

# Book Reviews

**WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY, No. 25: ISAIAH 34–66**

**J.D.W. Watts**

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1987 386pp. No price

ISBN 0 8499 0224 X

In this, the second, volume of Dr. Watts's commentary on Isaiah, readers will continue to be grateful for a veritable mine of information on textual, linguistic and bibliographical matters but it is harder to say how many will be persuaded by the author's over-all view of the Isaianic Literature or much helped by the detail of his exegetical and expository work.

Watts continues to regard 'Isaiah' as a twelve-act drama with Isaiah 34 opening 'Act 6' and covering the period from 605–586 BC. Acts 7–12 deal successively with Jehoiachin (586–540BC), Cyrus, Cambyses/Darius (Is. 49–52:12), Darius/Xerxes (Is. 52:13–57:21), Artaxerxes (Is. 58–61) with Act 12 (New Heavens and New Land) covering the years 457–438. But however hard one strives to open one's mind to new possibilities (and sheer admiration for such a magnificent effort to break new ground compels one to be at least ready to adopt novel positions) the pervasive sense remains that the theory is dominating rather than arising from the text. Sometimes it even seems that Watts himself is hard pressed to find the right explanation of what he sees in Isaiah. The historical chapters, 36–39, dealing with Hezekiah's day, are particularly hard to justify in an 'act' dealing with the years 605–586. We are invited to overhear an exilic reader reading the story aloud so as to learn why God saved Hezekiah's Jerusalem 'but . . . did not do the same for Zedekiah, partly, the reading suggests, because of Zedekiah's lack of caution.' Now where do Isaiah 36–39 make that suggestion? 'Through the reading, the Vision hints at the reverse image from that portrayed in the history. Without a direct word, the entire terrible period is brought vividly to mind.' Really?

As readers of Volume One will remember, Watts's whole treatment of the Isaianic Literature is based on the contention that the old Davidic mould has been broken; the emperors are now the Lord's servants under whom Jerusalem is freed to be the home of a pilgrim people. In Isaiah 53 this means that the 'servant' is Darius and is to be distinguished from the 'sufferer' who is Zerubbabel. Darius is the root from a dry ground, growing up in the court of Cambyses as an insignificant and unpromising person. The disappearance of Zerubbabel from Ezra's narrative is due to the fact that he was brutally murdered by Tattenai and in this the Jerusalemites see the transference to one man of crimes in which they were all involved—but there is more: according to 53:6, there is also 'the religious and moral sense of iniquity, and an understanding of substitutionary atonement is born' thus making room for those Christological developments so dear to the New Testament.

Dr. Watts's determination to work out an analytical approach to the

individual oracles in the literature is beyond praise but it seems like colossal learning and immense diligence in the service of a lost cause.

43 Branksome Dene, Westbourne, Bournemouth

ALEC MOTYER

**THE NEW TESTAMENT BACKGROUND: SELECTED DOCUMENTS**

**C.K. Barrett**

S.P.C.K., London 1987 360pp. £12.50

ISBN 0 281 04294 2

This substantial volume is a new edition of Professor Barrett's well-known collection of documents relating to the culture, society and religion of New Testament times. The sources are carefully chosen and well annotated, and the new edition includes a considerable amount of material which has come to light in recent years. This is a particularly important feature of the book, since much of this information is still not readily available to students.

Of course, as with all such collections, the reader must bear in mind the fact that a lot of the material included would not have been known to the New Testament writers themselves, and even when this was not the case (as for example, the plays of the Greek dramatists), the apostles would not have used or been particularly concerned with, the texts quoted here. What Professor Barrett has done is give us some idea of the flavour of the period in general, and this is greatly enhanced by the addition of papyrological material. But students will have to be careful not to extrapolate from this and claim that the evidence offered here proves anything, one way or the other, about the actual text of the New Testament itself.

Having said that, those whose classical education is weak, or who need to refresh themselves in reading of the period, would benefit enormously from this volume which is likely to remain unsurpassed for some time to come.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

**A PATTERN OF FAITH: AN EXPOSITION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE** **Geoffrey Paul**

Churchman Publishing, Worthing 1986 157pp. £5.95

ISBN 1 85093 037 6

This book is a collection of addresses and sermons given by the late Bishop of Bradford. It was a tragedy for all concerned that the Bishop passed away after so short a time in office, and this book is a fitting tribute to his memory. The tone is generally evangelistic, for Bishop Paul is speaking to the layman outside, or on the fringes of the Church. He is concerned to present the major themes of the Gospel in a way which will command the attention and respect of a secular generation, but without compromising the essence of the Faith. This he succeeds in doing remarkably well.

The Bishop is far from being a reductionist in the style of some of his colleagues on the episcopal bench, and he does his utmost to show that the Person of Jesus Christ, in all his miraculous splendour, lies at the heart of the Christian message, and gives it its uniqueness. He is friendly to representatives of other religions, from whom he quotes freely, but he resists the temptation to fall into a kind of interfaith consensus. He is particularly good on the

subject of sin, reminding us of its grave importance in a suffering world. This is a theme of which too little is heard nowadays, and it is refreshing to read such a strong defence of traditional Christian teaching.

As with any book of this kind, there are parts which will provoke a certain amount of disagreement among some readers, but this should not allow us to forget the overwhelming evangelistic achievement which it represents. The subtitle is in this respect somewhat misleading, in that it gives the impression of a more academic work. There is good scholarship and theology behind what the Bishop says, but it is always accessible to a wider public, and is to be recommended to anyone wanting to know more about the basics of the Christian Faith.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

### **A TIME TO SPEAK: THE EVANGELICAL-JEWISH ENCOUNTER**

Edited by **A. James Rudin** and **Marvin R. Wilson**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1987 202pp. £9.80 ISBN 0 8028 0281 8

This collection of papers forms the third in a series of publications deriving from national conferences in America between Jewish and evangelical clergymen and scholars. These three conferences span a decade from 1975 to 1984, with an ever-increasing circle of participants and an increasing influence on the Jewish-Christian Dialogue. It is, therefore, an important contribution. Truisms, however, are sometimes nevertheless true; one such is that collections of papers are uneven in quality and perception: this collection is no exception.

It must also be said that it is in fact a very American collection, reflecting on almost every page the political and social context of that nation. This occasionally irritates, since conclusions as to method and context do not always translate across the Atlantic; but then again it was a national conference, and of course nearly half of the world's Jewish population and many of the world's evangelical Christians live there, so the need for improved understanding and respect is great.

There are nineteen papers in all, four on the issues of Zionism and Christian support for the State of Israel, four on the self-definitions of who is a Jew and who is an evangelical, two on how Jews and evangelicals have influenced American society, and three general papers on Jewish-Christian relations as we near the end of the twentieth century. But perhaps the most interesting will be the two papers on what and how the two communities teach about one another, and the four on the rôle and goal of law and grace in both Judaism and Christianity. Sadly, however, the two issues which are usually conspicuous by their absence in such conferences and publications, namely the person and work of Jesus and that of the identity, rôle and challenge of Jewish Believers in Jesus, are again absent. When will we see this being openly dealt with?

On the whole, this collection deserves a place in the library of those interested in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue, but it lacks any real passion or drive.

Let me close with two quotes from the book. Were they said by Jews or evangelicals?

Both evangelicalism and Judaism have erred in not knowing the law. Jerusalem has neither parted this world for the heavenlies, nor does it presently lie in silence as a buried tell . . . the golden city is a pulsating, modern city; Israel is real . . .

All Nations Christian College, Easneye, Ware, Hertfordshire

WALTER RIGGANS

**THE FORGOTTEN FATHER—Rediscovering the Heart of the Christian Gospel** Thomas A. Small

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1987 207pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 340 39915 5

This is a new edition of the book (of the same name) first published in 1980. In that book the author expressed his conviction that the charismatic movement, with which as Director of the Fountain Trust he was in close contact, while it had brought new life to many Christians had not brought maturity. Why not? His answer was that it stopped short of what the Gospel has as its ultimate objective, bringing us to the status and privilege of being children of the Father, and the delivering up of the Kingdom to 'God, even the Father'. It had promoted instead a Spirit-centred religion just as in some evangelical (and other) circles there had been (and still is) a Jesus-centred one. In the process the priority of the Father had been forgotten, and the clear teaching and example of our Lord overlooked. In the years since he first wrote the book Dr. Small has done a great deal of theological reading (connected no doubt with his teaching at St. John's College, Nottingham) and feminist theology, sometimes extreme, has emerged more strongly. But nothing has led him to change the conviction he then expressed, that the heart of the gospel is the relation between 'the divine Father and His equally divine and incarnate Son'. With that conviction we must heartily agree.

