

Book Reviews

THE MESSAGE OF GENESIS I-II: THE BIBLE SPEAKS TODAY

David Atkinson

Inter Varsity Press, Nottingham 1989 192pp. No price ISBN 0 85110 676 5

This little book of a mere 190 pages, is worth its weight in gold. David Atkinson succeeds brilliantly in illuminating these profound and seminal chapters of Genesis I-II, with comments which are never trite, and always deeply penetrating. This is a book which like good wine, should be imbibed slowly and savoured without haste. The author holds up the text like a multi-faceted gem, and causes it to dance and sparkle in shafts of illumination from a multitude of angles. His mentors are from the whole range of the theological spectrum: Calvin and Augustine, Von Rad, Moltmann, Thielicke, Westermann, Blocher and G. Wenham. But the book never degenerates into a pastiche of theological opinions; the whole is woven into a tapestry of tightly meshed exegesis and contemporary exposition. Atkinson is very much aware of modern critical approaches to these chapters, but he ploughs his own theological furrow. He traces out the repeated theological themes of God's appointed order, man's violation of those divinely ordained boundaries, the struggle of fallen man in living out life in a disordered world, and God's gracious provision of the means of hope—themes reiterated in the stories of the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Flood, the Tower of Babel, and the beginnings of the story of Abraham. Without violating the text, he makes sensitive contemporary application in the areas of genetic engineering, abortion, sexuality, capital punishment, the nuclear threat, modern technological society, man's sense of alienation and loss of community. Always there is the emphasis on God's ever gracious provision of the hope of redemption in a world that consistently rebels against him, a redemption that culminates so gloriously in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Creationists and extreme literalists will, I suspect, be somewhat disappointed in this book; there is little extended discussion on evolution, geological ages, floods and fossils and such like. Mr. Atkinson's interests lie elsewhere; not even historical or literary genres or categories appear in the forefront, (not that he considers these unimportant). What he sets before us is a truly rich feast of theological exposition. No one who ponders the ultimate questions raised by the early chapters of Genesis can fail to be stimulated and moved by this profound little book. Bravo Mr. Atkinson! I wish you had written more!

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TOM GLEDHILL

1 AND 2 SAMUEL: TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

Joyce Baldwin

Inter Varsity Press, Nottingham 1989 272pp. No price ISBN 0 85111 842 9

1 AND 2 SAMUEL: THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY

Kenneth L. Chafin

Word Publishing, Waco, Texas 1988 404pp. No price ISBN 08499 6413 7

1 CHRONICLES: WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY No14**Roddy Braun**

Word Publishing, Waco, Texas 1986 311pp. No price ISBN 08499 0213 4

There are three lines of approach to commenting on any biblical text: explanation (the reader must come away knowing what this text is about and understanding what it says), encyclopaedia (the reader must be alerted to the shape of the specialist debate, what main lines of study have been opened up, where to find further information), and exposition (the reader must hear the abiding Word of God and come to terms with its message). Interestingly, Baldwin, Braun and Chafin set out respectively to fulfil these aims. Of course, the plan of the Word-series imposes all of them on Braun but (like most of his predecessors in the Old Testament volumes of the series) he excels in encyclopaedia, is reasonable at explanation and disappoints in exposition (which the series calls 'explanation'). He takes an oddly detached stance in relation to the text. We receive it as a voice from the ancient world; we certainly understand better thanks to his careful work; but we no longer feel the rock of sure history under our feet—the Chronicler is, so to speak, an early exponent of the art of 'faction'—and while we are well introduced to his theological thought and his view of history we are not told whether his thought is divine revelation and whether his view of history is an authoritative direction to us how to understand world events today. Is Chronicles a Word of God?

To comment on a historical book has its own peculiar hazards. Since the story element is already splendidly provided for in the Bible, why should the commentator feel it necessary to retell it? All three books under consideration do this. Yet, surely the story as such is not the real point. While Samuel and Chronicles are histories—and if they are not true history, then lessons derived from them carry as much assurance as morals drawn from the tale of Robin Hood—their purpose is 'prophecy', the declaration of the wonderful works of God. The story is the message. This element should shine in Chafin's work which is designedly expository but the sad fact is that it does not. Dr. Chafin has written a gracious and uniformly helpful book—no one will find difficulty in reading it or depart unblessed—but it is not solidly and consistently expository. He divides the text into five main divisions and one hundred and twenty five smaller sections but there is neither a sense of a 'whole message' nor of an expository movement and unity within each section. Usually within a section some smaller incident or turn of phrase is made the occasion of improving comment, often an anecdote, or a personal experience. The books of Samuel provide useful pegs on which to hang illustrations and exhortations (and we are all the better for having read them) but it falls short of exposition.

Joyce Baldwin, making the least pretentious contribution of the three, has written by far the most successful book. Her introduction could be taken as a model for any commentator faced with cruces of history and conflicting theories of literature. She threads a surefooted path through it all and even the non-specialist reader (who may very well be in the majority here) will have no difficulty in following the argument. Her sensible conclusions (for

example, regarding that silliest of all allegations of duplication of narrative, the instituting of kingship) carry conviction. So does her sensitive and reverent approach to the text. While she does not excel in expository comment in the same way that she can make the past and its characters come alive, we are in no doubt that this is God's Word and that it is intended to speak to us. The handling of the story of Saul is not only perspicacious in highlighting the way in which the career of that great leader took its downward turns but the final summary of Saul's character is extremely moving and accurate. The brevity which marks the Tyndale Series is found here too, but Joyce Baldwin has written what the reader will find to be a seminal book, which neither of the other authors under review has managed to do.

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ALEC MOTYER

PSALMS 73–150: THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY

Donald M. Williams

Word Publishing, Waco, Texas 1989 543pp. No price ISBN 08499 0420 X

PROVERBS: THE COMMUNICATOR'S COMMENTARY

David A. Hubbard

Word Publishing, Waco, Texas 1989 487pp. ISBN 08499 0421 8

It must be thirty years ago that I heard David Hubbard lecture on the Wisdom Literature at Tyndale House. It was a memorable feast of good things—not least for a poem beginning 'King David and King Solomon lived merry, merry lives' which will surely have remained in other memories besides mine. Hubbard has gone on to become President of Fuller and Professor of Old Testament and his love for the Wisdom books, his flair in presentation and his sense of humour have by no means vanished with the years. This volume (like the volume on Daniel) makes the whole series worthwhile! The introduction is as scintillating as it is sensible. Newcomers to Proverbs and old hands alike will find everything to their advantage but the subsections on the place of experience in Wisdom, the doctrine of Creation, the sovereignty of the Lord and the covenantal setting of the sayings of the Wise may be singled out for special mention. In handling the text of Proverbs, where there is a self-contained poem or section (e.g., Agur or Lemuel) Hubbard deals with it as such. In chapters 10–29 where the material is diffuse, he uses each chapter to highlight a Proverbs-theme, gathering all the scattered references into his discussion; e.g. Ch. 10, Wisdom and Work; Ch. 13, Violence and Hope. A useful index shows where each verse can be found. Explanations are well integrated into expositions. Application is pointed and sensitive.

Dr. Williams is not quite in the same Alpha Plus class but has written a very competent and worthwhile volume on the second half of the Psalter. He is obviously a caring and gifted preacher (Pastor of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of the Coast in San Diego). This is to his advantage because it guarantees that his expositions are always earthed. It is possibly to his disadvantage in that in most cases he comes too quickly to application—and frequently by means of an anecdote which is not quite as successful on paper

as it may have been in the pulpit. The exposition of Ps. 107, for example, becomes a sort of tract on the theme of Renewal—which links it more with the possible needs of the church today than with its original setting. Analysis is not Dr. Williams's forte in the same way that application is and he is not as sure-footed in Hebrew as Hubbard. Treated as anecdotal exposition, a work for the pulpit rather than for the desk and highly readable into the bargain, this volume justifies its place in the series.

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ALEC MOTYER

OBADIAH, JONAH AND MICAH: TYNDALE OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES D.W. Baker, T.D. Alexander, and B.K. Waltke

Inter Varsity Press, Nottingham 1988 207pp. No price ISBN 085111 841 0

NAHUM, HABAKKUK AND ZEPHANIAH D.W. Baker

Inter Varsity Press, Nottingham 1988 121pp. No price ISBN 085111 845 3

The soul of wit is sadly often the blight of commentaries and there is not a single volume in this fine group which does not suffer from the constraint of brevity. But the cry for more is, in this case, accompanied by deep gratitude for what has been provided. The competence and scholarship of the authors is beyond praise and each of them—Baker with his steady, workmanlike solidity, Alexander with his insights and flair, Waltke with his brimming enthusiasm—has made a significant contribution to the understanding of the part of Scripture in question and every reader will need a notebook at the ready to conserve the excellent explanations, comments and expositions. In the style of the Tyndale series the last element receives least attention. Of Baker's contributions, the commentary on Zephaniah deserves particular praise. Alexander's introduction to Jonah should be compulsory reading. In his Preface to Micah, Waltke expresses his hope that having himself found a spiritual banquet he may 'enable readers to share the feast.' He has done so and so have his colleagues.

