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# Book Reviews

**2 KINGS, WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY Volume 13 T.R. Hobbs**  
Word Books, Waco, Texas 1985 388pp. No price ISBN 0 8499 0212 6

In the introduction to his commentary, T.R. Hobbs makes it clear that his interpretation of 2 Kings is based on the idea that the book was put together by one author whom he refers to as the Deuteronomist. He assumes that like the rest of the Deuteronomist's writings (Joshua to 2 Kings), 2 Kings was written at Babylon shortly after the release of Jehoiachin from prison in 560 B.C. and is thus a product of the exile. He believes too that the book of Kings has a special connexion with the book of Deuteronomy in that the writer uses the lawbook as the model standard of behaviour for people and kings, and continually refers to its legislation. The Biblical author's work is one which displays remarkable skill and perception, and in the execution of his task he has employed a variety of literary techniques. His main aim in writing down the history of the kings of Judah and Israel can be thought as wanting to set out new values: order, conformity and social solidarity.

Hobbs points out in his introduction that his commentary will be based on the final form of the text as found in the Masoretic text. That is, it is a commentary which adopts an approach which is becoming more and more popular in the study of the Old Testament, referred to in different ways: 'the literary approach', 'the Bible as a work of literature', 'the method of total interpretation' etc . . .

There is no doubt that this kind of approach has been most valuable in throwing light on aspects of the Biblical text which had hitherto been neglected, but as a basis for a commentary its adequacy is questionable. Hobbs recognizes that the author of 2 Kings may well have used older documents to write his history of the kings of Israel and Judah, but because he has decided to study only the final form of the text the theological contents of his commentary are limited more or less to examining what the Biblical author says about the various kings. His studies of form, structure and setting are of interest on a technical level but again because the text is being considered only in its final form as a harmonious unity they do not go much further than to demonstrate how the text is a unit, how it hangs together well or how it reads smoothly. After several chapters of this kind of exercise it looks as if the main preoccupation of the commentator is to prove his thesis about the unity of the text. But often the meaning of the text itself still requires further elucidation.

A more productive method could have perhaps been to exploit the fact that the author makes use of older documents and to show what he has done with them; how he has arranged them to make something of his own. The theological commentary could then have been fuller and more specific.

Many scholars accept that the Book of Kings is the end result of a long period of literary activity and this is exactly what gives the Book its appeal and its interest. Although it is a legitimate endeavour to understand the view of the author of the book it is doubtful whether this aim can be achieved without looking for and identifying the smaller units and attempting to locate

them historically. So, for example, when Hobbs deals with the Elijah and Elisha narratives, true to his principles, he goes no further than to describe how this story is narrated by an exilic author, and to show that the author has done his work well. Since he does not however sort out the different strands of the story and examine their interrelation, the commentary does not go on to consider how these passages could help us to understand, for example, the institution of the prophets in the Northern Kingdom or what is, say, the significance of the ascension of Elijah. Instead we are presented with this kind of commentary on Elisha's work: 'the contents of the chapter illustrate the extremely complicated phenomenon of early Israelite prophecy' (p.54), or with a general comment such as: 'the Israelite prophetic tradition includes a variety of types of men and a variety of activities'. The commentator could have been expected to help us understand more clearly this complicated phenomenon and to provide a brief sketch of the special traits of the prophetic ministry in the Northern Kingdom, to place, in other words, the text in its historical context.

If you unreservedly believe in the validity of the literary approach then this commentary will suit you; but if you prefer something which sets the Biblical texts against the background of the history of Israel and Judah, then you will probably feel that, despite Hobbs's efforts, there are still many treasures in 2 Kings waiting to be uncovered.

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JEAN-MARC HEIMERDINGER

**THE BOOK OF ISAIAH, Chapters 1–39 New International  
Commentary on the Old Testament J.N. Oswalt**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1986, Distributed by Paternoster, Exeter 672pp.

£26.60

ISBN 0 8028 2368 8

This is the first of a two volume commentary on Isaiah. In it, the author gives his own translation of the Hebrew text, followed by a general presentation of each section and then finally a verse by verse analysis of the text. The commentary makes use of up-to-date research on the Book of Isaiah. It is clearly written and pleasant to read. Throughout, there are useful and relevant comments on interesting points in a verse, on a verse's importance in the section to which it belongs, on difficulties of the Hebrew text. For all those reasons, the book will prove most welcome to those who want to study the text of Isaiah in detail but who do not have knowledge of Hebrew. It will be a helpful tool in the preparation of sermons on Isaiah, for example, for all the groundwork will have been done already.

It is well known that most biblical scholars today maintain that the Book of Isaiah is comprised of two, if not three, quite distinct parts of which probably only the first has a connexion with the prophet Isaiah. Against this position, John N. Oswalt defends in his Introduction the compositional unity of the Book of Isaiah. He thinks that the essential content of the book has come to us through one human author, Isaiah, the son of Amoz. It is he who received the revelation from God and directed the shaping of the book (p.25). As a result, what we have in the Book of Isaiah is a kind of anthology, a collection of sermons, sayings, thoughts and writings of Isaiah arranged according to a

theological theme. Oswalt's conviction is that this overarching theme is servanthood. It is made explicit in Isaiah 40–55, but remains implicit in all the other chapters of the book.

Fortunately, once the author has stated his thesis he does not allow the defence of his position to distract him from the job of commenting on the text. Given, however, his belief in the unifying presence and work of the prophet in the Book of Isaiah, Oswalt could have been expected to pay more attention to a presentation of Isaiah as a man and as a prophet, and to showing how he belonged to the life of Israel; how he fitted in to the political, social, and moral context. Some kind of summary would have been helpful in the Introduction. As it is, if the reader wants to get an overall picture of Isaiah, the reader is forced to go through the book himself picking out the relevant information from here and there.

Isaiah is a man with a vision of history, the prophet of kingship, of the great Israel as represented by King David; he proclaims the hope of a future for a Remnant. Perhaps it is because Oswalt has chosen to concentrate on the theme of servanthood that these other themes seem neglected in comparison, and replaced by more general concepts, (e.g. 'humanity and the world', 'sin') both in the body of the commentary and in the Introduction. But a much more important subject in my opinion has also been neglected: the Messianic theme in Isaiah which should surely have been dealt with at least in the exegesis of chapters 7:10–16 and 9:1–7. Oswalt makes only a passing allusion to the Messianic theme when he explains chapter 11:1–9. Although it is true that scholars are divided over the exact interpretation of these passages, it is nevertheless clear that in Isaiah we see the emergence of one who is of the Davidic house but is other than the reigning king and who will represent far more perfectly the ideals of the kingly office.

These reservations do not detract, though, from the value of the commentary which displays a mastery of the literature and takes into account the most recent studies on Isaiah. For all its scholarly background, it is lively and interesting and guides the reader carefully through his understanding of the first part of the Book of Isaiah.

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JEAN-MARC HEIMERDINGER

**ECCLESIASTES AND THE SONG OF SOLOMON** Robert Davidson  
The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh 1986 162pp. £4.25 ISBN 0 7152 0523 4

The way you see the total message of a Bible book affects the way in which you interpret the details, and this is nowhere more necessary than with Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. Both books have invited a great deal of speculation over the years to the point where some have wondered why they are in the Bible at all! However, although not everyone will agree with Professor Davidson's understanding of these two fascinating books, he has certainly produced a stimulating volume for us. And having made his stand, he consistently and thoroughly interprets the text in a highly readable manner fitting to the Daily Bible Study series.

Unlike some, he assumes that Ecclesiastes comes from one author (apart from the fairly obvious second hand in the last chapter). His approach,

however, is that here we have a man who, when faced with life as it is, is having real difficulties with his understanding of God. Underlying his somewhat despairing questioning there is a real faith, although at times it appears to be submerged beneath the general meaninglessness of human experience. Some would want to see rather more made of those positive statements which do regularly crop up in Ecclesiastes and which seem to provide the clue as to why the Jews saw lasting worth in the work, other than, apparently, just stating that we cannot understand life as we find it. But, as I have said, that means a different understanding of its overall purpose.

It is refreshing to see a number of modern expositors admitting the frank sexuality of the Song of Solomon, as Professor Davidson does, and not making it into some elaborate allegory. Once again, he opts for a simple structure, and then provides us with a careful exegesis. His summary point that the subject of sex has been badly handled by Christians while being faced squarely and frankly in the Bible is timely. Perhaps that is what makes his commentary timely too.

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JOHN BALCHIN

**ISAIAH 1–33 Word Biblical Commentary Volume 24 John D.W. Watts**  
Word Books, Waco, Texas 1985 1vii+449pp. No price ISBN 0 8499 0223 1

It is no small matter to hail a commentary which sturdily seeks to break new ground in the interpretation of the Isaianic literature and a commentator marvellously familiar with the views of others but bowing to none. Dr. Watts and his book fully deserve this accolade. Novelty strikes us at once as we note that Watts divides Isaiah into 1–33 and 34–66. The Publisher affirms that 'Dr Watts argues convincingly for the unity of Isaiah' but does not warn the reader that these words are not being used in their familiar sense. Indeed in this commentary Isaiah is, even more than usually, the disappearing prophet. In Watts's view the 66 chapters constitute one 'Vision' whose 'unity' is 'the artistic concept which shaped and guided the formation'. He reckons twelve generations from Uzziah to Ezra-Nehemiah and 'the Age to come'. He contends that dateable events enable us to see that the 66 chapters of 'Isaiah' refer consecutively to these generations. Thus Act 1 of the Vision is an Uzziah/Jotham section (chs.1–6), Act 2 is Ahaz (chs.7–14) and so on, in this volume to Act 5, Josiah/Jehoiakim, (chs.28–33)—hence the point of termination. 'The author and the group he represents in 435 B.C. trace in the Vision an ancestry of faith . . . back to Isaiah . . . , back also to the "exilic word" of 40:31 and the "post-exilic preacher" of 55:1–6. The purpose is to find within the ancestry of faith a message to direct the confused and disparate strands of the people in the late fifth century: and the message was this, that

in the times of Isaiah of Jerusalem Yahweh enunciated a new strategy. The old Davidic mould was broken and cast off. Henceforth Yahweh himself would oppose all efforts to resuscitate David's empire. Imperial power had passed and would remain with Assyria and its imperial successors while the future of Jerusalem must be to constitute in itself a pilgrim centre for all nations and pursue a 'servant rôle' to all who would serve Yahweh, while at the same time scrupulously maintaining a political subservience to the dominant world power.

The twelve-Act drama in which this ancestry of faith is contained may even be due to the fact that it was all originally presented by a troupe of players and Watts tries to work this out as he indicates in the margin who the speaker might have been. Thus, for example, chapter 26 is divided out between a Narrator, a Chorus, a Speaker, a Herald, Yahweh, three Groups, three Echoes and a Tattletale. And frankly, this aspect of the presentation can only merit description as whimsical and unimpressive but it would not be right to allow a lapse, however pervasive, to blind us to real merit under the heading of analysis and structure. The internal structure of the Acts and their constituent Scenes is, for the most part seen as an 'arch', i.e. sections leading up (A, B, C, D . . .) to a 'Keystone' and descending (. . . D, C, B, A) from the keystone. Sometimes this is very effective and always it drives us to fix our attention on the detail of the text but for the most part it is overdone, and in chapters 28 onwards where in fact the inherent 'Woe' structure dictated by the text could be seen in an 'arch' formation, the procedure is not followed. On the other hand, Watts's attachment of chapter 23 to chapters 24–27 violates the inherent 'Burden' structure announced at 13:1 and the commentary offers no compensating advantages nor any real argumentation why 24–27 should be suspended on the oracle about Tyre.

