

Book Reviews

BELIEVING MAKES SENSE. A WAY OF READING THE BIBLE,

Lucas Grollenberg.

SCM Press 1983 (English Translation) 102pp. £3.50 pb.

ISBN 0 334 00096 3

Lucas Grollenberg is a Dutch Dominican. His book is a collection of popular essays with Biblical subjects, though their form is often curious. He does not simply reproduce what he said on assorted occasions, he tells us about the occasions and how his addresses were received.

His approach to Scripture is uncritically 'critical', which is of some importance since (commendably) his main interest is in the historical interpretation of the text. So on page 2 we have already learned that 'only in Babylon' did the Jews realise that 'their national God' was the only God, and 'therefore had to be the creator and ruler of everything'. Genesis 1 therefore 'cannot have been written before the exile', and the idea of the Jews as 'chosen' is no earlier either. He genially tells us that after he had 'demonstrated' all this to a gathering at Best 'it emerged that many people were astonished'. Well, well!

And on the story goes. 'In Babylon we also find the beginnings of what later was to become "holy scripture".' They had been preceded by people 'whom we call the "Deuteronomists"', who 'assembled all kinds of documentary material from the nation's past . . .' (p 16) The patriarchal narratives are 'sagas' (p 19). Of the Exodus narrative of the building of the tabernacle we read, 'there is no doubt that these passages were written by Jewish priests during and after the exile.' When we come to the New Testament, the birth narratives are regarded as legends.

What is Grollenberg trying to do? It is not easy to see. In a sense this is the most popular of all handbooks to a sceptical reading of Scripture. The blurb on the back cover speaks of the book's 'spontaneity and charm', but this reviewer at least found the author's constant references to himself and the detailed circumstances of this or that occasion more than a little trying. Unlike his original hearers, we cannot answer Grollenberg back!

But an important reflection arises out of his popular presentation of the scepticism of critical historical scholarship. After some hesitant attempts at popularising 'criticism' in the last century, we have settled down with a custom of teaching the people one thing and the ministers another. Grollenberg's desire to interpret Scripture historically (a thoroughly Protestant and evangelical concern) leads him out of this double-think, but by another door than many readers of *Churchman* would wish to take.

JUDGES A.D.H. Mayes

JSOT Press, Sheffield 1985. 98 pp., £2.95.

ISBN 0 905774 58 2.

The book is another in the series *Old Testament Guides*, which aim to provide standard introductions for the student to the books of the Old Testament. A.D.H. Mayes is eminently qualified to write on Judges and has contributed a useful volume to the series.

The book falls into three main chapters, ch. 1 describing the form of the book of Judges; ch. 2 the social context of Israel in the period; and ch. 3 Israel itself at that time. There is a familiarity about the first of these chapters to those who know the author's other work. It is basically a description of how the central section of Judges, viz. 2:6–16:31, came into existence. In Mayes' view an original collection of 'deliverer'-stories was provided, after the fall of the northern kingdom, with a deuteronomistic framework, subsequently attracted further stories (among them those of Samson and Jephthah), and was finally furnished with a prologue and epilogue (1:1–2:5 and chs. 17–21). The description of the contents of the book is therefore largely in redaction-critical terms, and is rather weak as an account of its theology.

The account of the international context of tribal Israel is more interesting. A picture is painted of a Canaan divided between city-state and country areas, between rich and poor, overlord and vassal. In this context the country-dwellers suffered much at the hands of their urban rulers. In Palestine even more than in Syria the burden of taxation was often intolerable. For Mayes the story of the country-dwellers is that of Israel. Israel's tribal organisation is in antithesis to that of the city-states. In those areas, furthermore, which the states found difficult to control, principally the mountainous areas, discontent could breed. The Judges period, indeed, bears witness to the decline of the city-state, and the parallel rise to dominance of a wholly different kind of society, organised in tribes and clans, with authority structures, as it were, from the bottom and not the top. (The treatment of the nature of the 'clan' and 'family' is illuminating and salutary).

The understanding of the origins of Israel, therefore, is primarily sociological. The conditions existed within Canaan itself which encouraged the growth of a Yahwistic movement, born in the experience of a group of people who had experienced deliverance from Egypt and who brought with them into Canaan a theology centred on deliverance from the tyrannical overlord as such. This powerful idea, united with the already existing tribal structure of the mountain-dwellers in the land, were the seeds of Israel. Mayes is therefore among those who think that Israel's presence in Canaan is not due to conquest. The major influence upon him seems to be the work of Gottwald, though he is critical of him in certain respects.

In ch. 3 the question of the transition from tribal system to monarchy is raised. Here Mayes rejects the common idea of an evolution from tribal system to centralised monarchy, arguing that the essential features of tribal society continued. Monarchy was an institution which the tribal society, for various reasons, felt obliged to adopt. The point is suggestive, recalling as it does the cry of Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12:16, which can be read as a protest against the centralisation of power. But the reviewer is less convinced that there was no underlying tendency towards monarchy in the Judges period itself. This is the natural reading of the stories of Gideon and Abimelech.

Mayes regards the latter's bid for power as an attempt to re-establish the city-state kind of system; the former he regards as a piece of polemic against David emanating from the reign of that monarch.

The historical debates which are thrown up by Mayes' approach to Judges cannot be entered here. What concerns the reviewer more fundamentally is the methodological question raised by the prominence accorded to sociological factors (as reconstructed) in the account of the phenomenon of Israel. (There are important parallels in the endeavour to account for the origins of Christianity). On two counts Mayes gives little place to theological factors as such. The lesser is in his understanding of hostility to monarchy. The greater (though the two are connected) is in his explanation of the rise of a political alternative as a matter of socio-economic factors only. The relation between the sociological and the theological is no doubt complex, and necessarily the subject of much future reflection. The danger in Old Testament studies is that current historical theories about the origins of Israel will be too hastily digested and become the latest orthodoxy before that kind of reflection has taken place. And it has scarcely been begun here.

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GORDON McCONVILLE

1 AND 2 KINGS, THE NEW CENTURY BIBLE COMMENTARY G.H. Jones
Eerdmans Grand Rapids: Marshall, Morgan and Scott. 1984

Vol. I 666 pp £8.95,

ISBN 0 551 01119 X

Vol. II 666 pp. £8.95,

ISBN 0 551 01160 2.

'Selection is the essence of writing history' says Barbara Tuchman (*Practising History*, Macmillan, 1983, p.62). She also says that 'the historical task is to tell what happened within the discipline of the facts. (The historians') exercise of judgment comes in their selection, his art in their arrangement' (p.32) . . . 'The problem is how and what to select, without, by the very process of selection, giving an over- or under-emphasis which violates truth.' And one could go on for a long time offering quotations from a book which should be required reading for anyone wishing to understand the mind of biblical historians or to write commentaries on their books. What, however, is the point of this Tuchman-catena in relation to Dr. Jones' two fine volumes on Kings?

Jones sees the Books of Kings as the end product of three layers of deuteronomic tradition: a basic historical work followed by a redaction which introduced prophetic material (prophetic speeches, notices of fulfilment, etc.) and finally law-orientated additions. In this he follows the work of Smend and his disciples and also the work of Nicholson who sees the deuteronomic school as a comprehensive movement holding together many different emphases. In addition to this understanding of what we might call the 'mechanics' of the Books of Kings, Dr. Jones is very insistent on the importance of their historical testimony, urging (e.g. p.77) that the historian 'was working with reliable historical traditions and did not wish to contradict them.' But—and here we come to a very basic consideration—we must make 'allowance for the fact that the historian was controlling his material in the interest of his own theme' (p.77 and *passim*). If this is the case then—as Mrs.

Tuchman would insist—we must cease to call him a historian for the historian's 'job is to achieve a narrative without straying from the essential facts or leaving out any essential facts and without twisting the material to suit one's convenience' (*op. cit.* p.49). How, in other words, are we to define the place of the Kings-historian(s) within Holy Scripture? Dr. Jones would reply that, first, they are recorders of sound historical information (possibly, in fairness to him we should add—on the whole). Beyond that, they offer a personal and interesting integration of the facts so as to illuminate a deuteronomic view of history. But we must go on to ask—and indeed the question is crucial—is this view of history part of inspired Scripture? Are they just telling us a selection of facts from a certain period of world history or are they, under the inspiration of the Lord of history, telling us what *history* itself is *about*? Is their view of history normative? Dr. Jones does not seem seriously to have tackled this question and does seem to follow the unsound assumption that in historiography selection points to tendentiousness.

Readers of these two deeply scholarly volumes are in for a treat on the levels of literary study and historical investigation. The eighty-five pages of introduction are a mine of information and a model of investigative scholarship covering textual tradition, chronology (with possibly less justice done to the theory of co-regency than might be expected), the deuteronomic question, sources (Succession Narrative, Prophetic Narratives, etc.) and theology. The commentary itself is detailed and majors helpfully on explanatory material. What savours of the miraculous tends to be handled guardedly—though the narrative of the fire on Carmel 'cannot be dismissed as a fabrication, like some of the miracles in the Elisha cycle' (vol. 2, 323). The section on 'theology' in the introduction outlines some of the main themes dear to the deuteronomists—covenant, law, purpose in history, the tension between judgment and salvation, the davidic norm, etc.—and these themes are faithfully brought out where appropriate in the course of the commentary; but are we meant to believe them? Did the deuteronomist create the historiographical equivalent of a nice pressed ox-tongue—i.e. full of perfectly valid and accredited tongue but forced into a shape which no actual tongue was ever intended to take? Or was he, perchance, working along the grain of the material allowing the facts to speak to him and through him to us, discovering in a few centuries of actual history what in God's providence all history is about? This cardinal question remains to be answered.

43, Branksome Dene Road, Bournemouth

ALEC MOTYER

THE TEMPLE SCROLL: An Introduction, Translation & Commentary

Johann Maier, English Translation by Richard T. White.

