theology in Exodus 32–34**

**R.W.L. Moberly** Journal for the Study of the Old Testament

Supplement Series 22

JSOT Press 1983 258 pp. hardcover £14.95

paperback £ 8.95

ISBN 0 905774 44 2

ISBN 0 905774 45 0

It is customary to start reviews of books like this with the observation that it is a revised version of Walter Moberly's 1981 Cambridge PhD thesis. While this is correct, it gives a quite false impression of its readability and general interest. For though it involves detailed arguments, it never descends to turgid obscurity but is a model of lucidity. He is not afraid of putting his points in short simple sentences that anyone can grasp. Though this book focuses on just three chapters of Exodus, it illustrates a method of studying a biblical text that could, and indeed should, be applied throughout the Bible.

Exodus 32–34 tells the story of the golden calf, Moses' intercession on behalf of the nation, the renewal of the covenant, and his descent from Sinai with a shining face. Heavily influenced by the JEDP-source analysis, most commentators have held Exodus to be an ill-assorted and badly organized collection of incompatible traditions. Furthermore, it is suggested that there is little historical content within them, and that they reflect the practices of later Israelite worship rather than the events of Sinai.

Walter Moberly begins by arguing boldly, yet persuasively, that commentators should not begin with hypothetical source analysis. Our first concern must be with the present form of the text. Here he makes explicit his indebtedness to the approach pioneered by Childs, Clines, Licht and others, who have underlined the necessity of understanding the final form of the text.

So Moberly's second chapter offers a verse-by-verse exegesis of chapters 32–34. Here he shows that the material, far from being disorganized, is well integrated, with one section leading naturally into another. In particular he emphasizes the theological profundity of the story: the greatness of Moses in persuading the Lord to repent of his planned annihilation of Israel, and the grace of God who does forgive even the faithless. He points out how God's reason for judgement, because Israel 'is a stiff-necked people' (32:9) becomes in 34:9 their ground of salvation, and he notes a similar feature in the flood story (Genesis 6:5; 8:21). These and many other fine exegetical insights will make this chapter mandatory reading for all concerned with expounding this part of the OT.

The last three chapters are concerned with reassessing some of the usual critical approaches to Exodus 32–34. Chapter 3 challenges the view that Exodus 32–34 is a cult legend, i.e. an attempt to justify or describe an ongoing religious ceremony. Chapter 4 tackles the alternative view that it is just legend, and chapter 5 the source-critical analysis. Moberly holds that these chapters are a substantial unity, recording real events, and that they were finally edited in the tenth century BC.

A short review cannot do justice to the skill, fairness, and thoroughness with which Moberly makes his case. If only all critical discussions of the OT were so judicious, we should be in a different world. Often one feels that the OT has become a lifeless corpse dissected by overzealous critics. Moberly

shows that the old bones can have new life breathed into them. May others follow in his footsteps.

College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham

GORDON WENHAM

**THE PSALMS COME ALIVE: An Introduction to the Psalms through the Arts**

**John H. Eaton**

Mowbray 1984 165 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 264 66992 4

But were they ever dead? We may have half-murdered them by dulness; a senior Hebrew scholar adds here to his earlier psalm studies by prescribing a kiss of life from the arts of poetry, architecture, music, dance and drama.

His own translations open up sound and rhythm for non-Hebraists, though what he gains in surprise he loses in tradition. We may miss the echoing archaism, and doubt if he rivals the durability of either Coverdale or King David with lines like 'I will always sing of the Lord's acts of fidelity.' What, *always*?

But zeal for praise is paramount. Even Psalm 23 has much more to give us, and we are cautioned against classifiers: Gunkel and Co. are useful, but their systems must not 'regulate the interpretation of particular psalms'. The 'architecture' chapter reminds us that Zion's greatness owed little to mere size.

On the debit side, too many metaphors are hijacked for ritual drama. Psalms 2, 68 and 149 yield crashing jars, melting effigies, and sword-dancers respectively; Psalm 18 would need some sharp stage-management! But much language surely transcends acting: the post-communion prayer, 'Father of all ...', would soon become tedious if its word-pictures were actualized at every celebration. As we ponder Israel's kings (rising 60?) somersaulting before the Lord, we must watch the author's beguiling trick of turning 'maybe' in earlier chapters into 'as we have seen' in later ones.

Mrs Eaton's line-drawings take us to Cairo more than Jerusalem; Jewish distinctiveness could teach us more than cultural parallels, since the 'Lord of the dance' is hardly the God of Israel. Those promoting the arts today should note the book's main concern with yesterday, and its avoidance of the fact that God revealed himself in words rather than other media. We are ignorant of Hebrew choreography; we do have the authentic text.

Limehouse Rectory, London E14

CHRISTOPHER IDLE

**THE SONG OF SOLOMON G. L. Carr**

Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries

IVP 1984 175 pp. hardcover £4.75

paperback £3.95

ISBN 0 85111 638 8

ISBN 0 85111 839 9

The latest addition to the Tyndale OT Commentary series is a worthy companion to the volumes which have already appeared. The subject is one which is bound to create considerable interest, and may even generate

controversy about a book of the Bible which, perhaps more than any other, has experienced a variety of fortunes in the history of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. For centuries the main line of interpretation was allegorical, and the author points out that evangelicals have been as active in this as any. He is obliged to deal with this tradition in his introduction, though it will not surprise anyone to discover that he is basically opposed to it.

It is only to be expected that a commentary of this kind would take the literal sense of the text as its main concern, though it is disappointing to find that the author feels bound to exclude the *Christological* interpretation along with the allegorical one. Considering that he is very careful to give weight to NT norms of biblical interpretation, it is surprising that he does not seem to believe that the student who searches the Scriptures will find Christ in all of them—even here!

The author's explanations of the language and imagery of the Song are frequently exhaustive, and very helpful to the beginner. On the other hand, there is little attempt at real analysis of the phenomena which he cites (often in long catalogues), and this may irritate the advanced student. Nevertheless, there is a very sound rebuttal of the many theories which have attached to the Song in recent years, especially those which have tried to make it a cultic or dramatic work.

The actual commentary takes up just over 100 pages and is frequently illuminating. The Hebrew text has many peculiar difficulties, and these are elucidated quite helpfully here. Lexical study is clearly one of the author's strong points, which he uses to great effect throughout. His division of the book into sections is usually sound, though some readers may disagree on minor points. His overall interpretation of the work, viz. that it is a poem celebrating sexual love, *and no more*, will perhaps cause the greatest controversy. Few would dispute the positive assertion, but that a Christian hermeneutic can stop there is far more questionable. In any case, exegesis rather than interpretation is the author's main concern, and that he does admirably.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

**JEWISH WRITINGS OF THE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD: Apocrypha,  
Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus**  
edited Michael Stone

Van Gorcum, The Netherlands 1984

Fortress Press, USA 1984 xiv + 700 pp. 97.50 Dutch florins

ISBN 90 232 2036 6

This is the third volume to appear in an elaborate project designed to describe the Jewish background, both historical and literary, in the period of the NT. The whole project goes under the rather portentous title *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, though it is in fact in English. The two volumes devoted to history (which for these purposes includes geography, sociology and religion) have already appeared under the editorship of S. Safrai and M. Stern, and this is the first of three volumes on literature. It is, however, complete in itself, since the other two volumes will be devoted to other sorts of literature: the first to biblical and expository literature, the second to the literature containing the rabbinical oral law.

To each of the volumes many scholars, both Jewish and Christian, have contributed chapters. Among the contributors to the present volume are J.J. Collins, D. Flusser and P.S. Alexander, and the editor is one who has made a name for himself in the editing of Armenian translations of ancient Jewish texts.

By a curious coincidence, another project of similar scope is appearing at the same time as the present one. This is the revised and updated translation of Emil Schürer's famous work, now about 100 years old, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, which is being edited for T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh by G. Vermes and F. Millar. Two volumes of this series also have now appeared, though nothing yet on literature.

Both the planning and the execution of the present series have been subjected to some criticism, and not without reason. Nor does the present volume seem likely to escape criticism, since it makes disputable judgements on many difficult questions. Nevertheless, it is, like the other series, a real contribution to knowledge, and NT scholars will want to avail themselves of both.

Latimer House, Oxford

ROGER BECKWITH

**THE MASTER: A Life of Jesus John Pollock**

Hodder & Stoughton 1984 192 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 340 32472 4

This biography takes Mr Pollock's greatest subject, demands all his skills, and is one of his finest achievements. Dipped into for the flavour, it could mislead; read through, it moves steadily to a compelling climax.

The biographer has decided to take us broadly from Jordan to Pentecost; to see it all through John's eyes; to use occasionally the 2000-year hindsight of 'little did they know'. And to rely on RSV (even AV) language for the classic passages, while allowing Martha to cry 'But he stinks, Lord!' Traditional phrases sometimes anaesthetize us from violence; this flexibility gains many nuances of speech while losing others—'... my church, which hell itself shall never defeat.'

Scripture is treated reverently, with few episodes altogether absent. Mr Pollock is a determined harmonizer whose homework occasionally obtrudes; his chronology looks watertight, and he combines an array of reasonable guesswork with some 'don't knows'. Surely Jesus never explained to the others (p.37) how Matthew planned to spend his money; and did he only 'look astonished' (p.48)—was he never truly so?

But the fundamental problem surfaces in chapter 2. The lake sparkles in the spring sunshine. John, however, 'had no eye for scenery as he sat in the family fishing boat ...' Exactly! To tell the tale afresh I must constantly highlight what the gospels ignore. To make it work for the browser in W. H. Smith, I need to be Nevil Shute.

Which, with all his gifts, John Pollock is not. Hot tears fall on the feet, cold fear crawls down the back, and Oh—those 'brawny' fishermen! Such embellishments, topped up with weather reports and colour-slide landscapes, send us back to the evangelists with new wonder at the concentrated power of their stories.

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But Mr Pollock has done for our generation (or its feminine part?) what every decade will treat differently. He is more readable, now, than Dean Farrar, more reliable than Bernard Miles, and every page enlightens us. If Zacchaeus is more credible than Lazarus, crucifixion than resurrection—well, we have seen men crucified; we have not seen them raised to life. But full marks for the 'transfiguration' narrative, too.

This moving, attractive book will delight many Christians and become a valuable pre-evangelistic tool. Here is the authentic Saviour, portrayed by a true disciple.

Limehouse Rectory, London E14

CHRISTOPHER IDLE

## **WHY DOCTRINES? Charles C. Hefling Jr**

Cowley, USA 196 pp. US\$8.00

ISBN 0 936 384 09 3

This book, by an Episcopalian priest and disciple of the Jesuit philosopher-theologian Bernard Lonergan, is an attempt to explain in modern terms what the meaning and purpose of doctrines is. It must be understood, of course, that the author means the phenomenon of dogma, rather than the shape or content of particular doctrines; it is a way of thinking, rather than particular thoughts, which he is seeking to defend.

Students of literature will be pleased to discover a wide range of literary allusion and quotation in this book, whose style is easy-going, even chatty, throughout. It reads very much like a series of talks, full of illustrations and anecdotes to help the reader grasp otherwise abstract and difficult concepts. For an amateur with a literary background, this book will probably prove quite exciting, though whether it will answer the question posed in the title is another matter.

One of the features of doctrine is clarity, and that is something which this book decidedly lacks. 'What is the author getting at?' is a question which recurs with depressing frequency as we turn from a 'definition' of doctrine(s), to a consideration of their various contexts: faith, community, authority, history, Scripture. Of these, only the last is truly concrete, but the author manages to mystify us with an understanding of revelation as community-event, which is quite baffling. The enemy at all times, as one has come to expect from this sort of work, is 'classicism': the belief that a thing is what it is defined as being, and that this does not change from one circumstance to another.