The now standard schema of this series is faithfully followed. As usual the textual sections offer a mountain of specialist information and the bibliographies are marvels of comprehension. The comments and explanations are dominated by Watts's understanding of what the vision is 'all about' namely the breaking of the old mould, the germination of the covenant relationship as hitherto understood, the call to submit to the imperial powers whom Yahweh has called out to dominate the world. To say that this theme is not in Isaiah would be as great an overemphasis as to say that there is no other theme. But when all comes to all, Watts cannot even be sure that Isaiah himself would have subscribed to this view (p.xlii) and may we not be forgiven for wondering if it can be true that there was more theological merit in Ahaz and Manassch who are supposed to embody the submission-principle, than in Hczekiah? Watts is notably less at home in what have traditionally been thought of as 'messianic' passages and his treatment of key verses like 7:14 leaves everything to be desired: where is the justification for the suggestion that Almah is used biblically for girls of reprehensible life?

Specialists will see Dr. Watts's commentary as a sustained attempt to justify a fairly narrow belt of interpretation and will note that the commentary elucidates the theory more than the text. Non-specialists will come to the sad conclusion that the Isaianic literature is beyond their comprehension and saying little to their lives.

**A COMMENTARY ON THE MINOR PROPHETS Volume 1: Hosea****John Calvin**

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1986 530pp. £6.95 hb ISBN 0 85151 473 1

This volume is a reprint of the Calvin Translation Society's edition of 1846. It, along with its sister volume, deserves and warrants careful reading and study. The value of this work is in no way diminished by the fact that Calvin pre-dates 'Critical Scholarship' by a number of centuries. Indeed one of the great strengths of Calvin's Commentaries is that they take you to the heart of the matter. You do not have to wade through pages of detailed discussion the relevance of which is clear to only a few. This is not to say that Calvin ducks difficult questions. It is quite the reverse. He faces them squarely and invariably deals with them in a careful and sensitive manner. His style is always clear and easy to follow. His choice of words is apposite and usually economic. This inexpensive book begins with a helpful and judicious preface by the translator, John Owen, one time Vicar of Thrussington, Leicestershire. Any doubts you may entertain as to Calvin's authority as a Divine and Expounder of Scripture are answered here. There then follows Beza's portrait of Calvin, Calvin's epistle dedicatory (to the king of Sweden), and three letters (by Calvin, Budaeus and Crispin) to the reader. The Commentary itself covers some 475 pages, representing the thirty eight lectures that Calvin delivered on this difficult (possibly the most difficult) portion of Old Testament Scripture. The book ends with Calvin's translation of this prophecy. This contains a few helpful annotations that refer the reader back to the Commentary for other possible renderings of words or phrases. Each lecture includes, where appropriate, some useful marginal references from the pen of the Editor. None of these is superfluous. Nor are the prayers with which each lecture concludes. Some will quibble with certain assertions made by the commentator. For example, not everybody will agree with his assessment of how long Hosea prophesied. Others, like this reviewer, will disagree with his view that Hosea's marriage to Gomer should be interpreted as being parabolic or visionary in character as opposed to historical. His reasons for arguing the way he does, whilst weighty, are not totally convincing. This issue is taken up again at the end of Volume 2 in this series. There you will find further comments on a number of passages as well as a list of corrections to the printed text. Incidentally, one or two, like that on page 71 line 31, have still slipped through even this reprinting. And, some will take exception to his comments on the Valley of Achor (chapter 2 verse 15). However, these are in effect minor issues when you consider the wealth of invaluable comment that Calvin puts before us in these pages. The author's aim at all times is to take us to the heart of the matter. He wants us not just to understand God's Word written but also to hear God speaking. Throughout he succeeds in being devotional as well as theological. This is a rare combination today. Inevitably there is a sixteenth century feel to this commentary but essentially it remains timeless in character. His comments about and definition of repentance on page 89 are nothing less than masterly. Thus it is that with telling force and appropriate application this expositor extra-ordinaire succeeds in opening up the riches of this portion of God's Word to us. This volume represents an invaluable Bible study aid not just for the preacher but also for all who love the truth.

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GEORGE CURRY

- THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY: ROMANS D.S. Briscoe**  
Word (UK) Ltd, Milton Keynes 1986 264pp. No price ISBN 0 85009 411 9  
**THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY: JOHN R.L. Fredrickson**  
Word (UK) Ltd., Milton Keynes 1986 299pp. No price ISBN 0 85009 410 0  
**THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY** Edited by Lloyd J. Ogilvie  
Word (UK) Ltd., Milton Keynes 1986

There are so many commentaries and commentary series on the market nowadays that it is almost impossible to choose between them, and even more impossible to collect them all. Yet although the level of scholarship may be high, and the breadth of treatment considerable, it would be hard to say that many of the more recent productions are of immediate usefulness to the hardpressed preacher needing something to communicate to his congregation Sunday by Sunday. This is a need which the present series has set out to meet, and these first two volumes to appear have set a remarkably high standard for the rest.

Roger L. Fredrickson has done the Gospel of John, and D. Stuart Briscoe has tackled Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The commentaries have been based on the new King James Version of the Bible, which will strike some readers as eccentric, but leaving that aside, the illustrations are down to earth, the message is clear and the pastoral dimension is of exemplary importance. It is this last feature, above all, which distinguishes this series from most of what is currently available, and makes it of such value to the clergy.

However—and this is equally important—this is one of the few commentary series which can be used by ordinary people for daily devotions. They make an excellent introduction for new Christians who want to learn about the Scriptures in a serious way without getting bogged down in scholarly detail. The commentaries could easily be used in home group Bible study as well, and in this respect are the closest Evangelicals have yet come to matching the late Dr. William Barclay's series on the New Testament. Here is a real gap to be filled, and the editor, Lloyd J. Ogilvie, and contributors to this new Commentary Series are to be commended and encouraged in their labours.

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GERALD BRAY

**ROMANS A Shorter Commentary C.E.B. Cranfield**

T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh 1985 388 pp.

ISBN 0 567 29118 9

This commentary is an abridged version of the two-volume commentary on Romans published in the *International Critical Commentary* series (Vol.I, 1975, and Vol.II, 1979). Many lengthy and deep reviews on the series have been published and, with certain reservations, that work has been universally received as one of the greatest of commentaries on Paul's Letter to the Romans. This new commentary is distinguished from the earlier work in many ways. Greek is dropped, as are formerly untranslated Latin, German and Hebrew sentences. Footnotes have virtually been eliminated which, on occasion, has the interesting result of showing more clearly exactly which interpretation of a particular thought or verse Cranfield himself is inclined to accept.

This reviewer assumes that the market for this commentary largely will be

found among theology students and graduates, ministers, and other well-educated lay people, for even in abridged form it is hardly an 'easy read'! Such people will, presumably, not know any Greek. If this is the eventual audience then a comparison of the commentaries does reveal some rather more disturbing changes.

The Introduction, which contained a wealth of information including a long section on the history of the exegesis of Romans and on the Roman church itself, has been reduced from forty-four pages to five. The commentary on the text is almost entirely re-written although, of course, the conclusions reached on interpretation appear to be the same. Sadly, two very useful essays which appeared at the end of Vol.II on 'Paul's Purpose or Purposes in Writing Romans', and on 'Some Aspects of the Theology of Romans' are dropped from the new version. Both of these could have been read with ease by any of the above-mentioned group.

In reading the textual exegesis there is also a sense of frustration. For example, the carefully argued and detailed examination of the clause 'because all have sinned (Rom. 5:12) is reduced from five and a half pages to just one. On such a grammatically and theologically disputed passage it is sad that Cranfield's whole argument (interacting with different positions) is not really heard. The section on the controversial passage dealing with 'all Israel' (Rom. 11:25-26) was not one of the strongest in the original commentary, but leaves many of the more obvious questions unanswered in the abridgement.

Having said that, Cranfield's strongly conservative position on the meaning of *hilasterion* in Rom. 3:25 is perhaps even clearer in the only slightly shorter version of the new work. In fact, this is one of only a half dozen or so places where footnotes are given which refer people to other reading matter in a debate. Here the positions of Dodd and Morris are noted, with Cranfield offering cautious support for Morris's position.

In this reviewer's experience the *International Critical Commentary* two-volume commentary can be read by most serious students even if they do not have ability in Greek. The additional argumentation, the footnotes, essays and theological comments all make that the better buy. If funds are limited, and a much briefer less well-argued commentary is desired, then this can be recommended. Certainly for all who study Romans one or other of these editions of Cranfield's most excellent work is essential reading. Perhaps it is time T. and T. Clark gave serious consideration to producing the series in paperback and at a cheaper price!

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PAUL D. GARDNER

**GOSPEL PERSPECTIVES Volume V: The Jesus Tradition outside the Gospels David Wenham ed.**

JSOT Press, Sheffield 1985 417pp.

£16 hb £8.95 pb

ISBN 0 85075 006 8 (007 6 (pb))

The Tyndale House Gospels Research Project has once again borne worthy fruit. Following David Wenham's 400 page monograph on Jesus's eschatological discourse (vol. IV, 1984), volume V, under the same editorship focusses on data found *outside* the canonical gospels. This helps us assess and

interpret the witness of these gospels, and to trace their historical genesis. Richard Bauckham calls this area 'the Cinderella of Gospels' scholarship' (p.369). The book is written at a level of learning and sophistication which may be somewhat forbidding to the ordinary reader, but it achieves its ends without unnecessary abstruseness. It consists of a collection of papers by an international team of evangelical scholars, all of them English-speaking except Gerhard Maier of Tübingen. (Maier's German essay 'Jesutradition im 1. Petrusbrief' is noteworthy for its firm, clear-cut, positions; it demonstrates that Peter included *Kurzkatechismen*, 1 Pet. 1. 18–21; 2. 21–25; 3. 18–22—which show close kinship with his sermons in Acts—follow the pattern of Old Testament summaries of salvation-history, Deut. 6:21–23, and were gospels in a nutshell pp.115, 118f; it also stresses convincingly the ties between 1 Peter and the Johannine tradition, pp.103, 117f). Several contributors, such as Gregory K. Beale and Donald A. Hagner, have written on topics which they have researched for doctoral theses: occasionally they refer the reader to their books for proof of their statements (repeatedly in Beale's case).

In spite of the variety of backgrounds and viewpoints, there is little unevenness in the collection. Murray J. Harris, who examines references to Jesus in Thallus, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, and Suetonius, would bear the palm of elegance. Richard Bauckham's logical analysis of criteria and procedures stands as a model. The most brilliant essay may well be that of David F. Wright on the apocryphal 'Unknown Gospel' (Pap. Egerton 2) and the 'Gospel of Peter'. He splendidly exposes inaccuracies and inadequacies in Helmut Köster's thesis and in his elevation of apocryphal gospels to the same rank as the canonical ones as sources about Jesus: ambiguities, omissions (pp.209f), ignorance of two long articles by Ugo Gallizia of Turin (p.211), overlooking of the fragment Pap. Oxyrhynchus 41.2949 (c.200 A.D., published in 1972) of the Gospel of Peter, which modifies conclusions drawn from the Akhmim manuscript (c.800 A.D.) (pp.222ff). These apocryphal works are derivative from canonical material, and are marred by obvious tendentiousness. How impressive the range of David Wright's scholarly expertise! Regarding apocryphal gospels, one can also mention the treatment, fair and cautious, of the Gospel of Thomas, by Bruce Chilton and Craig Blomberg: the latter seems to be on safe ground when he challenges the view that this secret book of Egyptian Gnostics contains parables of Jesus in a more primitive form than do our Synoptics (p.196).