JSTOT Supplement Series 34, JSTOT Press 1985 147pp. £8.95 paperback ISBN 1 85075 004 1

£18.50 casebound

ISBN 1 85075 003 3

The longest of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been one of the last to appear in English. The Hebrew text was published by the late Yigael Yadin, with elaborate Hebrew apparatus, in 1977, and reappeared with the apparatus

translated into English in 1983. This was a sumptuous work in three volumes. Translations of the text alone into French and German, the latter by Johann Maier and with editorial apparatus, appeared in 1978, and it is the German version which is here rendered into English. The translator states that he has, as one would expect, made constant reference to the Hebrew original. English readers now for the first time have the text available to them in a relatively inexpensive form.

The introduction is short, but the notes are very ample, and there are also an analysis and plans. In his interpretation, Maier generally follows Yadin, to whose memory his edition is dedicated, but he does not always point out how speculative some of this interpretation is, for example, with regard to the ignoring of sabbaths when numbering the days of week-long festivals. He firmly asserts that the Scroll is concerned with the historic temple and not the eschatological temple, but this distinction loses much of its importance when the nature of the work is appreciated. Maier does not venture to follow Yadin in his unfounded hypothesis that the circles which produced the Temple Scroll (probably Essenes) regarded it as canonical. But if they did not, why did they produce it, and why did they write it in the person of Moses? Probably for the same reason that they produced other pseudonymous texts concerned with ceremonial (Jubilees, likewise written in the person of Moses; the Aramaic Testament of Levi; and the Astronomical Book in 1 Enoch), namely, to back up their interpretation of the Pentateuchal law by supposedly ancient evidence, and to confute the rival interpretations of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The *true* interpretation (the Essene) would also have been the *original* interpretation, and these texts undertook to prove that it *was* the original interpretation; but the true interpretation would also be that which would be restored in the *eschatological* temple, when God gave the Essenes the upper hand over their currently more influential rivals.

There is no note on Temple Scroll 28:9, where an almost obliterated word is restored as 'fourteenth'. This is perhaps a slip, since Yadin's restoration of the word as 'fourth' makes much better sense.

Latimer House, Oxford

ROGER BECKWITH

THE LION STORY BIBLE — SERIES III Penny Frank

Noah and the Great Flood

Queen Esther Saves her People

Jacob and Esau

Jesus' Special Friends

Let My People Go!

The First Easter

A King for Israel

Good News for Everyone

Lion Publishing, Tring, 1986. 8 vols, £1.25 hb.

No doubt these eight volumes, now added to the twenty already published, will prove popular. They deserve to do so. Like their predecessors, they are meant for, and well suited to, the child in the 5–8 age range. Each book comes in a convenient and manageable size for those with small hands. In the main the stories, written by Penny Frank, are accurate and faithful to the original. The layout is attractive and clear; the print size appropriate for children who are learning to read; and the illustrations colourful and realistic. If a choice had to be made then the Old Testament illustrations, by Tony

Morris, are to be preferred. John Haysom's illustrations in the New Testament volumes lack the definition and sharpness of the former. Also more preferable are those volumes that concentrate on one story or event, such as *Noah and the Great Flood*, *Let My People Go!*, and *Queen Esther Saves her People*. Those volumes that span a few chapters of the Bible, such as *Jesus' Special Friends*, *Jacob and Esau*, and *Good News for Everyone*, contain too many events/stories for young children to take in and remember. Inevitably they lack detail and cohesion. This is especially so with *Jesus' Special Friends*. In the space of some twenty lavishly illustrated pages a child is introduced to John the Baptist, the Baptism of Jesus, the Temptation of Jesus, the Wedding at Cana and the Calling of the Twelve! Each event is important and worthy of individual attention but in the end none proves memorable or gripping. How different it is with the story of Queen Esther. This story is retold well and holds together as a coherent whole. It is regretted that the New Testament illustrator and the publishers chose to include pictures of Jesus. These well produced volumes would be far better off without them. They would also appeal to a wider market. It is also regretted that the writer appears to have taken too much liberty in the re-telling of the calling of the twelve disciples. It is to be feared that many children may well remember Jesus as saying to James and John 'I need you too' and 'Hey' to Matthew, when Scripture records him as saying neither! It is not easy to retell the Biblical stories for children, but we must never forget just how impressionable young (unregenerate) children are, and how imperative it is that we do not put words into our Lord's, or anybody else's, mouth. Faithfulness to God's word written is the first essential. It is hoped that the twenty-four volumes, of this fifty-two volume set, yet to be published will excel in this vital quality.

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GEORGE CURRY

BEGINNING TO READ THE FATHERS Boniface Ramsey

Darton Longman & Todd, London 1986. 288pp, £7.95.

ISBN 0 232 51689 8

This attractively presented and reasonably-priced book is a much-needed introduction to the thought of the Fathers of the Church. Taking as his time-span the period from the end of the New Testament to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, with occasional references to writers who lived as late as 750, the author expounds for us the main themes of the theology which shaped the Christian Church in its formative period. His aim is to persuade more people to read the original texts (in translation!) for themselves, and rediscover a patristic heritage which is in danger of being lost by neglect.

As an introduction, it must be said that this is an excellent piece of work. Beginning with the Scriptures, the author takes us through the doctrines of God, man, Christ and the Church. He then discusses aspects of the spiritual life like martyrdom, monasticism, and prayer before concluding with patristic thoughts about poverty, the world and death. The format of each chapter is that of a continuous exposition by the author, with occasional quotes from particular Fathers to illustrate his points. We are warned at the beginning of the book not to expect rigid uniformity, for the Fathers were very much individuals, but this book does its best to distil common tendencies and to

present them to us in readily digestible fashion.

Particularly commendable is the admirable lack of bias which the book manages to achieve. On Scripture for example, we are told that the Fathers generally preferred allegorical interpretations, but that we should not thereby dismiss their views as unworthy of serious consideration. We are reminded that the Fathers approached the sacred text with a reverent concern for truth, and we are shown how God guided them to their goal in spite of weaknesses in their methods of study.

Equally admirable is the fact that the author makes no attempt to read later Roman Catholic teaching back into the patristic era. Indeed, he probably goes overboard in seeking to minimise their teaching on such matters as Mary and the place of the Bishop of Rome, neither of which receives more than a passing mention in this book. Certainly there is nothing here which could offend the Protestant conscience!

The book also contains a valuable bibliography for those who want to pursue selected interests farther, and a programme of reading which, if followed, will help the student gain a first-hand knowledge of the Fathers. As this is the stated aim of the book, it is to be hoped that students will heed the author's advice and discover for themselves some of the riches of the Christian heritage which we often know far too little about.

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GERALD BRAY

THE REAL JESUS F.F. Bruce

Hodder & Stoughton, London 1985. 272pp. £5.95.

ISBN 0 340 38174 4

Professor F.F. Bruce, formerly Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at Manchester University, has deservedly won a reputation for careful scholarship which extends far beyond evangelical circles.

His recent book, *The Real Jesus* has been written as part of a series called 'The Jesus Library'. This series, edited by Canon Michael Green, already covers such ground as *The Teaching*, *The Example*, and *The Supremacy of Jesus*. Further titles include *The Empty Cross of Jesus*, and *The Counselling and Healings of Jesus*. Bruce himself has contributed an earlier book *The Hard Sayings of Jesus*. In the light of all this it may be wondered where this book makes its mark.

In the Editor's preface to *The Real Jesus*, Canon Michael Green writes: 'It is a careful study showing that the fashionable division between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is not tenable', and as well as taking us through who Jesus was, Professor Bruce stresses who He is in the experience of believers—'Son of God, Saviour and Lord'. Michael Green adds: 'It will give a great deal of information to Christians, and will be an ideal book to put in the hands of a thoughtful enquirer.'

To be honest, I cannot think of many enquirers who would be prepared to read through this carefully written book, which, for all its scholarship and spiritual insight, only sparkles occasionally. But for Christians who want to understand better the background to the New Testament picture of Christ, and who are seriously worried by the distinction that some are making between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of faith, this book will help. Theological students could profit from having it on their shelves—and reading it!

In the first chapter Professor Bruce examines Bultmann's statement that 'it is not the Historical Jesus, but Jesus Christ the Preached One, who is the Lord.' Bruce argues that such a view makes Christ 'the product of our faith instead of the ground of our faith.' He argues that if our understanding of Jesus is not governed by the Gospels, we can make Jesus support any cause—as some Nazis did in denying that Jesus was a Jew! Bruce goes on to examine the authenticity of the Gospel records and concludes that 'the outline of Jesus' ministry and the main thrust of his teaching can be derived with substantial confidence from the evidence of the four Gospels.' He develops this by assessing the value of sources such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and some other archaeological discoveries which throw light on the New Testament.

The last six chapters deal with Jesus in Christian experience. 'The Jesus of faith is identified with the Jesus who was seen, heard and touched on earth'. There is a moving and helpful chapter on the meaning of 'Son of God'. 'In Jesus we see the human face of God' . . . 'the Son of God became the Son of Man, so that the children of men might become the children of God'.

The reasonableness of Professor Bruce comes out in discussing the view that the authentic sayings of Jesus refer to a mission to the Jews only. The argument goes on that the Gentile sayings, though attributed to Jesus, were added later, and influenced by Paul. Bruce points out that all the four Evangelists speak of a Gentile dimension to Jesus' mission. 'If', he says 'we find the four Evangelists in their various ways, together with Paul . . . agreeing in this insight that the ministry of Jesus was mostly confined to Jews before His death, but was intended to reach out to Gentiles after his death, it is a reasonable inference that their agreement derives from the mind of Christ; why should Matthew 28:19,20 and Luke 24:47 be a later invention?' Why indeed!

A chapter on Jesus as the Coming One, is followed by a stirring chapter entitled 'Jesus is Lord'. Because of our familiarity with the Gospels it is easy to miss the astonishing fact that 'the early Jewish Christians transferred to Jesus of Nazareth the titles and activities which belonged to God alone'. As Professor Bruce summed up: 'The confession "Jesus is Lord" ascribes to him a degree of honour which cannot be surpassed. In saying that we say all.'