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ALEC MOTYER

WHAT DOES EVE DO TO HELP? AND OTHER READERLY QUESTIONS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT: J.S.O.T. Supplement Series 94

D.J.A. Clines

Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1990 178pp. £18.50 ISBN 185675 248 6

There is no such thing as an 'open mind' for, in one way or another, we all carry a good deal of mental furniture about with us. We have our presuppositions, our prejudices, our individual ways of coming to a subject—and all these bear on the meaning we derive from biblical texts. Hence the concept of 'reader-response criticism': the creation of meaning arises at the intersection between the text and the reader. By bringing their individual questions to the text, readers create fresh opportunities for meaning. From this

unchallengeable perspective Dr. Clines proceeds to consider what Genesis means when it speaks of Eve as a 'help', how we are to understand the promissory content of Genesis, the various stories of the imperilled ancestress (Gen. 12:10f., etc.) the Kings/Chronicles approach to historiography, the books of Job and Nehemiah. Sadly the resulting book does not live up to the exciting promise of this prospectus. The over-all approach is suggestive of a self-conscious gadfly out to aggravate where possible and more concerned with the (rhetorical) question 'Aren't I a card?' than with realistic biblical conclusions. By the end of the Eve/help chapter it is clear that reader-authority has replaced any idea of objective biblical authority, for what matters is not whether the Bible is right or, for that matter wrong, but that 'it impacts for good upon people'. Likewise it is not significant if the Bible is internally inconsistent—as in the case of 'two competing historical narratives' (the Samuel-Kings complex and the Chronicles complex), and as in the case of the internally self-destructive book of Job: for though its various contentions (for example, on suffering) are mutually self-cancelling, it retains 'its ability to provoke its readers into willing its success' (whatever that may mean). It even matters not that (on evidence wholly unconvincing) we cannot base anything on the Nehemiah memoir because 'Nehemiah is a liar'. A sad book and a tragically frivolous use of great mental powers and immense learning.

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ALEC MOTYER

INTERPRETING THE PARABLES Craig L. Blomberg

Inter Varsity Press, Leicester 1990 334pp. £11.95

ISBN 0 85111 411 3

This book has a surprise for those who have been taught as their starting-points in parable interpretation that parables make only one point and exclude allegory—Craig Blomberg makes a strong case for seeing three points in a 'normal' parable, and for allowing that there is a marked allegorical element in the parables.

The now classic approach of Dodd and Jeremias was, Blomberg argues, reacting too strongly against allegorizing of the parables. Looking for only one point in a parable puts the story in a straitjacket, and prevents the reader from appreciating the fulness of the parable's message. Rather than classifying parables by content, Blomberg uses an almost structuralist analysis to lay bare the composition of parables, and finds a basic triadic composition in most parables (though there are two- and one-point parables, also). These stories centre around three participants, and make three points (though one may receive more emphasis in a particular parable). These points regularly concern the nature of God, the behaviour of his people, and the activity or destiny of the unrighteous. The parables' central theme is the kingdom of God, and they implicitly teach and raise questions about the identity of Jesus himself.

Blomberg also does what even relatively conservative interpreters have scarcely done before, and makes a good case for the authenticity of the entire stock of Gospel parables *and* the interpretations which are sometimes appended to them in the gospels.

Blomberg is arguing, against much contemporary opinion, that the parables of Jesus had a message, which can be reduced to propositional form (although losing some rhetorical force in the process). A parable is not like a poem; its meaning can be extracted and put into other words. This kind of approach runs the risk of implying that what was said in the parable could have been said much better by a straightforward statement of systematic theology. Although Blomberg is concerned with systematizing the message of the parables he manages to avoid this pitfall. He does not replace the stories with an extract of systematic theology, but gives us a perspective to help us hear them afresh.

This is an important book. It is immensely wide-ranging in the field of parable studies, its judgments are very carefully weighed, and its style is eminently readable. The author's own position on Biblical interpretation is clearly conservative, but his handling of other positions is always sympathetic, and manages to be critical without being merely dismissive.

The work invites comparison with David Wenham's *The Parables of Jesus*. Which should one read? The answer must be—both! Wenham's book, with its wealth of interpretation insights, is surely the one for the Bible reader or preacher to have at hand for the understanding of particular stories. But Blomberg offers a comprehensive survey of parable studies, a helpful approach to parable interpretation, and a massive bibliography on the parables, scattered through the footnotes. It really ought to be read by all of us brought up in the one-point, no-allegory school of interpretation.

Just one minor quibble: why have I.V.P. given this Apollos series such a peculiar identifying symbol? It puts one more in mind of aftershave than (as is perhaps intended) the shield of faith.

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WILLIAM STRANGE

JUDAISM IN THE FIRST CENTURY Hyam Maccoby

Sheldon Press, London 1989 136pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 85969 550 6

This book is part of a series entitled 'Issues in Religious Studies', geared primarily for students at 'A' level standard or in their first year of college studies, and deals quite systematically with the different Jewish religious groups at that period, the institution of the synagogue, religious education, the calendar of feasts and holy days, the issue of ritual purity and the overall religious world view which the Pharisees left as a heritage to all future generations of Jewish people. There is no doubt of the need for such a book on the market. Maccoby is a member of the Progressive movement within Jewry, and readers should be aware that his presuppositions and conclusions would not all be accepted by Orthodox Jewish scholars (for example, the dismissal of the Temple on p.131).

Of more importance for this review it must be pointed out that there are really two levels at which this book is operating. First, it is a book about the nature of Jewish religious life in the first century. There is a great deal of useful information here for students with no previous knowledge, and it is easy to read and take in. He manages to convey the richness of Jewish religious life, and gives the life, rightfully, to the common Christian stereotype that Jesus came into a barren wasteland of legalistic Judaism. But,

secondly, it is also a polemic about Christian origins and the parting of the ways between what became rabbinic Judaism and Christianity. Maccoby has not received critical acclaim for his views of Paul and the Gentilization/paganization of Jesus' Torah faithfulness.

He gives as his sources for the proper study of Judaism in this period the New Testament—after severe sifting, correction and re-interpretation (p.1 and *passim*); inter-testamental writings, especially the Pseudepigrapha; the Dead Sea Scrolls; Josephus; Philo; and 'above all', the rabbinic writings.

In fact he does not do any justice to the complex issue of the dating of the various strata in this rabbinic literature, though he consistently gives it temporal and conceptual priority over the New Testament. Nor does he discuss that there might be (as of course there is) bias there as well on behalf of the rabbis of later periods. At the very least this bias is seen in the deliberate silence about other groups of Jewish people apart from the Pharisaic/Rabbinic tradition, and indeed non-Pharisaic groups receive scant attention from Maccoby.

Having said this, there is good introductory material on several issues. Occasionally he presents an example of the value of New Testament texts which help our study into pre-Mishna, indeed pre-70, Judaism (for example, a Jewish wife's right to divorce her husband, p.57). On the other hand he also gives some telling challenges to the Church's own understanding of the transmission of the New Testament texts (for example, the comparison of Mark 12:28–34 and Matthew 22:35–40, on p.119).

It is a pity that he adopts such a blatantly reductionist view of Jesus (for example, pp.34–36), refusing him any possible originality other than an intense sense of urgency about his mission. Jesus is not to be allowed any free, creative genius. And of course Maccoby suffers from the common malady that cannot consider that the Jewish people who come to faith in Jesus saw no conflict there with their Jewishness and their Jewish traditions because they saw Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah. Instead, this is seen as evidence that nothing radically new happened with Jesus and that the Jews who followed him remained within all the (later, rabbinic) parameters.

Very definitely a curate's egg of a book.

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WALTER RIGGANS

GOD AND EVOLUTION R.J. Berry

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1988 189pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 340 34249 8

When a new History of the Warfare of Science with Theology is written for the Twentieth Century, this book may well be seen as the last *cri de coeur* from an endangered species—the Darwinian 'evangelical'. One can feel some sympathy for Professor Berry. Here is a man whose whole career is based on the scientific consensus about the *Origin of Species*. From childhood he has been repeatedly told that Darwin is the Newton of biology. In his twenties Sir Julian Huxley was vociferating that 'Evolution must now be considered no longer a theory, but a fact.' Now, thirty years later, it must be disturbing, at least, for Berry to see a tidal wave of new books which threatens to shatter that confidence—titles like: *Darwin Re-tried* (1971), *Where Darwin Went Wrong* (1982), *The Great Evolution Mystery* (1983), *The Bone Peddlers: Selling*

Evolution (1984), *Darwin was Wrong: A Study in Probabilities* (1984), *Darwinism: the Refutation of a Myth* (1987) and *Adam & Evolution ('our sacred cow')* (1984). Worst of all, not one of these books was written from a Christian-apologetic point of view: they are concerned only with scientific truth—as was Sir Ernst Chaim when he called evolution 'a fairy tale'. Attack comes also from the much-maligned 'creationists' who assert that the traditional straightforward interpretation of Genesis is the only one that makes sense of the Bible. With his professional reputation at stake, and his integrity as a Christian, Berry clutches at every straw that promises hope of survival for his theory.

His strategy is to ignore (almost entirely) what he calls 'secular criticism'—such as Denton's devastating *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (1985)—and concentrate on ridiculing 'creation science'. Much of his material is taken uncritically out of American anti-creationist literature: he appears never to have read the Creation Research Society Quarterly, whose articles for twenty five years have been up-dating, correcting and improving on the basic work of Whitcomb and Morris. Thus John Lightfoot's alleged pinpointing of creation's date and time—always good for a laugh—has been lifted straight out of A.D. White (1890) who concocted the story by mis-reading the record. The myth was exploded by John Klotz in the C.R.S.Q. March 1987, but here we find it coolly resuscitated.