The author claims that his work is a direct offshoot of the teaching of Lonergan, which if true, must put the latter's work in a much less favourable light than it has customarily enjoyed. In fact, Lonergan is much clearer, and much nearer to the classical tradition than one would imagine after reading a volume like this. Perhaps the oddest feature of the book is the fact that it contains two doctrinal statements: the so-called Creed of Nicaea (*not* the Nicene Creed—another confusion) and the Chalcedonian Definition. What they are doing here is a mystery, given that they are archetypically classical formulations of doctrine which would appear to be just the thing the author is most anxious to avoid. Like the peace of God, this book passeth all

understanding, and is doubtless best read as an impressionistic, rather than as an academic or philosophical, study.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

**THE NATURE OF DOCTRINE, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY IN A POSTLIBERAL AGE** G.A. Lindbeck

SPCK 1984 142 pp. £10.00

ISBN 0 281 04133 4

The importance of this book may be gauged by the fact that almost before it was published it was taken up by another American scholar, Brevard Childs, and made the subject of a special excursus at the end of his latest book, *Interpreting the New Testament as Canon*. British readers, at least, will have seen Childs first, which is quite an accomplishment!

Lindbeck's book has grown out of a series of lectures given originally to Roman Catholic students in the USA, and much of his argument is taken up with the theories of Karl Rahner, and especially Bernard Lonergan. Those familiar with the latter's work will slot into this book straightaway, but others may find parts of it heavy going. The author shares the American penchant for polysyllabic terms when simpler ones would have done (e.g. utilize replaces use, for no apparent reason), and this only increases the difficulty for the uninitiated.

Lindbeck's thesis is that traditional doctrine has been understood and developed along one of two models. Either it has taken the objective-propositional approach and claimed that its statements correspond to ontological facts, or it has followed an experiential model and claimed that its tenets are ways of expressing a particular religious feeling. Lindbeck himself prefers a third way, which he calls the cultural-linguistic approach.

He begins by positing language as fundamental to human life, and proceeds to argue that all religions have an internal linguistic structure which may or may not be expressed in dogmatic statements. Dogmas function like grammatical rules: they express in words and logic what everybody feels to be right from experience. Failure to express them does not mean that they are not there, just as archaic forms of expression may continue to have official status long after the living language has moved on to another pattern of expression.

Lindbeck uses his thesis to try to reconcile different historical and confessional beliefs within Christianity, as for example, the Marian doctrines of Rome. He has to admit, though, that ecumenical rapport is still some way off, even when his technique is employed. He also has to admit that his theory is more descriptive than prescriptive; in other words, it offers a better explanation of how things are than of how things ought to be—unless of course, one thinks that these two are the same! Lindbeck himself does not take that view, and so it must be concluded in the end that his theory is unsatisfactory, even on its own merits. Even so, it makes a good read for those who are interested in doctrinal theory, and for the price, it is far from expensive.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

**THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD** edited Alan E. Lewis

The Report of the Woman's Guild/Panel on Doctrine Study Group

The Saint Andrew Press 1984 71 pp. £1.00

ISBN 0 7152 0577 3

The fortunes of this little report, at the hands of the 1984 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, belong to other orders of reality, such as ecclesiastical politics, than need concern a reviewer. It contains a cautious and balanced survey of the biblical, theological and church-traditional grounds for not only describing but also addressing God in motherly as well as fatherly terms. The majority of the study group concluded that it was both appropriate and desirable so to do, but the report is scrupulously fair throughout in noting the dissentient judgement of a minority of its members. It is a report that merits dispassionate evaluation, untroubled by real or imagined spectres of feminism. Yet it invites sensitivity to the plight of those who feel alienated from God by the traditional language of worship and theology. Such a consideration itself requires critical assessment, since presumably the mere fact of an (unmeasured) element of alienation would not itself be held to justify change, in the absence of weightier considerations. Should we take seriously, for example, the feelings of those women who might be alienated by this preoccupation with *motherly* female imagery for God (and, *mutatis mutandis*, of men similarly discomfited by predominantly *fatherly* male imagery)?

In fact, it is a weakness of this report that it does not maintain a clear enough distinction between female and motherly. Having decisively nailed the misconception that to speak of God as Father is to speak of him as male, unfortunately it re-muddies the waters by including some biblical material, such as the feminine gender of Hebrew and Greek words for wisdom, quite irrelevant to the issue under discussion. Nevertheless, it is the review of biblical evidence which readers of *Churchman* may well find most interesting, since the texts in which maternal imagery is used of God are rarely assembled as they are here. Their maternal force is not in all cases clear in English versions.

Also at issue is the proper sense of what the report calls the 'biologically-conditioned image' of the Father God. In this area sharper differentiation is called for, not least between God as Creator-Father of all humanity and God as Redeemer-Father of his people. The original meaning of 'Father' in the Apostles Creed was probably 'Creator'. The neglect of the doctrine of divine creation in much modern theology, not least in circles espousing a high Christology, may be responsible for a confusion from which the report is not wholly free.

The total difference between 'God as Mother' and 'Mary the Mother of God' is forcefully insisted upon, although it is then implied that the Reformed tradition's reluctance to pay Mary proper regard may not be irrelevant to hostility towards Mother-God language. The report would have been wiser to have established the difference and passed on. For if the two *are* connected, then the history of the abuse of Mariology counsels extreme caution with God as Mother. Nothing has done as much down the centuries to turn Roman Catholicism into a religion other than Christianity as the place it has given Mary. (It was the neophyte editor of this venerable journal who

irreverently quipped, at the time of the General Assembly debate, that the Kirk should stage a pre-emptive bid for Mary the Father of God!)

The study group recognizes that questions of biblical authority and interpretation will to some degree affect conclusions on the issues before it. This is evident, for example, in the way one relates the two creation narratives in Genesis. Yet in the end, I suspect, the question will be settled more on grounds of propriety and taste than anything else. It is the ultimate irony that the refusal of the Church of Scotland's highest court to receive this report for discussion was undoubtedly a negative verdict *by and for the women of the Kirk*. In less emotion-charged fora it will receive that serious biblical and theological critique that is its due.

New College, Edinburgh

D. F. WRIGHT

**DIFFERENT THEOLOGIES, COMMON RESPONSIBILITIES: Babel or Pentecost? Concilium 171** edited G. Geffré, G. Gutiérrez, V. Elizondo  
English language edition M. Lefébure

T. & T. Clark 1984 100 pp. £3.50

ISBN 0 567 30051 X

This symposium, put together by a group of radical Roman Catholic theologians, together with the odd Protestant and moderate Catholic, is an exploration of the state of theology in the eighties, as perceived by one particular constituency. What one thinks of their efforts will largely depend on the amount of sympathy one has with their aims and general outlook. Those who favour a radical approach will find in these essays an almost classical expression of all the current trends, especially feminism and Third-World theology. Those who find such things anathema will likewise know what to think of their efforts.

The essays themselves are generally well presented, and quite readable. The tone of Catholic self-flagellation is present throughout; the post-Reformation Roman church is all wrong until Vatican II, when the freedom to develop an experimental pluralism was finally won. Of course, it should be remembered that this is the younger generation attacking the old; the authors of this book are not themselves guilty of the crimes they detect in their church. On the contrary, it is highly likely that some of them, at least, may one day be the victim of the reactionary forces in the Vatican who are so freely attacked here!

Whatever one thinks of the virtues of theological freedom, it must be said that this book breathes the atmosphere of a generation which has rebelled against traditional authority and been given its head. The excesses which it contains are characteristic of the strictly disciplined adolescent allowed to run wild for the first time, and this must lead us to wonder what the future will hold. We may find that there will be an eventual retreat into a traditionalist conformity; on the other hand, the links which still bind the authors of these papers to their church may crumble still further. Until we know the answer one way or the other, the contents and assumptions of this volume will remain pending on the agenda of modern theological discussion.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

Churchman

**THEOLOGY AND THE THIRD WORLD CHURCH J. Andrew Kirk**

Outreach and Identity No. 6

World Evangelical Fellowship Theological Commission

IVP, USA 1983 US\$2.95

Paternoster Press 1983 64 pp. £1.70

ISBN 0 87784 892 0

ISBN 0 85364 321 0

If a monograph is intended to whet the reader's appetite for more, Andrew Kirk has been successfully tantalizing in the fifty pages of this text. Some of the chapters cover well-worn ground, particularly on theological education, but others present refreshing insights and panoramic sweeps. One might have expected more on liberation theology as such, but then the author has his full-length book *Liberation Theology: An Evangelical View from the Third World*.

The whole monograph could have concentrated on the argument of the second chapter, where four main reasons are presented to explain the present revolutionary approach to theology. This material is like eating condensed milk. Delicious, but a bit too concentrated! However, it is vital background for putting into historical and philosophical context the various twentieth-century movements which have drawn the attention of the world-wide church to Latin America: church growth, Theological Education by Extension, liberation theology, grass-roots communities, and contextualized mission. I found the chapter on 'Some Essential Conditions for Christian Theology' especially challenging in the triple call to be committed to Jesus Christ, to change, and to the whole people of God. We must be anchored on the one who is the same yesterday, today and for ever, and yet fully involved in the progressive leavening of society by the kingdom of God here and now.

It is a tribute indeed that Palo Pérez in his foreword says of the author that 'He comes across as a full-fledged citizen of the Third World'. However, on a lighter note I suggest that the word 'oligopolistic' on page 44 be restricted to solvers of the *Guardian's* crosswords!

As an overview and personal testimony, this is a very stimulating introduction. The author's eleven years of pilgrimage in Latin America have equipped him to be an effective gadfly among the 'over-indulgent academic elite' and to challenge us all that 'theology fulfils its destiny as missiology'. What are you doing?

Lima, Peru

† DAVID R. J. EVANS

**THE VINDICATION OF TRADITION J. Pelikan**

Yale University Press 1984 93 pp. £10.95

ISBN 0 300 03154 8

This book is a series of four lectures given in 1983 under the auspices of the American National Endowment for the Humanities. It represents the fruit of Professor Pelikan's long and distinguished academic career, in which he has consistently sought to understand and make accessible to us the meaning of the Christian tradition.

The first lecture deals with the rediscovery of tradition by the academic world, and it makes fascinating reading. The author reminds us of how greatly we are all the slaves of fashion, and very helpfully points out that the

longstanding Protestant-Catholic divide on this subject now has little meaning.

The second lecture deals with the recovery of tradition, and centres on the career of one particular individual—John Henry Newman. Some readers will find cause to disagree with Professor Pelikan's conclusions but, as always, his views repay careful study. The third lecture is an apologia for tradition as history, and contains some important insights into the Byzantine tradition, of which the author is a distinguished student.

In the final lecture he returns to his main theme: tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living, and he seeks to make a workable distinction between them. He chides people from different intellectual stables who have confused the two in their minds, and thus rejected what must be guarded (or clung on to what could be dispensed with). In the current state of the church, where modernity and relativity seem to be all, this is a corrective which is sorely needed.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

**MIRACLE IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WORLD: A Study in Sociohistorical Method** **Howard Clark Kee**

Yale University Press 1984 320 pp. £20.00

ISBN 0 300 03008 8

This book is one of a number of studies in the social context of early Christianity which have recently appeared from Yale. Like the others, there is a strong commitment to sociological methods of analysis, which introduce categories of thought not immediately familiar to those not accustomed to think in those terms. In spite of this difficulty though, the book is extremely readable and in places very stimulating.

The author begins with a critique of the history-of-religions approach exemplified by Sir James Frazer (*The Golden Bough*) and, more recently, Mircea Eliade. He demonstrates convincingly that their methods were unscientific in ignoring historical details and context in favour of an approach which stressed the supremacy of suprahistorical themes, symbols and ideas. In this book Kee is determined to redress this imbalance by pointing out what the historical context, or rather contexts, actually were, and then comparing them to the evidence of the NT.