Again, his background knowledge of New Testament times enables him to comment helpfully on the political and religious scene during Jesus' ministry. Occasionally (p.52) he raises a problem only to add frustratingly 'this is not the place to offer a solution'. But elsewhere he summarises the different views about, for example, the meaning of 'Son of Man', with thoroughness and clarity, and we are grateful for his help. There is a helpful summary too of Jesus' ethical teaching, and some topical application that brings this section alive. Bruce is at his best too in facing up to those who would like to make Jesus a Revolutionary.

There is a reasonably full discussion of the significance of the Resurrection of Jesus. 'By resurrection the disciples meant "the Resurrection of the body" . . .' 'If the tomb had not been empty it would not have been resurrection to the Jews of the time . . .' 'The Resurrection faith depends on the Resurrection fact. Otherwise it is empty.' He goes on to say 'It is the resurrection event that forms the hinge between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.'

Bruce concludes with a short chapter entitled 'Jesus Christ the Same', challenging us to follow the unchanging Christ.

This is a straightforward book about Jesus written with scholarly care and exactness, and touching on some of the controversial issues about Jesus today. But it also has the effect of good preaching—it exalts the Saviour, humbles the sinner, and encourages the believer.

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GORDON BRIDGER

THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE: Miracles and Faith then and now

Colin Brown

Eerdmans Grand Rapids: Paternoster Press Exeter 1985. \$7.95
£6.95

ISBN 0 8028 0086 6
ISBN 0 85364 439 X

Colin Brown, formerly Vice-Principal of Tyndale Hall and now Professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller, Pasadena, gave us a full-scale study of Miracles in his *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (reviewed in *Churchman* 1, 1985). The purpose of the present shorter work is different. It is for the general reader, and avoids 'detailed philosophical discussion', setting out the main arguments in simple but sound form. It is in three sections, headed respectively with the questions: Can we still believe in miracles?; What do the miracle stories tell us about Jesus?; Can we expect miracles to-day? The first section is the most general. It starts by discussing the way in which miracles have been regarded in the history of the church, both by Christian thinkers (such as Augustine, Calvin and Luther) and also by non-Christians (such as Spinoza). The author then examines Hume's celebrated objections, and attempts very briefly to answer them. A discussion of C.S. Lewis's treatment of miracles follows; it has its weaknesses. The next chapters are headed: What sort of a world do we live in? and, What then is a miracle? I felt that these chapters were not the author's best; no coherent world-view seems to emerge, and correspondingly no definition of miracle in an overall setting.

The second section starts with a very interesting historical summary on the Quest of the Unhistorical Jesus (apologies to Schweitzer). This is brought right up-to-date by reference to *The Myth of God Incarnate* (1977) and Morton Smith's *Jesus the Magician* (1978). Where does this leave us in evaluating the miracles of Jesus reported in the Gospels? Clearly, very puzzled. The author proceeds to unscramble the puzzle by a careful examination of the New Testament, both as to its witness to the person of Jesus, and to the use it makes of the miracle stories themselves. There is a long discussion of Mark's picture, then more briefly, of those of Matthew, Luke and John. What emerges is that the miracles are a solidly built-in element of the whole ministry of our Lord. They cannot be regarded as invented stories embellishing what the disciples believed about Him, but as an essentially integral part of His ministry, a ministry which was in fact, all along (in different ways) a 'baptizing with the Holy Spirit'.

The last section is a very helpful discussion of present-day miracles. Can we expect miracles to-day? What about miracles of healing? Brown examines both the appeal to contemporary experience, and also the arguments based on Scripture. He reviews a number of important authors who have written on healing (both Protestant and Roman Catholic), and then passes on to discuss the teaching of the Bible. His treatment seems very fair and balanced. He

does not deny the possibility of present-day miracles of healing, but he does regard them when they occur as 'uncovenanted blessings' of the Gospel, in contrast with forgiveness and reconciliation which are covenanted ones. Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' he argues (convincingly to me) was a form of eye trouble, not a personal antagonism. Further, present-day experience illustrates both illness responding to prayer, and (in the same subjects, exercising the same faith) illness not so responding. David Watson is a case in point. The final word must be God's: *My grace is sufficient for thee*.

A book to be recommended to the intelligent Christian, or to those on the fringe. There is a final note on books, covering a fairly wide variety; an index of names, and one of subjects. The production is to the publishers' usual high standards.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

THE DEATH OF DEATH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST John Owen with an introduction by J.I. Packer

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1983, 312pp, £3.50 pb.

ISBN 0 85151 382 4

This reissue of Owen's *Death of Death in the Death of Christ* as a paperback volume is to be welcomed, if only because it is a reasonable assumption that no publisher invests in a title which will not sell; and if students and ministers (and lay people!) will actually read a book like this then our picture of the Christian world is gloomier than it need be.

For this is one of the classics of Reformed theology, and—as someone has remarked—it is worth the money for the typically lucid introduction with which J.I. Packer has supplied it. Packer has no qualms about the difficulties of Owen's style ('much of Owen's prose reads like a roughly-dashed-off translation of a piece of thinking done in Ciceronian Latin'), but he commends to his reader the reading and *re-reading* of this massive discussion of what we have come to know as the 'extent of the atonement'.

Owen's way in to the subject is to approach it via the question of the *nature* of the atonement. He does not see the two issues as distinct, and while in this he is out of harmony with most of his evangelical detractors (who regard the doctrine of the limited atonement as an optional evangelical extra which they can do without) his strongest supporter was that most consistent opponent of evangelical orthodoxy, John M'Leod Campbell, the nineteenth-century Scottish heretic whose influential and unreadable book *The Nature of the Atonement* (with a prose style which compares with Owen's as Owen's with Packer's) underscored the logic of Owen's position, contending that, granted Owen's view of the *nature* of the atonement, his conception of its *extent* was inevitable. Unlike most of Owen's critics, M'Leod Campbell sought a consistent alternative (though, mainly because of his style, no-one seems entirely certain what it was).

This is not an easy book, and it does not deal in the light-weight theological argument which (often on both sides) has plagued serious discussion of these most profound of issues. Perhaps its re-issue will encourage more of the Biblical-theological reflection which it epitomises and which alone is worthy of so vital a question. It would be interesting, even at this late date, to see a considered reply!

Rutherford House, Edinburgh

NIGEL CAMERON

ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION Paul K. Jewett

Eerdmans Grand Rapids; Paternoster, Exeter 1985. 147pp. £5.95.

ISBN 0 8028 0090 4

There are few subjects of greater importance, and few which have caused greater heartsearchings and divisions in the Church than the one which Professor Jewett tackles in this timely book. Those who have been dismayed by some of the things which he has had to say about the rôle of women in the Church will be encouraged to discover that on this subject he is squarely in the Augustinian-Reformed camp. Indeed, there are few books on the market today which explain this great doctrine with such clarity and fairness. Professor Jewett recognises all the difficulties and gives ample space to the great names who have gone before.

Of particular interest here is his examination of Karl Barth, which is a masterpiece of lucidity and fair criticism. Jewett can recognise Barth's greatness as a theologian yet still disagree with him—and disagree in favour of the older orthodoxy which Barth rejected. This is not to say that Jewett is entirely happy with everything in the mainline Augustinian tradition; in particular he is quite critical of attempts to unravel the mystery of Revelation by a too neat division of the world into the elect and the reprobate, as if this could be known in detail by human beings.

But while he recognises that there are paradoxes in the doctrine of election which will probably never be solved this side of eternity, Jewett nevertheless insists that we can know that we are saved, and experience the unspeakable comfort of Christian assurance which has always been the special hallmark of the Evangelical tradition. For this fine restatement of a vital truth we must be deeply grateful, and while some may want to add or subtract a nuance here or a statement there, on the whole this book will serve as an excellent theological introduction to its subject.

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GERALD BRAY

REALITY AND SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY T.F. Torrance

Scottish Academic Press 1985, 224 pp. £10 hb

ISBN 0 7073 0429 6

This latest collection of essays by the Emeritus Professor of Christian Dogmatics in the University of Edinburgh is well worth the time and energy it takes in order to fight one's way through the rather tortuous use of the English language. It might well read more easily in the German translation if it is ever so translated. However this is not to say that the substance of this collection of essays is not valuable. Torrance, inevitably brings a refreshing sense of tradition and modernity with him to the theological task. This collection of essays originally delivered as the Harris Lectures at the University of Dundee in 1970 is no exception in this respect.

The overarching claim in the book is that the modern attitude of mind ought to be abandoned in favour of a classical attitude of mind. The modern attitude, influenced largely by idealism and positivism, claims that meaning is a function of the knowing subject. Contrary to this, the classical attitude, shaped largely by the early Christian period, claimed that meaning was something intrinsic in reality itself to be discovered by the knowing subject. The latter may be called subjectivism, the former, objectivism. One

important difference lies in the modern emphasis on *how* we know rather than *what* we know. It is this hyper-empiricism which must be abandoned. It forces experience of the world around us into artificial intellectual categories by seeing these categories as prior to the experience.

One is reminded of reading the Scottish Common Sense Realists who steadfastly argued that the mind adequately understood the world around it not because of the mind's own intrinsic power but because both the world and the mind were creations of God. As Torrance says 'it is God's act in comprehending and "containing" all things by his power that limits them giving them beginning and end and thus structures them and makes them comprehensible for us.' God serves as the guarantor of the possibility of objective knowledge.

However, for Torrance modern natural science (not modern naturalism) must play a critical rôle in the formation of knowledge as well. The theologian must have a twin commitment—to the church and its traditions as well as to the modern scientific community. In this fashion the theologian looks at the universe and *through* the universe beyond it to God. God is not adequately understood (in the limited sense that God can be comprehended) without a proper understanding of the nature into which He has put us. Torrance argues for a modified kind of natural theology in his second essay which in the end ought rather to be construed as a theology of nature. The understanding that is gathered in nature about God is not a prerequisite to the understanding that comes to the church through the Scriptures. In this sense natural theology does not provide us with the grounds or the evidence to believe in God. Rather it is the case that natural theology (or a theology of nature) can only be pursued in indissoluble connexion with revealed theology.