Again, he criticizes Thomas Barnes (Emeritus Professor of Physics, University of Texas), in his book on earth-magnetism; but Barnes updated his (1971) book in 1983, 1986 and 1987. Berry seems to know nothing of this, and Barnes is not even mentioned in the bibliography. (It is worth pointing out that Berry, a natural-scientist, here claims to know more physics than a Professor of Physics, yet scorns all attempts by non-biologists to invade the sacred precinct of Biology). In defence of biological evolution he offers sweeping generalizations by members of his own party, for example, Cuffey: 'The fossil record displays numerous sequences of transitional fossils . . .' but forbears quoting the numerous evolutionists (including Darwin himself) who have said exactly the opposite. Duane Gish is criticized for lumping all eight hundred and fifty species of bat into one 'kind', but Berry makes no attempt to trace the pedigree of any *one* species. Evidently Sir Karl Popper's dictum is still right up to date: 'Neither Darwin, nor any Darwinian, has so far given an actual causal explanation of any single organism or any single organ.' Berry cannot resist the temptation to sideswipe (*twice*) poor Philip Gosse whose famous 'God created the rocks with fossils already in them' has no relevance whatever to the modern debate (see Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* p.42).

We are glad to note that Berry has a high regard for John Calvin, but his quotations from the Reformer are eclectic and very misleading. He makes it appear that Calvin was, or would have been, a supporter of his non-literal interpretation of Genesis. In fact Calvin was a literalist of the literalists, insists that Adam's *body* was made in a manner quite different from the bodies of animals, and roundly rebukes allegorists. Berry entangles his argument even worse by quoting the Westminster Confession (1647) in support of his views. As most people know, those excellent divines actually went beyond the Reformers by including: 'It pleased God in the beginning to create the world and all things therein . . . *in the space of six days*' (my italics). Could anything be clearer? But Berry repeatedly accuses creationists

of 'deism', banishing God from everyday life, when in fact they believe exactly what our forefathers believed—that He *both* feeds the birds *and* sent the Flood *and* will change our bodies in the (literal) twinkling of an eye.

In his non-literal interpretation Berry dismisses as non-sense (quoting Colin Russell) the views of commentators whose knowledge of ancient languages and literature must be fifty times his own. Instead, he quotes at great length Henri Blocher as if he were a new Apostle. Blocher and Berry together are prepared to contradict all the standard commentaries on I Cor. 11.8 ('woman is out of the man') and Romans 8 (for example, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: 'Nature was not meant to be red in tooth and claw . . . the result of the sin and rebellion of man. St. Paul's teaching here is *diametrically opposed to what is so commonly held . . . the theory of evolution*') (my italics).

Berry also follows Russell (*Cross Currents*, Inter-Varsity Press 1985) in repeating the old, old fallacy, 'Darwin's case is a re-run of Galileo's'. Is it? Consider: one hundred and twenty nine years after Galileo, every European astronomer had accepted the Copernican system. One hundred and twenty nine years after Darwin, ten thousand doubts and criticisms remain unanswered. Listen to the Science Editor of the world's most prestigious newspaper: 'Although Darwin's books are said to explain the origin of species, in fact they do no such thing' (Pearce Wright, *The Times*, 30 August 1988). Also, the only words that *seemed* to contradict Galileo were three verses of Bible poetry, whereas Darwinism contradicts nearly everything in eleven *chapters* of Bible *history*. The 'parallel' is hopelessly crooked.

Like many evangelicals, Berry thinks he can consistently hold onto the Virgin Birth and the New Testament miracles while at the same time abandoning faith in the Six-Day creation. This is rather naive. J.A.T. Robinson was more logical when he wrote: 'Matthew 1 has no more to do with gynaecology than Genesis 1 has to do with geology.' Liberal scholars are quick to point out that the Infancy Narratives can be re-interpreted in exactly the same way as Berry re-interprets Genesis. 'They are not meant to tell us *how* Jesus was born but only *who* he was . . .' is a perfect parallel to 'Genesis was not intended to teach us *how* God made the world but only *who* did.' (Hence the doctrinal confusion in the Church today).

Finally Berry resorts to psychology: 'creationism is a symptom of *fear of a changing future*' (my italics). If only Berry had talked to some of these 'fearful saints', he might have realized his blunder. As it is, he is content to copy page after page from Americans who try to explain away religious movements in terms of politics and economics. He knows nothing of the success of creationism in Europe, Australia, India, and Korea (where the Association includes nineteen University Professors). He asserts that it produces 'stunted' Christians, and suggests that St. Paul's command to 'be transformed' means swallowing evolution! He would be surprised to find that hundreds of these 'stunted' Christians are preaching the Gospel in dark and dangerous corners of the world and (like Henry Martyn, Hudson Taylor, and all the pioneers) teaching their converts to observe the Sabbath *because* God made everything in six literal days.

It is indeed regrettable that one so highly qualified should waste his talents defending the pagan philosophy of which a more mature believer has written:

'What is Darwin's theory of evolution but a far-fetched exercise in credulity that may well amuse posterity for generations to come?' (Malcolm Muggeridge, *Conversion—A Spiritual Journey*, 1988).

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DAVID C. C. WATSON

DARWIN'S FORGOTTEN DEFENDERS: The Encounter between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought
David N. Livingstone

Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1987 xii+210pp. £7.95

ISBN 0 7073 0532 2

The subject of Evolution is one which has long divided evangelical Christians and will no doubt long continue to do so, even in so staunchly conservative a company as the supporters of Church Society. We need therefore to bear with one another patiently and to try to learn from one another. In this scholarly little book David Livingstone, a Research Geographer at Queen's University, Belfast, questions the assumption that American-style 'creationists' 'bear the *imprimatur* of evangelical orthodoxy on the issue of evolution'. 'If my case is sustained' he writes, 'the onus will be on the creationists to satisfy us that theirs is not a thoroughly modern movement cut off from the mainstream of the conservative Christian tradition'. The author does this not by rehearsing scientific arguments, but by looking at the historical evidence, that is, by finding out how evangelical leaders of unimpeachable orthodoxy actually reacted to Darwin's theory when it first appeared. His conclusions will be surprising to many. Not only were evangelicals who accepted the new theories represented among the authors of *The Fundamentals* (the twelve volume manifesto which gave rise to the epithet 'fundamentalist') but among them was no less a figure than B.B. Warfield, whose doctrine of biblical inerrancy still forms, ironically, the basis of what 'creationists' themselves believe about the Bible. Not all of the Princeton School (to which Warfield belonged) took the same line, of course; Charles Hodge did not. Nevertheless there was a great deal of conservative evangelical support for Darwin's ideas, and this survey brings it together in an accessible form. Charles Hodge's son, A.A. Hodge, who succeeded him at Princeton, at first rejected it, though like his father he accepted the Nebular Hypothesis for the origin of the solar system; ('Darwinism is atheism' the elder Hodge had written in 1874). Later however A. A. Hodge changed his views (not of course his theological views which remained quite conservative) and was even, Dr. Livingstone writes, 'prepared to allow that the human physical form has undergone its own evolutionary history'. Many other eminent men took the same line too.

If this little book serves merely to take some of the heat out of the controversy among evangelical brethren today it will have served a very useful purpose. I commend it.

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

IN THE MINDS OF MEN—DARWIN AND THE NEW WORLD**ORDER Ian T. Taylor**T.F.E. Publishing, Toronto 1984, revised 1987 498pp. £12.00 pb. £16.00 hb.
(including p. & p.) ISBN 0 96917881 6

This substantial volume, thoroughly researched, well-organized, and fully illustrated, is a veritable encyclopaedia of creationism, a powerful testimony to the Bible's 'truth unchanged, unchanging'. For some evangelicals it may be like a visit to the dentist—painful but gainful, because 'no intellectual discoveries are more painful than those which expose the pedigree of ideas'. But—to pursue the analogy—an unsound tooth is better out than in, and the wise theologian will be willing to have an unsound doctrine 'extracted' if its roots are shown to be rotten.

The rottenness which Taylor exposes lurks in the biology of Charles Darwin and the geology of Charles Lyell. As an engineer, Taylor is more at home with stones than bones, but he also does a good hatchet job on the standard errors of biology textbooks—horses, archaeopteryx, peppermoths, gill-slits, *et cetera*. His biographical approach contributes much to the book's readability. We learn interesting details about Lamarck, Champollion, Malthus, Cuvier, Lowell, Metchnikoff, Virchow, Colenso, Haeckel, Fosdick, James Frazer, and many others. We also see what they *looked* like. The reader is carried along by easy stages from Aristotle to Zuckerman . . . watching the author's sleuth-work on ideas, discoveries, influences, up to his logical conclusion: '. . . a belief [in the universal Flood of Noah] held unquestionably true for several thousand years, was abandoned little by little, beginning with a few leaders of the Christian Church . . . who were 'intimidated by the men of science'.