I found this book most rewarding reading. It is impressive in its biblical exegesis and insights, and at point after point not only informs the intellect but warms the heart—as for instance in its discussion of what the Spirit means when He moves the believer to cry 'Abba, Father'. The book is not a 'popular paperback' in the ordinary sense. It sometimes plunges into deep theology, as in its discussion of 'functional' and 'ontological' Christology, and I was sometimes left wondering if some of those who ought to read it might not find it at these points a little beyond them. But that is all the more reason why those who are in the position of teachers and leaders in churches should master its message and be prepared to pass it on; and even if not all can quite follow its occasional technical theology that is no reason why they should not read it. Thoroughly recommended, and at a price within everyone's reach.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage

DOUGLAS SPANNER

**THE UNFETTERED WORD: Southern Baptists Confront the Authority-Inerrancy Question** Ed. R.B. James

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1987 190pp. \$8.95 pb.

ISBN 0 8499 3094 4

Should the use of or rejection of the word 'inerrancy' be made the test of a true doctrine of Scripture? B.B. Warfield and James Orr gave different answers to this question early in the present century. The matter has been

brought very much into focus again in more recent debates among evangelical scholars in the United States of America, although it is not without its echoes in the British scene.

The issue has recently become a very crucial one among the American Southern Baptists. Does the trustworthiness of Scripture extend beyond matters of salvation to questions of history and cosmology, or does it not? This large denomination had a major conference on the issue at Ridgecrest, North Carolina in May 1987. The volume under review is related to that debate. Many of the chapters were already available in another format before Ridgecrest and affected the discussions which took place there. Other material in the book reflects on the Ridgecrest Conference.

In his forward Mark Noll says:

its authors, with perhaps a few exceptions, do not feel 'inerrant' is the best word or the most helpful word, to describe the character of the Bible. Most of the authors would call themselves 'moderate conservatives' who fear damage to their church if the 'fundamentalist conservatives' get their way and impose a strict view of inerrancy on the denomination.

The material is somewhat diverse in a number of ways. Some parts of it for example are more tied to the issue for the denomination than others. The volume falls into four sections. The first two parts deal with the truthfulness of the Bible and the study of the Bible and are of wide general interest. Parts three and four are much more denominational in their interest. Part three deals with three great Southern Baptists of the past (A.T. Robertson, E.Y. Mullins and W.T. Connor), and discusses whether or not they were inerrantists while part four is concerned particularly with the stance of Baptists on creeds and confessions.

It is also somewhat diverse in terms of the standpoint of the authors. T.J. Nettles, who wrote chapter ten, is an inerrantist. Unfortunately his chapter is perhaps the one which is of the least interest to non-Baptists. Not only are his views criticised by a number of the other contributors, but also by the editor himself in his introduction to this particular chapter. Nettles could be excused for thinking his presence among the authors was a mere token acknowledgement of the inerrantist case. Mark Noll and Clark Pinnock were two of the non-Baptist participants at Ridgecrest (J.I. Packer was another), and they write the Foreword and Afterword respectively. Although these two men are confessedly inerrantists, they give no exposition of it in their contributions.

A third way in which the material is diverse is in its quality. The articles in part 1, under the general heading of 'The Truthfulness of the Bible' confront the main issue. The first of these deals with the particularly important question of 'Jesus' View of Scripture' and it is by R.A. Culpepper. It is very disappointing. The author makes a number of sweeping statements such as, '[Jesus] said nothing about the Inspiration of Scripture', and some of the exegetical comments (especially on Matthew 5 and on Matthew 23:23) are most unsatisfactory.

C.H. Talbert in the next chapter ('The Bible's Truth is Relational'), states his own position in the following terms: 'The Bible speaks with authority on relational or soteriological matters, not necessarily on incidental matters of fact.' He contends that inerrantists do not take the humanity of Jesus

seriously enough. He argues that if He was human He was, in His human nature, finite therefore fallible. Without doubt, however, this needs much more discussion. It could be argued that finite knowledge does not necessarily involve fallibility, when it is predicated of One who was divine as well as human. He says that inerrantists maintain 'when Jesus speaks, even in the area of matters of fact, it is God the Son speaking'. Surely if we take the Chalcedonian formula seriously on its 'Alexandrian' as well as its 'Antiochine' sins we *must* say this or we will be guilty of dividing the Person.

By far the best of these three chapters is that by Fisher Humphreys, 'Biblical Inerrancy: A Guide for the Perplexed'. Most of the authors recognize the distinction between Simple Biblicism, the believer's attitude of confidence in the authoritative Word of God, and Elaborate or Strict Inerrancy, a developed doctrine of Biblical trustworthiness emphasizing inerrancy in history and cosmology as well as in matters concerning salvation. Humphreys deals with what he calls the Strict Inerrancy doctrine and with objections to strict inerrancy by non-inerrantists. His treatment is eirenical, sensitive and well-presented, even though he may not carry all his readers with him when he says 'I believe that when inerrancy is qualified carefully, I am unable to detect any substantial differences between it and the high view of Scripture offered by many non-inerrantists.'

Part two presents two interesting chapters on the Study of the Bible, and particularly on the place of Biblical Criticism for those who accept the authority of Scripture. The first of these, on the Pauline view of women, by C.H. Talbert, is not fully relevant to the inerrancy issue, but the second by the editor on 'Authority, Criticism and the Word of God', in which he works out in detail the difference between relational and strict inerrancy views of authority and argues the case for the former, is in general well argued and merits serious consideration by inerrantists.

What should be our attitude to this debate? There are many instructive parallels between modern debates about Scripture and patristic debates about the Trinity and the Person of Christ. A study of the earlier debates, for example, makes it clear to us that questions of terminology, although not all-important, are not to be treated as mere quibbles, of no real importance to the great mass of believers. Christians cannot help thinking about their faith and when they do, several questions must arise and must be faced.

This happened, for example, during the Arian debate. Athanasius championed the great word *homoousios* ('of one substance') at Nicaea, maintaining that it was the only word well-fitted to safeguard the true deity of Jesus Christ. Several other words were suggested during the turbulent decades which followed. *Anomoios* ('unlike') which we might call the 'unitarian' position, *homoios* ('like') the 'liberal' position, and *homoiousios* ('of like substance') which we might label provisionally 'an inconsistent orthodox' position.

*Homoios* was vague. You could read as much or as little as you wished into it. *Homoiousios* at least sought to relate Christ to the being and not simply the functions of the Father, but did not specify the areas of or degree of 'like-ness'. Only *homoousios* adequately set out the identity of being of the Holy Person. Yet *homoousios* was suspect for many theologically-minded Christians. Some of the modalists had used it to set forth their heresy. Eusebius of Caesarea and those influenced by him were very scared of modalism and rejected the word *homoousios* for this reason.

The debate with which the authors are concerned in this volume is also about terminology. Several of the authors make the point that when the term inerrancy is used by 'sophisticated inerrantists' it has to be qualified in many ways so as to make it clear how it is being used. This is fair enough. Athanasius had to explain the sense in which he was using *homoousios* to show that he was not employing it in a modalistic sense.

When properly used the word 'inerrant' is a useful, and, some of us would want to argue, even a necessary word to set forth the trustworthiness of Scripture. There are great difficulties in the 'limited inerrancy' position. For example, Christianity is grounded in history and it is not easy to break up the stream of redemptive history so that accuracy in the recording of some events is seen to be vital while it is not in relation to others.

Does this mean then that those of us who hold to inerrancy have to reject 'limited inerrantists' and refuse to recognize them as conservative evangelicals? Not necessarily. The attitude of Athanasius during the period 360–363 is most instructive as far as this is concerned. After thirty-five years or more of controversy in which he had been impugned, attacked and banished, and which would have embittered many a man, he spent those years in developing relations with the Homoiousian Party, convinced that many of them were just as sincere believers as he in the Deity of Jesus. He sought—and with some success—to show them that their favourite word was not a sufficient hedge against heresy and that his own was unobjectionable. As a result many of the Homoiousians accepted the Nicæan Creed. The present reviewer would maintain that it is such loving patience and understanding, and yet firmness which is needed in the present debate.

Bible Training Institute, 731 Great Western Road, Glasgow G12 8QX

GEOFFREY GROGAN

## **FRONTIERS IN MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER**

**Michael Nazir Ali**

Regnum Books £6.50

This book majors on Christianity in a Muslim land and context, and the Church in Pakistan is much in evidence throughout the book. I approached it with trepidation as someone who is seeking to share the gospel with Muslims living in the U.K. and I wondered how relevant it was for witness in London or Bradford. A basic knowledge of Islam is required to get something out of the book and there is much to get out. I found it rewarding reading and a prompt reminder of how much our Christian brothers and sisters in Islamic dominated lands need our prayers and support.

A question I have about dialogue, whether it be with Islam or any other religion, is just how far do we go? Christianity is unique and Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to God. Thus, by definition, Islam is a false religion and we must be careful not to compromise the Faith. Some students of Islam have begun with Christian convictions and no doubt the best of intentions but have moved towards Islam and begun to deny tenets of the Christian Faith in their attempts to harmonize the two.