One is not quite sure at the end of the day whether Torrance has given us cogent arguments for the positions he defends, so much as painting pictures as to how the theological enterprise might look if we were to take up his suggestions. He draws on the work of Michael Polanyi extensively and it is Polanyi's contention that there are no analytical categories of understanding. Rather the mind grasps reality tacitly. This is to say that the mind grasps reality in an objective manner because of an 'intuitive fit' between itself and the world. One is left wondering what exactly this tacit dimension amounts to over and above the conviction that we really do know the world around us.

As in many of Torrance's other works he draws very broad brush strokes rather than painting the fine details. In particular I suspect that historians of a certain stripe will feel very uncomfortable with the 'history of ideas' approach that is adopted. I also suspect that the generalizations made, even if they might stand up to further scrutiny, need more fleshing out. I do believe it is imperative to see trends in history, and for this Torrance is to be commended. He has touched on a very thorny issue especially in a post-positivist era such as ours. The epistemological framework is being rethought and to this end Torrance offers some helpful insights, if not a well worked out plan. At this point maybe this is all we should expect.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY Robert L. Dabney

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1988, 903pp, £9.95.

ISBN 0 85151 483 7

Robert Dabney deserves to be more widely read than he is. The publishers of this volume have done the Church of God great service in the past by making widely available Dabney's *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological* (3 Volumes) and his lectures on 'Preaching'. Now they have put us in their debt again by making this volume available for a mere £10. Dabney (1820–98) was a member of the Southern Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and, in turn, Professor of Church History and Polity and Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Seminary, Virginia.

A.A. Hodge regarded him as the 'best teacher of theology in the U.S., if not in the world'. He stood in the Reformed tradition and drew deeply on Calvin, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and, as this volume shows, the writings of Francois Turretin (1623–87). He had a fertile first-rate mind, an humble faith, and a single aim—to exalt God. He was also an excellent and well respected teacher.

Dabney was able, not only to grasp deep philosophical matters, but also to communicate them in a clear and incisive manner. In this volume, for example, we are introduced to his thinking on such issues as evolution (pp 26–38), materialism (pp 55–64), utilitarianism (pp 94–110) and rationalism (pp 133–144). Those who are prepared to persevere will see the thinking of men like Darwin and Huxley critically analysed and, where necessary, demolished. The speculations of such 'gurus' may not have been as 'short-lived' (p 37) as he would have liked but Dabney's assessment of them has a timeless feel about it. We may regret that Dabney makes no reference to the influential continental theologians of his day but we can rejoice in the clear Biblical wisdom that he provides on many vital theological issues. In these days of BEM and ARCIC we would all do well to read what Dabney has to say on the sacrifice of Christ (pp 500–545), faith (pp 600–612), justification (pp 618–650) and the sacraments (pp 726–817). He has much to say that is of value in the evolution versus creation debate of today (pp 247–263). His treatment of the decalogue is masterly, as is his exposition of the Biblical doctrine of predestination.

There is a wealth of material here that every serious-minded minister should grapple with. Those who sit at his feet will find that Dabney has rightly been called a 'prince among theologians and men'. However, it should be pointed out that the title of this volume is slightly misleading. We do not have here a complete systematic theology as such. Rather we have a series of lectures on systematic and polemic theology. As the note to the reader says at the beginning, Dabney took as read the doctrine of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture. This subject, therefore is not covered in these lectures, nor is the doctrine of the Church. The value of this volume is in no way diminished by these omissions. Those who wish to discover something of Dabney's thinking on these subjects can find a variety of useful articles in his other published works mentioned above.

In conclusion we ask, first, was it not possible to correct some of the typographical errors existing in the original manuscripts (such as on p28 line 20, p45 line 5, and p60 line 31) before embarking on this 8th edition (the first

by the Banner of Truth Trust) of this work? And, secondly, why has this volume been reproduced? The only satisfactory answer to this question is, because it contains a coherent exposition of those eternal truths that the church of our generation has lost sight of and yet desperately needs to recover.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

GEORGE CURRY

**THE GLORY OF THE LORD. A THEOLOGICAL AESTHETICS III:
STUDIES IN THE THEOLOGICAL STYLE: LAY STYLES**

Hans Urs von Balthasar

T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1986, 524 pp., £19.95.

ISBN 0 567 09325 5

This is the third of seven volumes which will eventually appear as the English translation of von Balthasar's *magnum opus*. Following directly on the second volume, which discussed 'clerical styles' in the formation of a Christian aesthetic, this volume continues with an assessment of various lay contributions to the same theme. As one would expect, the range of experience described here is considerably broader than in the earlier volume, and each chapter forms an independent whole within the book.

Von Balthasar is a Roman Catholic theologian deeply imbued with the classical spirit of the Greek Fathers, and this inheritance has had a certain influence on his choice of subjects. But it must also be said that he ranges widely, even outside the Catholic Church, and in spite of some rather unkind things which he says about Protestantism, many of the men he chooses to examine were deeply influenced by Reformed theology.

The book ranges across Europe, with representatives of six major linguistic and cultural traditions. There is Dante for the Italian, St. John of the Cross for the Spanish, Pascal and Péguy for the French, Hamann for the German, Soloviev for the Russian and Hopkins for the English. Of these, it is probably true to say that Hamann (a Protestant) is the least known in England, and Hopkins would probably not be the first choice of an English critic (here the author seems to have been unduly influenced by Hopkins' conversion to Roman Catholicism), but the critical assessments offered here are uniformly brilliant and illuminating. It is no small feat to have mastered the European literary inheritance as von Balthasar has done, and the reader must bow in admiration before such a great achievement.

Of particular usefulness are the chapters on Soloviev and Péguy, with whom the author seems to have special sympathy. Soloviev was a distinguished representative of nineteenth-century Russian intellectualism, whose path to the West and to Roman Catholicism (von Balthasar likes converts!) makes him the odd one out in a tradition noted for its eccentric individuals. Péguy is perhaps an even more complex character, blending as he did all the scepticism of post-Enlightenment man with a romantic attachment to the France of Joan of Arc. Of the others, Dante, St. John of the Cross and Pascal have all been treated at length elsewhere, so that these chapters are really resumés of their work which will be of interest mainly to the non-specialist. The chapter on Hamann will come as a revelation to the English-speaking reader, whilst that on Hopkins will probably leave feelings of ambivalence—von Balthasar's perception of the English spiritual tradition being rather different from our own, on the whole.

The translation is extremely well done, and the book is a pleasure to read. It will certainly be a necessary addition to the library of anyone interested in the relationship of theology to literature and will doubtless soon establish itself as a classic in its field.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

REFORMED THEOLOGY IN AMERICA Edited by **David F. Wells**
Eerdmans Grand Rapids 1985, 317pp, \$19.95 pb, ISBN 0 8028 0096 3

This is an important book for any who desire to know the origins and intricacies of Reformed theology in modern America. As an in-depth analysis by seventeen academics of the five main streams of Calvinist thought, it is of high quality throughout. Its main thrust is that there is no consensus Reformed theology, but diverse interpretations of an assumed doctrinal deposit that have helped to shape American Protestant religion, intertwined with cultural development. The American version of Calvinism is seen to have a schismatic capacity to proliferate new churches, institutions, colleges, and organisations while retaining its pristine dogmas. Thus five traditions are considered—Princeton Theology, the Westminster School, the Dutch Schools, the Southern Tradition, and Neoorthodoxy, particular attention being given to two theological exponents of each School. What emerges from the close study of these traditions is an impression that visible unity of churches will never be possible on a doctrinal basis, even though, in general, it would be expected that their theologians, holding a common faith, would have an agreed ground that prevents divisions. The fact that culture has and does affect Reformed doctrine, altering old and shaping new interpretations of theology, runs through the book, proving also that departures from a once-accepted dogmatic system may have roots in personalities rather than in scripture. The study of the Dutch School is particularly valuable in this respect.

Apart from academics, it is doubtful whether this book will hold much interest for British readers who know little or nothing of the background and current trends of American religion. But those who are familiar with the writings of such men as Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield, J. Gresham Machen, Berkhof, Thornwell, and others, whose life and writings are examined, will find the publication helpful. As over the last thirty years there has been an upsurge in the acceptance of the Reformed religion in Britain, the closing study on the vitality and richness of its theology by J.M. Boice with his opinion that 'to-day's Calvinists may yet usher in a new day in America' will hearten those who accept the doctrines of grace to expect an over-spill in Britain.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedfordshire

ARTHUR BENNETT

CREATION REGAINED Albert M. Wolters

IVP, Leicester, 1985. 96pp, £3.95.

ISBN 0 85110 757 5

This book, by the associate Professor of Religion and Theology at Redeemer College, Ontario, is not one more apologetic defence of the biblical doctrine of creation. Rather, it presumes the latter and bases on it a comprehensive and all-embracing 'world-view', 'life-perspective', or 'confessional vision'. What difference does it make to one's living in the 20th century to be a believer in the biblical doctrine of creation? That is the question which the author sets out to answer; and he does so from the Reformed position in a powerful statement based on the categories of creation, fall and redemption. His analysis starts off by discussing the nature and function of a 'world-view', which he describes as 'the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things'. Everyone has a world-view, however little he may have troubled to formulate it. It comes out when we are faced with such practical decisions as, How to react to breakdown in marriage? Should crime be punished? Do we support military conscription? Is violent revolution ever justified? and so on. He analyses and applies the biblical world-view in terms of the ideas of 'structure' and 'direction'. *Structure* denotes the essence of a creaturely thing—what the Creator has built-in to its very nature. *Direction* is the author's term for the way that creaturely thing is functioning, either in sinful deviation from the creational ordinance or in renewed obedience to it. When we use this distinction between structure and direction (these seem not to be particularly happy terms to the reviewer, but there are no obviously better ones) we must always bring them together under the theme of 'grace restores nature'. The author attempts to do this in a final chapter in which he discusses very helpfully four present-day issues of widely different scope and incidence: human aggression, human sexuality, spiritual gifts and dance.

A very worth-while contribution to an important debate.

Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

REVIVAL Jonathan Edwards

Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1965, reprinted 1984, including *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions* (1736), *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741). 160pp. £2.45.