There is a fascinating discussion of Asclepius and Isis cults, both of which were widespread in antiquity and equally concerned with the miraculous. Kee's strong literary bias no doubt gives a distorted picture, but it is all the more fascinating for us in that it records the attitudes of the intelligentsia. Then as now, this section of the population produced both highly articulate believers in miracle, and equally vociferous critics who regarded the cults as little more than trickery.

Surprisingly, for a writer who is a professor of biblical studies, it is the discussion of early Christianity which is weakest. If the author were discussing the cult of the saints and martyrs, it is obvious that he would have had a ready field of study in comparing that with pagan miracle-working. However, he ignores that and concentrates on the NT, where affinities with classical paganism are much more difficult to demonstrate. Here his

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assumption that Matthew and Luke (apparently minus 'Q' and Mark) were strongly influenced by Hellenistic and Roman models does not really stand up to serious investigation, nor would everyone be happy with his treatment of apocalyptic. In fact it is not really clear from the text whether the author believes that early Christianity was an apocalyptic movement or not, since statements to that effect are not generally followed up in the argument of the text. More would agree with his understanding of John as having used miracle in a strongly symbolic sense, but to tie this to Philo, Plutarch and Aristides seems far-fetched.

As so often in the attempt to reconstruct a coherent picture of ancient society, we are constrained by the evidence to adopt a position of reverent agnosticism. The mere fact that Christians were living in the same world as, say, Plutarch, does not mean that he had much influence on them; indeed, the conflict which was felt to exist between Christianity and all forms of paganism suggests that such syncretism would have been impossible before the fourth century. In a word, the author of this book tries to prove too much, and in the end the value of his study is liable to get lost amid some of its more extravagant claims.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

## **THE LORD'S SUPPER FROM WYCLIFFE TO CRANMER**

**D. Broughton Knox**

Paternoster Press 1983 75 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 85364 379 2

This is a work of originality and importance, published on the eve of the Wycliffe year—the 600th anniversary of his death in 1384.

After many years of discussion, it is generally agreed now that the English Reformers, both in their doctrinal convictions and in their liturgical projects, were greatly influenced by their predecessors on the continent. This raises the question whether, when one has added the influence of their own independent researches and of political factors, one has not arrived at a complete explanation of their reforming programme, without their English mediaeval precursors playing any significant part.

Broughton Knox thinks otherwise. He traces the development of Reformed eucharistic beliefs from Wycliffe onwards, through the work of the Lollards, and shows that Lollard teaching was widespread in England at the time when the Reformation began. The English Reformation was greatly influenced by Lutheranism, but the peculiarities of Lutheran sacramental teaching could make no headway in England. For example, it is very striking how the 39 Articles follow Lutheran confessions on the whole, but in the sacramental articles are much nearer to Swiss models. Why? Because (so Knox suggests) the ground had been prepared for the Swiss type of teaching by Wycliffe and the Lollards.

Wycliffe's own teaching on the eucharist leaves various questions unanswered, and is as open to a Lutheran type of interpretation as to a Swiss type, though it is here interpreted in the latter way. The Lollards, however, undoubtedly developed his teaching in the 'Swiss' direction, and it was they

who set the scene for the English Reformation. So the thesis makes good sense, and it will have to be taken seriously by the historians of doctrine.

Latimer House, Oxford

ROGER BECKWITH

### **MARTIN LUTHER: Prophet to the Church Catholic**

**James Atkinson**

Eerdmans, USA 1984

Paternoster Press 1984 226 pp. £6.80

ISBN 0 8028 1260 0

ISBN 0 85364 377 6

This book is the latest study on Luther by one of the leading contemporary authorities on the great Reformer. Professor Atkinson writes with his usual verve and sense of commitment, and manages the difficult feat of being always interesting but never unkind or unfair to those with whom he is obliged to disagree.

The book is both a statement of fact concerning the evolution of contemporary Roman Catholic thinking about Luther, and a plea for a renewed application of his message both in Rome and in the Protestant churches. The author is critical of many features of Roman Catholicism, but he balances this with equally trenchant criticisms of Protestantism and of the ecumenical movement, which in his eyes is largely concerned with the wrong issues and is, as a result, headed in the wrong direction.

The book opens with an overview of Roman Catholic Luther scholarship since the Reformation, and here Professor Atkinson makes his point with extreme clarity and simplicity. This is, that Rome has changed in its attitude towards the great Protestant Reformer in a way which only fifty years ago would have appeared impossible. Furthermore, he demonstrates that this change, which for many people became apparent only at the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), had in fact been carefully prepared by a generation of scholars since about 1939.

As the book unfolds, the author warms to this theme and takes us through the main points of Luther's theology, showing how they have lost none of their relevance for today's church. He deals with the fundamental importance of the conversion experience, the priesthood of all believers, justification by faith, the authority of Scripture and, above all, the centrality of Christ. Here there is much meat to chew on, and not a few new insights which might profitably be explored by those concerned with ecumenical relations.

Professor Atkinson is careful to insist that Luther himself never wanted to start a church, or even to be honoured in any way. This is an important corrective to the adulation of the Reformer which is so characteristic of Lutheran writing, even when the theses advocated may bear little relation to anything Luther actually taught himself. On the other hand, it must be admitted that Professor Atkinson has not escaped from this tendency himself: Luther is ranked with Abraham, Moses and Paul, and is regarded as the greatest Christian since NT times! It is not necessary to call Luther's genius into question to assert that this assessment is perhaps a little excessive.

One might also want to query Professor Atkinson's insistence that Luther is the way *forward* to Christian unity in the future. Undoubtedly everyone has a great deal to learn from him, but to portray him as the *only* answer to

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the church's problems today is surely taking things a little too far. Luther in fact had little or nothing to say about many of the problems we face today, simply because he was unaware of their existence. Even in theological matters, it is sometimes difficult to know which side of the fence he would have been on had he been alive today. This is particularly apparent in the chapter on the authority of Scripture, where Professor Atkinson claims (rightly) that Luther was not a fundamentalist, but then goes on to say (much more questionably) that he would have supported modern biblical criticism. Luther himself never faced this problem, so it is impossible to be sure what his response would have been. It is also difficult, if not impossible, to quote him in support of either position with complete confidence.

On this issue, as on others, the world has moved on, and we cannot return to 1517, however much we may wish to do so. We may always, indeed we *must* always, learn from the past, but we cannot simply apply it to today's needs without taking the ebb and flow of history into account. It is the strange failure of this book to take our changed circumstances sufficiently seriously which makes it somehow unsatisfactory as a practical programme for the churches. This is a pity, because otherwise there is a great deal to be learned, both from Luther and from Professor Atkinson's vast range of insights into his life and work.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

### **KARL BARTH: THEOLOGIAN** John Bowden

SCM Press 1983 119 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 334 00082 3

A better title for this book would be *Karl Barth: Great Man*, because it consistently subordinates theology to biography and insists on interpreting Barth's dogmatic writing in terms of what the author takes to be his psychological condition. This highly tendentious interpretation reaches its zenith when Bowden compares Barth's insistence on the uniqueness of Christ with his attachment to Mozart's music, and accounts for both by the fact that 'there was something in the depths of Barth's personality which led him to absolutize certain objects of his deepest concern in this almost jealously exclusive and, sadly, somewhat artificial way' (p.104). Apart from being highly patronizing, this approach makes any understanding of the inner dynamics of Barth's dogmatics impossible, by concentrating on the author rather than the subject, and seeing the work as witness more to Barth's inner states than to Christ and the gospel. This is to pervert Barth's own perspective at its very heart.

As translator of the Busch volume on Barth's life, Bowden is able to give a lively account of his subject's career, and the book is at its best on that level. When we get to the theology, Bowden seems to see Barth mainly from the perspective of *Romans*. The fact that he moved from that position is formally noted, but Bowden does not think he moved very far, and we have the standard reproaches that Barth's God is the 'wholly other', and that he rejected the created and the human in the name of a remotely transcendent divine. The Barth who entered into real dialogue with Marx, Sartre and Jaspers about the nature of man, and spoke of the humanity of the God who

became incarnate in Christ, is more or less unrecognizable in this rendering of his theology. Instead we are presented with a book-bound recluse holding together an incoherent theology by the sheer force of his spiritual personality. His failure is shown by the fact that as soon as his personality is removed, his whole theological enterprise disintegrates, and his only heirs are disillusioned disciples like van Buren, who relapsed into atheism because Barth gave him no basis for believing in God.

To show this up as the sheer parody that it is, one has only to read Moltmann, Jüngel, or even Pannenberg (who describes himself as a peculiar sort of Barthian), or Torrance in this country, to show that they are in the most positive and fruitful conversation with Barth, so that it is impossible to understand their theologies without presupposing his.

Those who want a door into the real Barth would do well to turn to Parker or Bromley, and leave Bowden to psychologize on his own.

St John's College, Nottingham

T. A. SMAIL

**BILLY GRAHAM: Highlights of the Story** John Pollock

Marshall Morgan & Scott 1984 192 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 551 01112 2

The country-born youngster, the debonair high school student, the young man struggling to assert his own goodness, Billy Graham was finally converted during an eleven-week crusade at Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1934. John Pollock describes the progress of Billy's ministry, his spiritual growth and ever-deepening sense of mission: 'He preached in the shadow of international crisis ... straight from the Bible. He had stopped trying to prove that the Bible was true, and just preached its message.'

In a paperback which spans sixty-six years, it is inevitable that coverage of individual events cannot be exhaustive. Clearly the planning, preparations, operation and anecdotes of just one campaign could fill many chapters. Consequently the recording of facts can sometimes sound a bit like a railway timetable! On the other hand, the glimpses of Billy as a world figure stand out clearly. His diplomacy in connection with the Siberian Pentecostals who had taken refuge in the American Embassy in Moscow in 1977, is an example of his wisdom and skill as an ambassador. For instance, it is clear that he did not act in the way the refugees had anticipated, but nevertheless their freedom to leave, unmolested, was achieved.

Never taking the easy way out, and, at times, against overwhelming odds, Billy Graham has continued to travel the world, proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to all who will hear him—truly a man of God.

London SE11

HAZEL BIDEWELL

**RELEASE! The Miracle of the Siberian Seven**

Timothy Chmykhalov with Danny Smith

Marshall Paperbacks 1984 176 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 551 01168 8

When the Siberian Seven were first in the American Embassy in Moscow, and writing their life stories, I noticed that Timothy Chmykhalov, then aged

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17, had the signs of a natural writer. Now he has written his account of the episode, how and why it happened, and about his earlier life. It is very readable, and his editor has allowed the real Timothy to come right through the pages.

In the Soviet Union there are millions of Christians who accept that God has called them to stay and to witness in the appallingly difficult atmosphere of a militantly atheist state: 'it is better to walk in a strait-jacket than not to walk at all'. There are others—and the two families which comprised the Siberian Seven were among them—who equally sincerely hold that they should believe and worship without restriction. Since this is impossible in the Soviet Union, Timothy shows without sensation what that can mean in practice, since the KGB considers unrestricted Christian activity to be anti-Soviet.

Many such families feel they must emigrate. As a result of the Helsinki Accords, they should be allowed to do so freely, but the Soviet state refuses to honour its signature.

The incident which led to the stay of four years in the US Embassy was not premeditated. Once the seven people of two families were there, naturally they were subjected to tremendous spiritual and psychological pressures. Timothy overcame them (as indeed did they all) through his deep, simple but growing faith.

His account continues the story after my book stops, and it is particularly interesting about their return to Siberia, what happened after the other family were allowed to emigrate, and his own final exit with all his relations to Vienna and thence to the USA.