I do have a couple of criticisms about this book: the ecumenical/inter-faith references and the 'justice, peace and bias to the poor' terminology. First,

the ecumenical/inter-faith issue: We read on page 95, 'The Church should reaffirm its wholehearted commitment to ecumenism and to the National Council of Churches in Pakistan'; on page 97, 'We reaffirm our critical commitment to bodies like the Christian Conference of Asia and the World Council of Churches'. And at the end of chapter 11—Christianity in relationship to other faiths—the author comments about Christians attending worship ceremonies of other religions and praying with non-Christians. But a distinction must be made between prayer *for* and prayer *with* non-Christians (Muslim or not) and worship to our God with non-Christians and worship to a false God.

My other concern was the 'justice, peace' terminology for the Gospel. There are references to this throughout the book. I quote, page 80, 'However we have to bring the distinctive witness of the Gospel to our context and to relate it to our society's search for justice and peace'. On page 88 we read of Mother Theresa's work commending the Gospel, but what is Mother Theresa's Gospel?; on page 145, 'we must work for the good of the entire nation and especially of the poor, the weak and the oppressed'. I am not denying that these issues are important but millions of Muslims, whether they are rich or poor, privileged or underprivileged are going to Hell unless they repent of their sin and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

These criticisms apart, this book is worth reading and gives valuable information to those of us seeking to share the Gospel with Muslim neighbours.

London SW6

ROGER COOK

**GOD'S ACTION IN THE WORLD: The Bampton Lectures for 1986**  
**Maurice Wiles**

S.C.M. Press, London 1986 viii + 118pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 334 62028 X

Professor Wiles holds the Regius Chair of Divinity at Oxford, and this volume gives us his Bampton Lectures for 1986 almost as delivered, not enlarged as the usual custom has been. They deal with a very controversial topic of philosophical theology: how exactly can we envisage God as acting in the world? When on the one hand physical nature seems to be (so science suggests) a closed nexus of cause and effect, and on the other personal experience seems to indicate a moral responsibility to demand freedom of choice in the sphere of decision, what room is there left for God to act in our world? 'How does He affect what happens to us in our lives, and in what ways and by what means?' These are exceedingly difficult questions to answer, and one can argue oneself out of faith in the attempt to do so. It is often overlooked that in the much narrower field of personal life it is almost equally puzzling to reconcile two of the undoubted facts which themselves constitute the problem, i.e. to see how freedom of choice can be reconciled with the functioning of the brain and body as a physico-chemical machine. While *that* problem remains unsolved we need not be knocked off our balance by the wider one.

Professor Wiles's eight lectures discuss the relationship of Creator to creation; the problem of evil; providence and history; providence and personal life; God's action in Christ; and God's action in us. He is easy to



read, but the digressions he makes often render it hard to grasp immediately just what his own position is. There is apparently nothing new here over and above what he has expounded before; his position remains what may fairly be called deist. God's one action is the totality of creation, 'the whole continuing creation of the world'. In that order which He has established He never 'intervenes'; the nature of the creation is 'incompatible with the assertion of further particular divinely-initiated acts within the developing history of the world'. Of course this rules out miracle, predictive prophecy and so on. Wiles would exclude even the Incarnation and the Resurrection as specific acts of God; answers to prayer (as commonly understood) disappear as a matter of course. With regard to the latter he appeals to the case of the central petition of the Lord's Prayer: 'Give us this day our daily bread'. This is not a request to God to do something quite specific now (why not?); rather it is an acknowledgement of the givenness of the world, and of the need of all men ('us') to pattern ourselves on it. And so with all prayer. We are not to expect God to respond to our requests in specific and particular ways.

Professor Wiles's whole position seems to stem from the fact that he looks for the unity underlying all things to be discernible within the realm of what makes up experience, using that term to denote all that comes within the purview of the physical and the human sciences. God's one act was to constitute this unity by creation; thereafter (in the logical sense of that word) nothing is inserted into it; even the Resurrection was not a new thing. The biblical position (and Wiles sits, I think, very loosely to Scripture) would surely be that the unity is to be found at an altogether deeper level; not in phenomenal nature but within the thoughts of the invisible God Who is always true-to-Himself, self-consistent. And such a position clearly allows for miracle and much else which he denies—foreknowledge, election and so on. The collect for the eighth Sunday after Trinity admirably expresses this; *all* events are particular acts of God, not just the more significant ones, let alone the one act of establishing the creation. Of course this view involves profound problems of its own, of another sort. But it is far truer to Scripture, and, I believe, to the deep spiritual instincts of the believer. The Passion of our Lord, and Peter's affirmation about it (Acts 2.22,23) are infinitely more significant as Christian orthodoxy has always understood them than as merely a 'form of retrospective interpretation of experience'. Wiles ends by quoting Walter Kasper: 'The God who no longer plays an active rôle in the world is . . . a dead God'. He defends his God against this imputation; but most believers, I think, would agree with Kasper.

There are seven pages of notes and a general Index.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage

DOUGLAS SPANNER

**THE COSMIC BLUEPRINT Paul Davies**

Heinemann, London 1987 224pp. £12.95

ISBN 0 434 17702 4

The fact that a book of this title can be written at all is indicative of a change in scientific thinking over the past few decades. Professor Davies describes how science has been pervaded by the Newtonian/thermodynamic paradigm of a slowly decaying universe described by analysis and reduction

of observations. But is this the whole truth? Are we imprisoned in a predestined universe which is doomed to heat-death? Bertrand Russell said that any worthwhile philosophy of life must be based on the firm foundation of unyielding despair. The physicist Steven Weinberg has stated that '... the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless.'

This is still Everyman's view of science. Professor Davies does not negate reductionism, but shows that it cannot be the whole truth—there must be some overall holistic theory. Far from inhabiting a completely deterministic universe, such as Laplace envisaged, forces of randomness and chaos lead to an unpredictable future for creation. Newtonian mechanics do not lead to predictability.

Davies shows that the appearance of *organization* in the universe is not at variance with increasing *disorder* predicted by classical thermodynamic theory. Life cannot be reduced to physics, for the mystery of life is how the living object 'operates collectively in a coherent and co-operative fashion' (p. 101). Appeal to 'vitalism' or higher transcendent or mystical explanations are firmly ruled out, however,—Davies believes that higher principles within yet-to-be-discovered scientific laws will offer adequate explanations.

Davies turns from biological concerns to the grand ideas of cosmic organization. The more we discover, the more we are confronted by baffling questions about the cosmos and our relationship to it as conscious observers. The temptation for Christians is to rush in with a 'God of the Gaps' theory to fill in the blanks in our knowledge. The danger of this is shown by the fact that in the 1950s the 'Big Bang' was firmly placed beyond the realms of science, but since then advances in particle physics and astronomy have enabled us to investigate the early universe in a way undreamed of thirty years ago. Today, we have no shortage of theories about the early universe, but who is to say that they will forever remain untestable?

Davies's discussion of the unfolding universe is pervaded by a strong sense of the need for overall purpose and control. There is a strong teleological 'feel' about the universe. He invokes 'organising principles' that must be at work over and above the known laws of physics—in fact, he speculates that the laws themselves may well need revision.

This book covers many areas of scientific thought. It shows how analysis and reduction cannot furnish all the answers to our questions. Although much of the book is speculative, there seems good reason to believe that there must be logical organizing principles at work in order to explain how our complex universe can appear out of apparent randomness and chaos. To Davies, the fact that the universe has organized its own self-awareness in the form of you, the reader, is powerful evidence that there is 'something going on'. It is interesting and exciting to read such a book as this. When compared with much recent theology, one is forgiven for feeling that here are subjects and topics that have been overlooked because the Church is dominated by timidity, inwardness, scepticism or a suffocating preoccupation with ecclesiastical joinery. We should pray for men and women of faith to be raised up by God to deal adequately with ideas such as those covered in this book.

**SCIENCE, REASON AND RELIGION** Derek Stanesby

Croom Helm, London 1985 210pp. £27.50

ISBN 0 7099 3360 6

Canon Stanesby, who graduated in Philosophy, has made a special study of the philosophy of science, especially in its bearing on the question of religion. Currently he is in charge of St. George's House, Windsor Castle and organizes conferences for clergy and others on these topics. The present volume, which has recently been reprinted, is an excellent introduction to a concern very central for our generation to the general question of Apologetics; for as he points out, Biblical critics and theologians, mindful of the success story of science and anxious to emulate it, have uncritically assumed that the methodology of science and the principles upon which science proceeds had been firmly established and were well understood. With this unexamined conviction they embarked—and still do embark—on their work of subjecting the New Testament writings to more rigorous 'scientific methods' of criticism, *quite oblivious of the fact that the very philosophy of science itself had, in the meantime, undergone a drastic transformation*. Thus, many of them continue to be inspired by a supposed methodology of science which has long since been repudiated by the best scientists themselves. This is a tragic state of affairs; it not only means much wasted effort, but it also undermines faith for no reason at all.