ISBN 0 85151 4316

Jonathan Edwards was pastor of Northampton, Massachusetts, from 1729 to 1750. His careful account of the Revival, and his subsequent analysis of its methods and effects, written as pastor and theologian, are remarkably relevant today. Revival was seen in several adjacent areas, in 1734/5 and again in 1740/41, under various preachers including George Whitefield.

Its results were so deep, widespread and effective that many believed that the Holy Spirit was being poured out to a degree not seen since Pentecost! Whole towns and villages seemed to become aware of sin, and thronged meetings and houses where preaching and praying were taking place. Many stayed 'under conviction' for days or even weeks before being 'savingly wrought upon' and finding forgiveness.

As always, critics pointed to failures and excesses. Edwards applies his deep knowledge of Scripture to his careful observation and personal knowledge of his people, before, during and after the Revival. He admits that, as in Corinth and elsewhere, some have been carried away into 'irregularities and imprudence'; some, even some of the leaders, are not wholly clear on doctrine; some are unduly censorious of those who have not shared their particular experiences; some true converts can still make errors of judgment, and even be deluded by Satan and fall into gross sin or spiritual pride; but *none* of those necessarily proves that the work is *not* the work of the Holy Spirit. Negative signs are not evidence either way; human nature, then and now, is very fallible.

Edwards wants to emphasize the positive signs of true Grace. When people of all types, including those who already 'profess', become deeply convinced that the historical Jesus is Christ and Lord, and confess Him in word and deed, when they turn from sin and demonstrate a deep desire to hear and read God's Holy Word; when their love for God and for man can be seen in the way they live, thankful, humble, and generous, *then you can be sure that the Holy Spirit has been at work.*

Edwards clearly allows for and expects tears, groanings, faintings, and other visible manifestations of the conviction of sin—but none of these guarantees that God is at work. On the other hand, he argues that gifts like tongues and prophecy, which some contemporaries claimed as necessary, and others welcomed, had been for the days when the Church was young; a church that has grown up into the truth of God's Word has no need of such things.

Whether this is a proper exposition of 1 Corinthians 13 or not, the central argument in this selection is hard to disagree with—Grace is more important than gifts; and Grace is visible in its fruits.

3 Melrose Road, London SW18

MARK BIRCHALL

THE PRACTICAL AND THE PIOUS. ESSAYS OF THOMAS CHALMERS (1780–1847), edited by **A.C. Cheyne**

St Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1988. 211pp. £15.

ISBN 0 7152 0582 X

Thomas Chalmers was a most extraordinary man, and it was fitting that the bicentenary of his birth should have been marked by the conference in 1980 which gave rise to this rather tardy volume five years later. Several of the thirteen papers collected in *The Practical and the Pious* have particular merit. The title itself is culled from an admirable summation of the man which came from his own lips: 'I've always been a kind of outlier between the practical and the pious. I have a liking for both.'

A.C. Cheyne, Professor of Ecclesiastical History at New College for more than twenty years, introduces the volume with a characteristically elegant and witty essay which begins by surveying contemporary and posthumous assessments of Chalmers. Karl Marx dubbed him 'the arch-parson' and Thomas Carlyle remarked that 'it is not often that the world has seen men like Thomas Chalmers, nor can the world afford to forget them'; he even considered that 'there will never again be such a preacher in any Christian

Church'. (p 9) Indeed one of the gems which await discovery in this volume is Owen Chadwick's *obiter dictum* on the subject of Chalmers' success as a preacher. He reckons that his Fife accent, which sounded broad in Edinburgh and Glasgow, let alone London, was a distinct advantage, but as to the net effect of man and voice there was no doubt. In the words of one contemporary, 'Never perhaps did the world possess an orator whose minutest peculiarities of gesture and voice had more power in increasing the effect of what he says'. (p 67)

Chalmers was the leading Scottish churchman of the nineteenth century, and it is difficult to think of any post-Reformation figure in Scotland, or indeed England, whose influence and reputation stand comparison with his. While more recent evaluations of Chalmers are more guarded than the panegyrics of his own day, his breadth of interest—in mathematics, political economy and social reform, quite apart from politics, theology and the leadership of his church—mark him as worthy of the multi-volume *Works* and biographical *Memoir* which followed him. He is best remembered as the major figure in the Church of Scotland before, and in the Free Church of Scotland after, the Disruption of 1843, which split the established church in half, chiefly over the question of patronage.

It is unfortunate that this volume pays little attention to the most significant event in Chalmers' life, his conversion, which took place when he was already in the ministry of the Church of Scotland. One of the essays treats it as important, one or two others allude to it; but it is a misfortune which would surely have not escaped the notice of Chalmers himself that there is no systematic treatment of the spiritual life which underlay his dynamic practical endeavours. In Professor Cheyne's introduction, we read of his conversion, but in terms of a 'deepening religious conviction [which] . . . stripped him of his earlier tolerant outlook and left him a convinced Evangelical. By 1811 and 1812 he had experienced a change from a state in which he relied on his own efforts to improve himself to one where he now placed all his trust in God's providence.' (p 42)

The reason for this is that although Chalmers was in every sense an evangelical, he was a man of wide vision (found helping raise funds for Catholic schools in Glasgow, for example), and such a significant figure that those who are less than evangelical have had to lay claim to him too. In recent years the chair of Systematic Theology at New College, Edinburgh has been named after him (long since brought, like most of Chalmers' Free Church, back into the establishment). Yet the first appointee under the new designation, succeeding Thomas F. Torrance, was a radical Roman Catholic, a laicised priest.

We may well hope that *The Practical and the Pious* will play some part in stimulating new interest in a singular evangelical churchman, whose Calvinist piety was no bar to a life of practical endeavour on behalf of his church and his nation. 'He was not one man;' observed the ineffable Sydney Smith, 'Dr Chalmers was a thousand men.' Would that the church of our day knew his like.

THE ST. ANDREWS SEVEN. THE FINEST FLOWERING OF MISSIONARY ZEAL IN SCOTTISH HISTORY Stuart Piggin and John Roxborough

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1965, 130pp, £2.95 pb.

ISBN 0 85151 428 6

Despite its gimmick of a title (the last thing one would expect from its publisher) this is a very good little book. Its theme is the nascent missionary movement in Scotland at the start of the nineteenth century, and the part played in it by the great Thomas Chalmers and six of his students; one of whom, Alexander Duff, achieved eminence, while the rest were forgotten.

The figure of Chalmers dominates the life of the nineteenth-century Scottish church, and the reasons why have no better illustration than *The St. Andrews Seven*, since here, in a hitherto untold chapter of his life and influence, we have yet another cause for admiration. We meet him first as a mathematician who, in the early days of his ministry, could reflect that 'after the satisfactory discharge of his parish duties' a minister could 'enjoy five days in the week of uninterrupted leisure for the prosecution of any science which his taste may engage'. Soon after his conversion he was the celebrated preacher of the day. But his work to relieve poverty in his Glasgow parish is legendary, and he ranks also as a major thinker in political economy; while his volume on astronomy must not be forgotten!

As Professor of Moral Philosophy his first effect, as Piggin and Roxborough reveal, was to revitalise the University of St. Andrews in the 1820's. The six students whom they lump together with Chalmers to make Seven all attended his classes in one of his first two years in the University. A missionary society was founded in the University, and became the seed-bed of the endeavours in which the friends engaged, once St. Andrews was behind them, when they fulfilled their calling in India. Altogether, we are told, they gave a total of 141 years' service as missionaries.

The Banner of Truth Trust is to be commended for giving us this scholarly but readable volume.

Rutherford House, Edinburgh

NIGEL CAMERON

THE DHIMMI, JEWS AND CHRISTIANS UNDER ISLAM Bat Ye'or

Associated University Presses, 1985, 444 pp, £18.95 hb

ISBN 0 8386 3233 5

£7.50 pb

ISBN 0 8386 3262 9

Any book which has a nine-page Preface by Jacques Ellul deserves to be taken seriously, and the following sentences from his Preface ease the reviewer's task by explaining the subject and the significance of this book:

This is a very important book, for it deals with one of the most sensitive problems of our time, sensitive owing to the difficulty of the subject—the reality of Islamic doctrine and practice with regard to non-Muslims, and sensitive owing to the topicality of the subject and the susceptibilities it now arouses throughout the world . . .

The *dhimmi* is someone who lives in a Muslim society without being a Muslim . . . his status was not the product of historical accident, but was that which

ought to be from the religious point of view and according to the Muslim conception of the world. In other words, it was the expression of the absolute, unchanging, theologically grounded Muslim conception of the relationship between Islam and non-Islam . . . One must know as exactly as possible what the Muslims did with these unconverted conquered people, because that is what they will do in the future (and are doing right now) . . .

The author is an Egyptian Jewess, now living in Switzerland (Bat Ye'or being Hebrew for 'daughter of the Nile'), and she therefore brings something of her own experience to what is presented as a work of scholarship. The main argument of the book is elaborated in pp.1-156, with a historical survey explaining how the *dhimma* system originated at the time of the Islamic conquest; how it operated (e.g. the special taxes and restrictions regarding legal status and places of worship); and how it developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. This is followed by a study of modern formulations of *jihad* and *dhimma*, the influence of these concepts on modern Arab nationalism and the psychology of Jews and Christians in the Muslim world. The remainder of the book, from pp.157-444, consists of the main documents on which the argument is based, arranged under different headings: Jurist's Texts, Aspects of the Dhimmis' Existence as Observed by Others (arranged according to different areas of the world), and Aspects of the Dhimmis' Existence as Experienced. The final section takes us right up to the 1980's with material from Khomeini, Arafat, and Bashir Gemayel.