My one regret is that the editor has allowed Timothy to be very critical of Billy Graham, apparently without consulting my own recent book on Graham which had already made public how Billy was guided throughout, in his attitude to the Seven, by an intense desire to help them and by a clear understanding of what he must do or not do, say or not say, if he was to succeed. And succeed he did. I am certain (as one who was involved in both sides of the question) that Billy Graham's quiet and very persistent diplomacy was the key factor in their eventual release.

Rose Ash, Devon

JOHN POLLOCK

**TIME OF TRIAL: The Personal Story behind the Cheltenham Spy Scandal Rhona Prime with Jean Watson**  
Hodder & Stoughton 1984 175 pp. £1.75 ISBN 0 340 36141 7

The merit of this book is that potentially sensational material has been handled so responsibly. The result is a most moving account of the many months of trauma experienced by the Prime family. The fact that the 'drama' is actually in progress at this moment, adds a poignancy rarely found in books of this kind. Rhona Prime, with Jean Watson's help, takes the reader step by step through the whole distressing time of discovery, disbelief and acceptance of her husband's spying activities—and other misdemeanours—and her own decision to hand over all the information to the authorities. She describes the support she received from family, police and, in due course, the church. The press comes out very badly, showing an insensitivity that stems

from an all-consuming eagerness to get the news at all costs. Prison, with its ability to destroy the family, is presented in chilling terms.

I felt the story dragged a bit towards the end (real-life situations do not necessarily fit into the standard small paperback), but that only added to the authenticity. The direct Christian contact is minimal, but it is the pivot on which all events turn; it is uncomfortably challenging. There is no happy ending, at least not yet. However, despite my initial unease at the mention of a prophecy that Rhona would be 'like a light across the nations in [her] witness for [God]', she has, indeed, the opportunity to be just that, given the power of prayer and the strength of her support. May she continue to be given the courage to persevere.

London SE11

HAZEL BIDEWELL

### **REASON WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF RELIGION N. Wolsterstorff**

first published in 1976

Eerdmans, USA 1984

Paternoster Press 1984 161 pp. £4.40

ISBN 0 8028 1604 5

This is an enlarged, second edition of a book first published in 1976. It contains an additional section of thirty-six pages, entitled 'Theory and Praxis', which is designed to bridge the gap between the highly intellectual arguments of the first section and the needs of specialists in other disciplines.

It must be said that although the book is short, and laid out in carefully divided chapters, it is not easy to read. Partly this is because of the technical language involved, and partly it is due to the extraordinary use which the author makes of his vocabulary. Sometimes he just uses words wrongly (e.g. 'recourse' instead of 'course'); at other times, he mixes metaphors, chooses the wrong adjective to describe something, or imports words into the language (e.g. *shalom*) which are not readily understood. The cumulative effect which all this makes is to give the reader the feeling that he is entering a rather strange subculture which is only partially connected with the outside world.

This is a pity, because otherwise the book has many valuable and important things to say. The author's discussion of foundationalism, as the philosophical theory underlying most current western thinking, including belief in the inerrancy of Scripture, is especially important, not least because he asserts that foundationalism of this type is no longer tenable. This is an idea which needs greater elucidation, particularly in the light of recent controversies over the nature of biblical truth.

Another point which needs clarification is the author's attitude to Christian faith. He is writing for Christians, and assumes a definite faith commitment in his readers, but many will want to know how he justifies Christian belief in the modern world. This is the point where his theories do not connect with the wider intellectual life of our time, and where his book is disappointing as a result. Perhaps a third edition will remedy this defect, and enable the author's many excellent insights to be related to the wider concerns of philosophical inquiry in our time.

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GERALD BRAY

**GOD OF CHANCE D.J. Bartholomew**

SCM Press 1984 181 pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 334 02030 1

The idea of chance is one with which everyone is familiar: from the man whose windscreen is smashed by a fragment of road metal to the woman who unexpectedly runs into a long-lost school-friend. It is an idea of which, quantitatively, science has made extremely fruitful use. Does its validity depend solely on the fact that we are ignorant of any detailed causation for what we are speaking about, or do its roots lie deeper? When quantum theory replaced classical Newtonian physics, a revolution was started whose implications for theology are only now coming to wide realization. In brief, what many readers will know as the famous Uncertainty Principle seems to imply that, at rock-bottom, i.e. in connection with elementary particles, events do not follow strict causal laws, as they do with billiard balls. It is as if, when two elementary particles interact, a die is thrown to determine what the outcome shall be. Over a large number of interactions a quite definite pattern emerges statistically (i.e. through the operation of chance); that is why large bodies like billiard balls bounce off one another in a precise way. But the outcome of single elementary encounters is quite different; it is impossible to know in advance what will happen. Since a single such event could conceivably start the explosion of one, or many, nuclear bombs, the possibility this discloses is not an unimportant one. Chance, most physicists now believe, is something real, built in to the very structure of our universe. It is not merely a consequence of our limited capacity to embrace innumerable details at once.

Now the serious question arises when we go on to ask, not 'Is chance something we must accept as real?' but 'Is chance something which *God* accepts as real?' Has he chosen so to constitute things that, at the sub-atomic level, *he* does not know what the outcome of an elementary event will be (except statistically, in the way we ourselves know the outcome of tossing a coin)? As Einstein's famous questions put it, 'Does God play dice?' The classical Christian answer (see Prov. 16:33) is 'No: God determines every such event exactly.' This remains an entirely valid view, and I believe is the sounder one biblically (see D.M. MacKay, *Science, Chance and Providence*, 1978). But a number of Christian thinkers see things differently: at the ultimate physical level God does play dice, and watches for the result. Dr John Habgood takes this view (see 'Does God throw Dice?' in *A Working Faith*, 1980), and so does our present author. Needless to say, this has very far-reaching consequences, and the author explores them extensively and carefully in this essay.

This is a thought-provoking book, and I am grateful for having read it. It contains a masterly discussion of chance, randomness, probability and kindred concepts, so full of pitfalls and traps for the unwary (even for an eminent scientist like Sir Fred Hoyle); it should be remarked that the author is professor of statistical and mathematical science at the London School of Economics. The biblical anchorage of his ideas is less satisfactory. But he has made a very valuable contribution to a debate which, I suspect, will grow in importance.

**ANGELS, APES AND MEN Stanley L. Jaki**

Sherwood Sugden, USA 1983 128 pp. US\$4.95

ISBN 0 89385 017 9

'Man is an intellectual animal and therefore an everlasting contradiction to himself. His senses centre in himself, his ideas reach to the end of the universe; so that he is torn in pieces between the two, without a possibility of its ever being otherwise. A mere physical being, or a pure spirit, can alone be satisfied with itself.'

Professor Jaki, a Hungarian-born Benedictine priest with doctorates in both theology and physics, quotes this passage from William Hazlitt at the end of the present volume. It epitomizes the thrust of the three brilliant chapters, originally presented as lectures at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, in 1981. In the first, 'Fallen Angel', the great philosophers who have sought to establish universal systems pass before us. Aspiring to be archangels, Descartes, Kant, Hegel appear only as fallen angels. Alas for man as pure spirit. The second chapter, 'Glorified Ape', proceeds from the other pole. It is Rousseau, and Darwin with his successors, who come in for critical scrutiny. There is much shrewd observation; the treatment is certainly not lightweight. I like his recollection of Herbert Spencer's 'paralysing thought'—'What if, of all this that is incomprehensible to us [in evolution], there exists no comprehension anywhere?' What if, indeed! The last chapter, 'Unconquerable Man', is headed (like the others) with one of Pascal's *Pensées*: 'By space the universe encompasses and swallows me up like a dot; by thought I encompass the universe.' Here Professor Jaki is clearly in his element. I cannot vouch for all his physics (or his philosophy); but I was impressed by it. He seems to side with Einstein against the Copenhagen School; and with 'everyday thinking', 'commonsense perception', against all idealist or materialist philosophies. This 'unconquerable basis of realism and metaphysics' is 'the only avenue leading to the true nature of man'. 'Unlike an angel who needs not conquests, and unlike an ape uninterested in them, man thrives on conquests which are the fruit of a mysterious union in him of matter and mind.'

Professor Jaki is conservative in his theology. Thomist (I think) in his philosophy, and Einsteinian in his physics. A taxing but rewarding book, suitable for an educated enquirer after faith, like his others.

There is a mistake on page 58, where the quotation from Gould should read, 'My conclusion is not unconventional ...'

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS C. SPANNER

**BIBLICAL FAITH: An Evolutionary Approach Gerd Theissen**

SCM Press 1984 194 pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 334 01895 1

I found this book very heavy going, and not, to me, very rewarding—though I am not sure I always understood what was being said. The author is professor of NT in the University of Heidelberg and, according to the rear cover, the 'most exciting of contemporary German theologians', his book being compared to Teilhard de Chardin's *The Phenomenon of Man*.

The author's approach to his subject may be described as follows. The human sciences (literary criticism, sociology and psychology) are not to be

used to illuminate the merely peripheral and mediating elements of the Bible's message, leaving the central theological core to be interpreted independently. Rather, the central core itself is to be set in a new light by using the most comprehensive scientific framework available to us: that is, the theory of evolution (by which he means 'natural selection'). Accordingly he first sets out what, from his point of view, are the essentials of the theory. They are three: the appearance of variation, a selection from the variants, and their preservation. 'This is the only way of arriving at successful forms of biological and cultural adaptation to reality'. In other words, the way forward is always *mutation* (presumed random), *selection* and *adaptation*. By means of these concepts, Professor Theissen sets out, not indeed to ground faith in science but to show the parallelism between, and the complementary character of, the scientific and religious understandings of reality. Thus scientific knowledge grows by the appearance of 'mutations' (new trial and error attempts at theorizing), by the process of 'selection' (some theories drop out due to the impact of new experimental observations), and adaptation (as a result of all this, theories get better and better).

Similarly, biblical religious faith moves forward by the same threefold process. In his chapter 'Evolutionary Aspects of Faith in Jesus', Theissen asks three questions (which presuppose the answer 'Yes'): 'Is Jesus a variant (or "mutation") of human existence in which the change of "heart" promised by the prophets has become reality?'; 'Is Jesus the consummation of that protest against selection which was formulated with increasing clarity in biblical religion?'; 'Is Jesus a permanently valid "structure of adaptation" to the central reality to which we do justice only when we participate in its form of life?'. The outlook which can pose such questions as these has, I suppose, a certain validity. But the whole exercise seems to me to be somewhat on a level with that of the biologist who insists on seeing the chicken as a mechanism employed by the egg to ensure the production of more eggs. I am afraid I don't find it very exciting, or even helpful. It seems rather to have an element of perversity in it, a confusing of pre-eminences. It is in God's light, surely, that we see light on these things—not in Darwin's.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS C. SPANNER

**MIRACLES AND THE CRITICAL MIND** Colin Brown

Eerdmans, USA 1984

ISBN 0 8028 3590 2

Paternoster Press 1984 383 pp. £14.20

ISBN 0 85364 385 7

At the beginning of the present century, Reinhold Seeberg observed that 'Miracle was once the foundation of all apologetics, then it became an apologetic crutch, and today it is not infrequently regarded as a cross for apologetics to bear' (*Realenzyklopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, vol.21 [J. C. Hinrich'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig 1908], p.562). Dr Brown's study of miracles seems to substantiate such a judgement.

In *Miracles and the Critical Mind*, Professor Brown offers a detailed picture of the interpretation of miracles, by believers and unbelievers alike, from the time of the early church to the present. His investigation is divided into five sections: the pre-scientific age; from the second-century apologists to Luther and Calvin; the rise of scepticism in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries, e.g. the philosophies of Spinoza and David Hume; the legacy of the nineteenth century, comprising the full flowering of Enlightenment thought in the 'critical' philosophy of Immanuel Kant and the radical biblical criticism of G. E. Reimarus, D. F. Strauss, and their theological successors; the ongoing modern debate among philosophers, theologians and apologists on the occurrence, rationality and meaningfulness of miracles; and finally a reassessment of the place and role of miracles in the biblical portrait of Jesus.