Overall, *Gospel Perspectives V* pursues its work along three main axes. The first chapters investigate Paul's knowledge of the Jesus traditions in his epistles 1 Cor. especially, James, 1 Peter, and Revelation: all tending to show, with the relative exception of the second one (P. Richardson and P. Gooch), that the other New Testament writers relied quite heavily on the information which the Four Gospels preserved for us, and often on organized chunks of material. The chapters which follow evaluate the evidence from apocryphal writings, Apostolic Fathers, and Justin Martyr. They both refute exaggerated claims in favour of apocryphal literature's testimony to the Jesus of history: their argument is persuasive. The composition and transmission of the canonical gospels took place within the context of an authoritative Jesus tradition which was carefully taught, memorized, analysed and applied, handed on both orally and in writing. During the first hundred years, more

references are made to this elastic corpus than strictly to our gospels, and the various expressions of the same subject matter probably mix and overlap in actual use. That this took place does not detract from the uniqueness *in normative function* of the canonical gospels (Bauckham, p.398, n.2). The last chapters before the final one deal with non-Christian writings: one reads, e.g., an exceedingly fine critical study by Graham H. Twelftree of the *Testimonium flavianum*, *Ant. jud.* xviii (pp.301ff), and his sifting of rabbinic traditions (rather negative results, well established, p.310–324). The common effect of the differing approaches, notwithstanding some divergencies (Bauckham, for example, is more lenient than others towards Köster), is to consolidate the authority of the Jesus tradition which our gospels incorporate, and hence theirs to us (Bauckham, p.374).

In such a collection of rich technical studies, there is a multitude of points deserving mention or discussion. Here are a few samples which are illuminating: Paul alludes to Matthew 16 in Galatians 1 and 2, and in 1 Corinthians 1–4 (Wenham, pp.24ff, 35 n.42); the tendency, in the development of tradition, is to abbreviate and to suppress distinctness (Blomberg, pp.182, 195); it is possible (I still hesitate) that the ‘testimony of Jesus’ in Revelation is the earthly Jesus tradition (Beale, pp.143, 147): yet, we would question the interpretation that the Risen one preached to the dead (Maier, p.114); or Wenham’s comments (p.32 n.13) that ‘in 1 Cor. 7:10,11 Paul quotes the relevant teaching of Jesus in such a way as to address the Corinthian situation . . . the problem in Corinth in the first instance had to do with converted wives who wished to know if they should continue to live with unconverted husbands’: now, it seems to me that 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11 deals with the case of both partners being believers; the unconverted husband enters the picture only in v.12, with no express teaching of Jesus available. Does 1 Corinthians 14:37 refer to ‘a command of the Risen Lord’ (apparently in a special, oracular, sense, Richardson and Gooch, p.45), or to Paul’s apostolic inspiration?

The book has been produced in a way to keep costs down by offset printing from typewritten papers (not all with the same typewriter). It is a pity that the notes are not placed as footnotes, but are gathered at the end of the chapters: such a horrible annoyance for the reader could have been avoided easily at typing stage. Misspellings, in a work with myriads of references, are just a handful: we only noticed Haacher for Haacker (p.58 n.6), Hans for Haus in G. Maier’s address (p.85), Selbt- for Selbst (p.152 n.63), Delachoux for Delachaux (p.173 n.31), ‘Ausesis’ in Mees’s title (p.285 n.20 and p.410) for ‘Auxesis’, we presume (as it is p.286 n.25). Antiquities for Antiquitates in Winter’s title (p.325, n.6; correctly p.331 n.58), Weidmannos for Weidmann’s (p.329 n.41), internationale for international after ‘Colloque’ (pp.407, 414), and affrontemonts for affrontements (p.419, penultimate line).

Most contributors are well aware of the tentative and precarious character of their decisions, because of the nature of the task. How can one be sure about possible allusions to possible strands of an almost invisible ‘tradition’? One remembers C.S. Lewis’s testimony: all the hypotheses of his fellow literary critics on the prehistory of his own works were incredibly wide of the mark. So the question presses itself upon one’s mind: is the expense of so much talent and effort worthwhile or futile? I affirm both the need and the

usefulness of such an endeavour as the Gospel Perspectives Project: it is an evangelical input and witness in scholarly debates, and through the combination of many uncertain analyses, it gives a trustworthy global picture. Nevertheless I express this *caveat*: the legitimate methodological restrictions impressed on such an achievement though built on common 'critical' ground, inevitably produce what is imperfect and artificial, and which isolates the reader temporarily from his commitment to believe; evangelical scholars must always remind themselves that they can only so proceed in faith, having no other ultimate certainty than the Word of God written.

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HENRI BLOCHER

**HERMENEUTICS, AUTHORITY AND CANON** edd. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge

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The strengths of men and movements are often the occasions for their weaknesses. It has been so in the course of church history. Two of the great strengths of conservative evangelicalism have been its insistence that true religion consists not in right moral and ecclesiastical ideas but in a personal relationship of trust and obedience towards Jesus Christ; and that such a relationship is mediated, directly or indirectly, by the word of Scripture, the 'sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus'. Brought, like a newly-awakened lover, into a new world of personal wonder and enrichment, the evangelical convert is often found to be highly sensitive to any supposed criticism of the way by which he has come into the experience of such surpassing excellence as he now enjoys. Had his 'becoming a Christian' been less an introduction to heavenly realities and more an improvement of earthly ones this over-sensitiveness to what might seem to threaten his new standing would have been less troublesome. This is, I believe, one of the reasons why conservative Christians have been so quick to react against any suggestion that the Bible is anything less than the Word of God, God-breathed in a sense which devout men and women have held to be the case (whatever may be argued to the contrary) from the earliest times, inerrant and infallible. This has resulted in church history (especially recent history) witnessing, hasty, ill-conceived and often counter-productive efforts to 'defend the Bible'. The 'defence' which has been offered has had unfortunate effects. It has tended to drive the conservatives into a ghetto, to excite the liberals to contempt and excess, and to put the intelligent and uncommitted into a quandary. There are hopeful signs that the challenge which all this poses is being met by conservatives.

The present volume is a collection of scholarly essays under the capable editorship of D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge. It is intended as a companion to the earlier volume (*Scripture and Truth*, Zondervan 1983) of which they were also joint editors, and it carries the matter further. The opening essay, by Professor Carson, is on Recent Developments in the Doctrine of Scripture. As with all the essays this is addressed to the whole

theological fraternity, not just to conservatives. It deals with the contributions of Roman Catholic scholars as well as with those of liberal and conservative Protestants. The discussion of the terms 'accommodation', 'inerrancy' and 'infallibility' is helpful in clearing the ground. There is a healthy emphasis on the need for self-criticism; and a saddening conclusion about the 'Diminishing Authority of the Scriptures in the Churches'. An impressive essay.

Dr. Kevin J. Vanhoozer next contributes a fine chapter on *The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture's diverse literary Forms*. The concepts 'propositional revelation', 'language games' and 'literary genres' come under close scrutiny, as does indeed the whole philosophy of language and its use. Next, Professor Moïses Silva writes on *The Place of Historical Reconstruction in New Testament Criticism*. How do we form a valid picture out of the historical data which Scripture gives us? For instance, do New Testament references to the Pharisees enable us to form an adequate idea of the movement as a whole? If not, why not? What about the first-century church: to what extent do the New Testament data leave us with a balanced impression? Can these data be even regarded as self-consistent? Must we fall back, with some modern scholars, on the persuasion that the relation between faith and history hardly matters; that 'the risk of faith . . . must not be avoided by appealing to objective historical reality'? 'No', answers Professor Silva; but our very commitment as evangelicals 'argues for a fearless approach to historical questions'. He could have added, to scientific ones too.

*The Legitimacy and Limits of Harmonization* is a first-class contribution from Professor Craig Blomberg. Much conservative 'harmonization' is implausible, and 'reinforces the criticism of the majority'. This is sad, but true. The author proceeds to list the possible ways of resolving apparently conflicting historical data. He notes textual criticism, linguistics, historical context, form criticism, audience criticism, source criticism, redaction criticism and plain 'harmonization' e.g. by addition of narratives. These are illustrated by reference to synoptic examples; examples from Kings-Chronicles; from overlaps with and within the writings of Josephus; and between Arrian's and Plutarch's Lives of Alexander. He concludes that 'the more one studies extra-biblical historiography, the more inescapable the legitimacy of harmonization becomes, even in its narrower, additive sense'. The tools of higher criticism (especially redaction criticism) not only 'do not have to be viewed as inherently destructive, but can . . . join hands with traditional harmonization in the service of a high view of Scripture'.

Douglas Moo follows with a perceptive essay on *The Problem of sensus plenior*. 'The ultimate christological meaning discerned by New Testament authors in passage after passage of the Old Testament often extends beyond, but is always based on the meaning intended by the human author', he concludes. John Frames, on *The Spirit and the Scriptures*, deals helpfully with an important subject on which work needs to be done on a deep level. There follows a splendid essay by Professor Woodbridge on *The Impact of the Enlightenment on the Doctrine of Scripture*. That the central tradition of the Christian churches from patristic times onwards, contrary to the claims of many historians and theologians to-day, did encompass the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, he maintains in an impressively researched thesis.

Professor Bromiley, writing on The Authority of Scripture in Karl Barth gives an admirably clear and masterly summary of Barth's position, with its strengths and weaknesses. Finally, Dr. David Dunbar writes on The Biblical Canon. He starts his scholarly contribution with a quotation from David Dungan (1975) foretelling 'a massive series of changes regarding the shape and content of the Bible'. He concludes it by saying 'The early Christians believed they knew where to find the canon of Christ and the Apostles. Today we still so believe'.

In my judgment this is a very impressive and important contribution to the apologetics of the conservative view of Scripture. It is to be hoped that it will be widely read by both evangelicals and those of liberal outlook. It is certainly addressed to them all.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

**ON THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES A Conversation with Tudor Christianity Oliver O'Donovan**

Paternoster, Exeter 1986 160pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 85364 435 7

This much awaited rarity is the latest in the Latimer Monograph Series, and makes an important contribution to the emerging theological debate about the identity of Anglicanism. Professor O'Donovan confesses that he first discovered the importance of this when he began to lecture to Anglican ordinands in Canada, where to be an Anglican is not as obvious and natural as it is in England. The Anglican Communion has long been more aware of the need for a distinct identity than the Mother Church has been, and it is encouraging to see that this awareness has brought forth such valuable fruit in this country.

The book is much awaited because it is a fresh appraisal of the Thirty-nine Articles, once the staple diet of Anglican theological students but now largely forgotten in the colleges and all but buried in the Church at large. It is a rarity, because it is now the only book in print which deals with the subject. The reviewer may say that it is a rarity in another sense also. It is perhaps the only book written on the Articles which seeks to appreciate them without expounding them, to honour them without adopting them as the living confession of the Church of England. This is why the book is subheaded 'A Conversation with Tudor Christianity', and not, as one might expect, 'A Defence of their Place in the Church Today' or some such title.

Accepting the historicity of the Articles allows the author to appreciate what they were trying to say in the sixteenth century without necessarily defending them as viable theological statements for today. Perhaps this is the only way the Articles can now be read, and if so, Professor O'Donovan has done an excellent job of rehabilitating them for a modern audience. But the reader must be warned in advance that this is what the book is, so that he will not be led astray by some of the criticisms of the Articles which Professor O'Donovan feels obliged to make.

Given the author's starting point, it is surprising and gratifying that he finds so much in the Articles to commend. He brings out quite admirably how they maintain a *via media* which is not a colourless compromise; how

they refrain from making injudicious statements about things like predestination; and how they testify to the best in Reformation teaching without cutting the Church loose from its patristic and medieval heritage. His exposition of their teaching on original sin is particularly masterly, and he points out with great clarity how Cranmer and his successors differed both from Augustine and from many in the second generation of the Reformation, who wanted to push the Church into an uncompromising Puritanism. The comparisons with other Reformation documents, and especially with the Westminster Confession, are illuminating and highly complimentary to the Articles which, according to him, display a greater theological balance in matters of epistemology (in particular).

One of the difficulties with a book of this kind is that a historical conversation is a one-way activity. Parts of the book would better be termed a *Reaction to Tudor Christianity*, particularly in the parts which touch on matters where the modern Church is furthest removed from its Elizabethan ancestor. These include the whole question of Church-state relations but they involve other things as well, notably the lack of emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the virtual absence of a doctrine of creation. But whether one ought to assume from this as much as Professor O'Donovan does is hard to say. He is, of course, well aware that the Articles are not a systematic theology. He fully respects the fact that their balance is quite different, and reflects ecclesiological and sacramental concerns which no systematic theologian regards as central to his discipline. But for that very reason it is dangerous to assume that the Reformers lacked a deep understanding of these things, and one would like to see some reference, at least, made to their other writings to support these arguments from silence.