The book presents (perhaps inevitably?) a very unflattering picture of Islam, which will not please those who want only to present Islam at its very best. How is the Christian reader likely to react to these words of the Caliph Umar (717-720AD): 'The non-Muslims are nothing but dirt. Allah created them to be partisans of satan . . .'? One can almost feel one's blood pressure rising when reading this description of how Jews and Christians sometimes had to pay their taxes in the 13th Century: 'According to Islamic law, when the poll tax (*jizya*) is to be paid, the person who delivers the sum must be standing and he who receives it must be seated. The former places it in the other's hand so that the Muslim receives it in the palm of his hand, the Muslim's hand being above and that of the *dhimmi* below. The latter then stretches forth his beard and the Muslim strikes him on the cheek with the words: "pay the dues of Allah, O enemy of Allah, O infidel."' Then there is the provocative suggestion that Hitler in the Holocaust may have simply been copying the Ottoman Turks with their attempted genocide of the Armenians.

The ideal person for reviewing this book would be an Islamic historian, and since the reviewer cannot claim to be such, all he can do is to express some unease about the scope and conclusions of the book. In the first place, one wonders if there is sufficient documentation in the book to prove that this is how *all* or *most* Jewish and Christian minorities were treated in practice. Even if some of the documents present an Islamic *theology of minorities*, and describe what some Muslims believed '*ought* to be from a religious point of view', we are still left wondering how consistently it was put into practice.

Secondly, in studying how Muslims have treated Jews and Christians in the past, we are dealing with one particular example of a universal problem—the problem of minorities. If such a study is not placed firmly in the broader

context of how *other* minorities have been treated in *other* contexts (e.g. the Jews in 'Christian' England), there is a real danger of distortion. When judged by the standards of pluralistic societies of the 1980's, the *dhimma* system appears extremely backward. But when compared, for example, to the way the Eastern Churches treated Jews, 'heretics' and other minorities before the rise of Islam, or the way Christian rulers treated Muslims in Spain in the 15th Century, it appears positively enlightened.

Thirdly, one wishes that the writer had attempted to look at how thoughtful Muslims *to-day* think and write about the *dhimma* system. Gabi Habib, General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, in a recent article on Christian-Muslim issues in the Middle East, reports what was said to him by a Muslim in Beirut during 'a rather hot discussion': 'let me tell you Christians that we in Islam have gone beyond the concept of *dhimma* (tolerance), and we have gone beyond this concept of *dar-al-Islam* and *dar-al-Harb*'. An enquiry along these lines might lead us to question Ellul's confident assertion that 'this is what they will do in the future (and are doing right now).'

But there's no smoke without fire! When every allowance has been made for possible distortion, there is much in the book which needs to be taken seriously by anyone concerned with Muslim-Christian relations and with the intractable problem of minorities in the world to-day. For the *dhimma* system, even at its very best, may help to explain, among other things: Muslim attitudes to dialogue (what dialogue can there be with those individuals and communities which refuse to accept the faith and rule of Islam and prefer to remain in *dar il harb*, the territory of war?); Islamic reactions to the state of Israel (the unthinkable has happened, for a *dhimmi* community, the Jews, has become an independent nation in the very heartland of Islam!); the problems facing Muslims in the West (what happens when it is *Muslims* who find themselves living almost as *dhimmis* in post-Christian secular states in the West?).

This 'daughter of the Nile' has done us a valuable service by opening up these sensitive issues, and giving us the basic documentation.

Trinity College, Bristol

COLIN CHAPMAN

WHOSE PROMISED LAND? Colin Chapman

Lion, Tring, Revised Edition 1985. 253 pp. £3.50.

ISBN 0 85648 956 5

Not very long ago I listened to a recently-returned Christian tour leader to Israel, and one of his many colourful and passionately-recounted stories went something like this: 'Our bus driver was Arab, very convivial, but earning only about one quarter of what his Israeli counterpart would earn. Our party's sympathy was with the Arabs all the way. Take for instance the accident! We were witnesses; and it was certainly the fault of the driver of the other vehicle! But he was Jewish and it was our driver who was judged guilty and fined an amount he could ill afford. So we had a "whip-round". He was overwhelmed at our friendliness and generosity.' I tell this tale because, while teaching theological students in an evangelical college, one of the things which continued to strike me was the number who went on visits to the Holy Land, confidently pro-Jewish, and returned entirely in sympathy with the Arab cause.

For such visitors and others, past, present and future, I recommend Colin Chapman's book. For some it will be all they are likely to read; for others it will function as a starter, whetting the appetite and leading on to further reading, some of which is quoted at length in the text and referred to in the endnotes.

Following on a preface and introduction, the book divides into six parts: *facts and figures*, sketching in the history of 'the land' from the twentieth century BC to the twentieth century AD; *call the next witness*, setting out some of the questions and attempted answers from various sources; *the land before and after Christ*, tracing the theme of 'the land' through the Old and New Testaments'; *is there any word from the Lord?*, exploring themes in the Bible which might shed light on the problem of 'the land' today; *epilogue, whose promised land?*, attempting to give an answer, albeit a personal one, to the question; *appendix*, being a Christian interpretation of Old Testament prophecy.

To my mind there is no easy answer; and it certainly does not lie in offering to Jews the invitation to convert to their 'messiah'. In that respect the book does not convince me, for one. But it did serve to remind me of the culpability over the centuries of Christians and Muslims, British and Europeans alike in either instigating or tolerating anti-semitism. And so when we, as Christians, sympathize with the Palestinians today, as indeed we must (even if also with the Jews), we have a duty to make doubly sure that we are not once again indulging in either Christian arrogance or a new and perhaps more subtle form of anti-Semitism.

Diocese of Liverpool

MYRTLE LANGLEY

PROPHET OF A NEW HINDU AGE The Life and Times of Acharya

Pranavananda Ninian Smart and Swami Purnananda

George Allen & Unwin, London, 1985. 171 + xi pp. £5.95.

ISBN 0 04 922033 0

It is not immediately obvious why a general readership which is Christian should wish to read the biography of an obscure Indian holy man who flourished in East Bengal during the early decades of the twentieth century. But having read the book with great pleasure I can warmly recommend it as an excellent introduction to the Hindu way of life. The life of the Acharya (spiritual guide, teacher), as Ninian Smart so aptly puts it in his introduction, serves as a window on Hinduism.

The account, written up by Smart, is based on various sources, the most substantial of which are a copy of a manuscript outlining the life and teachings of the Acharya, compiled by Swami Purnananda (a direct and close disciple of the Acharya for sixteen years) and a brief biography by Swami Vedananda. The methodology seeks to remain true to two principles: to present the historical facts about the Acharya's life and activities; to glimpse something of his person as seen through the eyes of those who had faith in him and followed him in his arduous calling. The latter is pursued through the 'phenomenological' approach of letting the Acharya be seen, in so far as that is at all possible, through the eyes of those for whom he was a

divinely-inspired leader. The result is a well-told story of birth, early up-bringing and influences, vocation, life activities, death and *post mortem* appearances to devotees. My only quarrel with this sympathetic, graphic and readable book is the failure of the publishers to provide glossary and index. I say 'publishers' because my guess is that the omission is due to cost. I think it a pity that all too often considerations of cost result in books being less useful for the general reader and consequently less likely to be bought and read.

The general picture, so well painted by Smart, is of a Hindu renaissance much more rooted in Indian tradition than that associated with the familiar figures of such as Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Doctor Radhakrishnan; and a vision of a Hindu future very different from, but much more akin to, today's religious, social and political reality than that of the great Mahatma Gandhi himself. Useful and illuminating discussions are provided on important themes of Indian religion: take for instance the subjects of the 'one' and the 'many'; monotheism; monism and polytheism; reality and illusion; and what Westerners too facilely see as 'idolatry' in Hinduism.

In a penultimate chapter on the dimensions of the Acharya's faith, Smart employs his own methodological categories 'to depict the pattern and structure of a religious movement'. These are his six familiar dimensions of doctrine, myth or sacred narrative, ethics, ritual and practical life, experience and institutional expression. Thus, summing up the dimensions of the Acharya's religion, he picks out two themes from each of the six. 'In matters of doctrine, the two major themes are those of Divine energy, and the concept of incarnation. In narrative, there are the stories of Durga [a goddess associated with mountains, vegetation and fire] and of the Acharya as a world-teacher come to restore the *Dharma* [moral and religious duty, law, custom]. In ethics, the emphasis is on austerity and service to humanity. Where ritual is concerned, examples are the *Gurupuja* [guru-worship] and the congregational arrangements at the Milan Mandirs [unity centres for Hindus]. In the dimension of experience, two of the most significant are the sense of Descent in the Acharya and the devotional visions of his disciples; while in the matter of institutions, the two major ones are the Sangha [religious order] and the work towards restoration of Hindu society.'

From childhood Acharya Pranavananda followed the ascetic ideal, drawing great physical and spiritual power from an austere discipline of life., Eventually, at the early age of forty-four, the body succumbed. But not before he had laid the foundations at home and abroad of an Indian future based on Hindu unity rooted in Hindu tradition—a unity which could hold its own against abuses of caste and class and the threat of Muslim, Christian and British rule. Moreover, suggests Smart, is not such a vision more akin to the India realized under the rule of Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv than that envisaged through the lens of the Mahatma's philosophy of non-violence and tactics of non-co-operation?

PROVE ALL THINGS D.M. Lloyd-Jones

Kingsway, London, 1985, 160pp, £4.95.

ISBN 0 86065 369 2

It is necessary that this book is published for in some important respects it corrects wrong impressions that may have been given by the author's previous work, *Joy Unspeakable*. Its most valuable parts are the closing chapters of wise and solid advice on testing claims to the possession of the Holy Spirit's gifts which, in Lloyd-Jones view, may arise from evil powers, spiritism, hypnosis, subjective feelings, and suggestion. His warning against using gifts as ends not means, and his counsel that reason, scripture-balance, discipline, and grasp of the Lordship of Christ, need to be used in testing the spirits, are salutary and important.