Dr Brown's book is the most comprehensive survey of theological and philosophical treatments of miracles known to me. His careful interpretation and balanced discussion of the numerous controversies surrounding miracles, and the clarity of his presentation of the issues at stake, will prove helpful, apart from the obvious uses of a reliable historical survey, in two ways. First, Dr Brown's guide to the positive and negative arguments of earlier thinkers provides indispensable background knowledge for any contemporary re-appraisal of the place of miracles in theology and apologetics. Secondly, his study indicates the significant influence of philosophy over theological discussion. As Professor Brown pertinently remarks, 'our attitudes to miracles are bound up with philosophical positions concerning how we know, what we know, and what we think reality is like' (p.vi).

It is good to be reminded of this, for it is true of almost all theological topics, e.g. the existence and perfection of God, the nature of the afterlife. Some writers (Leslie Houlden, Don Cupitt, John Hick), while accepting that incarnational language is used in the NT, ultimately dismiss its claim to validity on philosophical grounds. This shows that competent biblical exegesis, in itself, is unable to show the inadequacies of these increasingly popular alternative Christologies. What is needed is critical and discriminating engagement with the philosophical positions underlying these views, which seem to demand rejection of some traditional articles of Christian belief. The choice before us, as James Richmond brings out so effectively in *Faith and Philosophy* (Hodder and Stoughton, London 1966), p.16f., is not between theology and philosophy, but between good philosophical theology and bad philosophical theology. It is to Dr Brown's credit that he is not only aware of this but that his work is marked by a fluency and acquaintance with philosophical matters which it would do well for each of us to emulate.

Professor Brown reliably reports the views of others, adumbrates the historical and intellectual context, and briefly evaluates each contribution. The writings of Hume and Bultmann are particularly singled out for criticism. He is also no respecter of evangelical tradition, and wisely exposes the weak arguments of B. B. Warfield and C. S. Lewis.

A few minor criticisms can be aired. I believe the discussion of Kant is too brief, considering his influence upon subsequent philosophy and theology. His denial of theoretical, rational knowledge of God contributed, more than Dr Brown allows, to the discrediting of the straightforward evidentialist argument from miracles to revelation and God. Secondly, in common with many contemporary treatments of miracles, little significance is attributed to the 'signs and wonders' claimed by 'charismatics' in support of Christianity, or indeed in support of their particular form of Christianity.

In all, however, this is a substantial, scholarly work, and it is likely to replace J. S. Lawton's *Miracles and Revelation* (Lutterworth, London 1959), as the standard guide to this subject.

## Churchman

The book is attractively produced and very well annotated, and apart from the omission of a letter on p.77, I have found no other blemishes.

Queen's University, Belfast

L. PHILIP BARNES

### **DEVELOPING A CHRISTIAN MIND O. R. Barclay**

IVP 1984 207 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 85110 456 8

A new evangelical journal recently described itself as intended for 'ministers and thinking Christians'. Apart from the humorous slip, this sort of language does serve to remind us that 'thinking Christianly' is now publicly recognized as an evangelical priority. Harry Blamires fired the opening salvo in this debate twenty years ago, lamenting the absence of a 'Christian mind'; Francis Schaeffer pressed the point further, claiming that 'as a man thinks, so he is'; and John Stott, among others, exhorted us that 'your mind matters'.

One of the intentions of Oliver Barclay's book is to reaffirm this challenge as of continuing importance. However, surveying the course of the 'Christian mind' debate, he now voices a concern that the term is in danger of acquiring a narrowly intellectual focus, diverting energies away from more immediate questions of Christian practice. His book stands as a warning against the possibility of an encroaching evangelical intellectualism and seeks to reassure and challenge 'the straightforward Christian' (p.207)—perhaps a riposte to the élitist overtones of 'the thinking Christian'?—that the biblical call to develop a Christian mind is not a special imperative for the academically endowed but a comprehensive appeal for every believer to conform all aspects of life to the will of God. He shows how the Bible presents us neither with an *ad hoc* juxtaposition of unrelated maxims, nor with a full-blown systematic theology, but with a coherent, accessible and sufficient framework for belief and practice. The exegesis is perhaps weighted too much in favour of NT texts; but treatments of OT themes such as 'knowledge' and 'truth' would only have further buttressed his thesis.

His positive statement of the biblical meaning of a Christian mind is a convincing and necessary corrective to the cerebral excesses of western Christianity. Two aspects of the book, however, invite critical response. The author's practical applications tend to focus on the individual responsibility of 'the Christian', 'the parent', 'the teacher', 'the professional', and so on. But the Christian mind has wide implications for corporate Christian action as well. While, for example, a supportive response by local churches to its unemployed members, commended by the author (p.154), is indeed essential, there is also an enormous responsibility upon Christian business people, trades unionists and politicians to press collectively within their organizations, and upon governments, for broader structural remedies for unemployment, such as work-sharing schemes, the control of labour-shedding technology and so on. These are *no less personal* Christian responsibilities for having a corporate dimension.

A second area meriting critical discussion is the author's decidedly negative verdict on 'Christian philosophy'. The Bible, he rightly stresses, does not present us with any 'complete system' in philosophy, theology or any other area. Most advocates of Christian philosophy would broadly agree

with this, and the author's definition of a Christian mind as 'a Christian outlook that controls our life and thinking' (p.22), although they might call it a Christian 'worldview'; and they would endorse his strictures against 'system-building', or placing philosophy above the Bible, and so on. So what exactly is at issue? Two assumptions seem to underlie the author's particular arguments, one concerning the nature of philosophy and the other its relation to revelation. The author seems to suggest that Christian philosophy functions as a substitute for Christian faith. Of course some philosophers, notably Plato and Hegel, have ascribed ultimate religious significance to their philosophies. But this is by no means a necessary distortion. Most Christian philosophers (e.g. Aquinas or Dooyeweerd) regard philosophy as a human and fallible theoretical exploration of the fundamental structures of created reality, not as a search for ultimate religious truth. Like science, its focus is on creation, not on God. They would agree that only the Bible furnishes us with a knowledge of God and his dealings with his creatures, but they would further hold that philosophy needs biblical truth as 'a lamp unto its feet'. So, using the author's phraseology, Christian philosophy could be defined as a theoretical 'outlook' on the world *in the light of God's revealed 'onlook'*.

The second assumption concerns the degree of difference that revelation makes to philosophy. The author implies that philosophy has a 'relative autonomy' with respect to revelation (p.187). Advocates of Christian philosophy, however, speak of the 'radical dependence' of philosophy upon revelation (or some pseudo-revelation). This does not mean that Christian philosophy deals with different questions or always comes to different conclusions from non-Christian philosophy. It does mean that philosophy cannot avoid proceeding on the basis of religious convictions of some kind, and that these convictions shape the method and results of philosophy far more than is commonly supposed. While the 'relative autonomy' position seeks to place external (theological) limits on what is acceptable in any philosophy, the 'radical dependence' position seeks to transform philosophy from within, by bringing its basic categories into conformity with revelation. The first view seeks to sift out the good from the bad fruit of the philosophical tree through a theological sieve, while the second seeks to inject a different kind of sap into its roots. The second is a more complex affair but is likely to yield a more nourishing harvest in the long run.

There is also the further consideration that our society has been drenched for over two centuries with the intellectual outpourings of openly secular philosophies. Given this fact, Christian cultural witness will, like it or not, require a substantially increased commitment of resources devoted to Christian theoretical renewal in all disciplines. If, however, such work is indeed promoted on a significant scale, it will be crucial that its practitioners remain firmly anchored to a biblical understanding of the Christian mind such as has been proposed in this book.

**ESCAPING FROM FUNDAMENTALISM James Barr**

SCM Press 1984 198 pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 334 00385 7

This book is the second which James Barr, Regius professor of Hebrew in the University of Oxford, has written on the subject of fundamentalism. The first was a long study (379 pp., entitled simply *Fundamentalism*) which exploited the fallacy of the 'undistributed middle' (op. cit., first edition, p.165) with a vengeance. No one denies that there is a lunatic and obscurantist fringe to the movement, as there is to liberalism; but there is also a solid body of 'conservative evangelicals' (preferring that name) who can defend their convictions with scholarship and skill. In the first edition, Professor Barr had done his best to obscure the distinction, but I believe he has repaired the injustice in a second.

This new book is intended to be something different. Its aim is pastoral. It is designed to help those who, 'having grown up in the world of fundamentalism' (the word he always uses here) 'have come to feel that it is a prison from which they must escape.' 'Fundamentalism does virtually nothing to help [such] ...; they go out into the darkness.' Leaving aside the observation that this dramatic statement would hold equally if liberalism, radicalism, catholicism or any other Christian 'ism' were made the subject, how does this book succeed? I must be careful not to be ungenerous (for that is one of my own criticisms of Prof. Barr), but I found it extremely disappointing. There is an undercurrent of bitterness in it, but perhaps more to the point is the fact that the logic is confused, the arguments are half baked, and the impression comes over (at least it did to me) that Professor Barr does not always fully believe what he is writing. These are serious charges, but what is one to make of the argument that 'the widespread use of parables by Jesus makes it absurd ... to suppose that revelation is tied to *factual accuracy*.' How so?—we may ask. Why, the parables were 'fictions' and so 'factually quite inaccurate'! Thus he ensures an entry for 'factual inaccuracy' into the Bible. Faulty history can therefore retain its status as the medium for (some sort of) revelation. I am afraid that in his eagerness to prove this he has here simply tripped up over his feet.

Or take this: the wilderness temptations of our Lord were (some conservatives suggest) on 'a superhuman plane ... not adequately describable in human words.' This gets over the conservative's problem that the orders in Matthew and Luke are different. Yes, says Professor Barr, but it also means that the NT description of the encounter 'is a *legendary* one'. Of course he means 'metaphysical', but by using the term 'legendary' he is able to insinuate another contentious point that 'quite a lot of material in the Bible' is legendary! QED—what could be simpler?

Finally, his discussion of justification by faith illustrates my third point. Paul's doctrine 'applies not to the life story and decisions of the individual but to the communities as wholes'—shades of Abraham, Habakkuk and David!

I venture to predict that one day Professor Barr will be sorry he issued this book. His object is a worthy one: to reassure those real Christians who feel they can no longer accept all Scripture as 'God's word written', but who do not wish to lose their evangelical faith. There will always be such, and I earnestly wish them well. But I doubt if this book will help them.

**CRISES OF BELIEF: The Christian Dialogue with Faith and no Faith****Stephen Neill**

Hodder &amp; Stoughton 1984 304 pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 340 34156 4

This volume, published shortly before Stephen Neill's death, is a rewrite of his *Christian Faith and Other Faiths*, published by OUP in 1961. The author's position is the same as in the earlier volume, while the information has been somewhat updated. What he does is to look at contemporary developments within the major religious traditions and then relate these developments to the central message of Christianity as he understands it. He deals in this way with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Primal Religion. As the subtitle suggests, he also includes a section on non-religious movements such as Marxism and Existentialism. The task which he set himself was enormous and, not surprisingly, some sections are not as good as others, but the book as a whole is very informative and stimulating.

Unlike so many who venture into the maze of the world's religions, this author emerged with a positively Christian approach. One wonders, however, whether his list of basic convictions which need to be held 'if Christianity is to be recognisably Christian' (p.284) is adequate. His confession is very Christocentric but there is no mention of the Lord's deity, and he sees the significance of the cross merely in the belief that Jesus' way 'will certainly result in suffering'. Then again, there is no mention of the Holy Spirit. But even though this outline of basic Christianity leaves a lot to be desired, it should not cause us to dismiss the volume as a whole since it contains many valid and memorable statements.