Dr. Stanesby's first chapter is 'The Authority of the Senses'. Following Comte there arose a variety of positivist emphases which led to what became known as the Received View of science. Science proceeded first by the collection of facts (things indubitably certified by sense observation); these were then generalized by logical induction. Then, hypotheses were proposed to account for the facts; and finally the hypotheses were tested by deduction of their logical consequences and appeal made to sense-observation to see if these consequences were the case. If they were, the hypothesis in question was, so far, verified. The notion of Verification thus became central to the Received View of science, and in the hands of Ayer and others it blossomed into the Verification Principle which asserted that propositions are meaningful if, and only if, they are capable of positive verification. Otherwise they assert nothing real; they are merely expressions of our feelings. Thus all metaphysical propositions are meaningless, mere non-sense; this includes all theological statements. How the Verification Principle and with it the Received View have suffered total eclipse is the theme of this fascinating chapter. Its demise was brought about, not by the theologians, but by the scientist-philosophers.

The next chapter, 'The Retreat from Authority', continues the story. It centres chiefly around the philosopher Karl Popper, who in place of the Verification Principle (which purported to distinguish sense from non-sense) proposed a Falsification Principle. This distinguished rather science from non-science: scientific theories were statements capable of being falsified. Metaphysical statements were not capable of falsification, but they were not on that account meaningless—they might be highly meaningful. This of course rehabilitates religious claims to truth. The element of fallibility (foreign to positivism) thus becomes firmly entrenched in science, for a scientific theory remains always open to falsification. Popper's thought owes a lot to evolutionary ideas. The basic activity of organisms is *problem solving*, and the growth of human knowledge is seen as a continuation of the purely biological evolution of species, and by a mechanism Darwinian rather than Lamarckian. New

scientific theories are analogous to mutations and are sorted-out by falsification as a sort of natural selection. It is because the physical senses have been evolved as a means of coping with the problems of the actual environment that, for instance, Popper regards them as giving reliable information about it.

Popper's work has not of course escaped criticism, and the next chapter—'The Retreat to Irrationality'—discusses some responses to it. Positivism and the emphasis on falsifiability had in fact been attempts to establish the essential rationality of the scientific enterprise, a rationality which most of us would concede at once. Not all, however; Thomas Kuhn partly and Feyerabend more strongly have argued for its essentially irrational nature. Others have followed them, and the idea has been proposed that science, and religion too, are to be regarded as a sort of 'language game'. Chess, all would agree, though a fine game is not a fundamental element of reality; it is just a human invention. The important thing for us is to decide to play it- or not to-, and then to stick to the rules: so with science and religion. On this view science no more puts us into touch with objective reality than chess does, nor does religion. A final chapter, 'Science, Religion and Rationality', brings the argument of the book to a conclusion—not, to your reviewer, an entirely satisfactory one from a Biblical perspective.

This is a very fine book, both demanding and rewarding. It is one from which I have learned a lot, and to which I shall hope to return. Each chapter is followed by a page or two of notes; there are six pages of references, and a good general index. It is to be hoped that it will prove possible to produce it in a cheaper format.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage

DOUGLAS SPANNER

**DONALD COGGAN: SERVANT OF CHRIST Margaret Pawley**

S.P.C.K. London 1987 286pp. £10.95

ISBN 0 281 04326 4

To write a biography of a person still alive is no mean task. The temptation is to be less than candid or to over-indulge in adulation. Margaret Pawley avoids both extremes and gives a sensitive, scholarly, and detached assessment of a clergyman, who, if he did not reach the public eye as did William Temple, yet made his mark upon church and nation in ways that future generations may warmly acclaim. His biographer presents a picture of a many-sided man as an oriental scholar, an able leader, a wise strategist, and a fervent Christian who though shy threw himself whole-heartedly into whatever task he undertook. In spite of the many high offices he filled, and his chairmanship of committees that produced the New English Bible, the Revised Psalter, and the Revised Catechism, he is shown as one who never lost the common touch. The hand-written notes he wrote to encourage people in need, his child-like joy in lighting fires on the Yorkshire moors, and his humorous asides in the northern dialect run alongside his academic successes. London born, of west country forbears, Margaret Pawley traces his career from schooldays through university, ordination, college tutor, Principal, to his Bradford bishopric, and on through York to Canterbury, in all spheres of which she portrays a servant-leader who won wide respect.

To have obtained a First in most of his university examinations, and to have risen to the chief office in the Anglican Communion while retaining his modest

disposition speaks much for Coggan's Christian character. Those who knew him in General Synod will recall that by speech and manner he never attempted to make an impression but was always the gentle scholar. He stands forth in this book as a quiet-spoken leader who exercised an authority a more extrovert individual might envy. Possessing over-flowing energy, his readiness to endure hardship is evident in most pages, not least in his development of the London College of Divinity from small post-war beginnings to that of a premier theological college. His vigour as Bishop of Bradford that saw the building of new churches and vicarages alongside the evangelistic and pastoral work of the diocese, preaching, writing, after-dinner speeches, and wide correspondence, marks the measure of the man. Mrs. Pawley's final chapter of Coggan's life as Archbishop is a bewildering panorama of an episcopal workaholic whose world travels make him a modern St. Paul. But she does not ignore or minimize his weaknesses: his failure to consult others, his difficulties in working through committees, his dislike of administration, and his martinet spirit.

In the present flush of numerical evangelical growth in the Church of England Mrs. Pawley notes that Coggan made a vital contribution to the rise of intellectuals of this Party, and to the present influence of evangelicals in Church circles. She points out that he had come to a conservative evangelical faith and experience while young and never seems to have left his first love or lost his way in the morass of doubt. He had, she says, early fallen under the spell of the long deceased Charles Simeon (1759-1836) and adopted his spiritual discipline, biblicism, love of the Anglican liturgy, belief in the importance of preaching, and missiological fervour. Simeon's shadow hung over him throughout his ministerial career. But she does not gloss over the difficulties an evangelical like Coggan faces in retaining his pristine doctrines during elevation to higher Anglican offices. Coggan himself broadened out his churchmanship, was enthroned in cope and mitre, at times attended the Roman Catholic Mass, was intimate with Cardinals, and blessed inanimate objects, in ways that he would never have envisaged when a Crusader or member of C.I.C.C.U. But he seems rarely to have moved from his early evangelical tenets, and his allegiance to evangelism and proclamation.

Coggan's ecumenicity receives much treatment in Mrs. Pawley's hands. She notes his visit to the Pope, his sorrow at the failure of the Anglican-Methodist re-union schemes, his support of the ordination of women to the Priesthood, his support of the *Call to the North* in association with Roman Catholic and Free-Church leaders, and his outlined plan that led to the forming of the Churches' Unity Commission.

This fascinating and comprehensive book, as the full index shows, is a valuable contribution to the life, witness, and interests of the Church of England during the mid-twentieth century, and of the political moves that lead to high office in its affairs. Nor, in all this, must sight be lost of Jean Coggan, Donald's wife, who is frequently mentioned and emerges as the best type of clergy wife in her support of an involvement in her husband's life, faith, and ministry.

As a definitive biography of Donald Coggan, Servant of Christ, this book is worthy of close perusal by all who care for the Church of England and the future of Christianity in the realm.

**THE GRAVEDIGGER FILE Os Guinness**

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1987 edn. 253 pp. £2.50 ISBN 0 340 39833 7

This is the second edition of a brilliant, trenchant, devastating yet strangely encouraging book first published in 1980, a trumpet call to honesty and energy. I found it gripping from start to finish—often disturbing, sometimes shattering, but at the end full of a virile challenge to awareness and faith. What is it all about? Well, the plot is similar to that of *The Screwtape Letters*: important Enemy papers have fallen into the hands of a Christian. However, everything is on a far more ambitious scale than C.S. Lewis envisaged. So vast and overwhelming is the Enemy's objective (nothing less than the total subversion and ruin of the Western Church), and so near to success, that the author has little scope for the pleasantries of humour or wit. The Director (presumably an incarnation of Satan himself), the master-mind behind Operation Gravedigger, has charged his Deputy to initiate a new head of the Los Angeles Bureau into the details of his plans finally to wreck the Western Church. The Director-Designate, a philosophy don (who has just been elected to the Central Security Council) has hitherto been engaged in counter-apologetics work with the purpose of promoting the *philosophy of secularism*. He is now to switch to a line of attack found to be far more effective, the furtherance of the *process of secularisation*. Why is he being sent to Los Angeles instead of Moscow? Because of the significantly different characteristics of the American and European Religious scenes, described here with a keenly analytical perceptiveness. The Deputy-Director initiates the new head into the subtleties of the plan (ultra-secret of course) in a series of Memoranda with evocative titles: The Sandman Effect; The Cheshire-cat Factor; European-style Confusion; Fossils and Fanatics; Trendies and Traitors; The Last Christian in the Modern World; and so on. All this is done with deep and devilish seriousness; with ruthless clarity the sins and follies of the Western Church are exposed. It is uncomfortable reading, not least when (again through the pen of the Deputy-Director) are laid bare the tragic self-esteem, myopia and insularity of the conservative wing of the Church. The liberal wing fares no better, in fact (and in a different way) even worse. So well is the story written that one could easily believe that this is not Os Guinness's pen, but The Real Thing. The author is widely read: Peter Berger, David Martin, Jacques Ellul, Owen Chadwick, Theodore Roszak, Walter Kaufmann are just a few of the writers whose names appear in the nine pages of references.