More distressingly, Professor O'Donovan seems to have a rather low opinion of the three classical Creeds which the Reformers not only acknowledged in the Articles, but included in the Prayer Book. Hesitation at this point calls into question the very foundation of Catholic Christianity, the Reformers' attachment to which he is otherwise so concerned to demonstrate and uphold. The reader senses here, as occasionally elsewhere, that personal judgments have been allowed to intrude in a way which takes us away from *conversation* with the Reformers and puts us on to something else. Indeed, at more than one point we are in conversation not with the sixteenth century but with our own, which might confuse the unwary! It is, however, a reminder that to appreciate the riches of this book one must be fairly conversant with the modern theological scene as well as with the Articles themselves.

Nevertheless this book is by a theologian writing for other theologians, more than for the wider public. To follow its arguments and appreciate its many telling points (as for example, in his criticism of the marks of the Church) one must know one's theology. But this is all to the good, particularly at a time when theologians are too seldom challenged in this way. It must be hoped that Professor O'Donovan's work will have as great an impact on Anglican theological circles as Professor Stephen Sykes's recent book on Anglican identity has already had, and that it may contribute to a deeper and more truly catholic understanding of our particular theological heritage.

**THE MYTH OF CERTAINTY David Taylor**

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1986 154pp. No price

ISBN 0 8499 0547 8

In this slender volume the Professor of English Literature at Bethel College, St. Paul, Minneapolis seeks to counsel the Reflective Christian in the Church who cannot dot every 'i' or cross every 't' of the Church's faith. Professor Taylor draws on his own experience of the challenges to faith which arise within faith itself and those which come from being concerned with secular disciplines and this-world affairs. His basic question is, then, How can the Reflective Christian maintain a believing commitment in the light of these challenges?

His first response is to declare to the Reflective Christian that his faith would surely hold up if only he could be assured of its certain grounds? But, alas, too often the Reflective Christian's questionings to this end are met with pietistic rebuke, or he is compelled to silence as an impious doubter. While in the secular world his confession of such faith that he has leads to his being ridiculed as being schizophrenic. 'Conservative Christendom will allow you to think, as long as you think "correctly" or keep dangerous thoughts to yourself. The secular world will allow you to be a Christian, as long as your faith is kept in quarantine and not allowed to influence your judgments or lead you to question secular presuppositions' (p.60).

What then has Professor Taylor to say to the believer who cannot find answer to his doubts in the Church or acceptance of his faith in the world? Just this: that which he seeks is not to be found. He would have *certainty*. But no certainty can be given him. For certainty is a myth; an unreality. Calling on his own experience Professor Taylor says, 'My own experience is that for human beings certainty does not exist, has never existed, and will not—in our finite states—ever exist, and, moreover, should not' (p.94). The argument then is that 'doubt' is an element in faith not to be proscribed. In every act of faith there are other possibilities present; while the attitude and behaviour of faith can be accounted for in a variety of ways, sociological and psychological as well as religious. 'Why, then, should we insist on being certain about God, on having proof of his existence, or on having unmistakable absolutes on which to build a faith when none of these is compatible with being finite creatures God has created' (p.97). Faith is like Pascal's wager; a staking of one's life on God without absolute certainty, either that he is, or what he is. Speaking again for himself, Professor Taylor says, 'I have learned to live with the rise and fall of the thoughts and feelings of faith, to co-exist with honest doubt, to accept tensions and paradox without clinging to it as an excuse for inaction' (p.145).

He interlaces with the development of his theme a number of fictional interludes in which the character Alex Adamson gives voice to the tension occasioned by his doubts regarding some of the doctrinal tenets of the Church. In these sections opportunity is taken to tilt at the dogmatisms of American Fundamentalism and at the pious platitudes of the super-spiritual. Yet the author affirms his own allegiance to the Evangelical faith and expresses the conviction that liberal Christianity has no shelter for the questionings of the Reflective Christian.

This reviewer's attitude to *The Myth of Certainty* is ambivalent. On the one hand we concur with much he has to say to the disturbed, thinking believer.

On the other hand we cannot accept that there are no ultimate certainties for faith.

Professor Taylor is right to castigate those evangelical Gnostics who believe they hold all the answers to the doubter's questions. They just have not. Their view of God is altogether too small; their answers too shallow. They would reduce God to the limits of their own tidy scheme. But God is greater than we think. And saving faith is no assent to the particulars of another's belief. Rather is it trust in God who by far transcends all the propositions of our grandest dogmatics. It is, therefore, quite false for the evangelist to declare that in the commitment of faith to Christ all the problems the mind may pose are solved. The truth is rather that from one point of view it is *in faith* that the most baffling problems for faith itself arise.

But Professor Taylor's denial of any certainties for faith is not acceptable. Maybe their numbers are far fewer than some preachers dare allow. But some there are nevertheless. And is not his affirmation that there are *no* certainties a tacit admission that there are some? For the burden of his thesis is that there is at least this one certainty that there are none. A man who sets out on a voyage takes 'risks'. He may encounter unforeseen and uncalculated problems on the way. But he is most surely certain that he is on a ship, and not in a taxi-cab when he puts out to sea. Paul the apostle had without doubt sure grounds for his faith. And all who know God revealed in Christ have *certainty of God* as the God of their salvation.

43 The Rough, Newick, Sussex

DERMOT McDONALD

**FAITH IN DIALOGUE: A Christian Apologetic** J.H. Gill

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1985 159pp. No price

ISBN 08499 0495 1

The author, presently teaching Philosophy and Religious Studies in the College of Saint Rose, Albany, New York, declares it his purpose to engage Christian Faith in open-minded 'dialogue' with other expressions of the human spirit. Thus on an early page Gill says, 'a dialogical posture is one that *listens* as well as shares. Faith in God is open to truth wherever it is encountered; it takes both the questions raised and the answers given by unbelievers extremely seriously' (p.12). It is his view that since all truth is of God, 'spiritual reality reveals itself where we least expect it' (p.91). Short chapters are consequently accorded to dialogue between Christian faith and the natural and social sciences, the humanities and the arts. Note is taken of the several particulars in which each of these complement the realities of faith and where each presents a challenge to that faith. There follows a chapter on world religions and their relation to Christianity. Gill rejects both the exclusivist and synergistic approach. He opts instead for the 'pluralistic', and accepts the developmental view of religion. He would find in each of the world religions its own expression of the 'Christ principle'. In this way he believes salvation comes to men and women of other faiths who otherwise have never heard of the name of Christ but yet because of him have their redemption. He declares, 'If one thinks of the revelatory and redeeming Word of God as focused or embodied in the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, as the

principle or basis upon which all true relationships to God are grounded, but which remains broader than this particular historical embodiment, then a richer interpretation of Jesus' statement is possible' (pp.98, 99). The presence of the 'Christ principle' in other religions is the operation therein of Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The blurb makes the claim that Faith in Dialogue 'will be immensely valuable to Christians trying to reconcile a committed faith with a mind and spirit open to truth wherever it is found'. That is, we think, a bit enthusiastic. College and seminary students may indeed be stimulated to further thinking by its perusal. But for most 'ministers and educated laymen' the compressed nature of its chapters and their several allusions to other ideas left unexplored will deny them its worth.

43 The Rough, Newick, Sussex

DERMOT McDONALD

**THE FOURTH DAY Howard J. van Till**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Distributed by Paternoster, Exeter 1986

xii + 286pp. £8.85

ISBN 0 8028 0178 1

This book is not, as one might suspect from its title, one more contribution, from a fairly elementary apologetic viewpoint, to the continuing debate about science and creation; rather it is a fine exposition of the relationship between creation theology and the scientific theory of origins, from a modern Reformed position. The 'fourth day' comes into it because as Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Calvin College, Grand Rapids the author's scientific expertise lies in the direction of the subject-matter of the 'fourth day'. The author's argument starts from a distinction between the rôles of science and biblical theology. The first deals with what may be called the 'internal relationships' of the Cosmos, the second correspondently with its 'external relationships'. This seems quite a useful way of looking at things, though doubtless it does not do entire justice to them. Since evolution (the all-embracing scientific concept) and creation (the corresponding theological one) deal with distinctly different questions 'both can be taught with integrity in schools, not as alternatives, but as complementary views of the Universe and its history'. Professor van Till works out this thesis in a way which tries to take both the Bible and the Cosmos seriously (by the Cosmos he means the scientific approach to its study). His opening section, on The Biblical View, is a fairly sophisticated statement both of the status of Scripture as the 'Word' (not 'words') of God and of the biblical teaching on the status of the Cosmos as *created*. Genesis, he maintains, is an introduction to the covenant relationship which is biblical religion; it fulfils the rôle of the preamble of an ancient suzerainty treaty in establishing who is the Senior Party to whom allegiance is due; He is none other than the *Creator*. Then follows a section on The Scientific View. Again, this is a sound exposition of a subject often treated inadequately. It majors on matters of stellar behaviour and evolution: biological evolution (the usual context with which the word 'evolution' is associated) is given only a paragraph. But the author confesses that he expects that 'a fully satisfactory description [i.e. in scientific

categories] for the processes of biological evolution will eventually be worked out'. He would be 'terribly surprised to discover that we live in a universe that is only partially coherent—that is, on the scientific level. (Does this mean then that he disallows miracles? Presumably not). The last section is on Integrating the Two Views. The creation/evolution debate has generated more heat than light and done great damage. But how are we as teachers in both university and school to handle it? On this point the author makes some very useful suggestions. He ends with a fine statement of what he calls the Creationomic Perspective (he avoids 'creationist' as a word already compromised). This places natural science in the framework of biblical theism; its principal methodological rules are those of 'categorical complementarity'.

This book is a fine attempt to present a perspective from which the Bible can be seen not only to retain its credibility in the face of present-day scientific understanding, but also to do a much bigger thing: to validate and provide meaning for the scientific enterprise itself. A book for those prepared to think hard and biblically.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

**THEOLOGY, CHURCH AND MINISTRY John Macquarrie**

S.C.M., London 1986 211pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 334 02353 X

This book is a collection of articles and papers which have appeared in different places and which Professor Macquarrie has put together for us in a single volume. Admirers of his thought will be grateful to him for this, and the careful reader will learn a good deal about how his mind has developed over the years. For this reason alone, the introductory chapter, *Pilgrimage in Theology* is of paramount importance. Here we read of Professor Macquarrie's own intellectual progress, from Evangelical Presbyterianism to a fairly 'High Church' Anglicanism, into which he was ordained as recently as 1965.

What attracts a Free Church intellectual to Anglo-Catholicism is worth a study in itself, but Professor Macquarrie quickly moves on to other considerations. Many of the articles concern his philosophical interests, and are quite illuminating. In them we discover his deep appreciation of Continental and American theology, and trace his involvement in, and gradual move away from, existentialism. The general tone of these papers is reflective and eirenic throughout; the author is concerned to present a balanced overview, not to advocate one particular position.

Probably the most controversial articles will be those dealing with the relationship of Christianity to other world religions. Here Professor Macquarrie's eirenic temperament seems to get the better of him, and he does his best to minimize the rather obvious exclusivist claims of Judaeo-Christian theology. This will not endear him to conservative Protestants or to those who might be described as 'Barthian', and it is no surprise to discover that neither Barth nor Calvin has been particularly congenial to Macquarrie during his career.

One or two concluding articles deal with the church's ministry, including the vexed question of the ordination of women. Here it is difficult to know just how the author would vote in a General Synod debate; he seems to see no theological objection to such a step, but plenty of practical and diplomatic ones! Still, these articles, which include an interesting piece on episcopal ministry, make for stimulating reading and deserve to be pondered thoughtfully in the spirit in which they were written.

