

Book Reviews

ACCURACY OF TRANSLATION

Robert P Martin

Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 1989 (reprinted 1997) 92pp £4.95 pb
ISBN 0-85151-7358

In a short and polemical work, Martin forcefully makes the point that the *New International Version (NIV)* is not accurate enough as an English language translation to be used as a standard text. He deals only with the New Testament, and three brief appendices deal with revisions to the *NIV*, archaic language and the *Textus Receptus*. The author is not to be confused with the New Testament scholar Ralph P Martin.

Broadly speaking, translators tend towards either 'formal equivalence' translation (word-for-word translation, retaining where possible the original structure and idioms), or 'dynamic equivalence' (a paraphrase or translation which aims to convey the thought of the writer). The doctrine of the verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture demands, according to Martin, that orthodox Bible translations adhere to formal equivalence. Since 'the general tendency has been to find dynamic equivalence translation associated with heterodox views of biblical inspiration' (p 15), it seems there can be no concession to the functionally illiterate.

That the *NIV* is not a 'formal equivalence' translation should not be a surprise to any reader who uses it with regular reference to the Greek text. There are easy pickings in two chapters which give detailed (but thankfully not exhaustive) examples of the *NIV*'s failure to preserve original sentence structure, the omission or addition of words in translation, different translations for a single Greek word, and the translators' interpretation of difficult texts. In fact all translation involves interpretation, and the translator will inevitably use theological as well as linguistic criteria in such work. Yet the assessment of the *NIV* is one-sided, as if it were alone among English language translations to stand by a theological agenda (or indeed add or omit words in translation). A comparison of the various theological agendas would have been more even-handed – and interesting. Also, Martin writes with reference to American translations (eg *ASV*, *NASB*) which are not common in the UK.

This book is already in need of revision for at least two reasons: the first is that while the *NIV* is now widely accepted in popular use, it has not become the standard text for serious study in Britain. Perhaps more important however is the rise of gender-inclusive translations (eg *NRSV*) whose approach makes many of the concerns addressed by Martin pale into insignificance.

ED MOLL

ZEAL FOR TRUTH AND TOLERANCE: THE ECUMENICAL CHALLENGE OF THE CZECH REFORMATION

Jan Milic Lochman

Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press 1996 78pp No price ISBN 0 7073 0735 X

This little volume represents the author's Cunningham Lectures delivered at New College, Edinburgh. In six short chapters it introduces English readers to the breadth of the Czech Reformation and its principal concerns. This subject is not only important in its own right but also as a part of the context in which the better known events of the sixteenth century took place. Lochman argues further that a study of the Czech Reformation provides a model for defending the truth in an ecumenical and indeed pluralist age.

The lectures introduce readers to a number of influential figures in the movements of dissent within the Czech church of the fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Jan Milic, Matthias of Janov, and the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, played an important role in the first stage of the Czech Reformation which culminated in the martyrdom of Jan Hus. Lochman argues that the *Four Articles of Prague* (1419) constitute a common manifesto which gave theological shape to the Hussite Reformation. These emphasized the free preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the sacrament in both kinds, the simple apostolic model for the Christian priesthood, and the punishment of all public sin. However, perhaps most distinctive was the Czech development of the practical and social implications of the Reformation. Later figures such as Peter Chelcicky and the movement known as the Unity of the Czech Brethren added other features, such as a rejection of the practice of defending theological positions by means of the sword, and a serious questioning of the broader Constantinian order of Christendom. Jan Komensky added a forthright millenarianism and the hope for a universal reformation and renewal, penetrating education, culture and society.

Lochman's lectures conclude with an application of the principles of the Czech Reformation to contemporary ecumenical discussion. He quotes Jan Hus' final letter to the Czech nation: 'Love each other, do not oppress good people and grant everybody the truth.' A radical love of the pure truth of God must be placed in creative tension with a genuine tolerance and a realization that 'nobody can be brought to the faith by force'.

Lochman is an enthusiast for the Czech Reformation and his enthusiasm has led to this introduction into the thought-world of men like Milic, Matthias, Hus, Chelcicky, and Komensky. He honestly admits the way his own experience as a believer in the Eastern bloc has heightened his appreciation of their perspectives. The result is a short book which is

worth reading but which does not place the theology of these men under the careful scrutiny of the teaching of Scripture. Such a scrutiny would have revealed problems in a number of key areas (including eschatology, anthropology, and the nature of salvation) while perhaps even strengthening the appeal 'to speak the truth in love'.

MARK THOMPSON

HYMNS AS HOMILIES Peter Newman Brooks

Leominster: Gracewing 1997 294pp £15.99 pb ISBN 0-85244-281-5

This book is a joy to read; and yet, to a degree perhaps because of this, it is an unusual production, curiously misnamed, for it deals with far more than hymns just as homilies. Some of us are in Dr Brooks' debt already for his contributions over the years to Reformation and particularly Cranmer studies. Now he has chosen to consider 12 hymn-writers, beginning, not surprisingly for him, with Martin Luther. All the rest are British, starting with Thomas Ken and 'Awake, my soul' and ending with John Ellerton and 'The day Thou gavest'. This linkage of writer with one particular hymn heads each chapter, but the treatment is by no means so narrow. Indeed, it is here that the book's unusualness lies with its mingling of biography, homiletic and literary comment, this last not in any strict sense literary criticism but rather old-fashioned literary appreciation – and none the worse for that. The specified hymn does in every case receive special consideration, and each chapter concludes with what the author calls a spiritual or devotional treasury, the particularity of which, however, escaped this reader.