At the very last moment, when the whole plan has been disclosed to him in utterly compelling detail and the Western Church seems ready for 'dust to dust, ashes to ashes', his ticket to Washington D.C. via flight BA 189 having been enclosed with the last Memorandum, the Director-Designate, Los Angeles Bureau defects to the Other Side! In a cloak-and-dagger operation he thrusts the twelve Memoranda into the hands of Mr. Guinness, and vanishes. What considerations have led him to this unexpected change of sides? Read the book and see. You will be alerted to much that has been going on, and is still going on; and in the end be chastened but encouraged.

Churchman

**CHRISTIAN YOUTH WORK Mark Ashton**

Kingsway, Eastbourne 1986 256 pp. £5.95 pb.

ISBN 0 86065 428 1

In our churches many are concerned about reaching young people with the gospel. However there is a great deal of confusion and lack of thought about the aims and principles involved in this type of work. This book written by Mark Ashton, until recently the head of C.Y.F.A., will do a great deal towards sorting out this confusion if it is widely read and applied.

The first couple of chapters survey the characteristics of youth culture today. They explode some popular myths which tend to see young people almost as a separate type of human being. In contrast to this the humanity of young people and the variety of problems which they face are stressed.

However the most valuable chapters are those which deal with the biblical principles of youth work. Many of these principles of course apply equally to adult Christian work. That indeed is one of Mark Ashton's most important and wise emphases. Thus effective evangelism is to be seen in a long-term perspective. Young people need time to understand what the gospel is really saying, and they need time for Christian teaching to mould their lives. It is also important that young people are integrated into the life of the church without operating on the principle that everything must be changed and ordered so as to attract them. The church is a mixture of people in which different age groups must learn to love each other, with give and take on both sides. Mark Ashton also makes some very important comments on the rôle of parachurch organisations and how they must see themselves as servants of the local church rather than its masters.

This is an excellent book on youth work that contains Biblical principles which must be heard and applied today. It is also very readable and therefore should be in the hands of all those contemplating or engaged in work with young people in our churches.

2 Gatley Road, Cheadle, Cheshire

MARK BURKILL

**A NOBLE TASK—ELDERSHIP AND MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH Neil Summerton**

Paternoster Press, Exeter 1987 187 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 85364 461 6

Many evangelical congregations owe a great deal to former members of the Brethren, for their example of integrity, commitment, and deep knowledge of the Bible. *A Noble Task* puts us still more in their debt. It will repay the careful reader: the author is a scholar and senior civil servant, and every word and phrase carries its proper weight! He gives clear enough indications of the specific and sometimes surprising emphases of Brethren culture and tradition for non-Brethren readers to apply the discussion usefully to their own situation. For example, one of their recent problems is how to integrate a 'resident full-time worker' into what has hitherto been a team of spare-time elders; most non-Brethren face the mirror-image of this issue—how to develop a spare-time team around their traditional full-time minister. But the same causes of friction emerge—the costs of deepening relationships, unfulfilled expectations, and the threat to established positions.

Neil Summerton has put together a thorough, balanced and seemingly

comprehensive analysis of the Bible references to virtually every aspect of recognized ministry in the local church. He deals with the authority and priorities of the eldership team, and the need for varied and complementary gifts within it. He insists that teaching is their prime task—both public and private; and that the Brethren pattern of ‘freedom in the Spirit’ and/or reliance on visiting preachers is just not adequate. The local elders must ensure there is ‘doctrinal coherence, pastoral relevance, and prophetic immediacy’: that is, the preaching must relate to where people are, and lead them on to where they should be! The pastoral responsibilities of elders must include discipline—not just policy on admission to membership, but also dealing with moral and doctrinal issues. Public discipline should of course only be a last resort, after every pastoral effort has been made, and arising from the eldership’s ‘love and tears’ (II Cor 2:4).

We are reminded that the New Testament is much more precise on the qualifications for eldership, which we often largely disregard, than on methods of selection, or even precise rôle, where many churches today are excessively dogmatic. One of the key functions of a collective leadership team is ‘seeing what ought to be done and causing it to happen’: without such vision, congregations suffer from low morale and loss of purpose. I would urge everyone involved with local church leadership and developments in local ministry to read *A Noble Task*—for its inspiration, practical common-sense, and balanced Biblical analysis of important ministry issues.

3 Melrose Road, London S.W. 18

MARK BIRCHALL

### **HEALING AND MEDICINE D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne 1987 185 pp £4.95 pb. ISBN 0 86065 531 8

The publication of this volume is to be warmly welcomed and the publishers thanked for making these addresses more widely available. All but two of them (Chapters 9 and 10) and two pages of references were published in 1982 by the *Christian Medical Fellowship* under the title *The Doctor Himself and the Human Condition*. Although originally delivered to doctors and medical students, these papers contain much practical scriptural wisdom which all Christians will benefit from no matter what their calling. On page after page we see the Doctor, the spiritual giant of the twentieth century, taking us to the heart of the matter. It is first principles that he wants us to isolate, focus on, remember and act upon. Without a shadow of doubt his keen, searching mind helps us to do this no matter what ethical or moral issue is tackled. Thus, although these ten addresses were given between the years 1953 and 1974, they have an up to date feel to them. I warmly commend this book. It is a gem. The papers are both stimulating as well as topical. All will benefit from all that the author says about the counsellor and counselling, and from his comments on the supernatural in medicine (chapter 7). The last chapter, *Body, Mind and Spirit* (chapter 10), should be prescribed reading for all preparing for or involved in Christian ministry today. It is nothing less than Lloyd-Jones at his best.

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

GEORGE CURRY



**BUILD THAT BRIDGE David Coffey**

Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne 1986 189 pp. £4.95 ISBN 0 86065 423 0

What does unity in Christ mean in practical terms? *Build That Bridge* tackles this at two levels: within the local congregation, and between churches and denominations. At the local level, David Coffey provides much pastoral wisdom, relevant to the situation in my home church and in most other churches I know much about: at the wider level, he raises questions on the agenda, or which lie behind the agenda, of most groups or committees discussing unity, ministry or leadership. For healthy local church life there are two key underlying requirements: God's word must be taught and obeyed, and God's gifts must be recognized and used. David Coffey expounds these themes from experience, most recently as pastor of a large Baptist church in Torquay.

In worship, we should neither be prisoners of tradition nor captives of the newest fashion. We are not in a lecture hall to hear a great preacher nor in a concert hall to hear great music. We meet on Sunday to praise God, to hear His word, to proclaim His death and resurrection. If we do this well, combining order with freedom, joy with penitence, in a way that relates both to today's world and its needs and to our future hopes of heaven, we shall have our vision enlarged, we shall be motivated to live and work more effectively through the week. Our 'Amen' will mean action as well as assent.

As well as a helpful chapter on worship, in the form of a pastoral letter to his congregation, there is a good chapter on discipline as an essential feature of church life. Discipline must spring from love, rather than condemnation; its aim should always be to restore and build up, rather than to exclude or humiliate. He also has helpful material on how to hold together the 'weak' and the 'strong', the rigid and traditional with the flexible and progressive.

Discipline is one of the links between local and inter-church unity. The author notes that both Rome and the free churches believe that Anglicans lack discipline in both doctrinal and moral issues. But historical differences and misunderstandings are often deepened by mutual caricatures. He raises two questions for evangelicals in this area. First, do we 'stay in' or 'come out'? History encourages staying in—God kept on renewing the dead dry bones of Israel, and has continued to do this in the established churches. So what conclusions should we draw from the rapid growth of Biblically-based new churches and groups, while mainstream churches are declining 'due to the gradual removal of any supernatural or miraculous elements, leaving a faith that is either too complex for most people to understand, or so empty of content that it offers nothing and demands nothing?' Secondly, if 'church' means only the individual congregation or the world-wide company of all believers, what intermediate forms of association are desirable? What structures will best help us express unity at local and national level?

*Build That Bridge* highlights the need for an evangelical ecclesiology which can be applied to today. Evangelical strength is increasing; there is growth in black churches, in other independent churches, in the more or less formalized groupings of house/community churches and fellowships, and also within the mainstream denominations. The Gospel and common sense require us to be reconciled to each other, to stand and work together. Maybe we need a whole generation of mutual recognition, replacing past mutual

suspicion, in which we have become less wedded to our own traditions and perhaps more critical of our innovations, slowly building on areas of agreement. Christian unity is supposed to be a visual aid for the Gospel to a watching world. Disunity is not just the result of liberalism here and unbiblical views of priesthood there: evangelicals too are still contributing to it. David Coffey raises the questions; Lent '86 and Spring Harvest, in their different ways, point to widespread lay enthusiasm for unity, and to lay impatience with the denominational structures which hinder it. So what sort of unity *do* we need? There is more work to do here.