However, what is damaging and alarming is his insistence that a Christian's experience is defective unless he has been baptised with the Holy Spirit. He bases his judgment on a belief that such baptism and its accompaniment of miraculous signs were intended by God to be the permanent mark of the Church. This is the Great Divide between those who accept this view and those who do not. It is here that your reviewer must point out what to him are serious defects in Lloyd-Jones' case and methodology. He rightly warns that Christians must not twist Scripture 'to suit our theory and argument.' But this is precisely what he does, by selecting verses, persons, and incidents to buttress his thesis. Nor are his arguments from silence convincing. Is it true that miracles and gifts were present in every New Testament church, but are not mentioned because no problems arose? Was Saul's anointing by Ananias a gift of the Spirit? Was the baptism of Jesus such a bestowal in order to enable him to start his ministry? All these and other cases he uses in support without giving conclusive evidence. Nor is he helpful in speaking of a 'tradition' without giving categorical proof. Worst still is his treatment of Christian assurance which in his belief rests upon Spirit baptism. And is it true that a shining face results from it? If, as he holds, such baptism 'is what enables us as Christian people to represent our blessed Lord and Saviour . . .' (p.15) why does he ignore the life of utter godliness, a dying unto sin, and even martyrdom of those who reject this doctrine of the Spirit? And why does he not point out that Peter who was so baptised was devious and vacillating in later life?

All of these questions and more need to be kept in mind by the reader, if he is not to be swept into wrong judgments by the persuasive author. Having said that, no-one can read this important book without gratitude for the perspicuity, wisdom, and sensitiveness of its author. It is a valuable contribution to the present charismatic debate.

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ARTHUR BENNETT

THE COUNTRY PARISH Anthony Russell

S.P.C.K., London, 1986, 296pp, £9.50.

ISBN 0 281 04214 4

It is not often that a balanced sociological book of such unqualified distinction as this is written. In your reviewer's opinion it surpasses in importance the warmly accepted *Akenfield*, (Ronald Blyth), *The Living*

Churchman

Village, (Paul Jennings), and the somewhat romantic writings of H.J. Massingham, a generation ago. It is a factual well documented study of the past and present rural community and its church. It is difficult to do anything but praise this appraisal, so apposite as it is to the Church at the end of the 20th century. The rural sociologist will find in it insights into village and church, and the clergy will be encouraged by its hopefulness, so different from some official reports that denigrate the country church.

Russell is a country clergyman and Director of the Arthur Rank Centre. He has a deep love for and understanding of the village community, its social disadvantages and deprivation, its migration of older inhabitants, and influx of newcomers, and changes that have transformed some villages from what they were. He accepts that the rural church is 'the heartland of the Church of England', but warns that 'if the Church is not to become an urban sect it must develop new ways of ministering in rural areas with much reduced levels of stipendiary clergy.' He has no wish to return to the recent past when Incumbent and manor lord ruled the parish. Nor is he happy with young urban trained and oriented clergy being sent into villages. Likewise, he has incisive comments to make on the divisive nature of 'Alternative Services' in regard to village congregations with their tendency of creating a *gathered congregation* around the Lord's Table to the demise of the old understanding of the rural church model as a community at worship. He has trenchant remarks on Incumbents with a number of parishes to serve who tend to adopt the panacea of working them as a unit to the loss of each village's identity. As to non-stipendiary clergy, he sympathises with those of whom too much is expected, and who find it difficult to wear the mantle of the paid Incumbent. He passes severe strictures on the Tiller Report as supporting the modern tendency to debase the ministry, 'in some places finding almost no place for it,' and denying 'the essential localism of the church, particularly in rural areas.'

Contrary to the current gloomy view of the church in rural areas, Russell is hopeful about its future, and sees the country Priest as the focus of the Church in a village. His rôle, he suggests, is to create and train a ministerial team, help his Church to define its goals, place his theological and biblical knowledge at people's disposal, and be responsible for the church's work in that area.

There are, however, certain weaknesses in the book. He appears to draw too frequently on Midland parishes for his judgments. He fails to recognise that the Bible is largely a rural book that comes alive to country people when its images and analogies are presented in establishing Christian truth. A note on sermonising to country congregations would have been helpful. He also fails to recognise the impact on rural England of the Wesleyan and Evangelical revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the thought-forms and worship of the Tractarian movement that so much altered the reformed character of the Anglican church.

In spite of this, Russell's assessment of village and church is highly commended for study by sociologists and church authorities. It has an excellent bibliography, though its Index could well be extended.

THE PASTOR'S PROBLEMS edited by **Cyril Rodd**

T. & T. Clarke, Edinburgh, 1985, 225pp, £4.95 pb.

ISBN 0 567 29117 0

Modern society appears to be increasingly problem-orientated, seeing most situations in these terms rather than more positively. Hence the title of this book, which is really a contemporary approach to pastoralia, and would perhaps be seen more by some as 'The Pastor and His Opportunities'. Certainly this reviewer would not wish to see his family (for example) as one of his problems!

The articles originated as a series in the Expository Times, and have been written by ministers from a variety of denominational backgrounds, most of them involved in pastoral ministry, together with a minister's wife. Subjects include the pastor himself (devotional life and study); the pastor in church (worship and the occasional offices); caring (visiting and care of the dying); the daily round (family, finance and relationships); and training and assessment.

Significantly, a chapter is given to 'The Pastor and the Young Fundamentalist' (does none of them survive into old age?). Here the writer (chaplain at a College of Higher Education) seeks to be eirenic, and those ministers who share the outlook of the U.C.C.F. will be interested to see how he advises his colleagues to draw alongside students and other young people of this background. It is interesting that on p.79 *evangelical* is used where *evangelistic* would be more appropriate.

In the opening chapter David Bridge (from the Methodist Home Missions Department) writes of the Pastor's Priorities, and speaks encouragingly (pp.2-3) of a reawakening of confidence in the ordained ministry as a profession in its own right. This bodes well after all the hours spent at ministerial conferences in the last two decades seeking to establish the rôle of the minister. The same author gives stimulating hints on how to handle the present revolution in worship, and the pastoral chapters are written with sensitivity for the minister as well as for those receiving ministry. Not every reader will share William Horton's enthusiasm for indiscriminate baptism, appearing (p.75) to see the ordinance as a sacrament of creation rather than redemption, but Gillian Weeks gives advice on finances which will be helpful to every minister's wife.

No-one engaged in pastoral ministry can fail to be stimulated by reading this book, and we are grateful to the publishers for making the articles known beyond the range of readers of the Expository Times.

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DAVID WHEATON

EXPOSITORY PREACHING? PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE**Haddon V. Robinson**

IVP, Leicester, 1986, 230pp, £4.95.

ISBN 0 85110 758 3

Inter-Varsity Press is to be congratulated for finding and producing a book which teaches people how to preach without preaching at them! Haddon Robinson's book has been widely acclaimed in the U.S.A. since it first appeared in 1980. Each stage of sermon preparation is carefully outlined, and

Churchman

the dangers to be avoided are set out with a clarity at times bordering on bluntness. This is all to the good, as criticism of the preacher (to his face, that is!) usually has to be self-administered, and this book provides a ready checklist of items.

Particularly valuable are the practical exercises which the book contains. Many manuals of preaching are too theoretical to stoop to the level of the practical workshop, but not this one, and the author is to be commended for such realism. It makes the book ideal for classroom use in theological colleges, and not inappropriate for parish clergy who need or want a fresh stimulus.

Of special importance are the first and last chapters. The first makes out the case for expository preaching and is a reminder that God works first in the life of the preacher, and then uses him to communicate to the congregation. The last chapter discusses all the practical points like posture, voice level and so on, which are easily ignored by everyone—except the recipients, who often judge that kind of thing first!

Oddly enough, there is only one thing missing. Nowhere, as far as this reviewer can tell, does the author mention *the need to pray a sermon through before preaching*. At the end of the day, all our preparation is in vain if we ignore that vital point. Sadly, it may be the result of a typically evangelical failing—wanting to communicate a message from God without submitting it to him for judgment first! Let us hope that a subsequent edition of the book will rectify this with an additional chapter on prayer, and that it will be greatly used by God to prepare the next generation of preachers for their ministry.

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GERALD BRAY

HOPE FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND? edited by **Gavin Reid**

Kingsway, London, 1986, 220pp, £5.95.

ISBN 0 86065 457 5

Quite frankly it is difficult to know why and for whom this book has been written. It consists of an introduction, a postscript, and fourteen essays arranged under the headings *The Church* (four chapters), *The Task* (seven chapters) and *The Workers* (three chapters). The fifteen authors, we are told, are 'intensely committed Anglicans' who stand 'within the Evangelical tradition' (p.13). The back drop for each contribution is the multiple crisis facing the Church of England today. This is described as consisting of five strands: chronic decline; doctrinal uncertainty; the attractiveness of new churches; the understanding of the ministry; and Church/State relationships.

If the intention is that this volume should reassure us that all is not lost and that there is real hope for the national church then it must be said that this book does little to dispel the gloom. The essays hang together loosely. In character they tend to be subjective and even pragmatic rather than theological. And, being in the main descriptive as opposed to prescriptive, they tell us nothing new. Indeed, one wonders how the authors perceive the present crisis. There seems little awareness that the issues raised by both A.R.C.I.C. and the Bishops' Report 'The Nature of Christian Belief' are just as momentous as the hotly debated issues of the Reformation itself. The alert

ecclesiastical historian, however, will discern from this volume that the concerns of evangelicals today are not the same as those shared by our parents a generation or so ago. Evidently the in-thing amongst Anglican Evangelicals today is to speak much about shared leadership, renewal, going for growth, political involvement, experimenting and taking risks, revamping theological education, and the great flexibility that the A.S.B allows. Discussion of these issues obviously has its place. But, in a day when many have already spent much time thinking these things through, the need is for the trumpet to give a certain sound so that loyal and true Anglicans can rally together to pray and work for the reformation of the Church of England. You will not find that prophetic call here. What you do find is that it has become fashionable for evangelicals to glory in the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and to presume that everybody who professes to be a Christian actually is one. The underlying assumption appears to be that evangelicals have come of age. Such an assumption is surely misplaced when you see post-Keele Evangelicalism drifting into a neo-sacramentalism; committed to ecumenism; and accepting pluralism. We may have grown in size and scholarship but there is little evidence to support the claim that we have grown in 'stature, maturity . . . and cohesion' (p.21). After all, both the Anglican Evangelical Assembly and the Church of England Evangelical Council tend to follow a catholic (consensus) rather than a scriptural methodology.