It is almost invidious to choose between the different hymnists, but some, merely by who they were and even by how much we know about them, come over more vividly than others. Newton, the one-time slave-trader, is an obvious example, but a lesser and very passive figure such as Charlotte Elliott of 'Just as I am' receives detailed treatment, generally sympathetic but also a touch suggestive of her undoubted hypochondria. I should have liked to see what Brooks would have made of another frequently bedridden writer, Frances Ridley Havergal, or of the revivalist Fanny van Alstyne (Crosby) or, again in the realm of the disturbed psyche, William Cowper who is merely dealt with incidentally as a kind of appendage to Newton. The other woman-writer considered besides Elliott is Cecil Frances Alexander ('There is a green hill'), where in his choice of extracts and by his comments Brooks neatly enables us to distinguish between the child-like and the childish. One could go on – Doddridge, Watts, Charles Wesley, Toplady (and there's a name!), Keble, Newman – they are all here to demonstrate in the author's felicitous phrase, 'the limitless potential of poetry as the handmaid of piety', a comment actually

made about Wesley, on whom, incidentally, I discovered the book's only significant factual error, where the date of publication of the *Collection* should surely be 1779 (not 1799).

ARTHUR POLLARD

THE ROAD FROM DAMASCUS Richard N Longenecker ed
Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans 1997 253pp £16.99 pb
ISBN 0-8028 4191 0

Whatever Paul experienced on the road *to* Damascus, he would travel the road *from* Damascus a man changed in life, thought and ministry. The second volume of the *McMaster New Testament Studies* makes available much of the recent debate about the nature of Paul's experience (was it conversion, or his call to apostleship?), its impact on his thought (how much of Paul's gospel originated in that encounter, how much was inherited from his background, and how much developed later during his ministry) and its use as a paradigm in Christian thought (was it prototypical of all Christian conversion?). The topic also gives an opportunity to summarize some of the current debate on Paul's Christian (as opposed to his pre-Christian) attitudes to the Law, the Spirit, eschatology, gender and ethics.

Bruce Corley discusses the history of interpretation of Paul's conversion, and challenges the thesis that it was only after Stendahl's seminal article that the 'Damascus road' was viewed as other than a prototype conversion: indeed the impact was on Paul's Christology, eschatology and missiology, topics taken up by Richard Longenecker, I Howard Marshall and Terence Donaldson respectively.

James Dunn explains how his perspective applies to the 'Damascus road', while Seyoon Kim suggests that Paul's unique use of 'reconciliation' terminology has its genesis in the 'Damascus road' encounter. Bruce Longenecker's sympathetic treatment of Covenantal Nomism shows how the 'new perspective' can be consistent with Paul's aversion to legalism.

The debate about the nature of the 'Damascus road' experience, and the biblical witness to that event are left behind in the closing chapters. Working on an (unstated) assumption that the 'Damascus road' marked a turning-point in Paul's thinking (ie a conversion), four scholars write on Paul's Christian (as opposed to Jewish or hellenistic) thought about the Law (Stephen Westerholm), the Spirit (Gordon Fee), gender (Judith Gundry-Volf) and ethics (G Walter Hansen). Where Scripture is silent on Paul's pre-Christian attitudes, the gaps are filled in from the presumed

Jewish and hellenistic backgrounds.

This collection of essays is valuable for two reasons. The first is that it serves as an excellent summary of the debate for the non-specialist. The authors all work hard to summarize necessary elements of a wide debate. Their skill in reducing entire arguments into paragraphs is helpful for an overview, but can make for a dry read before a real argument is spotted (it is worth persevering for). The text is kept clear of notes, and a short bibliography is given with each chapter.

Secondly, several contributors write explicitly from within the so-called 'new perspective' on Paul (following E P Sanders, James Dunn and N T Wright among others), and in so doing provide a helpful introduction to 'Covenantal Nomism' and other aspects of recent Pauline thought. It is especially refreshing to see the 'new perspective' being put to work on different questions, rather than merely being rehearsed.

The *McMaster New Testament Studies* series aims to show how scholarship speaks 'directly to the pastoral of people in today's church'. It is ambitious to try both to summarize a complex debate and draw out the pastoral implications, and few of the contributors succeed completely. In any case, the variety in their own points of view (witness the lack of consensus on whether or not the Paul of Romans 7 is converted) means that the readers must do their own thinking too. But as a guide to the recent debate, this volume provides a handy starting-point.