Two chapters discuss the Age of the Earth. Taylor explains the hidden assumptions of all radiometric dating, and adduces more than thirty scientific evidences which support the Bible chronology. This should be helpful to those who agree with a recent writer in *Churchman* (1989/3 p.212) that a 'literalist' interpretation of Genesis is an 'unhealthy trend' and a 'horrific backlash'. Evangelicals who grew up in the shadow of men like Dewar and R. E. D. Clark find it hard to believe that these stalwarts may have been mistaken in *not going far enough* in their repudiation of Darwinism. Also, it is easy to forget that the Evolution Protest Movement at its inception (1932) was ridiculed in much the same way as Six-Day creationists are now labelled 'literalist' and 'fundamentalists'. Dr. Griffith Thomas, whose *Principles of Theology* was a standard Anglican textbook, in 1930 wrote: 'We may *rightly* accept Evolution as a working hypothesis . . .' and Bishop Westcott in 1901: '*No result* has been established more certainly . . .' (italics added). In other words, these eminent theologians would have regarded *any* attack on Darwin as 'unhealthy' and 'horrific'. How are the mighty fallen!—let their successors beware. Taylor shows that all attempts to mix more or less of science with more or less of Scripture produce a hybrid more or less absurd. The 'millions-of-years' extrapolation is no less brittle than Piltdown man, Nebraska Man, and many other embarrassing blunders long since consigned to the dustbin.

Another fascinating chapter ('Heads, Organs, Embryos') surveys the numerous medical misconceptions (and *mis-operations*) which have resulted from Darwinian thinking. For the mathematically-minded there are twelve

appendices: the non-specialist will find more enjoyment in the Notes on each chapter. These are no mere references to obscure journals, but informative sidelights—some seven hundred authors are quoted.

Taylor's style is good-humoured and non-polemical but his final chapter sounds a note of warning as to the deadly effects of World Humanism based on a 'new Darwinism'. Even the most brilliant scientists find it well-nigh impossible to break out of the paradigm of thought in which they have been educated, and the evolutionary mind-set is the very antithesis of faith in divine revelation: 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' This is a book for the 'last days'; every minister who works among academics should read, mark, and lend it. We British evangelicals have erred and strayed from God's Word for one hundred and thirty years: is it possible that He may be gently correcting us through the sharp-eyed investigations of a Canadian metallurgist? 'Tolle, lege'!

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DAVID C. C. WATSON

FRANK LAKE: THE MAN AND HIS WORK John Peters

Darton, Longman and Todd, London 1989 250pp. £12.95 ISBN 0 232 51842 4

Those who have attended Frank Lake's seminars, lectures, and workshops or have benefited by his treatment skills will welcome this study of the man and his techniques. Having been a member of one of his monthly study groups for two years I desire to commend it to a wider public. Disclaiming that it is an official biography, John Peters is content to offer information and reflection, often from those who knew Lake well as a controversial figure. There is in it sufficient material to evaluate Lake's ideas and the Clinical Theology Association which he founded.

It relates how his professional career moved from general medicine through missionary work to psychiatry. He seems to have been the spoilt child of a demanding mother. His wife Sylvia gives a sensitive appraisal of how she struggled to keep love alive through the years of their marriage with a man difficult to live with. His India missionary work without her, his unwillingness to play with his children, his frequent absence from home, his continual reading and writing, even when on holiday with his family, are not glossed over by Peters. As a man he was an outsider. Those who worked with him in his early days, including his brother Brian, eventually left him. An isolationist to his death he failed to make provision for the future of his work.

In all this, The Clinical Theology Association which he founded in 1862 and dominated until his death in 1882 was nothing but Frank Lake with his seminal ideas and methodology. John Peters gives much attention to Lake's view that neuroses may be due to infantile memories submerged in the unconscious to be healed when baby traumas are revealed. He went further in tracing emotional maladjustment and stress to pre-natal states. This concept of primal therapy engrossed his attention and conditioned his treatment of patients. To him the healing process began when a person's birth experience was relived and verbalized, often by the use of the drug L.S.D. (Lysergic Acid). Theologically, he saw in the birth process a crushing of the infant's head and desertion as it emerged from the womb into desertion and isolation from its mother. He associated this with Christ's

crown of thorns and desolation on the cross. In creating his therapeutic seminars and work groups throughout the land for the dissemination of these views of primal integration therapy he hoped to help their members to understand the stresses and needs of those whom they counselled.

John Peter's book outlines this in a masterly way. He admits that Lake's beliefs have been criticized by his peers and theologians as something yet unproved. Biblicists have warned against his delving into the past, and eminent psychiatrists have questioned his techniques of healing. But it is a measure of Lake's importance and influence that the re-adjusted Clinical Theology Association has been able to develop after his death. It is now pointed out that the Primal Therapy concept is only a model and that its association with Christ's passion needs modification.

John Peters has offered to the public an honest and open book of Frank Lake and his theories. He gets to the heart of his character and fervent ideas, and allows others who knew Lake and his work intimately to give their impressions of a remarkable man. The book is a fitting introduction to Lake's massive and major literary production *Clinical Theology*.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

**THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM: The Theology of
John A.T. Robinson**

Alistair Kee

S.P.C.K. London 1988 190pp. £8.95

ISBN 0 281 04338 8

This book is the second to appear within a year about the life and thought of the late John Robinson. Canon Eric James, who wrote the earlier biography, has contributed the foreword to this book, which fills in the background to a study of Robinson's thought.

Alistair Kee is an admirer of Robinson, without being an uncritical disciple, and the book is not slow to point out what its author sees as shortcomings in Robinson's approach. He begins with the well-known contrast between conservative Biblical scholarship and radical theology, and attempts to demonstrate that these two were held together in Robinson's mind in a way which makes him both a conservative and a radical, though not in the traditional senses of these terms.

His starting point is Robinson's Cambridge PhD. Thesis, *Thou Who Art*, which is an unpublished study of the nature of God. Kee maintains that it holds the key to all his future work. In the thesis, Robinson challenged the Thomist view of God, and tried to replace it with the personalist view of Martin Buber and others. For him, relationship was the key to the divine reality, and it was this concept which obliged him to reject so much traditional theological language. Kee does not always approve or excuse the way in which this was done, but he agrees that Robinson's general approach was needed in the theological climate of the early 1960s.

Kee also delves into the Bishop's social thought, in particular the controversial views which he held on questions relating to sexual morality. He points out that Robinson began as a radical critic of the establishment but lived to see many of his views become the standard orthodoxy of Church

leaders—though whether that has really benefited the Church is another matter.

Most difficult for Kee to accept is the conservative Biblical scholarship, which to his mind seems to be so out of tune with the rest. He makes a valiant effort to integrate this into Robinson's overall system of thought, but cannot resist stating that he finds his approach to the Bible old-fashioned and naive in many places. Robinson is reproached for having accepted too natural a link between history and tradition, and of having put his critical views of other matters to one side in dealing with this.

The book is a valuable introduction to Robinson's thought for those not already familiar with it, and it will fill in gaps in the picture for many who seldom dug deeper than the headlines which Robinson knew so well how to capture. Kee's attempt to integrate Robinson's thought is less successful, and probably we shall have to conclude in the end that Robinson, if not quite two different people, was torn in two very different directions by conflicting principles which he never integrated in his own mind. That does not destroy the value or importance of much of his work, but it does mean that in fifty years' time it is the solid works of conservative scholarship, not the radical pamphlets, which will still be read.

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GERALD BRAY

BISHOP HUGH MONTEFIORE John S. Peart-Binns

Quartet Books, London 1990 364pp. £18.50

ISBN 0 7043 2714 7

Writing the biography of a living subject has both advantages and disadvantages. The writer can refer to the person concerned, yet at the same time must be sensitive to the fact that the person can be hurt by what is said. Therefore, to claim that any biography can be written 'warts and all' cannot always be the whole truth. This does not, however, do away with the fascination of such as Hugh Montefiore.

That he should have become a bishop in the Church of God is in some ways remarkable. He was brought up in a substantial Jewish family and while at school at Rugby, he was given a vision of Christ which changed his life and led him into the ministry. He is, in many ways a remarkable man whose life was certainly conditioned by a very fine mind. Not that he is an academic but giving his mind in a decisive way was to stand him in good stead in his ministry in college, parish and diocese. In all this he was ably assisted by his wife, who came of a notable Christian family.

Besides the Gospel, he was always concerned with what are now called green issues. The question arises, however, how he can reconcile these two subjects with the *Gaia* hypothesis, which forms the basis of the New Age movement, and of whose organization he is chairman. Some would undoubtedly question the wisdom of his saying that the consecration of Barbara Harris was 'a future blessing for the entire church of God.'

Like many he has shown his frustration with the General Synod and the subjects discussed, though he did not realize how the continuance of this form of government has led to an increased power for the bishops. He was, however, concerned that this 'non-representative' body had the power to decide doctrine. The present Archbishop of Canterbury likened him to

William Temple, and this was certainly justified as he has interested himself in many social and ethical issues, not least when he was chairman of the Board of Social Responsibility. On certain issues he incurred the displeasure of members of the House of Commons as well as churchmen.

He excelled himself as a pastor, although he found following Mervyn Stockwood at Great St. Mary's quite difficult. He also found it difficult to come to terms with Evangelicals who made it clear that they were sure of their salvation. One, the present Bishop of Wolverhampton, when he was a student challenged him about his conversion, not knowing of the event that led him to Christ. Although he showed tolerance, he was clear that the Anglican Church was Protestant and that he followed Protestant principles in his interpretation of Scripture.