3 Melrose Road, London S.W.18

MARK BIRCHALL

**HEAVENLY SPRINGS Andrew A. Bonar**

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1986 211pp. £2.25 pb. ISBN 0 85151 479 0

This is a delightful book. It consists of some 53 meditations, one for each Sunday of the year, chosen by the author's daughter Marjory. Each begins with two quotations, one from Scripture, the other from the pen of Andrew Bonar. There then follows two or three pages of extracts, of variable length, culled from the diary, letters and sermons of this great nineteenth century Scots divine. The quotations are clear, concise and apposite but it is to be regretted that the publishers did not take the opportunity to explain the word 'Lethe' (2x) on p.18 and to correct the spelling of 'and' (last word) on p.19.

Bonar, like his hymn-writing brother, Horatius, knew the Lord. He was a man of eminent piety and spirituality who saw that he needed 'every day . . . before any business begins, an experience of the new wine of the kingdom—fellowship with God' (p.23). In this day of small things, when good devotional literature is in short supply, we do well to purchase this little volume and to make good use of it. It is replete with superb pithy sayings, on many topics, as well as excellent advice. Here is a tool that will help and encourage us to know the Lord and to say, with Bonar, 'I find my Lord and Saviour more and more satisfying to my soul. In very deed He is all my salvation and all my desire' (p.62).

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

GEORGE CURRY

**THE OXFORD BOOK OF SAINTS Second Edition**

edited by **D.H. Farmer**

Oxford University Press 1987 478pp. £15.00 hb.

ISBN 0 19 869149 1

£5.95 pb.

ISBN 0 19 282038 9

What is a saint? Who qualifies for this title? Why are they venerated? Such questions and others are answered in this new, but more selective edition. It includes all those of English origin, overseas nationals who died in England, those honoured with an English cult, and those of importance in the British Isles and Ireland. Farmer points out that the public veneration of saints began in the second century, martyrdom especially being accepted as the gateway to heaven. His long Introduction traces the historical development

of martyrology, saint-acknowledgement, and cult devotion in the English Church. His painstaking research has unearthed many unknown or largely forgotten Christians whose sanctity qualifies them for inclusion in his book, to all of whom he has accorded potted biographies. Those interested in this subject will find his Appendices enlightening, not least the saints' patronage of astronauts, head-ache sufferers, lost articles, mad-dogs etc. His scholarly approach, humorous asides, wealth of detail, and open-ended appraisal of the curious and bizarre should make a wide appeal.

However, Protestants generally are not enamoured of the designation of 'saint' to any Christian, however holy, especially in view of the New Testament application of the term to communities and not to individuals, as also encouraging prayer to and intercession from departed spirits. It remains a fact that since the Reformation the Church of England has not engaged in canonization, though its Alternative Service Book has included 'Heroes of the Faith'. Surprisingly, in view of the author's comprehensive aim and his biographies of post-Reformation Roman Catholics, such as Thomas More and Edmund Campion, he has omitted principal Marian Martyrs like Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, and missionary Martyrs such as Bishop Hannington in whose honour a Brighton Church is dedicated. But perhaps, in his opinion such men are not to be accorded sanctity or commemoration. His hagiography is incomplete without them.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

### **BRIEF ENCOUNTERS Wesley Carr**

S.P.C.K. New Library of Pastoral Care, London 1985 143pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 281 04179 2

The author is on the staff of Chelmsford Cathedral, and has been deeply involved in clergy training in that diocese. This book is concerned with the ways we use the occasional offices of baptism, marriage and funerals. The book, primarily for the minister in the parish, is written in three parts. First, he looks at the theological and pastoral significance of these offices, rooted as they are in English culture and history, looking at the priority of grace and the place of sacraments. The second part is concerned with a practical discussion of infant baptism, weddings and funerals. The final part deals with handling the pressures from these occasional offices. Those who have a 'strong' policy on infant baptism will find scant comfort in this book, as Canon Carr unravels the expectations of the enquirer and articulates the deep-rooted anxieties of the minister, torn between 'folk' religion and the imperatives of the Gospel. For the same reason this is a very English book, which will be met by puzzlement beyond these shores, since the frontiers of the Church are perceived as so fluid. Undoubtedly the most helpful (and challenging) pages are those which deal, whether in detail or in passing, with the minister's awareness of his own rôle in Church and society, which demands a religious 'persona', while rejecting most of what he really stands for as a clergyman. As an incumbent I found myself mirrored in many of the images he presents. This is a valuable book, which as well as dealing

specifically with the occasional offices will help us all to see ourselves as the vast majority of our fellow countrymen see us.

31 St. Saviour's Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea

ANTHONY SMYTH

**TEACHING IN A MULTI-RACIAL SOCIETY** **Maurice E.J. Hobbs**  
 Paternoster Press, Exeter 1987 56pp. £3.95 ISBN 0 85364 469 1

This is a serious attempt to make life easier for immigrant children and to apprise (white) teachers of some of their difficulties. The author has had fifteen years teaching in Tanzania and twenty years as a teacher-trainer in Birmingham, so his views should be heard with respect. My own experience of teaching mixed-race classes in India and England has led me to quite different conclusions . . . but that is often the way with educational theorists.

Mr. Hobbs's view can be stated quite simply. In education there are three cardinal sins: Racism, Racism, and Racism. Upon these three abominations hang all the law-breaking and the riots. We are all guilty. To right the wrong, the whole syllabus should be changed, especially the textbooks for English and History, so that every 'ethnic minority' will feel at home.

We may admit straight away that there is some truth in Mr. Hobbs's thesis. White teachers, he affirms, have low expectations of black children; low expectation leads to poor performance; academic failure leads to unemployment, unemployment to frustration, crime and 'city-burning'. This must STOP! 'Teachers are in the business of the formation of citizens of a just, humane, harmonious democracy.' Who would quarrel with that? The diagnosis may well be correct; but what about the cure prescribed?

Mr. Hobbs posits four types of reaction to a six per cent presence of 'immigrants' (a word he would like to expunge from our vocabulary, as denoting alienation): 1) Assimilation. This means NO CHANGE in curriculum. 'They have come to our country of their own free will. Let them learn our culture and be absorbed'. This is judged to be the *worst* possible reaction. 2) and 3) 'Permeation', i.e. courses like Urdu and Indian History added to schools where immigrants are present. This is better, but not nearly enough. 4) Re-orientation, which means re-writing humanities textbooks, 'rooting out racist pictures' etc. in *all* schools, even where there are *no* coloured children. This is said to be 'God's plan' for Britain! To your reviewer it seems to have several flaws:

a. He insists that intelligence and character have nothing to do with genetics.

Individuals may be said to be lazy or energetic, dull or bright—but never races. This dogma runs counter to the experience of all globe-trotters from Herodotus to Marco Polo to David Livingstone; and to my own. Tribes, castes, races—by whatever name—*do* have well-defined characteristics. In South India the Brahmins are well-known for their intellectual acumen; upon this undeniable fact is based the whole system of reserved places for lower-caste students in Indian Universities. Who doubts that the Romans had a genius for government? Who denies that the Greeks were uniquely gifted? It is equally obvious that most heavyweight boxers are black. Of course a wise

teacher in a mixed-race school will not *stress* racial differences; but to pretend they do not exist is absurd. What should be stressed is that we can *all* be thankful for the achievements of *all* who have benefitted mankind, because God is the Giver of all good gifts.

b. Hobbs repeatedly attacks 'ethnocentricity'. Of course a Christian should love all the world, as God does, and patriotism can degenerate into xenophobia. But the best corrective to national pride, I suggest, is true history—not the emasculated anti-colonial fudge which our author apparently wants to concoct for immigrant children. For example, he mentions the Amritsar massacre in 1919 when three hundred potential rioters were shot down by General Dyer's Gurkhas, but passes over in silence the carnage on the Pakistan/India frontier in 1947 when more than a million Muslims and Hindus slaughtered one another. A good teacher, in my opinion, will mention neither event in an Asian-white school; but if the story must be told, let it be the *whole* story.

Hobbs also thinks it a waste of time to teach them our 'folklore', e.g. Alfred and the cakes. Wrong again!—because children need heroes much more than they need political theories. In Indian textbooks you soon encounter 'Gopal-Who-Always-Told-the-Truth' and a missionary who did not know his story would be accounted a numbskull. I suggest that if immigrants ever hope to rise to positions of trust, they too must begin at the grass roots in learning our culture—even the nursery rhymes.