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GERALD BRAY

**TRADITION RENEWED The Oxford Movement Conference Papers**  
**Ed. Geoffrey Rowell**

Darton, Longman, and Todd, London 1986 237pp. £12.95 ISBN 0 232 51667 7

This collection of fifteen historical and theological lectures commended by the Archbishop of Canterbury with a greeting from Pope John Paul II is worthy of close attention by all who care for the life and future of the Church of England. Few religious subjects of the last one hundred and fifty years have aroused more passion in Anglicanism than the Oxford Movement, proponents and opponents at times being locked in unresolved battles. It is to the credit of the organizers of the 1983 celebrations that they made use of speakers from various church traditions. All deal sensitively and informatively with prime issues in the present ecumenical atmosphere. Tracing Tractarianism from its 1833 origin, with emphasis upon its spirituality, sacramentalism, political and social theology, the reader is offered rich fare. Papers by Peter Toon, a known evangelical scholar, and Gordon Wakefield, a Methodist theologian, help to keep the balance between traditional Reformed views and what might appear to be a new infusion of Anglo-Catholic doctrines and precepts into the Church.

Of particular importance is W.S.F. Pickering's appraisal that Anglo-Catholicism has much declined from its 1920s hey-day, and that the early vision of completely catholicising the Church of England in a Roman direction has failed, the Movement now being a Party or Sect within the Church. With its Branch theory of Christendom, apostolic succession, baptismal regeneration, sacramental grace, and submission to authority, Peter Toon describes the Movement as 'Anglicanism in Popish Dress', and gives a succinct evangelical response to it. It remains to be seen whether the publication of these papers will fulfil the Editor's hope 'that the critical reflection they embody may contribute to the renewal of a great tradition within Anglicanism, and indeed within the whole church.'

But the question is hardly faced whether Tractarianism as it developed into Ritualism and Anglo-Catholicism is a legitimate expression of the Reformed Protestant nature of the Church of England. An obvious omission in many of the essays is the clear note of divine personal grace as embodied by the 16th. century Reformers in the Thirty-nine Articles and in their writings. It was left to Reginald Fuller in his essay to quote Dean Hook, a High Churchman, that, 'On the question of justification the Church of England and the Church of Rome stand in direct contrast'. Important as this is, A.M. Alchin admits

that the A.R.C.I.C. principles and theology are the direct result of the Oxford Movement. If therefore reconciliation with Rome fructifies, Tractarianism will have been largely the cause.

'Tradition Renewed' clearly marks the danger of disruption facing the Anglican Church and the possible emergence of a continuing Church of England adhering to Reformed principles. It is good that these papers are published, and it is hoped they may be widely read. On this ground your reviewer commends them.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

**HERE WE STAND Justification by Faith Today J.I. Packer et al.**  
Hodder & Stoughton, London 1986 189pp. £5.95 ISBN 0 340 34502 0

This collection, edited by David Field, marks the golden jubilee of Oak Hill Theological College; and seven out of the eight constituent essays were written by past or present members of its teaching faculty (James Atkinson's is the exception). In Anglican circles, of course, the theme could hardly be more topical; and it is treated from a wide variety of angles—biblical, systematic theological, ecumenical, pastoral and liturgical.

In 'Justification in the Old Testament', Michael Butterworth early anticipates the drawing of lines between Gospel and Law when he endorses the common view that righteousness in the Old Testament refers to conduct which corresponds to claims intrinsic to a concrete relationship, and that it has nothing whatsoever to do with the Latin concept of an 'absolute and impersonal' *iustitia*. (How this concurs with his undoubtedly true statement on the facing page that 'the Old Testament writers never lose the sense of fixed norms and standards implied in "righteousness"' [p.13], is not immediately clear). In the course of an analysis of selected texts—in particular, Genesis 15:6 and Habakkuk 2:4 (Paul's favourites), Deuteronomy and Isaiah 40–55—Butterworth brings us to the conclusion that the definitive Reformation concept of God's loving, saving initiative in bringing undeserving human beings into relationship with himself, is already a seminal Old Testament theme.

Steven Motyer detects a tension in the Gospel of Matthew that the previous essay had noted in the Old Testament (see p.27): between righteousness, on the one hand, as a human quality, and, on the other, as an exclusively divine attribute. Motyer argues that this tension finds its resolution in the Pauline synthesis which renders the utterly gracious and salvific righteousness of God as the very precondition of human ethical righteousness.

Whereas Motyer raises doubts about the fidelity to Scripture of the Protestant doctrine of justification, James Atkinson contends that it is not only thoroughly biblical but also patristic, and therefore ecumenical. In the last half of his essay, he draws out several (rather Barthian) corollaries of justification by faith. Among them: that the Bible is the Word of God, not

only because it is inspired, but also because of its *content*—the God who justifies man through Christ; that all human knowledge, theology included, is subject to Christological criticism; and that every ethical decision should be the product of a combination of faith and pragmatic calculation, rather than of mechanical deduction from abstract principles and rules.

Both Atkinson and George Carey take pains to point out that not all Roman Catholics have repudiated the Protestant concept of justification, citing the Ratisbon/Regensburg Conference of 1541 and Hans Küng in support. Carey argues, against Alister McGrath ('Justification: Barth, Trent and Küng', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 34/6), that Küng's position is typical of many contemporary Roman Catholic theologians and that, in spite of the passive recalcitrance of the magisterium, it represents ground for substantial ecumenical hope. He also proposes that the ecumenical cause would be much furthered if Roman Catholics were to abandon the problematic concept of merit for the more biblical one of reward; and if they were to build on the ecclesiology of Vatican II to produce a concept of the Church as *simul iustus et peccator*.

J.I. Packer's 'Justification in Protestant Theology' is entirely lacking in ecumenical flavour: he admits no differentiation within 'Romanism' which, together with Arminianism, represents the Scylla and Charybdis between which the Protestant doctrine navigates. The title of this essay misleads, since its analysis of Protestant doctrine ends in the seventeenth century.

Packer mentions the (for him, unhappy) influence of Greek patristic thought on the later Caroline divines of the Church of England. It was therefore quite fitting for Gerald Bray to make one of the less predictable contributions of this collection: an account of the attitudes of the Eastern Orthodox Churches to the doctrine of justification by faith. Much of his essay consists of an historical survey—covering the response to the Augsburg Confession of the patriarch of Constantinople in 1576, the early seventeenth century 'Calvinist' patriarch, Cyril I Lucaris, and the anti-Western revival of Orthodox theology under Vladimir Lossky this century. Bray's conclusion is clear: that, apart from the remarkable hiatus under Cyril I Lucaris, Eastern Orthodoxy has been continuously opposed to the Protestant understanding of justification, largely because of its identification of mortality (not sinfulness) as the effect of Adam's Fall and its consequent lack of a doctrine of original sin.

The last two chapters are both by David Wheaton, one on the pastoral, and the other on the liturgical, implications of justification. In the first, he argues that the crucial pastoral implication is the doctrine of assurance; and that another corollary is that evangelism should always hold justification by faith to be the proper content of the Gospel. On this last point, I should stress that Steve Motyer suggests that even Paul made use of this theme only in specific situations (p.34).

In the final chapter, Canon Wheaton causes no surprise when he argues that a liturgy faithful to the Protestant doctrine of Justification should give primary place to God's gracious acts towards man, and when he therefore holds Cranmer's 1552 eucharistic liturgy as normative. As a consequence, although he welcomes the presence of other themes—such as love of neighbour, the risen and ascended Lord and His final Coming—he objects to the sequential priority of human works over the divine Work, which occurs in

many of the current alternative liturgical forms.

This is a coherent collection whose members do (largely unintentionally, I think) interact with one another, at certain points to quite stimulating effect. This reviewer would have liked to have encountered a more considered treatment of the relation of the doctrine of justification by faith to the making of moral decisions. Both Butterworth and Atkinson assume the typical Protestant position that the affirmation of the primacy of a concrete relationship requires the repudiation of abstract moral norms, principles, rules etc., and imply that moral decisions are to be made by means of some form of intuition (though, it must be said, they both exhibit a certain degree of ambiguity on this matter). The questions of what rôle this permits a discipline of moral thinking, and how it secures itself against the dangers of situation ethics, are not faced. But, then, that would require a determined concentration that none of these essays has. It would also require a more creative and adventurous approach than is perhaps fair to ask of a book entitled, 'Here We Stand'.

Latimer House, Oxford

NIGEL BIGGAR

**EVANGELICALS ON THE CANTERBURY TRAIL Why Evangelicals are Attracted to the Liturgical Church Robert E. Webber and others**

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1985 174pp. \$12.95

ISBN 0 8499 0402 1

**Editor's Note:** This review of *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail* was written recently at the suggestion of Dr Gillis Harp, one of our overseas Consultants in Canada. Canon Bennett's review of the same book was already in press when this was received and was published in the previous issue of *Churchman*. The writer of this second review, being a native North American, brings a more personal perspective to bear on the important subject raised in the book and we trust that our readers will appreciate this unusual opportunity to read a second opinion.

*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail* is written as if the combination of Evangelical with Anglican produces, if not an oxymoron, at least a recognizable anomaly. Of course, many Anglicans, certainly many American Episcopalians, have willingly given up the evangelical label, leaving those in the more radical and more recently formed Protestant denominations free to take over this designation for themselves. So too something like the same group has been able to claim that they are the only born-again Christians—without quite explaining whether there could be Christians who are not.

However, some of these evangelical Protestants have rejected their evangelical religion for something more 'Catholic'. One such group, called the Evangelical Orthodox Church, looks to the East and Constantinople for its identity. Another group finds its niche in Anglo-Catholic parishes in the U.S. Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the chief centres of this movement is Wheaton College, Billy Graham's alma mater, where Robert Webber, the editor and principal contributor to this book, is professor of theology.

When I first met people like this in an Anglo-Catholic parish in Washington, D.C., I was surprised at their still wanting to be identified as evangelicals. As far as I could tell, this identity did not show in their

acceptance of sacerdotalism, or their Catholic view of the sacraments, or even Anglo-Catholic soteriology. Certainly, their high view and knowledge of Scripture set them apart from others in the parish, but their almost complete acceptance of Catholic ceremonies and ornamentation meant they were not easily distinguishable from the crowd. It also meant that the only challenge to Anglo-Catholicism in this particular parish came from Liberals and that the teachings of the Reformation, though poorly understood, were nevertheless generally reckoned contemptible.

As an evangelical Anglican, as one who values Reformed teaching and the liturgical tradition associated with the Reformed side of Anglicanism, it is difficult not to be curious about this phenomenon. After all, Professor Webber has subtitled his book: *Why Evangelicals are Attracted to the Liturgical Churches*. For him, and for the other contributors, liturgy means Anglo-Catholic liturgy. But it need not be so. Though a scanty minority in the U.S. church—less so in the worldwide church—many Anglicans continue to adhere to both their Reformed and their liturgical heritage.

Ironically, one of the reasons for the dissatisfaction of these evangelicals is their failure to find in the tradition in which they started any objective basis for the individual Christian's reconciliation to God. In the best of the contributions to this book, John Skillen, who teaches English Literature at Gordon College (the other academic centre for evangelicals on the Canterbury trail), describes his 'discomfort with evangelical spirituality which sets the self centre-stage, and hence triggers the very self-consciousness that abstracts one from involvement and inhibits action.' Who does not cringe with Skillen as he describes the evangelical clichés which so effectively make this point? He reminds us, for example, of the groups which invite each person around the room to tell how he 'met the Lord' or to 'share' what the Lord has been doing in his life that week. Such groups often end with the 'just' prayer: 'Lord, we *just* want to come before you, Lord, and *just* thank you, Lord, for *just* being who you are, and for *just* being with us, and we *just* pray that . . .' The way out of his dilemma came, Skillen concludes, through liturgical worship.