We have lost sight of the fact that true Anglicanism *is* evangelical. We have capitulated to the view that evangelicals represent but a wing of the Church of England. The need of the hour is for us to take the high ground. We need to come to terms with the fact that our national church is under the judgment of God. Repentance is desperately needed. It is to the old tried and tested paths that we must return. We are not interested in dead orthodoxy or cold, clinical formalism. We pray for men and women to be gripped by the Truth. Acts chapter 2 and verse 42 teaches us that the Spirit-filled church is devoted first of all to the Apostolic teaching and to the fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer. You will find many allusions to the last three of these features in this volume but only a few passing references to the first. It is to be regretted that the authors do not focus our eyes sufficiently on the centrality and primacy of the Word of God, on preaching, on prayer and on holiness. But then if they had they would be very close to presenting a 'party line or manifesto' (p.13), the very thing they set out not to do. Herein lies the weakness of this book.

Finally, it is hoped that the new words 'unlove' (p.48) and 'dailiness' (p.188) do not become parlance, and that any further printings include the missing full-stops on pp.196f, and that the Notes (pp.219f) are reset in a more easily readable format.

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GEORGE CURRY

STRATEGY FOR LEADERSHIP Edward R. Dayton and Ted W. Engstrom
MARC, Europe, £5.95.

This is a very thorough book on Church and Christian organisation. The reviewer comes to it with the conviction that for too long Christians have operated with the biblical understanding that the Church is an organism, a

living body, but in doing this have often failed to see that organisational principles also need understanding and applying. The two questions that underpin the book are: 1. What are we aiming to do? 2. How are we going to do it?

The obvious Jungian foundation of these questions ought not to deter thoughtful Christians from thoroughly grasping and applying the aspects of organisational life that the authors bring to our attention. They very helpfully seek to explore and explain the tension which frequently faces Christian leaders between moving forward with the work and caring for those involved in it. They separate out the vast differences between being involved in activities and achieving positive results. It comes as no surprise that their approach is to clarify objectives and goals, but they do this with a thorough grasp of the ministry of the Spirit in evolving God's purpose for his people.

Their introductory analysis of organisational anatomy is most helpful. It is a failure to grasp the different aspects of organisational life that often leads to frustration within Churches. Their approach to goal-setting and priority discernment is very useful, and clearly based on the fundamental question for those of reformed conviction, 'Will this glorify God?'

In these experience-orientated days it is good to find such a clear balanced approach between the activity of the Holy Spirit and the responsibility of Christians in organisational life. The authors lead us into the way in which we can understand where Churches are, in order to move forward under God. Their understanding of the relationship between conflict and compromise is well worked out and the reviewer is of the opinion that an appreciation of this alone in many Christian groups and organisations would bring great release and a move forward.

The Americanism of the book is obvious throughout and there may be many approaches which will not easily be taken up in an English setting. Nevertheless, many 'techniques' which the authors bring to our attention are familiar in contemporary management circles and would cause, if applied wisely and sensitively, a minor revolution in the English Church. I commend the book to those prepared to wrestle with it and put it to work!

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TREVOR PARKIN

THE CHRISTIAN AT PLAY Robert K. Johnston

Eerdmans Grand Rapids: Paternoster, Exeter, 1983, 175pp, £7.95.

ISBN 0 8028 1976 1

Increased 'leisure time' (the term is not always really appropriate) may result either from affluence or from unemployment. Its problems and the opportunities for using it are different in each case. The considerable attention given by American thinkers in recent years to the meaning of 'play' activity belongs in a context of affluent leisure (which need not, however, be desired or chosen) and is not applicable therefore to the most pressing problems which contemporary British society has in relation to the rôles of work and leisure in human life. But if the picture Johnston paints of the problem of leisure in contemporary American culture does not fit Britain at every point, aspects of it come close enough: the 'ever more furious orgy of consumption' and the stupefying addiction to television which cover the real

emptiness of leisure time, and 'the tyranny of a work mentality' which allows leisure no independent value alongside the worth and success which are conferred solely by work. Certainly, Johnston's pioneering attempt at an evangelical approach to a theology of play deserves both attention and adaptation to a British context.

Johnston is critical of two sustained and very different attempts at a theology of play: those of Sam Keen and Jürgen Moltmann. Besides other criticisms, he finds a common mistake in that both compromise the 'self-contained meaning of play' by making it a means to something else: psychological fulfilment in Keen's case; political liberation in Moltmann's. (In fact Moltmann's eschatological concept of play could be more easily rescued than Johnston allows. The notion of play as an anticipation of the play of the new creation requires that it be purposeless, as the latter is; and so only *as* purposeless, can it be, as Johnston says, 'a form of mission.') Johnston finds the insights of Peter Berger and, especially, C.S. Lewis more helpful in suggesting the possibility that play could be the medium of encounter with God. But I must admit I did not find the connexion between Lewis's rather specific notion of 'Joy' and the broader concept of play with which Johnston is working, illuminating.

The problem of definition recurs throughout the book, in spite of the very stimulating and helpful discussion of the matter in chapter 2. The survey of relevant biblical material in chapter 4—whose highlight for me was the fresh approach to Ecclesiastes—includes such diverse elements of human life (Sabbath rest, erotic love, religious festival and dance, feasting, hospitality, friendship) that I wondered how helpful a generalized concept of 'play' (meaning, essentially, activity with no extrinsic purpose) was for exploring the theological and human meaning of these activities. By including them all in this single concept, Johnston is inclined to give them all the *same kind* of significance, and fails sufficiently to explore the specific significance of each, or their relative importance in life. Moreover, the definition produced in chapter 2 tends to use the *game* as the paradigm of what play essentially is and does not so comfortably fit other forms of 'play', such as those which Johnston highlights in the Bible. Games have a hermetically self-contained nature which, say, friendship and many kinds of art, do not really have.

The final chapter on the relation of work and play is similarly marred by a failure of definition, in that it gives little recognition to the crucial difference between two pairs of correlative concepts: work as purposive activity and play as non-purposive activity; work as 'earning a living' and leisure activity. Some lucky people earn a living as the by-product of their play. Many people choose to undertake purposive activity in their leisure time (DIY, cooking, community service, lay preaching, etc.) for a wide variety of valid reasons besides the unhealthy compulsion to make all activity a form of work. Johnston's general conclusion that play qua non-purposive activity has its own God-given place in human life, not to be subordinated to work, is a point which needs to be made, but it is only one element in the complex question of how to use leisure time. Moreover, the evidence Johnston uses (pp.136-7) for the idea that a balance between work and play is beneficial to both disturbed me. To argue that the people who are successful in their jobs in contemporary American society are people who also play well seems like giving play, after all, a political function. A book which began with a vigorous critique of contemporary society ends by endorsing that society's

Churchman

standards of success, offering only—like too much American religion—a more effective means to the same success. One is left wondering whether Johnston's jealousy for guarding the hermetic nature of play does not lead necessarily to this conformist ideology of play, so that the only alternative, after all, is Moltmann's desire to give play a politically liberating function. It may be that only in a more genuinely free society can play be as free as Johnston wants it to be. In an unfree society play tends either to support or to challenge oppression, and at some point the player must make his choice.

These criticisms may serve to show that this is a good book which provokes thinking in a relatively unexplored area.

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RICHARD BAUCKHAM

INDEX OF REVIEWS

BALTHASAR, <i>The Glory of the Lord. A Theological Aesthetics III: Studies in Theological Styles: Lay Styles</i> (G.L. Bray)	173
BROWN, <i>That You May Believe: Miracles and Faith then and now</i> (D.C. Spanner)	168
BRUCE, <i>The Real Jesus</i> (G. Bridger)	166
CHAPMAN, <i>Whose Promised Land?</i> (M.S. Langley)	180
CHEYNE, ed., <i>The Practical and the Pious. Essays on Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847)</i> (N. Cameron)	176
DABNEY, <i>Systematic Theology</i> (G.R. Curry)	172
DAYTON, ENGSTROM, <i>Strategy for Leadership</i> (T.K. Parkin)	187
EDWARDS, <i>Revival</i> (M.D. Birchall)	175
FRANK, <i>The Lion Story Bible—Series III</i> (G.R. Curry)	164
GROLLENBERG, <i>Believing Makes Sense. A Way of Reading the Bible</i> (N. Cameron)	160
JEWETT, <i>Election and Predestination</i> (G.L. Bray)	170
JOHNSTON, <i>The Christian at Play</i> (R. Bauckham)	188
JONES, <i>1 and 2 Kings: The New Century Bible Commentary 2 vols.</i> (J.A. Motyer)	162
LLOYD-JONES, <i>Prove All Things</i> (A. Bennett)	183
MAIER, <i>The Temple Scroll: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary</i> , translated by R.T. White (R.T. Beckwith)	163
MAYES, <i>Judges</i> (G. McConville)	161
OWEN, <i>The Death of Death in the Death of Christ</i> (N. Cameron)	169
PIGGIN, ROXBOROUGH, <i>The St. Andrews Seven. The Flowering of Missionary Zeal in Scottish History</i> (N. Cameron)	178
RAMSEY, <i>Beginning to Read the Fathers</i> (G.L. Bray)	165
REID, ed., <i>Hope for the Church of England</i> (G.R. Curry)	186
ROBINSON, <i>Expository Preaching: Principles and Practice</i> (G.L. Bray)	185
RODD, ed., <i>The Pastor's Problems</i> (D.H. Wheaton)	185
RUSSELL, <i>The Country Parish</i> (A. Bennett)	183
SMART, PURNANANDA, <i>Prophet of a New Hindu Age: The Life and Times of Acharya Pranavananda</i> (M.S. Langley)	181
TORRANCE, <i>Reality and Scientific Theology</i> (R. Lints)	170
WELLS, ed., <i>Reformed Theology in America</i> (A. Bennett)	174
WOLTERS, <i>Creation Regained: A Transforming View of the World</i> (D.C. Spanner)	175
YE'OR, <i>The Dhimmi, Jews and Christians under Islam</i> (C. Chapman)	178

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