Hobbs writes as a Christian so we may well ask, What saith the Scripture?—about ethnocentricity. Answer: the Bible is the most ethnocentric book in the world!—in two ways:

i. It centres on the Jewish *race*, which God chose as the vehicle of His revelation. He might have told Abraham to wander over the earth preaching and gathering converts, but He did not. Rather, the chosen individual became a chosen family, then a chosen *race* sufficiently strong to preserve its identity and the precious Books for the whole world. The Lord said to a Samaritan woman, 'Salvation is of *the Jews*.'

ii. St. Paul specifically says that God 'made every race of mankind' (Acts 17) and in Genesis 10 & 11 we find the details. *God* confounded the languages, *God* scattered them abroad. Throughout the Old Testament (five hundred and fifty times) non-Jews are called 'the nations', and throughout the New Testament (one hundred and sixty times) it is assumed that people all belong to nations (ethne, = races), right up to the Last Judgment. So I cannot believe that loyalty to one's own race/nation is sin, any more than loyalty to one's own family. Pride and jealousy, despising and envying others, these are the sins which Christ condemned. The remedy is the Cross; *not* re-writing the history books. Of course in Christ all believers are one, and (as Hobbs insists) we should show that unity visibly when occasion serves. But if blacks choose to worship in one way, and whites in another, that cannot be accounted sinful.

c. Hobbs's use of Scripture tends to be eclectic and arbitrary. He quotes Acts 17.7 ' . . . the Messiah was crucified for "defying Caesar's decrees" . . . ' as if it were true, not perceiving that this was a deliberate *misinterpretation* of the Gospel by Jewish *opponents*. Such 'liberation theology', read by men like Bernie Grant, could well prove inflammatory. In another passage he says that Islam and Sikhism act as a 'schoolmaster' to lead children to Christ. My own experience suggests just the opposite.

d. With regard to 'miscegenation', Hobbs suggests that Christians should set an example to the nation by marrying across race-boundaries. It is easy to theorize when one's own children are not involved, but perhaps the people of this world are wiser than the people of God. I have no statistics on cross-cultural weddings, but with Britain's divorce rate soaring it would seem the height of folly to add an extra hazard to the known difficulties of keeping marriages intact. It will certainly be an enormous stumbling-block to (e.g.) a Sikh father to know that at Christian meetings his daughter may be persuaded to marry a West Indian. Mr. Hobbs claims no success stories. It is the kind of extremism that will do his cause no good. In America, a hundred and twenty years after emancipation, black/white marriages are still only a very small percentage. It just does not work—for most people.

e. What about Religious Education? Hobbs says little, apart from the obvious fact that Comparative Religion should be taught. He seems to overlook the sovereign remedy for 'racism'. In a school in South India we had Tibetan Buddhists, North Indian Muslims, South Indian Hindus, and Christian Anglo-Indians. The remarkable harmony we enjoyed I attribute first and foremost to Bible teaching. The Bible is neither Oriental nor Western; it flatters no-one. All are judged guilty, all are offered salvation on equal terms. What we need today in British schools—black, white, mixed-race, or whatever—is not more little books on 'Religion' but the Bible to be reinstated in 'core curriculum'. This will do more for inter-racial harmony than a hundred committees bowdlerizing the classics, re-writing history, and watering-down religious education to make it acceptable to all. It is a pity that Mr. Hobbs puts such faith in his schemes for re-orientation of children's minds, when God promises through His Word to re-create their hearts. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' . . . and of every national blessing.

3 St. James Close, Stretham, Ely

DAVID C.C. WATSON

**FAITH FOR THE FUTURE** Edited by **G. Leonard**

Church House Publishing, London 1986 104pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 7151 4759 5

This slim volume marks one hundred and seventy five years of the National Society (Church of England) for promoting Religious Education. Essays are contributed by nine distinguished educators; the Bishop of London is Editor. The six-page section allotted to each is too short to convey much detail, but we are given a glimpse of the origins, achievement, problems and prospects of the Society. One thing we can be profoundly thankful for today is that we no longer hear of bickering between Anglicans and Nonconformists as to exactly what should be taught in religious education. The danger, of course, is that we may lurch into the opposite evil of indifferentism in our multicultural multiracial multifaith 1990s Britain.

Broadly, it seems that the history of Church schools in England and Wales has been not unlike that of Mission schools and colleges in India. These were founded with a definite Christian purpose—to attract non-Christians, teach them the Bible, and lead them to faith in Christ. The 'bait' was secular education, and many Hindu/Muslim parents responded. (I notice that the 1811 motto of the National Society was/is 'Piscatores Hominum'). But

## Churchman

gradually over the years the emphasis shifted from evangelism to enlightenment; more and more Government help was accepted, and with it Government control. Academic ability, rather than Christian commitment, became the touchstone of new teachers/lecturers. Finally the pejorative word 'proselytism' was substituted for the noble word 'evangelism', and 'indoctrination' for Bible teaching. Today in most of the older Mission colleges no attempt is made to disguise the fact that they are simply educational institutions with a veneer of Christianity. The last thing they aim at is conversion!

I hope this comparison is not unfair. Never having taught in a Church school I can only go by what is left *unsaid* by these ten writers. I do not doubt that much good work has been done, but one misses the keynote—an earnest desire to see boys and girls become *real* Christians or *better* Christians.

One of the most interesting articles describes religious education at a Primary school in Soho. The Headteacher seems to think it quite normal that children of this tender age should be exposed to ashrams, mosques, and Silence in worship. We may agree that all experience is valuable if it helps to remove prejudice, but one wonders whether those children—Chinese, Bengali, Jewish, and others—will understand anything of the *unique* claims made by the God of the Bible, and the *unique* glory of Christ. 'The wealth of stories that cluster round the historic faiths of the world is extraordinary.' No doubt; but to tell the story of Krishna and the cowgirls in the same breath as the story of Moses in Egypt will hopelessly confuse young minds. We do well to remember that it was for *mis-leading children* that Christ pronounced His sternest condemnation: 'Whosoever shall cause one of these little ones who believe on Me to stumble . . . it were better for him to be sunk in the depth of the sea.'

While we have the Bible, and the Holy Spirit, there is always hope. But this booklet seems to show that, if present trends continue, what happened in India may well be repeated here: pressure from secular authority and other religions will squeeze the spiritual life out of Church schools and colleges. Dare I suggest that those responsible will have to 'mend their nets' rather thoroughly if they are to fulfil the Founders' ideal of becoming 'fishers of men'?

3 St. James Close, Stretham, Ely

DAVID C.C. WATSON

### **UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH David Jackman**

Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne, 1987 218pp. £5.95 ISBN 0 86065 449 4

The author of this splendid book has put churchmen of all types and outlooks in an immense debt. In an age of ecclesiastical ecumenicity it should be compulsory reading for all who are intent on furthering the church's organic unity. Jackman, out of the matrix of his own church growth roots his understanding of the church in positive scripture principles as a body of Christian believers evangelizing, growing and maturing. In his view Christians are in the world to make disciples through preaching, testifying, and a distinct life-style. He has little time for evangelistic campaigns that have overtones of secular pop. concerts. Rather, the priesthood of all believers makes each Christian responsible for furthering the faith. Yet, he believes,

many do not fulfil this task through complacency and fear of failure. His weakness here is that in stressing that the church's evangelistic task is to 'go and make disciples' he fails to see that the imperative 'I ought' can fossilize into a deadly 'doing'. A chapter on the constraint of Jesus' love would have helped in this sphere.

As to spiritual gifts he holds that the Holy Spirit is given in conversion, with later fillings. Jackman has wise things to say about modern charismata. To him, miracles may happen but in scripture they were occasional and in clusters. Prophecy is simply a word from the Lord that must be tested by scripture, otherwise it becomes relative to the person speaking, and to the content of his words. Both prophets and Apostles, he says, were foundation gifts to the church, but ceased when the New Testament was canonized.

As an Independent ligamented to the all-Christians' ministry he rejects the belief that the New Testament established the policy of an ordained Presbyter for every church. Here he appears to be confused, for he states that the church is not a democracy in which majority decisions are taken but believes that the New Testament intends the church to have God-given leaders, that local churches need to keep in touch with each other, and that leaders should have frequent contact. Nor can he accept that a church's written authority should be the touchstone of church membership.

In reading this book it is important to remember that Jackman is the minister of an Independent church of one thousand members in a large city. His every member ministry in terms that he outlines is hardly applicable to a rural church, or to a structured church within a pyramid system, or to one in a deprived urban area. Nevertheless, all churches have much to learn from it, not least from the author's final chapter in which he deals succinctly with church unity.

Your reviewer cannot but commend it heartily.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

### **THE CROSS OF CHRIST John Stott**

I.V.P. Nottingham 1987 383pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 85110 767 2

Reading the back cover's brief description of John Stott makes one approach the reviewing of this book with some trepidation. It is a book to be read carefully and slowly, but it never bores and will give ample reward to those who read it.

The book is divided up into four parts. The first part is entitled 'Approaching the Cross'. Throughout this part, and indeed throughout the book, are numerous Scripture references for many of the statements made and it is good to read these Scriptures alongside the book. The reference on page 52 about Jesus upsetting the Jewish establishment is applicable today. I am sure that he would ruffle a few feathers in today's church. On page 65 we read the following: 'To be sure, the fossil record indicates that predation and death existed in the animal kingdom before the creation of Man.' What about those of us who believe in a six-day creation?