'Liturgical worship allowed me to forget myself in a corporate action not contingent on my own feelings at the moment for its effect. The efficacy of the liturgy does depend on *faith* but efficacy resides within the corporate *act* performed in faith, rather than in the faith as evidenced in the subjective *feelings* of the individuals present.'

This then is the irony. Contemporary evangelicals have been led by their tradition to look for actual righteousness in themselves as evidence of their own salvation and have only found the external righteousness in which they can have confidence in liturgical and sacramental acts. Just as the evangelical teachers who drove these pilgrims to the Canterbury trail did not realize how close they were getting to the essence of Roman Catholic teaching, with its insistence on works righteousness, so also our pilgrims do not realize the similarities between their own stories and the stories of the sixteenth century reformers who realized that they must look for their justification in a righteousness external to themselves.

This same story can be heard elsewhere and from such distinguished sources as the present Bishop of London. In an address given in America in

the Spring of 1986, Dr. Graham Leonard spoke of his own background in a conservative evangelical setting. He admitted his frustration at being expected to produce a particular subjective state, which he was never sure he did produce. He then said that the answer for him came only in the Catholic teaching about the sacraments. He went on to cite—not, as one might expect, the principle of *ex opere operato* or the notion of Eucharistic sacrifice, but—the Prayer of Humble Access: ‘We do not presume to come to this thy table, O Merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness . . .’ This shows us that when these evangelicals turned to liturgy, sacraments and priests, they were in some sense looking for a righteousness outside themselves. They wanted confidence about their relationship to God, and their search could be likened to the Reformers’ discovery of justification by faith through imputation of righteousness.

Because it lacks clarity, the position of these pilgrims on the Canterbury trail is subject to some criticism. Certainly Professor Webber sees the situation differently. For one thing, he understands the change he made in terms of his own model of justification and sanctification. His contention, as set out in his concluding essay, is that evangelicals are strong on the justification side of Reformed teaching, and the liturgical church is strong on the sanctification side. But the rest of the book does not bear him out. The kind of evangelicals he is talking about may emphasize conversion, but it is rarely conversion based on *reconciliation to God through imputed righteousness*. It is more often conversion based on practising a particular style of piety or religious observance.

On the other hand, the evangelicals who become Anglo-Catholics are not claiming (or demonstrating) a greater sanctity, but adopting a different style of religious observance or manners. The evangelicals come from a tradition in which religious observance is more blunt and parochial, and the manners more provincial. The Anglo-Catholics, on the other hand, are, by comparison, more subtle and catholic in observance, and more urbane in manners.

This difference in style is not discussed, as such, by any of the contributors, though several do mention the importance of recovering a sense of the historic church. All the contributors, for example, seem to have experienced the isolation which characterizes most American evangelical congregations. Apparently, they find in the contemporary U.S. Episcopal Church a stronger solidarity with the Apostolic Fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. It is difficult to evaluate such a conclusion.

Most, too, see the Episcopal Church as a community with a common approach to worship but a fair amount of diversity in religious beliefs. Yet the great teachers of Christian history have been primarily concerned about correct doctrine. It is only since the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement that Christian Doctrine has been displaced from its formerly central position.

What we see today is an accommodation with Liberal Christianity, although it is seldom recognized as such. The interest these evangelicals say they have in the Fathers is perhaps best understood by reflecting on the practical use made of the Fathers in the last forty years, namely as a source book for liturgical study and liturgical revision. The writings of the Fathers have not had a substantial practical effect on determining doctrine (other than sacramental) or on defining ethical standards. This may explain why

## Churchman

those who are mainly interested in public worship and liturgy exaggerate the Fathers' importance for Anglicans.

Admittedly, the above criticism can be made of many others with a liturgical interest. And while the claim to unity with the Fathers is eclectic and raises questions about this group's so-called catholic identity, other claims raise similar, more serious, questions about its evangelical identity.

For example, in one piece, a former Seventh Day Adventist minister talks about taking a Seventh Day Adventist to the Anglo-Catholic parish he was attending at the time. This visitor (who happened to be the author's father-in-law) pointed out that the ornaments and ceremonies were all signs of belief in the Real Presence. The author's response was to 'remind him that the mainstream Protestant Reformers continued to believe in the Real Presence, that Jesus' presence in the sacrament is *not* one of the issues of the Reformation.'

Sad to say, the Canterbury trail has many of the same defects of the old evangelical path. The problems that Professor Skillen identified in evangelical piety are not entirely absent from the piety Professor Webber describes. Unhappily, Professor Webber likes to dramatize important points in his spiritual odyssey by telling us he 'gulped' or he 'swallowed hard'—till we finally imagine his having to put himself under the special care of St. Blaise. He also describes the time when, alone in his office, he abandoned Calvinism:

Then in a moment of conviction, I stood to my feet, grabbed the answer part of my sermon in both hands, and vigorously crumpled the papers. Raising my right hand and arm high above my head, I tossed those answers with all my power into the wastebasket. I dropped back into my chair and sobbed for several hours. I had thrown away my answers. I had rid myself of a system in which God was comfortably contained. I had lost my security and turned my back on years of defending God's existence, his incarnation, his resurrection, and his coming again.

Continuing the description of the events that day, he writes:

'I wept and I wept . . . my student assistant came into my office. I told him what had happened and he wept. I went to my class and told them what had happened and they wept.'

The road we are on here is the Sawdust Trail of American revivalism, with its attendant emotionalism and anti-intellectualism.

Later, when he was in a 'crisis situation' about his 'church affiliation', Webber meets a 'charismatic Episcopal deaconess' friend crossing the Wheaton College campus: 'She took one look at me and said, "Bob, what's the matter with you? You look deeply troubled. I see strain in your face and in your eyes.'" After he 'spelled out his concern over church affiliation', she took him to his office to pray, locked the door, and turned out the lights:

I watched with curiosity as she drew a small silver vial from her pocketbook. She made the sign of the cross over the vial and uttered a brief prayer to set the oil apart as the agent of the Holy Spirit. Then she dipped her thumb into the precious oil and placed the oil on my head in the sign of the cross and in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

She then performed the 'healing of memories' for Webber:

She clasped her hands around the sides of my head and encouraged me to pray through every stage of my spiritual journey. Starting in my preschool years through high school, college, and seminary, we prayed through my spiritual journey asking God for a sense of direction. I began to feel a sense of release from the past. To this day the effects of that prayer are still with me. For the confusion about my spiritual identity was laid to rest, and my feeling about being drawn into the Episcopal Church was confirmed.

Scripture teaches that people are forgiven and freed from the past, based on the one oblation of Christ, once offered. Nevertheless, there is a need to examine ourselves in light of what the contributors to *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail* are saying. Why have Anglicans within the historic evangelical position not been able to minister to people like this when the Anglo-Catholics have? Have evangelical Anglicans been abandoning the historic liturgy that so beautifully expresses their theology and adopting in its place an emotional, subjective piety and observance, which in practice deny the Reformed doctrines of justification and sanctification? Perhaps evangelical Anglicans have accepted uncritically the informal, emotional, and subjective style of many free church evangelicals and, in the process, lost the ability to minister to those who, like Professor Webber, are dissatisfied with their revivalist roots.

Anglican teaching and worship should clearly teach salvation by a righteousness which is *perfect* but not inherent. This is the foundation of New Testament faith, and should not be obscured by either what we teach or how we worship.

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CHARLES FLINN

#### **FRANCIS SCHAEFFER — THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE**

**L.G. Parkhurst**

Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne 1986 221pp. £4.95 ISBN 0 86065 462 X

An intelligent young South American communist known to your reviewer and intent on communizing her country arrived in Switzerland on the verge of a nervous breakdown. A doctor she consulted told her to go to L'Abri where a man there could do more good for her than he could. She went, opened her mind to Dr. Schaeffer, and on a walk with him was led to Christ. She entered an English Bible College for missionary training, and returned to her country seeking to Christianize her communist friends. She was one of the many who found in Christ meaning and purpose in life through Dr. Schaeffer in whose honour this book is written. It is not an unusual story of a working class boy who made good.

Parkhurst divides his account into two parts, the Man and the Message, the former being of greater interest, the latter showing lack of clarity in content and style. That which emerges throughout is the courage of a fighter who faced family opposition to his call into the Christian ministry, scorn from his student fellows, public criticism, and his final five year struggle against

cancer, during which he continued his seminars, witnessed to hospital patients and medical staff, visited the White House, and made a final journey to England. As it appears in this book, the secret of his life was Christ's hold upon him, prayer, and his grasp of the integrity and authority of the Bible as the ground of personal, doctrinal, and church purity. The author shows that while Schaeffer's life was directed to winning others to Christ he was no 'heady' evangelist, but took a dynamic lead in divisive moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia which he vigorously opposed. He lived a practical spirituality, walking far when a student to instruct poor black children in the Bible, and later teaching the Faith to Down's syndrome and otherwise handicapped children.

Of particular importance is Parkhurst's account of Schaeffer's spiritual crisis at the close of his first three years in Europe when he came into a deeper experience of God, which the author claims is the real beginning of L'Abri.

In the second part of the book he is not so happy. Here he attempts to outline Schaeffer's biblical foundations. But he does not distinguish his words from those of Schaeffer. The short chapters deal with the subjects of Christian truth, faith, liberalism, the Godhead, man, divine guidance, the Church, and salvation.

It is unfortunate that in his laudation of Schaeffer the author should be led into extravagant language. Was it really true that 'Dr Schaeffer's work swept over the whole of Western intellectual life and thought'; that through Schaeffer 'Bible-believing Christianity really began to make an impact upon the masses and sweep across the American continent'; and that the film series *Whatever Happened To The Human Race* 'rocked the Western world', pp.98-100.

Nevertheless, this is a book with appeal to a wide public, whether Schaeffer 'fans' or not. But it should be read alongside Edith Schaeffer's more restrained book, 'L'Abri.'

Munden, 5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

**THE LETTERS OF FRANCIS SCHAEFFER** Edited by **Lane T. Dennis**  
Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne 264pp. £5.95pb ISBN 0 86065 453 2

The name of Francis Schaeffer is linked in many Christian minds with a rigorous intellectual defence of evangelical orthodoxy. Many have found his books hard-going and have not persevered. Many others have not even begun to grapple with the thinking of this man who sought to give answers to the questionings of Christian, atheist, and agnostic alike.

The publication of Schaeffer's personal correspondence will at once make his thought more accessible to the general Christian reader and demonstrate that far from being abstract intellectualism Biblical orthodoxy penetrates to the heart of reality as we experience it. Indeed the word 'reality' keeps occurring in this collection of letters which is sub-titled 'Spiritual Reality in the Personal Christian Life'.

The three main sections concentrate on inner spiritual reality, daily living, and finally, reality in marriage, family and sexual relationships. Perhaps the

thrust of the whole book may be summed up in the author's concern for the experience and living out of Christian truth as stated on page 76, 'It seems to me that we do tend to have two creeds—the one which we believe in our *intellectual assent* and then the one which we believe to the extent of *acting* upon it in faith. More and more it seems to me that the true level of our orthodoxy is measured by this latter standard rather than the former.'

The warmth of the author comes through in these letters—his obviously genuine concern for people in their need. There is neither the cold censoriousness of a moralist, nor the sentimental idealism of the humanist. For example his moving letter to 'Louise' on page 214 concerning the dangers of a 'platonic relationship' with a married man shows a true pastor at work, a man with one foot in the world of the Bible and the other in the world of today.

The humanness of the author comes through too—I lost count of the number of times he begins a letter by apologising for taking so long to reply.

For the Christian minister this is an extremely helpful volume; for any Christian who wants to see the vital connexion between Biblical truth and everyday experience this is an invaluable book; and for some who are feeling their way to faith and spiritual reality this could be an important aid.

There appears to be a line of print missing on page 82.