This book is full of very interesting items and the author has tackled his task very well. There is, as with all biographical studies, more to be learnt about other things than the person himself. As a help to understand the centre ground of Anglicanism this book is well worth reading.

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JOHN BOURNON

CONFESSIONS OF A CONSERVATIVE LIBERAL John Habgood

S.P.C.K., London 1988 229pp. £6.95 pb.

ISBN 0 281 04384 1

This book gathers together a number of pieces described by the author as

the sort of things I say or write when I am asked for a lecture or essay or sermon, usually on some special occasion. Unfortunately there are no examples of sermons or talks in ordinary parishes . . . As a confession of faith, therefore, this book lacks an important dimension. It is strongly slanted in the direction of public issues rather than personal religion.

This disclaimer needs to be borne in mind when criticizing the balance of what the Archbishop has written, though one must remember also that it has all originated 'in the daily business of trying to communicate the Christian gospel'. The book is divided into five parts headed Public Faith, Controversies about Belief, Ethical Theory, Moral Issues and Church and Ministry. The style is pleasant and thoughtful, and the author says many perceptive and important things. He clearly thinks that these pieces are suited to represent his considered opinions, or he would not have offered them for publication. What then is the general impression they leave?

It must be said at once that the subjects are treated 'horizontally' not 'vertically'; that is to say, the Archbishop confronts men with their social and other problems, rather than with God. This is a great loss, almost a 'serving tables' rather than preaching the Word of eternal Life. He often mentions 'the gospel', but I could find no clear statement of its content. He gives the impression of thinking that everyone knows what that is; it can therefore be taken as read. Unfortunately this is very far from being the case. It is just so with the question, 'What is a Christian?' His answer is extremely involved and seems calculated only to confuse the questioner, (who happened to be a television interviewer):

I launched into a long description of the six dimensions of religion—doctrine, ritual, myth, ethics, social institutions and personal experience—and was about to explain how they applied to Christianity when he interrupted me.

All the interviewer apparently wanted to know was if one had to believe in the Virgin Birth, but that is beside the point: why not a plain New Testament answer? A Christian is a disciple, a learner; unlike a student (who is attached to a subject) he is joined to a Master; that Master is Christ; and his relationship to his Master is absolute, not relative. All this can be abundantly supported from the New Testament and to say it in terms such as these is to do the work of an evangelist, which is one of a bishop's most important callings. When the trumpet gives such an uncertain sound, who prepares himself for the battle? When it comes to clearly spiritual questions there is much of this sort of convoluted writing, and it seems to be related to His Grace's ambiguous attitude to the New Testament. He rejects, for instance, the miraculous nature of the feeding of the five thousand, and supports his interpretation by what is surely special pleading of an obvious kind (no more unusual among liberals than among others). After remarking that 'apart from the miraculous element' (which one would judge is clearly the decisive consideration with him) 'the sheer mechanics of feeding . . . from a single distribution point . . . late in the evening . . . must surely raise questions . . .' But why a single distribution point? The Lord had just been giving powers similar to His own (healings, exorcisms) to the disciples and they had reported back to Him. Now comes a further sharing of power; the bread was to multiply in *their* hands too (note the emphatic '*you* give them' in all accounts). This annuls the objection. For Dr. Habgood to say that the evangelists 'are not interested' in the details is to offer an outworn but still dogmatic liberal cliché in place of a reasoned argument. It really is not good enough! His case is surely extraordinarily weak. He writes, 'for us, *accustomed as we are* to reading stories of this kind as if they were newspaper reports . . .' (my italics) without apparently asking himself *why* we are so accustomed. The answer is surely, because all the eight accounts which refer to the two miraculous feedings, written moreover by four writers of probably very different temperament, nevertheless all manage to convey the solid impression that what they wrote was *meant* to be read in that way and in no other! By what authority do liberals try to impose a wholly unnatural reading on a text that gives no indication that it expects or sanctions it? Sometimes the effect can be quite exasperating. 'John', he says, 'goes on uncovering layer after layer of meaning' [but to what does the meaning refer? we may well ask]. 'But none of this helps to answer the question, What actually happened? The reason is simple. It was not a question which . . . the evangelists had any particular interest in answering'. In other words, what our culture has come to call 'facts' did not matter to them and should not to us! At least, not in questions of Christian faith. The facts about our Lord's birth do not matter (I think that is Dr. Habgood's view); the facts about the present miracle do not matter; the facts about the fate of our Lord's body do not matter; where does one end? Does it matter whether our Lord was actually crucified? Perhaps the accounts of His passion were just 'a powerful symbol of the truth' about our Lord's utterly self-sacrificing life, and the early Christians 'felt it appropriate to express it through this article in the creed'? Why not, if liberal ways of handling Scripture are legitimate? Bultmann

seems to have gone almost as far as this. If our scientifically-orientated western culture is ever to be won back to faith in the Gospel some theologians will have to give up their almost studied contempt for 'facts' and learn again to speak in plain honest language: not 'The *doctrine* of the Virgin Birth is a powerful symbol of this truth' (p. 61), but 'The *fiction* of the Virgin Birth is a powerful symbol'—for that surely is how they regard it? Why cannot His Grace be less mealy-mouthed, if that expression can be used respectfully? I cannot refrain from quoting some words from an earlier Bishop of Durham, Ian Ramsey, who wrote in 1973 (*Models of Divine Activity*):

As everyone knows, theology is at present in turmoil; and if I were asked to characterize our present discontents I think I would select two features as basic to the present scene. First, there is the loss of a sense of God's presence; and secondly, there is a growing inability to see the point of theological discourse. We have become—for whatever reasons—insensitive to God; and theology—not God—has died on us.

The present book will I think confirm this impression on many readers. It illustrates an inability to break away from the stranglehold of the principles of the Enlightenment. There are more kinds of fundamentalism than one! Those principles gave us much, but as Leslie Newbigin has pointed out, they have their limitations, and today those principles are being called into question as rarely before. What a pity that a man with such a fine mind and such a responsible and influential position as Dr. Habgood does not submit his mind to the authority of Scripture as the Lord did, and as an act of loyalty to Him. Those of us who have the advantage of some degree of higher education need to heed very carefully indeed our Lord's words in Luke 10.21. For few can that be so important as for theologians and ecclesiastical statesmen.

There is a specially-written article on the Archbishop's part in the Crockford Preface affair, and several other interesting pieces. Even when one does not agree with him one finds all that he has written well-worth reading. But I wish he were more *realistic* in assessing the probable impact of his style of apologetics on a hard-headed and concrete-minded generation (if the expressions can be excused) which will hardly take readily to his blurring of the distinction between 'facts' and 'symbols'—even if the context is religion. I did not myself!

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

UNEARTHLY POWERS: A Christian Perspective on Primal-Folk Religion D. Burnett

Marc, Eastbourne 1988 286pp. £7.95

ISBN 1 85424 055 2

At a time when quasi-religious movements and occult practices are proliferating, from the New Age Movement to various doubtful forms of alternative medicine, Western Christians need to be informed of that other world view which includes the possibility of the supernatural.

Why are pentecostal churches growing at such a rate in third world countries, while in Western Europe the historic denominations are receding into a religious backwater?

The reasons are many and complex but one is supplied by Dr. David Burnett in *Unearthly Powers*. Western Christianity has taken on the world view of Western secular society and lost any sense of the supernatural. As a result it is seen as totally irrelevant to the majority of mankind who know from their own experience that there is a supernatural dimension.

David Burnett takes us through some of the basic assumptions of those with a primal world view. He does this succinctly and clearly. A glance at the table of contents shows the extent of the book. From the 'Human Soul' to 'Spirit Possession', from 'Totem' to 'Shamanism', taking in 'Ghosts and Ancestors', 'Mediumship—Consulting the Spirits', 'Folk Religion' and more. Sometimes the reader may be daunted by yet another category but the author sympathizes by including an extensive glossary so as to minimize confusion in the terms used.

The author shows 'that in primal world-views, unseen powers, whether they are personal or not, are interwoven with the lives of the people'. So that, for example, in the everyday business of decision making, by seeking the services of a diviner, responsibility is taken away from the individual and placed on the unseen world. The missionary has entered this world with medical technology, political democracy, marriages of love, and scientific agriculture. Religion and society have become secularized, as has happened over a longer period in the West. However, the folk element remains, as we find in the West with astrology and the like because the secular world view is not enough, nor is Westernized secular Christianity.

My criticism of David Burnett is that he seems to distance the problems of the church in countries with primal religions from our own. Now that we have begun to see Western Europe as very much a mission field, the same difficulties, while perhaps not being so clear cut, are present. For instance there are forty thousand registered fortune tellers of various kinds in France, more than the number of priests. Dr. Burnett suggests that spiritual gifts might well have 'particular relevance for the church of primal society' (p.118) but he fails to apply the lesson to our own society.

Similarly on the subject of possession, Dr. Burnett carefully goes through the various degrees of possession, condenses them, and rightly says that 'the church must be willing not only to acknowledge the reality of spirit-possession in its various forms, but should be able to minister to those affected in this way.' He then quotes a Ghanaian pastor as saying to him, 'We want missionaries who are both educated in the Bible and who have power to deal with the spirit world.' The reader is then referred to the appendix for 'a few practical guidelines for those who find themselves in such situations.' Presumably one will only do so in Ghana or a society with such a primal world-view. If only!