There is no compromise on the central importance of the historical person of Jesus Christ, through whom God offers man forgiveness of sins (pp.25, 56—though forgiveness is not linked closely enough to the cross of Christ), and the need to proclaim this message to the whole world (p.31). The author was undoubtedly someone who possessed a profound experience of the grace and forgiveness of God in Jesus Christ, which enabled him to sit down with those who differed from him and graciously listen to them without losing grip of his personal assurance that Jesus Christ is Lord. In this context the challenge he throws out to those Christians who live and work among Hindus is relevant to us all: 'So what is the Christian witness to do? Primarily the Christian task is to live out the life of Jesus Christ before the eyes of men. They cannot see him. They will not see him, unless they can see him in the lives of his followers' (p.124).

Pontypridd, Mid-Glamorgan

DEWI ARWEL HUGHES

**A DICTIONARY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** edited John M. Sutcliffe

SCM Press 1984 374 pp. £14.95

ISBN 0 334 01968 0

To set out, as the instigators of this dictionary did, to describe RE throughout the world, to describe the major religious teaching traditions and RE in schools, to summarize philosophical, theological, sociological and psychological understandings of RE, to outline curriculum and teaching methods, and to note some resources for RE, is both laudable and ambitious. Yet to try to cover such a vast amount of ground in a worthwhile way must be an editor's

nightmare, particularly when over 200 contributors are used. Fortunately this editor has largely succeeded in his task.

Inevitably a reviewer of such a work can only dip into its contents, but the overall impression is one of a series of authoritative and informative articles written by men and women who, from their descriptions, are well qualified to write on their subjects.

The trouble with dictionaries of this kind is that whatever their virtues, they fail to please everyone who turns to their pages for help, and this is no exception. Some of the articles are too short to provide very much useful information and the space given to some topics is disappointingly small, as for example in the case of 'Children's Concepts of Prayer'.

Editorial decisions about such matters must be difficult to make, but the balance of this book raises a question about the intended readership. If it is intended for teachers, I fear some will be disappointed to find a lack of content about the teaching of some religious groups. Whilst the article on the Orthodox Church gives an outline of the teaching of the church, those on the Mormons and Methodists are solely statements of educational policy. Interesting though they may be, this is precisely the kind of book to which a busy RE teacher might expect to turn for an outline of what such groups believe.

This is a minor complaint that perhaps the dictionary could be of still more use, and should not be taken to imply that the book is of little consequence. On the contrary, it is a great help to have all this material bound together in one authoritative volume, and the book is to be welcomed as filling a long-standing need.

Spurgeon's College, London

COLIN BROWN

**THE WEALTH OF CHRISTIANS Redmond Mullin**

Paternoster Press 1983 256 pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 85364 366 0

It is unquestionably the devastating final chapter which makes this book, the previous 170 pages having covered much Christian (and some good Jewish) teaching and practice on wealth. Economic life in the West is corrupt. First, 'Greed which is overwhelmingly vicious and immoral is a characteristic of our society' (p.182), seen in companies, trade unions and consumers. Secondly, the capitalist system allows (creates?) deep poverty—at home and abroad—and moreover is wrong in its view of man and work, as argued by Marx, liberation theologians (e.g. Miranda) and Pope John Paul II.

Having laid waste any moral defence of the *status quo*, Redmond Mullin sadly exposes the lack of a Christian response. 'Certainly, at present, the remarkable thing about most Christians' lives is that they are so conformist' (p.214). He then calls for the restoration or reformation of Christianity's ideals.

This, in turn, will be achieved first by individuals taking Christ seriously, and hence moving outwards 'to the family ... neighbourhood ... town ... province and so to the whole state' (p.222). In all this, Mullin lays continual emphasis on the incarnation as the condition for how we live: 'that every experience of events, and above all every human relationship, without

exception, is a realization of the life of Christ in this time, not as a simulation or exercise, but as a living achievement' (p.219). What a challenge!

This is a broader demand than in Sider's *Rich Christians*, although the tension between stewardship (encouraging industriousness and prosperity[?]) and poverty ('at least a spiritual detachment in the pursuit of a living' [p.218]) is important; and in our context 'the Christian prejudice needs to be strongly in the direction of poverty, austerity and self-denial' (p.218).

The author has a refreshing willingness to be critical *wherever* appropriate: hence this is no call for a socialist revolution, for he is well aware of the danger of the notion of perfectability now (compare Miranda), and also of the necessarily self-corrupting nature of all institutions. Thus, also, he sees only lay people being truly revolutionary, since clergy are institution-bound.

As for the rest, I had to invest great effort to discover what Redmond Mullin was saying: e.g. he should give summaries of his chapters (scholarly though they be, and useful for reference).

Ealing College of Higher Education, London W5

ANDREW HARTROPP

**THE CROSS AGAINST THE BOMB Robin Gill**

SCM Press/Epworth Press 1984 94 pp. £3.50

ISBN 0 7162 0403 7

**PACIFISM AND WAR 8 Prominent Christians Debate Today's Issues**

edited O.R. Barclay

Series—When Christians Disagree

IVP 1984 256 pp. £5.75

ISBN 0 85110 727 3

Reading *The Cross Against the Bomb* is rather like watching an episode of *Dallas* half-way through the series. If *Dallas* is best watched by ensuring that one has followed previous episodes, then reading Gill's book is best done by first reading *The Cross and the Bomb* (F. Bridger, ed., Mowbray, Oxford 1983), for *The Cross Against the Bomb* is primarily a critique of the earlier volume. Gill says that 'I found myself increasingly depressed by the low level of ethical and theological argument in so distinguished and influential a group of theologians' (p.vii): he has thus set out to write a penetrating theological critique of those who have argued for a policy of nuclear deterrence. This he has undoubtedly done. He identifies in *The Cross and the Bomb* four main methods of arguing for the retention of nuclear weapons: 1) saying that the possession of nuclear weapons is not totally evil in itself; 2) claiming that to abandon nuclear deterrence would make nuclear war more likely; 3) concluding that the just-war theory permits nuclear deterrence; 4) saying that to adopt a pacifist position is irresponsible. Each of these four arguments is criticized in some detail. In each case the argument presented is clear, reasoned and lucid.

A point which is made by Gill on a number of occasions is that much talk of nuclear deterrence is based solely around the idea that NATO and the Warsaw Pact deter one another by each possessing a nuclear capability. Gill asks that we take more seriously the threat that the proliferation of nuclear weapons might mean that countries outside the NATO and Warsaw Pact alliances could start a nuclear holocaust. He raises the 'suspicion that there may well be countries which would, in desperation, engage in a mutually

destructive nuclear first strike. Hitler might well have been prepared to do that had his scientists actually produced a nuclear bomb, and some of the Middle-Eastern countries might be prepared to do that today' (p.11).

Like the authors of the Church of England report, *The Church and the Bomb*, Gill makes one major mistake of logic. If, as he argues in chapter two, nuclear weapons are totally immoral and evil, then I fail to see how he can conclude that 'politicians should be urged to pursue multilateral negotiations on nuclear weapon reduction and strict control, with vigour, even in the face of serious obstacles' (p.87). If nuclear weapons are morally wrong in themselves, then one cannot have any truck with them *at all*. One must prohibit their possession and use immediately. Immediate unilateral disarmament is the only option. Anything other than unilateralism is to deny that nuclear weapons are morally wrong in themselves. Gill has mistakenly validated what he terms an intrinsic ethical approach, and yet has come up with a conclusion that is based on a consequential approach. And that is illogical.

*Pacifism and War* is a collection of essays by various Christian authors who have differing views about the morality of modern warfare. Arthur Holmes believes that there is such a thing as a just war but that a nuclear exchange would be unjust, and a similar position is taken by John Peck. Sir Frederick Catherwood and Jerram Barrs believe that a nuclear exchange can fall within the concept of a just war. A joint essay by Willard Swartley and Alan Kreider, and another by Robert Clark, argue for a pacifist stance. Dr Neil Summertown comes to a virtual pacifist position, although he believes theoretically in a just war.

Although this is a collection of essays by various authors, they run well together, with each essay being read by another contributor who offers criticisms of it. The result is a well-balanced book, setting out very clearly a variety of Christian positions on the subject of war. The excellence of the book is that it presents a group of Christians trying to develop a theology to cope with the war and peace debate: the authors take Scripture seriously and sensibly, and base their conclusions on their view of God as they see him presented in the Scriptures. Oliver Barclay points out in his analytical summary at the end of the book that the pacifists have based their position to a large extent on an NT picture of a loving and forgiving God: the just-war supporters, on the other hand, have taken the Bible as a whole and have given more stress to the justice of God. He points out that the pacifists have a pessimistic view of the state and an optimistic view of man, whilst the just-war theorists have a more positive understanding of the state and a less optimistic view of man. The basic differences of theological emphasis lead the different authors to different theoretical and practical conclusions.

As a just-war theorist, this reviewer found Dr Robert Clark's essay very difficult to stomach. Clark argues that the Christian should abstain from any use of force, so that not only can he not be a member of the armed forces but he should not be a judge or a policeman either. Clark's essay would have the Christian living a separatist existence, with no real involvement in the important affairs of man—a denial, in my view, of the nature of the incarnation. On the other hand, whilst I enjoyed the strength of Jerram Barr's contribution, I believe many will find it hard to accept his bald statement that nuclear weapons are only quantitatively different from

conventional weapons. Barr needs to examine and discuss this issue at far greater depth if he is to command support. In particular, he needs to examine the development of the neutron bomb.

Lawnswood School, Leeds

DAVID G. KIBBLE

**CAN MODERN WAR BE JUST? J.T. Johnson**

Yale University Press 1984 215 pp. £17.95

ISBN 0 300 03165 3

**EVANGELICALS AND THE BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER**

edited D.C. Curry

Eerdmans, USA 1984 254 pp. £9.75

ISBN 0 8028 1986 0

distributed by Paternoster Press in the UK

Much of the debate on the morality of nuclear warfare assumes that nuclear weapons are right or wrong in themselves. James Turner Johnson believes that we should look instead at the use to which the weapons are put when we seek to enter the debate. The morality of the weapons, he argues, depends not upon the nature of the nuclear blast but on the effects they have, particularly the effect on non-combatants. He concludes therefore that 'the possibility does seem to exist that in some conditions the neutron weapon can be used with greater moral discrimination than tactical fission weapons and even conventional high explosives' (p.117). The neutron bomb is a recent development in atomic weaponry: it can cause short-term radiation damage over an area of a few square miles; its blast and heat effect is small. Unlike the conventional fission weapon, there is no lingering radiation damage. As such, Johnson believes that the neutron bomb can be justly used under certain circumstances, and its use, he believes, can sometimes be more moral than the use of conventional weapons.

Johnson's book is an attempt to look at the just-war theory and to apply its criteria to modern war and to modern weapons of war. Taking his standpoint on the just-war concept, he examines the morality of different types of war, different types of weapons, and different types of targeting. By using the just-war yardstick, his basic conclusions are that non-combatants should be protected from the ravages of war; that, whilst strategic nuclear missiles are probably immoral, certain types of nuclear weapon are acceptable because they can inflict proportionate and discriminating damage on an enemy; and that we should continue to develop nuclear and non-nuclear weapons to ensure that they are as proportionate and as discriminating as possible. Johnson believes, for example, that the development of the neutron bomb and the cruise missile are distinctly moral steps forward, because of the possibility of their inherently discriminating and proportionate effects.