The second part of the book is called 'The Heart of the Cross'. The chapters in this part are: 'The problem of Forgiveness', 'Satisfaction for Sin', and 'The Self-Substitution of God.' Each of these subjects is well covered.



Especially good on page 89 were the comments under the section 'The Gravity of Sin', expressing the depraved and helpless state of Man in his Sin. Reading the comments of Dr. Mennings on pages 90 and 91 leads me to hope that some of our bishops and theologians have the same belief. Again, the difference between my anger and God's anger on page 106 was something to take to heart. God's anger is well explained on pages 125 and 126. At the bottom of page 108 we read this: 'The kind of God who appeals to most people today would be easy going in his tolerance of our offences. He would be gentle, kind, accommodating, and would have no violent reactions.' This anaemic God is quite common today even in some of our Evangelical fellowships. On page 140 it was good to see the emphasis laid on the essential unity of God: 'We must never characterise the Father as judge and the Son as Saviour. It is the one and the same God who through Christ saves us from Himself'.

Part three of the book is called: 'The Achievement of the Cross'. The first chapter in this part deals with propitiation, redemption, justification and reconciliation. The section on propitiation is very good and the reference to the *New English Bible* on page 170 is a good enough reason to have not to use it. In the redemption section on page 181 he writes this:

A remembrance that Jesus Christ has bought us with his blood, and that in consequence we belong to him, should motivate us as individual Christians to holiness, just as it motivates presbyters to faithful ministry and the heavenly host to worship.

This holiness motivation is lacking in many of our churches today. Instead we find window-dressing phrases like 'Free to be myself' and 'Freedom in expression' and such and so forth. In the section on justification he brings in the Roman Catholic viewpoint. Some people within that church may have different views, but has the official doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church changed? On page 187 he writes: 'Not works but grace. Not law, but Faith. Not our righteous deeds but his mercy.' In these days of ecumenical compromise within the Evangelical wing of the Church of England it is refreshing to read an influential Anglican *not* accommodating Rome. To the question of Rome at the bottom of page 187, the answer must surely be—no change, no conversion, no justification. The last sentences of this chapter on page 203, again in a few words speak volumes. In the chapter called: 'The Revelation of God', John Stott talks about the Love of God. What he writes goes against much of what the church and society say about love and that we must look at Calvary if we wish to see genuine love. The section on page 224 on the Wisdom and Power must surely be the basis of our preaching for conversions. The last chapter in this part of the book deals with the conquest of evil. I warmed to the following at the top of page 236: ' . . . the conquest is extended as the Church goes out on its mission, in the power of the Spirit, to preach Christ crucified as Lord and to summon people to repent and believe in him'. Oh that the Church would get on and do it! The reminder that the Cross came before the Resurrection is important. Each of us must carry our cross and remember that Good Friday came before Easter Day. It was good to see on page 244 the refuting of the idea that Jesus died for our sicknesses and diseases on the Cross. He goes on on page 250 to deal with counterfeit religion. Counterfeit religion, especially that which is semi-Christian, has always been one of the most effective and powerful weapons that the Devil has.

The fourth part of the book is called: 'Living under the Cross'. The first chapter in this part is about the Lord's Supper. I do wish that he would not use the word 'Eucharist'. In these days of seeking closer ties with Rome, we need to hear Evangelicals keeping to Scriptural words. On page 260 he lists five ways in which what we do at the Lord's Supper is related to the self-sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. In the fourth way he says 'we attribute our unity to his sacrifice'. How can we unite on something where people have such differing views? On page 263 he stresses the Priesthood of All Believers and yet to preside at Communion one has to be 'priested'. Say no more. Page 264 gives the Roman Catholic position on the sacrifice of the mass. Good reading for ecumenical Evangelicals.

Moving on to the next chapter: 'Self Understanding and Self-Giving', he deals with the self-love syndrome that has become quite fashionable. In the section headed 'Self-Affirmation' on page 282, it was good to see affirmed our sexuality in these enlightened days of 'Biblical Feminism'. He goes on to talk about self-sacrificial love which is so difficult for us all. On page 288 he asked this question: 'Where are the Christians who are prepared to put service before security, compassion before comfort, hardship before ease?' The answer I face is that they are stuck in the Bible Belt in comfortable middle-class churches. Later, on page 291 he gives the reasons why people do not want mission on a personal basis. It hurts and is costly. On his comments on the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the need for involvement in God's world, we must remember that there is nothing like conversion to change a person and the situation he is in. On page 293 he gives the example of Count Zinzendorf and at the end of the chapter we read:

... the young count asked the crucified Christ to draw him into the fellowship of his sufferings and to open up a life of service to him. He never went back on that commitment. He and his community were passionately concerned for the enthronement of the Lamb of God.

John Stott then moves on to loving our enemies and he is right to distinguish between Christian love, and peacemaking and appeasement. The section on discipline is apt for the church at this time. He then describes our attitudes to evil and a Christian's relationship to the State. The final part of this chapter is about Suffering and Glory. The last paragraph in the section called 'Suffering Service' speaks volumes to us today.

The conclusion of the book is called 'The pervasive Influence of the Cross'. He lists seven affirmations found in the Letter to the Galatians. There is a message for those churches and Christians today who are looking for unrepented sin, healing of the memories and involvement in other dubious practices. Gospel preaching is about the Cross and we need to take the warning given on page 347 seriously because we all like to be popular. The last quote in the book on page 351 is an excellent and compelling one. Oh that I could say that for myself!

To sum up: the Cross is the only place where Christians can unite. This book is excellent, relevant for today when unity is being sought on any basis. This book is for all Christians who call themselves Evangelical, to see if they really are and for those who are not Evangelical, to show them why they should.

## Churchman

### INDEX OF REVIEWS

ASHTON, <i>Christian Youth Work</i> (M. Burkill)	180
BARRETT, <i>The New Testament Background: Selected Documents</i> (G.L. Bray)	167
BONAR, <i>Heavenly Springs</i> (G.R. Curry)	183
CARR, <i>Brief Encounters</i> (A. Smyth)	184
COFFEY, <i>Build That Bridge</i> (M.D. Birchall)	182
DAVIES, <i>The Cosmic Blueprint</i> (T. Gouldstone)	174
FARMER, ed., <i>The Oxford Book of Saints</i> (A. Bennett)	183
GUINNESS, <i>The Gravedigger File</i> (D.C. Spanner)	179
HOBBS, <i>Teaching in a Multi-Racial Society</i> (D.C.C. Watson)	185
JACKMAN, ed., <i>Understanding The Church</i> (A. Bennett)	188
JAMES, ed., <i>The Unfettered Word: Southern Baptists Confront The Authority – Inerrancy Question</i> (G.W. Grogan)	169
LEONARD, ed., <i>Faith for the Future</i> (D.C.C. Watson)	187
LLOYD-JONES, <i>Healing and Medicine</i> (G.R. Curry)	181
NAZIR ALI, <i>Frontiers in Muslim – Christian Encounter</i> (R. Cook)	172
PAUL, <i>A Pattern of Faith: An Exposition of Christian Doctrine</i> (G.L. Bray)	167
PAWLEY, <i>Donald Coggan: Servant of Christ</i> (A. Bennett)	177
RUDIN, Wilson, ed., <i>A Time To Speak: The Evangelical–Jewish Encounter</i> (W. Riggans)	168
SMALL, <i>The Forgotten Father: Rediscovering The Heart Of The Christian Gospel</i> (D.C. Spanner)	169
STANESBY, <i>Science, Reason and Religion</i> (D.C. Spanner)	176
STOTT, <i>The Cross Of Christ</i> (R. Cook)	189
SUMMERTON, <i>A Noble Task – Eldership and Ministry in the Local Church</i> (M. Burkill)	180
WATTS, <i>Isaiah 34–66: Word Biblical Commentary No. 25</i> (J.A. Motyer)	166
WILES, <i>God's Action In The World</i> (D.C. Spanner)	173

## Other Books Received

**Cowley Publications** J. Booty, *The Christ We Know*, 1987, \$9.95

**Evangelical Press of Wales** D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *Why Does God Allow War?* Second Edition, 1986, £2.50 & *Out of the Depths: Studies in Psalm 51*, 1987, £1.95; Ian Shaw, Ed., *Christian Family Matters*, 1985 £3.95

**Firethorn Press** A. Moss, Ed., *In Search of Christianity*, 1986, £5.95

**Free Church of Scotland** *The Sanctity of Human Life* (Report of the Study Panel), No date, No price

**Handsel Press** D. Torrance, *The Mission of Christians and Jews*, 1986, 75p.

**Hodder & Stoughton** J. Huggett, *Listening to God*, 1986, £2.25; C.P. Wagner, *Spiritual Power & Church Growth*, 1986 £1.95; R. Steer, *Admiring God: The Best of George Müller*, 1986, £2.25

**S.P.C.K.** M. Stancliffe, *Jacob's Ladder*, 1987 £3.95; T. Dudley-Smith, *A Flame of Love: A Personal Choice of Charles Wesley's Verse*, 1987, £2.50