It needs to be recognized that there are very many people in secular Western society who have opened themselves to demons by deep sinful involvement or by dabbling in the occult, including transcendental meditation and yoga as offshoots of Hinduism, as well as astrology, all kinds of divination, spiritism and Freemasonry.

The appendix 'Ministering to the Spirit Possessed' is detailed excellently, though I would add two points:

1. Desire for deliverance (p.262). Only Christians—those who know that their need can alone be answered in Jesus and His victory over Satan on the

Cross—can be delivered. Those whom Jesus delivered were all Jews, members of God's people, except the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman who showed her faith by her reply to Jesus' stricture that the children should be fed first, and that their food should not be thrown to the dogs.

2. Anointing (p.264). Time should be allowed for the Holy Spirit to make His presence felt and to bring inner healing. This is the best assurance of acceptance, forgiveness and sonship that anyone can have.

Dr. Burnett sums up his position in the final chapter with challenges to the missionary not to dismiss the world-view beliefs of the culture to which he goes as mere superstition, but to risk allowing the new Christians to evaluate their way of life under scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit: 'They will find answers to their own problems, and seek to manifest the life of Jesus Christ in their own society, not as a group who have left their own culture for one which is new, but a people who remain as part of their own culture, and yet are totally Christian.' (p.257).

I must not forget that this book is written for missionaries and those being trained for that field, for whom it is admirable preparation. But we must stop artificially dividing up the mission field. Many of the same issues need to be recognized and dealt with in the power of the Holy Spirit actually within our own churches.

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JEREMY B. CROSS

THE OTHER SIDE OF 1984 Questions for the Churches **Lesslie Newbigin**

World Council of Churches, Geneva 5th printing 1986 74pp. Unpriced
ISBN 2 8254 0784 4

This small essay, Bishop Newbigin writes, was written at the request of the British Council of Churches as preparation for a conference to be held in the famous George Orwell year, 1984. It was reissued by the World Council of Churches and often reprinted. Those who know the Bishop will be prepared for its very perceptive analysis and convincing presentation. There is nothing trivial here; it is a weighty challenge to all who, at this critical point in history, have the widest interests of the gospel at heart. I have read it twice, and I expect I shall read it again.

The author is concerned with the fact that the Enlightenment, which brought such immense gains to a society ridden with dogma and priestcraft, has now left us in the lurch. One of the most characteristic features of western culture is, he says, its almost complete lack of hope and of any ability to find a source of meaning for existence (incidentally, a realization already eloquently expressed by Bertrand Russell in his famous essay of 1903—*A Free Man's Worship*). There is a 'dramatic suddenness with which, in the space of one lifetime, our civilization has so completely lost confidence in its own validity'. This is true of both streams, Marxism and liberal capitalism, whose proximate source was the Enlightenment. What then actually happened in that momentous turning point? For one thing, the concept of 'rights' replaced that of 'duties', as the French historian Paul Hazard notes; but even more, following Basil Willey, he believes it was a change in the character of

what was held to be the basis of real explanation; that is, what the human spirit could regard as satisfying in this connexion. How profoundly this affected man's outlook on all things he traces in a highly fascinating and, to me, convincing way. The concept of Nature replaced that of God, as that of rights replaced that of duties; 'Dare to know' became the motto for advance. 'Doubt' was elevated to a principle of honour and 'dogma' reduced to a rude word. And we must recognize that in some ways this elevation of doubt over dogma did sweep away a lot of harmful superstition. So we owe an enormous debt to the Enlightenment in important respects. However, a new recognition is forcing itself on us. 'It is impossible to doubt all one's beliefs at the same time without falling into imbecility', he writes. Indeed; and this leads to the conclusion that necessarily, primary to all knowledge is an act of faith, believing something without demonstration.

This is—if one may put it very sharply—an invitation to recover a proper acknowledgement of the role of dogma. It is an invitation to the Church to be bold in offering to the men and women of our culture a way of understanding which makes no claim to be demonstrable in the terms of 'modern' thought, which is not 'scientific' in the popular use of that word, which is based unashamedly on the revelation of God made in Jesus Christ . . .

This leads to three practical questions: How can we be preserved from returning to 'dogmatism' in the bad old sense? If the Christian revelation is to be reinstated as all-embracing, including the public sphere as well as the private, how can we escape the errors of 'Constantinianism'? And, Does Scripture in fact give us any authority for specifically Christian decisions in the public sphere? All this leads the author, in the light of 'recent efforts by the British churches' to advance proposals based more on 'contemporary liberal opinion than upon exegesis of scripture and the Christian tradition' to invite us to explore afresh five questions fundamental to our civilization: What does it mean to be a human person? What is the goal of human life? What are the capabilities and rights of governments? What is our vision of the future? What are our contemporary assumptions about what is involved in *knowing*? Following Michael Polanyi he believes our situation to be akin to that of Augustine, for whom 'a uniquely brilliant culture was coming to the end of its life. It had lost the power to renew itself.' We must, like him,

be ready, boldly and without embarrassment, to offer to our dying culture the framework of understanding that has its base in the work of Jesus . . . and to understand and deal with our experience afresh in the light and in the power of that name.

This is an extremely worth-while essay. The concluding postscript *From the Other Side* by the Methodist, the Rev. Wesley Ariarajah, I found however very disappointing. In his own words, 'it blunts the cutting edge of the questions raised in the original essay'—a great pity.

AGAINST THE NIGHT Living in the New Dark Ages**Charles Colson**

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1989 205pp. £5.99 pb. ISBN 0 340 51484 1

This is a short but impressive book. Charles Colson has already put us all under a debt of obligation by the frank and moving account of his conversion after the Watergate affair. Since then he has been engaged in a wide-ranging ministry among prisoners, and in connexion with this he has visited prisons all over the world. He therefore writes from extensive experience. This book, arising from a series of lectures given at Wheaton College in 1988, sets out in a vivid, serious and compelling way why the author has come to the conviction that we are living in a darkening age. The storm clouds are gathering; not only, or not principally, the clouds of war and international tension, but even more those of moral decline.

Men and women trade character for cash and sacrifice commitment on the altar of selfishness. Politicians, preachers [*sic*] and professionals prey on the weak . . . All around us crime rises, moral values decline, and families fragment. Indeed, the forecast is foreboding.

No doubt many will reply that all that could have been said of many preceding ages, and we are still here; so what? But this is a very hasty and superficial response, though a very common one. It overlooks the irreversible trends of history, of which many are bearing in on us. There is the exponentially-mounting growth of population with all that that means of mutual pressure, competition for scarce resources, intolerance, jealousy, religious rivalry and not least, of necessity to introduce what is euphemistically called 'family planning' but which has other and less savoury connotations. It overlooks too the vast increase in sheer technical ability to inflict injury and damage to others, whether by physical violence or through propaganda. It overlooks the continual reduction in the hours which must be spent in toiling to provide the basic necessities of life, leaving men with more and more time on their hands. And it forgets that the continuous advance in scientific technology brings in its train problems in affluence, pollution, and alienation from nature which have never been approached on a global scale before. Charles Colson traces our moral predicament to certain key issues: individualism, the loss of shared values; relativism, the loss of a sense of the absolute; and as a consequence of these, despair, the loss of hope. All of these have worked together to produce a collapse of what he refers to as the 'moral imagination'.

This is not an ideology. An ideology begins with discontent and sets out to force the universe into some speculative, rational plan . . . In contrast, the moral imagination begins with awe, reverence, and appreciation for order within creation. It sees the value of tradition, revelation, family, and community and responds with duty, commitment, and obligation.

Charles Colson's language is vigorous, direct and incisive. This is a book for thoughtful men and women, whether committed Christians or open-minded but not yet convinced. The print is fairly large so it is not long. I wish it a large circulation.

FREEMASONRY AND ITS IMAGE OF MAN Giuliano di Bernardo
Freestone, Weald U.K., Tunbridge Wells 167pp. £12.95 ISBN 0 7104 5001 X

The author, a Freemason and an Italian philosopher of international repute, endeavours within the pages of this volume to provide an acceptable and workable apologetic for Freemasonry. In essence Mr. Bernardo's argument is that Freemasonry is not a religion but a philosophy, a way of living. As such it is therefore open to all, irrespective of creed or culture. In the space of some nine chapters he sketches in the history of Freemasonry (not everyone will agree with every assertion made), analyzes its conception of man, its Constitutions and symbols, and discusses its relationship to religion, science, Roman Catholicism and the State. The usual criticisms of the Craft are faced and addressed, but not always convincingly.

There can be no question about the importance of this book. Freemasons will turn to it to justify both the existence and practices of the Craft. Certainly the author seeks to provide a secular justification of them. And those who question or object to Freemasonry at the presuppositional level will need to take seriously the arguments propounded.

Mr. Bernardo is a man of learning with considerable intellectual gifts but, as indicated above, his arguments are not likely to satisfy Evangelical Christians. It may be, for example, that many Freemasons hold that *The Great Architect of the Universe*—T.G.A.O.T.U.—(the masonic title for God) is to be understood as a *regulative ideal in a non-exclusive sense* (p.86), but those who worship the God of the Bible know that it is the responsibility of all men everywhere to worship God exclusively and that our beliefs and lives are to be fashioned only according to his revelation.