One interesting point made by Johnson is his plea for a resumption of National Service in the USA. He rightly points out that the armed forces carry out their role as representatives of the American people. He believes that this representative nature would be far better served if National Service were to be reintroduced. It would also ensure that the armed forces were not disproportionately composed of the poor, the poorly educated and the non-white.

The book consists of a number of separate essays, some of which were originally composed independently; there is therefore overlap between the various chapters. Whilst there are passages that are rather complicated, the overall thrust of the book is clear. Some of his argument from parallel example is weak, but generally his reasoning is logical and well thought out. There is one point I would like Johnson to consider: if the armed forces really do act as the representatives of the nation, then it follows that when a nation goes to war, its people and not just its army are at war. Bearing this in mind, is non-combatant immunity as sacred as he makes out?

In 1983 Roman Catholic bishops in the USA issued a letter on war and peace. The letter rejected the use of nuclear weapons as a moral option, but accepted that in the short term a policy of nuclear deterrence was acceptable until such time as disarmament had been achieved. The collection of essays, entitled *Evangelicals and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter*, represents a response by American evangelicals to the bishops' letter. The authors represent a variety of views on the nuclear debate, a variety which is 'both a reflection of the diversity of views on war and peace that exist among evangelicals and a reflection of the pluralism that is the Protestant tradition' (p.20).

One of the contributors criticizes the bishops' letter for its simplistic and inadequate biblical theology. The bishops' letter bases most of its theology on Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, but fails to deal adequately with the teaching of the epistles, particularly Romans 13. It is unfortunate, then, that this collection of essays falls into a similar trap. The book is seen as a distinctly Christian contribution, and yet its discussion of a theology for the nuclear age is virtually non-existent. Christians must, in discussing the morality of nuclear weapons, concern themselves with practical and political issues, but that does not mean that they should not first lay a firm theological foundation. Most of the book is taken up with discussing practical and theoretical issues. It criticizes the bishops' theology but fails to lay an adequate theology of its own.

Mark Amstutz, in a very strong presentation of deterrence, points out that the bishops' letter, at root, is blatantly illogical. 'What the bishops seem to be saying is this: deterrence is OK but it cannot be morally supported through policies that are themselves immoral. MAD is clearly wrong because it does not discriminate; counterforce is wrong because by discriminating it makes the use of nuclear arms more likely. And since the use of nuclear arms would violate the principle of proportionality, we are left with the conditional affirmation of deterrence but the denial of the strategies designed to maintain such a policy. The pastoral affirms deterrence, yet by calling into question the means to implement such a policy it weakens the very policy it seeks to promote' (p.173). This represents the most penetrating criticism in the book.

Nevertheless the pastoral letter, despite its basic illogicality, has raised important issues and has enabled evangelical scholars in this volume to present a wide variety of views on nuclear deterrence and nuclear warfare. One particularly positive contribution, by Robert De Vries, advocates an approach to arms control through negotiation and treaty. He believes, for example, that the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 should be more fully implemented by the USA and criticizes Ronald Reagan's 'Star Wars' policy for breaking the spirit of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. He believes that, in a world where peace is fragile, there can be no substitute for

continued arms control negotiation. His approach seems to be highly realistic, and based upon a detailed knowledge of agreements and treaties already concluded.

Here then is a collection of essays from the other side of the Atlantic written in response to a Roman Catholic document. Its strength lies in its presentation of the 'Christian Right'; its presentation of the 'Christian Left' is not as strong. Its weakness is its failure to deal adequately with a theology for the nuclear issue. It also suffers from a failure to discuss the morality of nuclear warfare in the light of the recently developed neutron bomb. This weapon has blurred the distinction between nuclear and conventional warfare, and raises important issues which must be dealt with in any contemporary debate.

Lawnswood School, Leeds

DAVID G. KIBBLE

### **WHAT ARE WE DOING WHEN WE PRAY?**

**A Philosophical Inquiry Vincent Brümmer**

SCM Press 1984 138 pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 334 02421 8

**WAYS TO PRAY** Sermons No. 4 edited **Thomas Shaw**

Cowley Publications, USA 1984 88 pp. US\$5.00

ISBN 0 936384 19 0

**A BOOK OF VESTRY PRAYERS** compiled **C.N.R. Wallwork**

SCM Press/Epworth Press 1984 117 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 7162 0277 8

In the first book, a Dutch professor in both theological and philosophical faculties of the University of Utrecht seeks a framework of understanding within which 'valid prayer' can be made. References are widely drawn, there is an extensive bibliography, notes and an index. Cross references in the text show where matters under discussion are further considered.

After examining ways in which prayer can be viewed, the author rejects prayer as therapeutic meditation and centres his concern on what he calls 'impetratory prayer'—aimed at getting things by praying for them. Mystical prayer is left on one side. Using Aquinas and Calvin, with a range of modern American and European writers, he investigates the logic of prayer, analyses relational models of prayer, and explores the conceptual framework within which prayer can be said to be answered. Markers of this framework are: 1) a personal God seeking personal relationship with us; 2) a non-deterministic universe; 3) the relational character of prayer, affecting both God and the pray-er; 4) the mediate nature of divine agency in the world. The pole-stars for navigation are: we can't manipulate God (magic) and God won't manipulate us (power). Little room remains for a tradition that 'commands' God in prayer on the basis of Scripture promises or the Spirit's prompting.

The trouble about the appeal to logic and coherence is the prior conviction that God must fit our logic to be credible. Suppose our logic is bent—in this bent world? Does prayer in the Bible and in Christian experience demand Brümmer's framework and his logical strictures, or could it offer its own alternative framework to challenge our logic?

One may continue to pray without reading this book; one might find some ideas one has taken for granted challenged and overturned by it; one could hardly read it without having one's prayer life deepened; but it is a very demanding read as well as a stimulating one.

## Churchman

*Ways to Pray* is a collection of thirteen sermons originating in an American SSJE House. They are not about the mechanics of 'spiritual exercises'—more about attitudes in life where prayer can happen. Prayer is treated as a 'wide game', extending to all of life. The life-span is long: wanting to get rid of sin, questioning and doubting, being quiet, and old age. There are many flashes (and some americanisms) in this somewhat oblique approach, not all equally acceptable, but plenty to illuminate and extend our praying.

*A Book of Vestry Prayers* comes from the Methodist tradition, with a foreword by Geoffrey Wainwright. Originally published in 1976, it is now reprinted, evidently with some additions, since some sources are signified as 'original collection'. Two prayers (one in classical form, one contemporary) are given for each Sunday or special day in a JLG/ASB arrangement, though the theme is not printed. There is a list of sources and five blank pages for additions.

The concept of 'vestry prayer' is interesting—for those crucial minutes before a service—and so the selection is geared to leaders' pre-worship attitudes, though some could be judiciously used in a service. This is a leader's book which prods us into praying about our worship—we who so readily pray about our proclamation and witness. Here is a reminder that worship doesn't just happen, that it needs, deserves and can have, the Spirit's brightening touch which prayer can release.

Abbotsbury, Dorset

PETER R. AKEHURST

**A DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY** edited Gordon Wakefield  
SCM Press 1983 400 pp. £15.00 ISBN 0 334 01966 4

The project to publish a dictionary of Christian spirituality must have been fraught with pitfalls. To produce a book which would really represent the many facts of orthodox (and unorthodox) Christian experience must have seemed to many beyond the bounds of the possible. In fact, under Gordon Wakefield's editorship, this volume is nothing less than a triumph. Indeed, some of the most distinguished articles in the volume are by the editor himself. His own article on 'Spirituality' is a model of its kind, with a perceptive grasp of the differences between Catholic and Protestant spirituality but with a clear-sighted view of the common ground to be found in men like Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux.

In addition, one of the great values of the dictionary is the fact that it is not restricted to Christian spirituality. For instance, Geoffrey Parrinder's article on Sufism within Islam, and the interaction with Christianity, is most illuminating.

There are articles on subjects, and also on a variety of distinguished people such as John Bunyan and Teilhard de Chardin.

It is really very difficult to fault this volume! There is of course the unevenness of contributions inevitable in a collection of articles, but the impression of this reviewer is of a uniformly high standard. Certain contributions are outstanding, such as Rowan Williams on the 'Dark Night' and M. J. Jackson on 'Rastafarianism'. Yet on reading Michael Hennell's article on 'Evangelical Spirituality', one wonders whether the writer is really

in touch with the realities of life in evangelical parishes today. For example, in describing the spirituality of an evangelical parish, he says that 'The Bible exposition is usually from a fundamentalist outlook, and much of the interpretation is allegorical.'

It is interesting also that there is no reference to Ryle's *Holiness*, which is surely one of the most serious of the evangelical works on the spiritual life. Nevertheless it is to be expected that few will agree with everything that is included in such a book. There is no doubt that it is a superb contribution to the understanding of Christian spirituality and ought to be on every pastor's bookshelf.

St Barnabas Vicarage, London E9

JOHN PEARCE

### **BASIC TYPES OF PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING:**

**Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth** **Howard Clinebell**

first published in 1966

SCM Press 1984 463 pp. £8.50

ISBN 0 334 01892 7

The first edition of this well-used book was published in 1966. In the intervening years, Howard Clinebell has moved along in his personal growth. This enlarged edition reflects changes in his own understandings and also some of the changes in society: the feminist perspective, liberation theology, environmental concerns, and the newer therapies which have emerged.

The author has five purposes in presenting his book about pastoral care and counselling. The first is 'to describe a new holistic growth and liberation-centred paradigm with spiritual and ethical wholeness at its centre.' Great emphasis is placed on the multidimensional nature of healing and wholeness: enlivening the mind, revitalizing the body, renewing and enriching intimate relationships, deepening relationships with nature and the biosphere, growth in relation to the significant institutions in one's life, and the deepening of one's relationship with God.

The other purposes are to survey the theological foundations and historical heritage, to review fundamental procedures, to describe different types of approach to various difficulties, and to examine particular areas of need, e.g., short-term crisis, bereavement, marriage and family problems.

Throughout the book, the author tries to link theological and psychological insights, though I personally found his treatment of these a bit general. He sees the whole task of pastoral care and counselling as a means of communicating the gospel.

The greater part of the book is an attempt to give guide-lines about practical techniques for facilitating self-understanding and promoting growth in other people. There is extensive coverage of many modern types of counselling: gestalt, transactional analysis, reality therapy, etc.

On balance, as a general guide, this book has much to offer. It has the disadvantages of an eclectic approach and the advantages of an experienced, well-read student of the subject. I found the greatest stimulation from the emphasis on multidimensional wholeness.

Chorleywood, Herts

MYRA CHAVE-JONES

Churchman

**MINISTRY BURNOUT John A. Sanford**

first published in the USA, 1982

Arthur James 1984 117 pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 85305 262 X

The title may possibly put you off, and it should be explained that 'burnout' is a technical term which is used when a person has become exhausted with his or her profession or major life activity. This book, therefore, written by someone who is both a Jungian analyst and an Anglican minister, seeks to describe how the problem of 'burnout' applies to those engaged in ministry.

The author begins with a helpful analysis of the particular factors which lead to spiritual exhaustion in ministry. In the rest of the book he proceeds to look at these factors and to suggest possible solutions to the problem.

It is tempting to say that one has heard much of these discussions before, and some of the conclusions which the book reaches are more in the way of being sanctified common sense. Some of the ideas, however, are likely to raise a few eyebrows, not least the suggestion that 'ministering persons' (a term coined by the author) should receive payment for pastoral counselling. Also the cavalier use of Scripture gives deep cause for concern, the exegesis of John 5 being quite extraordinary.

One of the most helpful sections is where the author deals with the problem of being exhausted by failure. While his use of the picture of Elijah after Mount Carmel is not altogether original, he does have some valuable insights into what does and does not constitute failure in ministry.