The Vicarage, Knutsford, Cheshire

MICHAEL WALTERS

### **AMONG THE SOVIET EVANGELICALS** Samuel Nesdoly

Banner of Truth, Edinburgh 1986 207pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 85151 489 8

This is the account of one man's visit to groups of Soviet Evangelicals, mainly in Leningrad, but also in Moscow and in the Ukraine. It encapsulates reminiscences from 1971 and 1978, with a short postscript written in 1985. Dr. Nesdoly is a Canadian Baptist pastor of Ukrainian origin, whose grandfather had been a spearhead in the Baptist Church in the Ukraine, and so he has a strong personal interest in the whole subject. His research into the history of the Russian Baptists was actually officially approved and subsidized by the Soviet Government, which enabled him to see and do more than the average tourist—without giving him complete freedom, of course!

These circumstances explain both the interest and the limitations of the book. It is not—and does not pretend to be—a comprehensive history or a balanced account of Soviet Evangelicalism (which the author insists on calling 'Baptism'). It is a series of impressions of Church life among Evangelicals in the Soviet Union, which are accurate in what they say without being a complete picture. The author's presentation of ordinary Soviet life is perhaps the most successful part of the book, because it gives the reader an accurate feel of what it is like to be a foreigner in the Soviet Union.

The dominant impression which comes across is one of unexplained happenings, apparently 'chance' meetings, a general climate of fear and uncertainty which keeps most foreigners on their guard and inhibits contact with the local population. There is the incomprehension of the ordinary Soviet citizen who cannot understand why the visitor was not allowed to

speak at the Baptist Church, combined with the secret explanations of why it has not happened. There are the people who appear out of nowhere, become very friendly, and then disappear again—who are they? And there are the paranoid foreign diplomats, convinced that every visitor may be subjected to the same petty harassment which is the norm of their lives.

There is also quite a lot about the spiritual life of the Church; the reminder that it has never tolerated liberalism, that it is vibrant with a deep-rooted piety which simply does not exist in the West, and the reassurance that in spite of everything, men and women are still coming to know Christ. Dr. Nesdoly moved within a closed circle of Baptists, and only occasionally refers to the wider world outside, and this is bound to distort the reader's overall impressions of Soviet life. Almost nothing is said of other churches, and Dr. Nesdoly's approach is generally not at all ecumenical—a pity, because that of Soviet Evangelicals themselves very often is. But for those who want a flavour of what they, as foreigners, might experience after a week or two in the Soviet Union, this is probably the best popular introduction to read at the moment.

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GERALD BRAY

**AN ALTERNATIVE VISION: An Interpretation of Liberation  
Theology Roger Haight**

Paulist Press, Mahwah 1986 345pp. £8.45pb

ISBN 0 8091 2679 6

The writer teaches theology in Canada. He has lived in the Philippines and visited Latin America and India as a visiting professor. The purpose of his book is straightforward: 'To "translate" liberation theology into a cultural context that extends beyond Latin America' (p.1). That context is the secular, affluent, Western world, obsessed with the rhetoric of its own freedom.

Roger Haight gives a brief overview of the main assumptions from which liberation theology is working. He then discusses the question of theological method in the light of liberation theology's challenge to the Western church, particularly the need to relate to historical reality. In subsequent chapters he tackles the main themes from classical theological reflection: God, Christ, the Spirit, the Church, the Sacraments, Ministry and Spiritual Life. The intention is to relate each subject to the church's witness in a post-Christian, pluralist world, stimulated and confronted by the stance which liberation theology has taken within the context of poverty and dependence in Latin America and elsewhere. The book ends with the Vatican's Instruction on liberation theology and the author's own commentary on it.

We are told that the book will proceed 'on a more general and abstract level' than the writings of liberation theology. This is somewhat of an understatement. The book is heavily theoretical, full of theological meta-language and turgid in its prose. The discussion is often repetitious and therefore becomes tedious. It is difficult to see who will have the stamina to read right through to the end.

The author unfortunately has not really achieved his purpose. This is not

so much an interpretation of liberation theology in a way which would challenge the myths of contemporary Western culture as a reinterpretation of liberation theology in Western categories of thought—a very different matter.

'In the light of liberation theology' is interpreted very broadly. It would be truer to say that liberation theology becomes the occasion for the author to explore his own brand of 'existentialist' theology. He completely parts company with one of the main emphases of liberation theology in failing to relate abstract theological concepts to the social reality of Canada. It is a typically Western theological treatise, content to discuss critically theory unrelated to concrete existence (except in the most abstract and general ways.). I honestly doubt that liberation theology would recognise here a kindred spirit.

The person who wants to bring the insights of liberation theology into the human experience of Western societies must first see the world from a critical Third World perspective.

Pinner, Middlesex

ANDREW KIRK

#### **PROTESTANTISM IN CENTRAL AMERICA Wilton M. Nelson**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1984 90+vipp. No price

ISBN 0 8028 0024 6

Wilton M. Nelson, a North American who lived and worked in Costa Rica for forty-four years, until his death in 1984, taught at the Biblical Seminary of San José. He completed the present short work, in Spanish, in 1975, adding a preface and postscript when preparing the English language edition in 1983.

It began life by invitation of the Commission for Studies of the History of the Church in Latin America (C.E.H.I.L.A.), a group of Roman Catholic historians whose purpose was to compile a definitive history of Christianity in that part of the world. It deals with Protestantism in Central America, one of the eight areas into which Latin America was divided for the purposes of the studies. To name the countries of the area—Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica—is to name the familiar in terms of world news while underlining the timeliness of this slim, but by no means small, contribution to the history of the Church.

The book's six short chapters deal in turn with protestantism during the colonial era and in the nineteenth century, the beginnings of national protestantism and its advance in the midst of opposition; the characteristics of the early evangelicals and the growth and development of protestantism in the modern period. The treatment is comprehensive but brief; the method is descriptive and factual with very little of the discursive and interpretative; the style is readable if somewhat cramped. For instance we are told of General Efraín Ríos Montt's eldership in an evangelical charismatic prayer group; his rise to power and his leading of a record 350,000 to 700,000 audience—by far the largest evangelical gathering in the history of Latin America—in prayer for the welfare of the nation; and finally his fall from power; without explanation or comment. It is tantalizing to say the least. As is much else.

Yet, all this said, the broad sweep of the canvas has been covered, and I, for one, am grateful. It remains for someone else to fill in the details of light and shade, and of the many and varied hues and colours of the Central American Protestant spectrum.

Diocese of Liverpool

MYRTLE Langley

**CATHERINE BRAMWELL-BOOTH Mary Batchelor**

Lion Publishing, Tring 1986 240pp. £8.95

If history is a panorama of creative personalities this book will justify the assumption. In Mary Batchelor's hands, a vibrant old lady of one hundred and three years meets the reader with a challenge to live triumphantly in one's declining days. It is more a literary portrait than a biography. In it, Catherine is allowed to speak for herself with generous quotations of her feelings, thoughts, doubts and questions. A Puritan element seems to impregnate her life, with its utter devotion to God, a careful use of time and opportunities, a wholesome service to others, the sanctification of grief and sorrow, and her assiduous pursuit of godly living.

Alongside of the Christian faith and ethic which made Catherine what she is runs the loving atmosphere in which she was nurtured. The Booths were a closely inter-related nuclear family in what she styles 'the harmony of love', a love that spilled over into the Army's growth and influence. In this saga of a remarkable Salvationist woman, Mary Batchelor throws much light upon the Booth family in which its Founder, William, emerges as a commanding decision-maker and director of operations whose word no one dare brook. More likeable, is her father, Bramwell, his son and successor, whom Catherine appears to have adored.

A surprising picture is given of her childhood with Bramwell and the 'General' both purchasing houses in salubrious Hadley Wood, her parents employing a housekeeper, cook, French maid, and a governess. In time, the Booths became treated almost as royalty. The description of her grandmother, also Catherine, the Founder's wife, lying in a glass covered coffin, with thousands viewing her, before the grandiose funeral procession from the London Embankment to Dalston, with the General standing erect at its foot in a carriage flanked by his two sons on horseback, followed by the family and four thousand Salvationists, crowds lining the route, and on stands and house-tops, seems a strange picture of a Movement associated with the poor. But it speaks of the early affection which the Booths aroused; though it did surpass the funeral of the Duke of Wellington. Catherine remembers it all.

It is to Mary Batchelor's credit that she has not omitted such recollections in her portrait of her subject, for they speak of the immense influence the Army exerted on British Society that has continued to this day. Catherine Bramwell-Booth as she appears in this book with her ready wit, practical common-sense, and tireless interest in life is such that will arouse a deep respect for the best type of Christian women. It is a happy and triumphant story of her life.

**BLOOD BROTHERS A Palestinian's Struggle for Reconciliation in the Middle East Elias Chacour with David Hazard**

Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne 1985 224pp. £1.95 ISBN 0 86065 328 5

It is a rare book on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which is not only read but also appreciated by people on both sides of the conflict, from Jewish students at Hebrew University where it has been read by many, to Jordan where King Hussein is reputed to have ordered several thousand copies. What is it that makes this book so attractive to such an audience? It is that this book, like its author, is about reconciliation in the midst of suffering.

In his introduction to the book, David Hazard makes the bold statement that this book 'breaks new ground in what has been written about the Middle East turmoil and goes beyond the usual political wrestlings over "who owns the land?". He is justified in his statement because this book is the autobiography of a Palestinian who has learned and is learning to forgive in spite of much pain and suffering. Elias Chacour, an ordained Melkite, traces his life's story from his boyhood in Biram to his ministry today in Ibbilin. Through the pages of this book the suffering of the Palestinians is seen from the inside. The picture is unrealistic, objectively, but suffering cannot be either seen nor understood objectively, a fact which must be taken into account when looking seriously at reconciliation.

Those who are familiar with the 'facts' of the events which Elias Chacour so movingly and powerfully narrates will realise that this book is not 'history' and as long as it is not read in that light its contents will pose a deep challenge to every reader. The first half of the book in particular is overly unrealistic but it is the reminiscences of a young boy who saw and experienced much suffering. The rest of the book is how that same person, no longer a boy, has learned to say 'Father forgive them'. Abbuna Chacour helps us to echo those words.

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PETER FREY

**CHRIST TRIUMPHANT: Exorcism then and now Graham Twelftree**  
Hodder and Stoughton, London 1985 252pp. £5.95 ISBN 0 340 34247 1

This is an important book for those who want to understand the subject, and even more so for those who in their ministry want to be more effective in getting to grips with the various manifestations of evil. The author is an Australian clergyman who has served on the staff of the All Souls College of Applied Theology, and has written to relate some of his research into *Jesus the Exorcist* to the present debate on the possibility and form of exorcism.

The book offers us a detailed consideration of the Biblical evidence for Jesus' work as an exorcist and the place of exorcism in the early church. The main question before the author (p.171) is 'In what way(s) does the New Testament contribute to the contemporary debates on exorcism?' and it is answered (p.193) 'Christ has fought and won the first and decisive victory over Satan and his minions: Christ is triumphant and we, in union with Christ, share that triumph as we await the final victory.' Many readers will

appreciate the balanced view on the subject expressed on p.175 that 'the contemporary Church would do well to follow the example of the early Church—not to ignore the demonic, but to focus attention on Jesus the healer who defeats the demonic'. C.S. Lewis's comment in *The Screwtape Letters* on this point is quoted with approval.

From the practical point of view there is a corrective against the use of any formula (for example, the Lord's Prayer or the sacraments) instead of recognising that it is Jesus who, through his Spirit, confronts the demonic and defeats it. Twelftree also rejects the suggestion in the former Bishop of Exeter's Report that a priest should be the chief exorcist where there is not a bishop so acting, seeing that what authorises an exorcist is *not* episcopal appointment, but the gifting of the Holy Spirit (Luke), belonging to the local church family (Matthew) and being one of the leaders of that community (James) (p.189).

*Christ Triumphant* is well annotated and indexed, and should be compulsory (it will be compelling) reading for all who find themselves in the front line of the contemporary battle with evil.