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GEORGE CURRY

THE UNIVERSE NEXT DOOR James W. Sire
Inter Varsity Press, Leicester 1988 246pp. £5.95 ISBN 0 85110 672 2

This is the second edition of a book first published by I.V.C.F. in America in 1976, and widely successful. This new edition differs in that there is a more adequate section on Marxism (by C. Stephen Evans), and still more significantly, a long section on the New Age Movement, which has grown markedly in the intervening twelve years. I found the whole book very impressive and worthwhile.

Dr. James Sire was formerly a lecturer in English in the University of Northern Illinois, and is now senior editor of the Inter-Varsity Press in the U.S. As one would expect, he is very well-read. He has set out to give us a comprehensive survey of the various world-views on offer to-day to men and women in our western culture. What is a world-view? Dr. Sire answers,

a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true or entirely false) which we hold consciously or sub-consciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make-up of our world.

Something is there, we all realize; but what is the real nature of that Something, and why is it there? It is in answers to these questions that world-

views declare themselves—and very divergent, and significantly divergent, are the answers. James Sire gives us a Hitch-hiker's Guide, not indeed to the Universe, but to views about it, and a splendid guide (in another sense of the word) he proves to be. He holds the interest throughout with a style at once crisp, luminous, fascinating and well-documented. I found it hard to put his book down.

First comes a chapter entitled 'A Universe charged with the Grandeur of God: *Christian Theism*'. Then we move (surely downwards) to 'The Clockwork Universe: *Deism*'. There follow, in an order rightly explained as logical, 'The Silence of Finite Space: *Naturalism*' (this includes a discussion of Marxism); 'Zero Point: *Nihilism*'; 'Beyond Nihilism: *Existentialism*' (Both atheistic and theistic); 'Journey to the East: *Eastern Pantheistic Monism*'; and 'A Separate Reality: *The New Age*'. Finally there is a chapter on 'The Examined Life', a reasoned commendation of the Christian view. There are twenty pages of Notes and a useful Index.

I find it hard to do justice to the many excellencies of this book, and its (to me) satisfying nature. It is anything but superficial and it indulges in no special pleading. Reading it resembles being taken round a food supermarket where all the goods displayed have their vital statistics plainly marked. There is thus no excuse for choosing something which though in a splendid package and selling like hot cakes is fundamentally unwholesome and ultimately lethal. This is a book for intelligent men and women: seekers, scoffers, or slumberers. It will be valuable too for ministers. May it have a wide circulation.

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

LOVERS OF DISCORD Twentieth Century Theological Controversies in England Keith W. Clements

S.P.C.K., London 1988 261pp. £8.95

Keith Clements, who is Senior Tutor at the Bristol Baptist College and something of an authority on modern theology, has written a very instructive guide to theological controversies in England over the past century or so. It is always very difficult to know where to begin such a work, since 1900 did not by itself introduce any new departure in theology, and also to know what to include and what to leave out. In the end, we have a book which starts with the 'Down-Grade' controversy among the Baptists (1887 onwards) and takes in the main Anglican controversies, with occasional references to Nonconformity (especially to the Baptists).

It is of course true that theology has become an ecumenical enterprise in the course of this century, but it was not so at the beginning, and the old Anglican antipathy towards Nonconformity (and *vice-versa*) is a factor at work in the earlier part of the narrative. More important though, and still largely true, is that Anglicanism has dominated the universities in which theological controversy has largely taken place, so that to introduce references to other denominations is to move into a different world. It is this, rather than churchmanship, which gives the book a certain unevenness at times—as if the main story has been interrupted by news bulletins from another country.

What is interesting about the author's choice is that he concentrates heavily on controversies generated by symposia, punctured occasionally by one-off books like *Honest to God*. The names have faded into history now—*Foundations*, *Church Problems*, *Soundings*, even *The Myth of God Incarnate*—and the general impression left behind is that after an initial flurry of publicity, the controversies have been conducted within a restricted élite of theologians who have made little lasting impression in the Church at large. It is interesting to note that at the end of his book, the author is able to say that there are signs that the Church of England now wants to repudiate the entire tradition of the liberal theology of the past eighty years, and even to drive it out of the Church altogether. Whether this is a belated reaction from the laity or a sign of a newly-emerging conservatism is not made clear, but the fact that such a reaction is possible after all this time makes one question the enduring quality of the debates which have taken place.

Having said that, the author's approach is generally fair and not too biased in favour of one side or the other. It is possible to discern a general kind of sympathy with the radicals, especially in the early period when they were battling against a Christianity which had become virtually synonymous with the national interest, but he is not afraid to criticize the radical heroes of more recent times, or to point out that in some cases (for example Hensley Henson) initial liberalism changed to a defence of the *status quo* and a hostility to more radical positions taken up by a younger generation. The slide across generations from traditional Orthodoxy to virtual atheism is catalogued quite clearly, though some readers will wonder where the conservative opposition was going at the same time.

It is the weakness of the conservatives which stands out above all, and their generally defensive approach to everything. Did they have a positive programme of their own? Hints of one emerge with the publication of *The Truth of God Incarnate* in 1977, but its weaknesses were plain for all to see and it has not been followed up. What does appear to be happening, in the light of the Durham affair, is a realignment of conservative forces, based now in television and the General Synod of the Church of England, which will prove to be politically powerful if intellectually dubious—the ecclesiastical counterpart to Thatcherism? Whether this will lead to a new era of controversy, or end it altogether, at least in its present form, remains to be seen. The author holds out the hope that it may continue, and be used to bring out a deeper understanding of God's Word for the world. But whether that Word lies with the conservatives or with the liberals (or some blend of the two) remains unresolved at the end of the volume.

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GERALD BRAY

THE CHURCH IN AN AGE OF NEGLIGENCE Peter Virgin

James Clark, Edinburgh 1989 320pp. £30.00 hb.

ISBN 0 227 6 7911 3

This is an extremely well-researched book, having taken the author twenty years in the writing. With the administration of the Established Church undergoing radical changes in recent years, the comparison with the events of the Georgian period proves a salutary study. The centralization that has overtaken the church contrasts with the events of that period, and the

studying of this alone would justify obtaining this book, though the cost may well call for its being obtained through a library. It is surprising that the ministry managed to survive during that period as stipends were at such a low level and these had to cover accommodation in many cases. Comparison of the length of stay show that the length was not always for pastoral or spiritual reasons. Many, too, of those who were ordained were never benefited. There were the privileged few who having the right connexions were rewarded with profitable spheres. The majority came from 'Oxbridge', but 'Georgian clergymen did not enter orders as a trained man' (p.134) and 'it was thought more fitting to purchase a collection (of sermons) by a well known divine'.

Comparisons are drawn from the records of various dioceses and these show that at the beginning of the period there was a real spiritual poverty in the church. Circumstances change in the new century with a 'surprisingly vigorous spiritual revival'. The Evangelical ministry at Cromer, for instance, records attendance of three to four thousand as a minimum with as many as a thousand on some occasions. Evangelicals were also anxious to exercise a spiritual ministry as against those who were appointed magistrates. By 1840 most had for various reasons followed this example.

In all this, patient research has produced a picture of the church often different from that which is usually thought to be the case, and it is certainly a very worthwhile study which may encourage a deeper analysis of church life to-day.

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JOHN BOURNON

MORE THAN ONE CHURCH: MARC Monograph No. 27

Marc Europe, Bromley 1989 40pp. £5.00

ISBN not applicable

At more than twelve pence a page this is expensive. If value is to convey maximum data in minimum time, so be it. In February 1989, one hundred and sixty ministers replied to a two-page questionnaire. They serve five hundred and eighty five churches with nineteen thousand members. The survey is an interesting collection of off-the-cuff information which may be more true than carefully stewed statistics. It was done in the Dioceses of Norwich and Peterborough, including some Methodists. It does not reveal how many questionnaires were not returned: either because the Minister is lazy and disorganized or because being out in the highways and hedges is less dangerous to his own soul than lying back in his study counting sheep.

The point of the exercise was to study multiple-church pastoral care in rural England. I felt the lack of a geographical understanding of rural ministry. Simply describing the size of parishes by population will not do. There may be a mere two and a half thousand people in my present four church cure but it is seven and a half miles long, traversed by nine foot-wide lanes and cut by the A34 which might as well be the Berlin Wall. The comparison is made with local services such as Grocer, Butcher, Baker, but quoted from 1967, and one is left wondering if Diocesan Bureaucrats might prefer to do business through a Spiritual Supermarket and let the village outlets die.