I must be straightforward and say that the book did leave me with a question as to whether it really tackles the need for *spiritual* renewal in ministry. There are, however, very few books on this particular subject, and this one may have value in its analysis of those factors which 'ministering persons' know to be part of their experience but do not necessarily find easy to analyse themselves or to put into words.

Filkins Vicarage, Glos.

A.J. BURDON

## In Brief

**STAND UP AND BE COUNTED R.T. Kendall**

Hodder & Stoughton 1984 127 pp. £1.75

ISBN 0 340 35175 6

Kendall is a Calvinist—'a real one', as he explains! He believes in the doctrine of election. Yet he is also convinced that, at the end of an evangelistic address, it is right to ask people 'to come forward' as an act of confessing Christ publicly—a 'public pledge' is the term which he prefers.

He argues his case carefully and logically, and explains how this practice was introduced at Westminster Chapel, London. He acknowledges that the act is open to abuse, and considers some of the objections to it, but has well thought-out chapters on its roots (which he traces back to Abraham) and its purpose.

Commended as good reading for all Calvinists—even the 'high' variety might benefit.

**VICTORY: The Work of the Spirit** Pieter Potgieter  
Banner of Truth Trust 1984 42 pp. 85p

ISBN 0 85151 430 8

Ten moving meditations on the ministry of the Holy Spirit, all taken from the book of Revelation. Here is another good Calvinist not only urging readers to ask Jesus Christ into their lives but exhorting the church to pray 'Come, Lord Jesus. Do come now!'

**THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MAN** J. Gresham Machen  
first published in 1937

Banner of Truth Trust 1984 254 pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 85151 112 0

This book was written fifty years ago, and we might wish to change the emphasis here and there. It is, however, firmly rooted in Reformed theology and will repay reading. In particular, the author's treatment of predestination is helpful. So, too, is his affirmation that God has *his* purposes for his creation, and man will not be allowed to bring the human race to a meaningless end through self-destruction.

**THE FORCE OF TRUTH** Thomas Scott  
first published in 1779

Banner of Truth Trust 1984 127 pp. £1.50

ISBN 0 85151 425 1

Scott was a Church of England clergyman who entered the ministry when he was not a Christian. In the book he first sets out his early state of mind, and follows this with an account of how he was led to Christ—John Newton being in large measure responsible.

**OXFORD BIBLE ATLAS** edited John Day  
first published in 1962

OUP 1984 144 pp. hardcover £8.50  
paperback £4.95

ISBN 0 19 143452 3

ISBN 0 19 143451 5

This third edition has been substantially revised in order to bring it into line with recent scholarship, particularly in regard to archaeology, topography and chronology. The maps are excellent and there is a wealth of valuable information concerning the history of Israel through to the NT, together with such items as the natural regions and archaeological sites of Palestine, plus a comprehensive gazetteer.

The section on 'Archaeology and the Bible' points out that there are gaps in our knowledge and that some guesswork is involved—provided that the limitations of this process are understood. Where this is necessary in the Atlas, every attempt is made to be fair and relevant.

**TEN GROWING CHURCHES** edited Eddie Gibbs  
MARC Europe 1984

British Church Growth Association 1984 190 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 9508396 8 5

ISBN 0 947697 04 7

These churches are selected from a variety of denominations and come from rural, industrial, suburban and inner-city locations. They are in no sense a 'top ten'—rather are they chosen as representative of what God is doing through his people in similar situations. No contributor is trying to tell others

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what to do or suggesting that there is a certain model at which we should all aim. Leaders come in all shapes and sizes. Three factors at least are common to all: prayer, a reliance on the work of the Holy Spirit, and a willingness to change patterns and structures in order to meet the requirements of the present-day situation.

A worthwhile and encouraging book.

### **HOW TO PLANT CHURCHES** edited Monica Hill

MARC Europe 1984 131 pp. £4.50

ISBN 0 9508396 4 7

Now comes a more technical book on church planting, with growth very much in mind! Biblical guidelines are offered, practical experiences shared, ideas put forward, approaches recommended and future directions considered. However, it is clearly recognized that there is no blueprint available. New thinking must go on all the time, but essentially we need wisdom from above.

London SE11

LANCE BIDEWELL

### **THE CHURCH AND THE STORY** 7 Study Units for Parishes and Groups

based on *Believing in the Church*, the report of the Church of England

Doctrine Commission

SPCK 1984 58 pp. 95p

ISBN 0 281 04083 4

The Doctrine Commission's Report, published in 1981, turned attention to belief as a corporate experience and developed the concept of 'story' as a useful way into thinking about belief. This study guide offers seven units to explore that insight rather than the text of the report. Each unit provides homework, questions and exercises, and an extended extract from the report with more academic questions—plus a 'government health warning' not to do the last only. An appendix gives six short, related essays. It demands a little more than usual of leaders, but in a vivid, participatory manner could give any group a gentle, interesting nudge into the theological process—from *where they are*.

Some may find the issue of authority for belief is soft-pedalled in this excellent scheme. The guide is in fact authoritative without being authoritarian—a useful lesson for church and state today.

Abbotsbury, Dorset

PETER R. AKEHURST

### **THE EXISTENCE OF GOD** Richard Swinburne

first published in 1979

OUP, Clarendon Press 1984 296 pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 19 824778 8

This book is a paperback edition of a work which first appeared in 1979. It is part of a trilogy in defence of classical theism, the first of which is *The Coherence of Theism* (1977) and the third *Faith and Reason* (1981). However, it can be read quite easily on its own, without reference to the other two volumes.

Easily, of course, is a relative term! Abstract thought is never simple, especially to the uninitiated, and this book is no exception. But within the

limits of the possible, the author makes the traditional arguments for the existence of God as accessible to the average reader as he can. He accepts that none of the proofs, taken on its own, can be regarded as proof of the theistic case, but argues that, *taken together*, they tip the balance of probability in favour of the existence of God.

Those who enjoy serious reading will find this book provocative and enriching, as one would expect from one of the leading defenders of classical theism in this country today.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

**THE PRAYERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT** Donald Coggan

first published in 1967

Mowbray 1984 186 pp. £3.50

ISBN 0 264 66984 0

Congratulations to Mowbrays for this reprint of Lord Coggan's exposition of the prayers of the NT. The book is scholarly, devotional and full of rich insights. An invaluable tool for the preacher, this book is also one to be studied in its own right. It will deepen and enrich our understanding of the nature of Christian prayer.

Filkins Vicarage, Glos.

A.J. BURDON

**FOLLOW MY LEADER** Katharine Makower

Kingsway Publications 1984 191 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 86065 288 2

Making extensive use of original material, both written to and by Dr Murray Webb-Peploe, the authoress follows his varied career from birth to gunner captain at the front line in the First World War. From thence to Cambridge, to China, to India—for twenty years' service with Amy Carmichael at Dohnavur and finally to the New Forest as a general practitioner. His dedication, spiritual stature and adaptability clearly inspired all with whom he came into contact, and can do the same for readers of this book today.

**LOOK WHO'S TALKING: The Christian's Guide to Better Communication**

Peter Cotterell

Kingsway Publications 1984 158 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 86065 289 0

This is an excellent example of the very art it commends, that of communication. Clear, down-to-earth, witty, one is left in no doubt about the need of many to follow Peter Cotterell's good advice!

**THE LION BIBLE USER'S STARTER KIT**

Lion Publishing 1984 32 pp. 50p

ISBN 0 85648 898 4

*The Lion Handbook to the Bible* is the 'parent' book to this starter kit, which introduces the gospel of Mark, placing it in a historical context. This pocket guide can be used on its own, or in conjunction with the rest of its 'family'.

**THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF PAUL** illustrated with photographs Sonia Halliday and Laura Lushington

Albatross Books, Aust. 1984 Aust.\$9.95

ISBN 0 86760 501 4

Lion Publishing 1984 76 pp. £4.98

ISBN 0 85648 781 3

Well produced in hardcover, passages from the book of Acts and Paul's own letters highlight his teaching and throw the suffering and glory into sharp

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relief. His conversion, travels and contact with fellow-Christians introduce us not only to Paul as a man but, more importantly, to his message—good news as the gift of God.

London SE11

HAZEL BIDEWELL

### **WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE** John Balchin

127 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 85648 566 7

### **REAL LIFE CHRISTIANITY** Andrew Knowles

127 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 85648 565 9

**A WORKBOOK** by Mags Law, 24 pp., 75p, is available with each of the above.

All published by Lion Publishing 1984

This series is in the now accepted format of many Lion books—attractive and colourful. But does this have to be spelled out on the cover? It is obviously an approach which appeals to a generation steeped in visual learning.

Both books are succinctly written, though this sometimes presents difficulties: e.g., should Joseph be called Jesus' earthly father? Linked with the work books, they should prove extremely useful. Having just been asked to recommend a book for an elderly person who is searching for truth, my copies will be on loan.

### **GOD AND THE FAMILY** Paul Marston

Kingsway Publications 1984 212 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 86065 277 7

This is a stimulating book. Sometimes it is inclined to literalism, and at other times it acknowledges cultural differences with biblical times. It forces one to search the Scriptures: for instance, is it true that the Bible does not accept that the man is the bread-winner?

The author has certainly studied his subject and gives advice in a down-to-earth way: e.g., nudity is now so common that it ceases to be exciting. He deals with such matters as masturbation, headship and subjection in marriage, divorce, the single person, and dressing for church. He even devotes a chapter to men and women in the church family, where he concludes that a woman should not occupy an institutional position of ruling in a church.

A book worth reading more than once.

Christ Church Vicarage, Ware, Herts

JOHN BOURNON

### **THE SPIRITUAL LIFE** Evelyn Underhill

first published in 1937

Mowbray 1984 127 pp. £1.75

ISBN 0 264 66993 2

One of the problems of many pastors is the fact that some of the greatest books are out of print. For this reason we all owe a great debt to those publishers who reprint classics. One of these is Evelyn Underhill's *The Spiritual Life*. The book originated in four broadcast talks and is therefore couched in language which is suitable for anyone. Here is a book to reread oneself, and certainly one to pass on to all kinds of people: to the Christian who needs to discover the possibilities of growth in spirituality; to non-Christians as an introduction to a world which may yet be unknown to them. First published in 1937, this reprint deserves a very wide circulation.

St Barnabas Vicarage, London E9

JOHN PEARCE

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## Other Books Received

**Anglo Orthodox Society** M. Wright & J. Auton, *A True Glory. A Collection of Hymns*, 1984, £1.00

**Arthur James** E. Robertson, *Take and Read*, 1984 (revised), £2.95

**East-West Publications** D. & P. Cope, *Christmas Carols for Young Children*, 1984, £1.95

**Hodder & Stoughton** M. Harper ed., *Bishops' Move*, 1984 (2nd edition), £1.75; J. Gunstone, *A People for His Praise*, 1984 (2nd edition), £1.75

**Hulton Educational Publications** G. Dobbie (illust.), *Stories of Jesus, books 1, 2 & 3*, 1985, @ £1.75

**Jubilee Publications** T. Drummond & M. Pepper, *Liberation Theology and British Christians*, 1984, 50p; D. Nicholls & R. Williams, *Politics and Theological Identity*, 1984, £1.00

**Lion Publishing** M. Batchelor, *The Lion Christmas Book*, 1984, £4.95; M. Batchelor, *Mary Batchelor's Everyday Book*, 1984 (2nd edition), £6.95

**MARC Europe** M. Goldsmith ed., *Love your Local Missionary*, 1984, £1.50

**University of York** S. Brown, *The Medieval Courts of the York Minster Peculiar*, 1984, £2.00

**Unwin Paperbacks/Mandela Books** A. David-Neal, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, 1984, £3.95; P. Pullar, *The Shortest Journey*, 1984, £3.95; S. Kakar, *Shaimans, Mystics and Doctors*, 1984, £3.95