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DAVID WHEATON

**STREAMS OF RENEWAL The origin and early development of the Charismatic Movement in Great Britain Peter Hocken**

Paternoster Press, Exeter 1986 288pp. £7.95

ISBN 0 85364 422 5

In the popular mind it is often thought that the Charismatic Movement was a child of the 1960s. Peter Hocken has done us all a great service by documenting the early years of the movement and showing the way in which a number of individuals were spontaneously seeking and experiencing renewal in the Holy Spirit in the mid 1950s. These men came from different denominational backgrounds, with perhaps the Plymouth Brethren and classical Pentecostalists being especially in evidence. One outstanding example was Edgar Trout, a Plymouth City Councillor and Methodist, who himself had an experience of healing through a high church Anglican vicar. Subsequent experiences of the Spirit transformed his own ministry and also his relationship to Methodism. Most of these men were indebted in one way or another to the Pentecostal Movement but none actually became Pentecostalist, seeking rather to manifest their new experience of the Spirit within their own denominational framework. Peter Hocken sees this phase as a legitimate part of the development of the Charismatic Movement rather than merely being preparatory to it. They had little contact with each other during this early phase and it was only later that what we might fully term the Charismatic Movement emerged.

Hocken goes on to document the emergence of this movement in the 1960s. He narrates how the movement spread and its growing acceptance by the mainline denominations. In this respect he sees an editorial by Philip Hughes in the *Churchman* in September 1962 as being quite crucial in gaining credibility for the movement among Evangelical Anglicans. He relates the formation of the Fountain Trust and also traces carefully the influence of both American Charismatics and traditional Pentecostalists on the mainline Charismatic Movement. It is this part of the story which is better known, but

even here his careful and painstaking research reveals a number of new details.

Mr. Hocken has not merely written a descriptive history but also provides some reflective analysis. He helpfully clarifies the distinguishing experience of the Charismatic Movement as being that of Baptism in the Holy Spirit and looks particularly at the relationship between that experience and speaking in tongues. On the basis of 1 Corinthians 12: 8–10 he argues that the essential experience in Spirit baptism is one of closeness to God rather than power for ministry. Consequently it is not surprising that speaking in tongues frequently, but not inevitably, occurs when one is baptized in the Spirit, since tongues also have to do with one's nearness to God.

His second thesis is that the current Charismatic Movement is to be seen as the fulfilment of a prophecy given by Smith Wigglesworth to David Du Plessis in 1936. The prophecy foretold revival on a worldwide scale that would eclipse anything that has been known in history with empty churches being packed once more and buildings not being able to accommodate the multitudes. It was said that David Du Plessis himself would play a major part in that worldwide revival. Du Plessis did play a major and formative rôle in stimulating the Charismatic Movement around the world and that part of the prophecy was certainly fulfilled. I am less convinced that the global claims of revival mentioned earlier in the prophecy have been fulfilled even by the current charismatic renewal. There must be more to come. Certainly much life and growth has taken place and spiritual refreshment has been poured out on barren soil. But it is hardly a world-wide revival of the proportions announced or on the scale of previous revivals.

This is a measured book for which we should be very grateful. It provides a mature perspective and understanding to very recent history. It commands respect by the careful way in which the research has been undertaken (there are 55 pages of footnotes) without suffering in interest because it began life as a university thesis. There are two minor things which would have enhanced the volume further. In view of the frequent reference to Philip Hughes's editorial in the *Churchman* it would have been good to have had that reproduced as an Appendix in full. Secondly, it would have been useful to have had a chapter sketching at least developments post 1965 even at the expense of the chapter which compares the Charismatic Movement in the U.K. with that in the U.S.A.. Personally I would think it too early to claim that Smith Wigglesworth's prophecy had been fulfilled by the mid 1960s. It is surely later developments in the movement, on into the 1970s and 1980s, which are the real test as to whether the prophecy will be fulfilled or not.

Mutley Plain, Plymouth, Devon

DEREK TIDBALL

**PURSUING JUSTICE IN A SINFUL WORLD Stephen V. Monsma**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: Paternoster, Exeter 1984 100pp. £5.95pb

ISBN 0 8028 0023 8

The author of this readable book 'taught political science at Calvin College for several years and served for eight years in the Michigan legislature'. Previous books of his include *American Politics* and *The Unravelling of America*. It is a sustained advocacy for a biblically-inspired commitment to

political life. Its thrust is however quite different from what is usually urged as 'the church's involvement in politics'. Here is not a call for the church to exercise a 'prophetic' rôle and exert pressure on the Government of the day, but rather for suitably gifted and committed Christians to enter polities and engage in the processes of government. After introducing the subject ('The Challenge'), the author goes on to argue 'The Case for Christian Politics'. This he does biblically, attempting to resolve (I think successfully) the tension between our Lord's teaching 'Do not resist one who is evil' (Matt. 5:39) and the duty of God's servants in government to execute wrath on the wrongdoer (Rom. 13:4, John 19:11). The key to the resolution is the idea of justice, and he illustrates this engagingly in connexion with the question, 'Should motor cyclists be required to wear helmets?'. Not that the consideration of justice at once answers the question; rather, it forms the basis on which an answer should be sought. He contrasts (to its advantage) the 'politics of justice' with what he calls 'moral politics' i.e. the idea that 'if something is morally right and good it is the proper rôle of government to impose it on all of society'. Clearly this distinction is one of great and far-reaching importance, and he discusses it very helpfully. His next chapter ('Redeeming the Political Process') discusses the political life, how the Christian legislator should live in the often sordid atmosphere of politics; how he should face its temptations, rise to its opportunities, and live through its disappointments. It is fine counsel, true to New Testament ideals. Finally he writes on 'The Options for Political Involvement', how in fact the Christian who feels called to this form of service for God finds his or her niche.

This is an excellent introduction for those who hear the call to enter politics: biblical, evangelically-committed and by an enthusiast who understands what he is talking about. It has an Appendix listing (for the U.S.) about thirty citizen organisations concerned with the ideal of justice.

Wantage, Oxon

DOUGLAS SPANNER

## DID THE VIRGIN MARY LIVE AND DIE IN ENGLAND?

**Victor Dunstan**

Megiddo Press 1985 147pp. £7.50

ISBN 0 946922 60 8

What an extraordinary book, but British Israelism is an extraordinary -ism! The British Israelism presented here is that heady, misty sort of the English variety, not the dangerous, heretical form of Herbert W. Armstrong. It ranks with *Trivial Pursuits* rather than with American *Blackjack*. Were it not for the continuing interest in fringe issues we might safely leave this volume. However, the generally marked paucity of solid exegetical preaching and teaching from our pulpits will do nothing to help refute the stuff found here.

Thankfully we are spared—the grammatical solecisms of the origin of Brit-ish, the assertion that the Japanese Samurai are from Samaria, the Geological mystery of the Stone of Scone, and the claim that the prophetic fifth kingdom in Daniel is the British Empire. Nonetheless, breathtaking claims are met in every chapter by this 'in depth research' which the author 'reveals' et al. Many of the statements are common knowledge though the

reader might be forgiven for thinking otherwise by the presentation adopted. And an exciting tale it is with the rich tin magnate—Joseph of Arimathea—the Onassis of his day, uncle to that same Virgin Mary who ‘escaped secretly by boat from Palestine’. Here we can revel in the secrets of the Holy Grail, delight ourselves in discovering the secret Druidic password that Pilate uttered to Jesus, ‘What is truth?’, and ponder the origins of the British and American peoples. It may be a great comfort to know that the Jesus family was linked closely with English Royalty, but what British heart could fail to be thrilled to think, after all, that God might be an Englishman?

Truly, never in the field of theological endeavour is so much believed by so few with so little evidence. Much is claimed for manuscript evidence—from the Vatican to the British Museum. Four documents are cited in all, but never with precision. The blurb speaks of a deliberate journalistic and popular presentation. Gratefully, this provides the only staying power and alone prevents it from falling from the amusing to the derisive. We await still (with bated breath?) a clear, formal demonstration of British Israelism’s credibility. Once again we have much assertion, more hypotheses and endless possibilities woven with a mish-mash of fact, loose and unrelated evidences, and the vaguest (and strangest) traditions and tales. I cite one example of many: the author thinks that the Druids have been greatly misrepresented, too much reliance being placed on Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*. He believes that we ought to look at similarities, rather than differences, with the Christian faith. Thus we find, for example, high morality and academic status amongst the Druids: a belief in the immortality of the soul, etc. But Caesar was *not* the shortsighted historian he is made out to be by the author. That the Druids practised human sacrifice is found also in Lucan, Posidonius, Pausanias and Procopius. The *Esus* they worshipped was not *Jesus* (despite verbal similarities) but the Celtic God to whom the sacrifices were offered. The attraction of the ‘forty Druidic Universities’ may have been in the escape that they provided from conscription and taxes. Transmigration of souls would well explain the Druidic notions of immortality, as Caesar suggests. And so it continues. Selective exegesis, a shifting sand of historical methodology, and a delight in *possible* equaling *probable* which then becomes dogma, abounds in this rich tapestry of British myth seeking to prove the truth of the book’s title.

Biblically, British Israelism has been shown to be false too frequently to concern us. I mention only David Baron’s letter concerning the ten lost tribes, quoted in *The Kingdom of the Cults*, by W.R. Martin, pp.298–301. It cannot be answered. Sadly, British Israelism seems to appeal to those wishing to remain orthodox but who delight in some strange aberration. It might appear harmless yet over the years I have met British Israelites each has been distracted away somewhat. Aberration eats up balance to some degree and one is left with the suspicion that the Christ angle in the pyramid or Israel redivivus is somehow just too important, too strong to contain. It was Dr. Albert Pieters who wrote that British Israelism ‘is one of the most baseless and absurd varieties of Bible study that the human mind has yet produced—which is saying a great deal! If you read this book I doubt you will disagree.

**TEN NEW CHURCHES Ed. Roger Forster**

Marc Europe, Bromley, and British Church Growth Association 1986

176pp. £1.95pb

ISBN 0 947697 20 9

It is often true that praxis illuminates dogma and this is certainly true of this brief paperback. It is an account—or rather ten accounts—of the founding of new churches in the British Isles and is, in my view, of an importance quite unrelated to its size.

Obviously it will be of interest and indeed great value to those engaged in church planting or church revival in these islands for there are certain principles which are common to each of these accounts. It is revealing how often reference is charitably made to established churches being primarily concerned with maintenance rather than mission for, to over-simplify somewhat, the truth is that churches grow when they set about evangelising as their first priority—providing that their outreach is genuinely related to the situation of those they are seeking to bring to God.

But this volume ought also to be of great interest to those who are undertaking new work on ecclesiology. Too often that work is based on the tired presuppositions of a thousand years of increasingly sophisticated ecclesiasticism. The freshness of these growing churches must make us think a good deal about what is the irreducible minimum which constitutes the Church of God. For example, what are we to say about Jack Hardwidge (of the Isca Church Fellowship) when he lists three crucial factors in the development of the fellowship: 'the Holy Spirit', 'pure, clear, loving relationships' and the 'recognition of leadership'. Those three elements appear to characterize all ten of the churches described here.

The book will also interest the church politician and strategist. Here the growth of the work of the Lord is based upon the principle 'Divide to Multiply' and certainly that has been this reviewer's experience in church-planting. Is the general tendency of the established denominations (to close churches, withdraw further from the neighbourhood and consolidate) simply a recipe for death? After all the Church of England is only doing today what the Free Churches did yesterday and it is perfectly plain what has happened to them. We need *more* churches not fewer and those churches need to be in natural communities. Instead of bemoaning the so-called failure of the parish system, we need to replan our church centres in relation to the actual modern urban 'villages'.

Finally this book has much to say to the ecumenist. The old tired churches are huddling together for warmth in an increasingly hostile world, instead of accepting the unity which already exists between every baptized believer in the world and getting on with the job of winning the world of Christ.

Of course it is true that all the churches detailed in this book are 'charismatic' but what they have to teach is applicable in every kind of church providing that fellowship is *under the Scriptures* and open to the Holy Spirit.

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