The analysis of congregations which are growing, static or decreasing is very interesting: but again there is a vital element unassessed, probably

because it cannot be, that is the pastor himself. The response of people has a great deal to do with the Minister's approach, style, audibility, instant availability, and impression (not faked) of total interest although he may be due elsewhere in ten minutes. In particular, the Parson traditionally is a Visitor. No other representative of the Church can fulfil this rôle of the Vicar and his Wife 'calling' without appointment and without reason. It is a *parousia*. 'Whenever I see you coming I feel so guilty', was said to me last week. Please God, that person will soon attend church and be prepared by Grace for the *Parousia*. The question lying at the back of this survey is how far can one Minister be an effective presence, whether as servant or leader, for more than one congregation. Professor Gill is quoted, 'that congregations would much prefer all of a non-stipendiary vicar than a small part of a stipendiary one.' The Minister in charge of several churches is playing at Bishop which is not the Church of England ideal any more than the strange notion, introduced into recent Inductions, that my cure is also the Bishop's. There is no point in pursuing an impractical dream. The Bishop ought to fulfil his cure of the parson and his family but there is no hope of him being the super pastor of every person in his diocese. So many comments beg other questions, 'Unshakable attachment to the *Book of Common Prayer*,' may reflect unwillingness to change or revulsion at unbiblical ideas in the *Alternative Service Book*. Article XIX calls a church, amongst other things, 'a congregation.' The Bible talks about where two or three are gathered together in His Name . . . The glory of the English Church is that this is possible in every parish of the realm. To remove that possibility in the name of rationalization is to reveal a heresy that the Diocesan Office (Church Commissioners or whatever) is essential to the Church. Dr. Beeching may have removed some branches to save the system. Christians need the branches, all of them, we do not need the system.

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MARTIN GARNER

EQUAL TO SERVE: Women and Men in the church and home
Gretchen Gaebelin Hull

Scripture Union, London 1987 302pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 86201 564 2

The author of this book is the daughter of the well-known Biblical commentator Frank E. Gaebelin. As such she is writing from the standpoint of what is called 'A high view of Scripture': The Bible is the inspired, trustworthy word of God written, and as such, stands as the true revelation of God's message, regardless of any human reaction to it. As the title suggests she is not just concerned about the ordination of women in the church but also their position, as Christian women, in the home and the world.

The author begins with a long, hard look at the changing situation that women have faced in the world over the last thirty years. She is also concerned with the tension and disharmony that often exists between men and women and which are evidenced in the increasing divorce rate, severed relationships, the violence between the sexes and crimes of wife abuse and rape. Her concern is to maintain the position that women are equal partners in ministry, marriage and society. Her emphasis is upon the equality of all persons being subject to one another in the cause of servanthood rather than

on assigned positions or proscribed rôles in life. She herself is comfortable with Biblical Feminism (p.55). Biblical Feminists advocate partnership not competition; mutual submission, not domination by one sex or the other; the priesthood of all believers, not male hierarchy. Here is a book to make the orthodox, traditional, conservative evangelical think very hard about 'his' position.

The crux of the matter lies in chapter 9 entitled 'Who's in charge here?' This is the chapter that deals with what are termed the 'hard passages', namely those in 1 Corinthians 11.2–16, 1 Corinthians 14.33–36, 1 Timothy 2.8–15, to which might be added Colossians 3.18, Ephesians 5.22–24 and 1 Peter 3.1–6. There is a helpful appendix at the back dealing with the exegetical difficulties in these 'hard passages'. As there are not many books that deal with the text in this way this is helpful, though regrettably somewhat confusing in its analysis.

The author faces us with the statement, 'Even the shortest look (at these passages) will make it readily apparent that the precise meaning of these three passages cannot be determined at this time'. Until this understanding comes we are told that we must not allow these passages to rule out truth that *is* clear! Logic would surely demand that if these passages are so difficult for us to understand, then now is surely not the time to change the *status quo*.

This book is an interesting contribution to the whole question that we are facing. It will cause many people to think hard about what they believe, and why they believe it, concerning the rôle relationship of men and women in the New Testament. This in itself is no bad thing. However, it sadly does not give us a definitive answer, nor clarify much of the confusion that exists in the minds of many people today.

If people want a clearer understanding of the texts in question then it would be good for all who take this matter seriously to study what Professor George Knight has written in his book, *The Rôle Relationship of Men and Women, New Testament Teaching*. Church Society also has recently published an excellent pamphlet on this subject upholding the orthodox Christian view.

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JOHN HALL

FREEDOM UNDER THE LAW Norman Anderson

Kingsway Publications Ltd., Eastbourne 1988 185pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 86065 434 6

This book is in two distinct parts. The first part is about issues of the law and freedom in a modern state. The second part examines law and gospel in the Bible.

Norman Anderson is a distinguished lawyer and Bible Christian and who better to write this book? Would that all law lecturers and Bible teachers could speak and write so clearly! Kingsway are to be congratulated on producing a book that will still be a worthwhile summary to have on one's bookshelf in twenty years' time (though there is no index).

The first half of the book would be valuable for all Christians connected with the law. For example, those involved in politics locally or nationally, or those involved in making or enforcing laws, or those concerned with reforming society or campaigning for freedoms would find much that rings

bells for them. Issues that they are familiar with in their everyday work are discussed, summarized and put in an historical context in a masterly and concise way.

This reviewer was surprised to meet in the book familiar names from his undergraduate law course. It had all the nostalgia of meeting people whom one did not expect to see again, whom one had not given a thought to since meeting last (in an examination hall) and whom one did not expect to remember even if one did meet them again. But here they all are: great legal theorists—Dicey, Savigny and other friends. In fact the chapter on the Rule of Law would be a very helpful summary for a student beginning a course of Jurisprudence.

But there is a practical feel to this first half of the book. Chapter One discusses the necessity of law to freedom. It is helpful to have pointed out that in early societies one of the worst punishments for an offender was for him to be put outside the protection of any law, 'out-lawed'.

In other chapters, terms such as Natural Law, Divine Law, Positive Law and Natural Justice are explained and considered, often in the context of different cultures, religions and legal systems—Chinese, Indian, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu and Islamic. The treatment of a Bill of Rights (which the author argues for), private/public morality and the law *vis-à-vis* some current moral issues is handled concisely and with a sure touch. Other authors attempting the same would have written a far longer book without necessarily saying more. Running through the first part of the book is this practical theme of the tension and dependence between law and freedom.

The second half of the book takes as its starting place the world of the Bible. It explores the place of God's (Mosaic) law in the New Covenant, the relationship of the Covenant to the Kingdom and the place of law in a life of grace. This is then briefly applied to today's world. Throughout the book the author includes telling quotes from others: for example, this from Professor John Rawls:

Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory, however elegant and economical, must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust.

This book was written before the 'Salman Rushdie affair', otherwise we might perhaps have been able to consider in the context of Islamic fundamentalism the tension between the law of God and tolerance for others. And whither the law of blasphemy?

Speaking as a grass root, I found this a helpful and interesting book to read. What a pity that it was not written in the 1960s!

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ROGER COMBES

SELECTING GOOD SHEPHERDS Hugh Craig

Church Society, London 1990, 16pp. £2.00

In the guise of giving the 'Church' a greater say in the appointments we have returned to the pre-Reformation position of effective hierarchical appointment: we have turned the Sovereign and Prime Minister into virtual rubber stamps for

a predominantly clerical Committee: while the principle we claimed to be following was that the consent of both clergy and laity should be given, not merely that the laity be given minority representation.

In a closely argued booklet the present Chairman of the Standing Committee of General Synod, Hugh Craig, explains the above claim and offers some means of reforming the way in which bishops of the Church of England are appointed. His target, the Crown Appointments Commission, was set up just over a dozen years ago when James Callaghan was Prime Minister. It was approved by 390 votes to 29 in General Synod. But in July 1989 a Private Member's motion critical of the balance in the appointments so made drew 80 signatures of Clergy and Laity. By February of 1990 in the House of Laity alone it had risen to 74 or over 29%. In all 105 signatures were appended by then—but no suffragan or diocesan bishops were among them. It is Hugh Craig's conviction that the kind of bench of bishops we have is the kind of commission set up.

Going back to New Testament times he notes that the *Church*, and not mainly the leaders, joined together in the appointment of the oversight. The laity, who are 99% of the Church of England have no such say. The author argues that the old system of appointments did, in fact, work much more fairly. In answer to the objection to the State having any part in appointments he uses the example of Israel which some might not find satisfactory. However, his further observations remind us that the country is much more 'Christian' than might be assumed from actual Church of England membership. 15,000,000 claim to be 'C. of E.', another 8,000,000 belong to other denominations. Both Church and State are divine institutions and God is sovereign over both. In such a situation there is nothing wrong in principle with the State participating in church affairs.

His proposals for reform of the Crown Appointments Commission include a dominant rôle for the laity, the restoration of the idea of appointments by a church/state partnership in a still professing Christian state, 'To use the prime Minister as little more than a forwarding address should be equally repugnant both to Church and State', to secure means which discriminate in favour of, not against, men with Scriptural convictions and spirituality: and secure a proper balance of view across the bench. Means of achieving these ends including removing both Archbishops from the Commission as has been proposed by the Bishop of Chichester, and adding to the Commission some non-synodical but representative laity. A review cannot do full justice to this powerful challenge to the *status quo*. The booklet needs to be read carefully, and those who would contradict its contentions need to find weapons of equal quality to those in its armoury.

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- Basil Blackwell** E. Mason, *St. Wulfstan of Worcester c.1008–1095*, 1990, £49.95
Collins Religious Publishing G. Appleton, *Unfinished*, 1990, £17.95
Kingsway Publications Ed. A. Warren, *Happily Ever After . . .*, 1990, £3.25
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Macmillan Press H. Montefiore, *Reclaiming the High Ground*, 1990, £12.99
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