ED MOLL

THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF WORLD RELIGIONS

John Bowker ed

Oxford: OUP 1997
Conversion Tables)

1111pp (with Topical Index and Chinese Word
£30 hb ISBN 0-19-213965-7

Those who are mystified by the many *Sanskrit* and *Pali* religious terms used in the previous work by Ramachandra, would be well advised to get hold of this superb Dictionary, to help them discover their meaning. In fact the whole range of religious terminology, with a comprehensive history including the content of every 'world religion' you can think of, or have never even thought of, is included in this excellent tome.

Each religion is given equally objective treatment, so, for example, in the entry under 'Christianity' we find a refreshingly historical and factual presentation of it, setting aside modern reductionism. As for the scope of the Dictionary: I tested it out with *ta-riki* and *ji-riki* of Japanese 'Pure Land' Buddhism and was not disappointed. It yielded a like result with

Hesychasm and *Totum simul* on the equally extreme edges of Christian terminology! However, the term 'religion' is stretched to its widest limits with such entries as 'Bricolage', (French, 'doing odd jobs')! Apparently, it is used in describing 'the making of myth'.

More to the point, the fulsome articles by reputed scholars on all the major religions are of consummate excellence. I have a feeling that this Dictionary of World Religions will maintain its place in the forefront of cognate works of reference for a long time to come.

OWEN THOMAS

SAINTS AND SINNERS: A HISTORY OF THE POPES

Eamon Duffy

Yale: Yale University Press 1997 326pp £16.95 hb ISBN 0-300-07332-1

Eamon Duffy is one of the Roman Catholic revisionist historians aiming to show that the old religion retained majority popular support at the time of the Reformation. His *The Stripping of the Altars* makes an eloquent case. He has now turned to a history of the popes in what looks like and, I suppose, is a coffee-table book, intended to complement a television series on the subject, beautifully produced with a host of colour illustrations, many of the popes themselves.

This is not to say that it is a lightweight treatment of the topic – anything but, for it is a masterpiece of comprehensive coverage combined with easy readability. Its title, moreover, indicates an intentional judiciousness which is for the most part observed. Indeed for this very Protestant reader it was somewhat surprising to find Duffy so critical of popes as rigid as the three in immediate succession from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Pius IX, Leo XIII and Pius X, in an era near the beginning of which Cardinal Manning admiringly spoke of 'its beauty of inflexibility'. Surely one might logically expect the leaders of an authoritarian faith to be unyielding just as the later Pius XI could see no sense in being ecumenical.

Duffy begins, as we might expect, at AD 33 with his first chapter, again not surprisingly entitled 'Upon This Rock'. He traces the rise of Roman superiority, its progress through the Middle Ages with the increasing entanglement with the secular powers and the Church's own internal divisions culminating in the Great Schism. This is followed by the multiple scandals of the Renaissance period (pluralism, nepotism, bribery, warfare, sexual laxity, sale of offices, indulgences and whatever else), all the ills and evils which Duffy acknowledges to have been 'the degradation of the papacy'. In the eighteenth century we read about the fascinating struggle between the Vatican and France with the consequent development of

Gallicanism, then on into the nineteenth and the situation I have referred to above with the suppression of theological originality, and coming right down to the present with a generally balanced but, I thought, a touch too uncritically favourable treatment of the current occupant of the alleged throne of St Peter.

In such a finely produced and well written work from so reputable a press I was sad to find even the 15 or 16 errors of misprint and spelling, among which 'principle' (p 18) and 'principal' (p 76) would have been better transposed, 'exhalted' has no medial aspirate and the illustration of Pope Benedict should read 'XIV' and not 'IV' (p 190).

ARTHUR POLLARD

THE SPCK HANDBOOK OF ANGLICAN THEOLOGIANS

Alistair McGrath ed

London: SPCK 1998 236pp £27.50 hb ISBN 0-281-05145-3

Like every symposium this is in part excellent and in part inadequate.

It consists of brief surveys of theological thinking in various geographical areas where Anglican theology is thought to be strong, followed by a large number of short articles about distinguished people.

When one considers that only four pages are allowed to survey the theological thinking of South Africa or the Indian sub-continent, one can assess how comprehensive the articles are. Nevertheless it is a useful undertaking since we are informed of the theological signposts in areas of the Anglican Communion of which we might be ignorant.

Unfortunately the long article on Great Britain does not inspire confidence generally. Readers of *Churchman* will be surprised to learn that: 'The pre-reformation Church in England was suffering neither decline nor decay.' I fear that the writer has taken *The Stripping of the Altars* by the Roman Catholic author, E Duffy without a pinch of salt.

Again we are told that Hooker 'took his stand on tradition more widely interpreted'. Even in a brief article this is highly misleading, as Nigel Atkinson has shown. Nevertheless there are many useful phrases in that article. For example it was illuminating to be reminded that: 'In 1689 Anglicans settled decisively for toleration instead of comprehension.'

I suspect that the other articles are much the same, though I am not qualified to assess them. Certainly I learned much, for example about the theological history of ECUSA from the article here, although I did not

learn why that church has lost a third of its membership in recent years, a development which might be the result of the theology and ethics now dominant in that denomination.

As far as the 163 pages on individuals are concerned, there are widely varying contributions. Some worthies seem to have been included not because they were theologians but because of their historical importance. The number of pages allotted to people is odd, to say the least. Cranmer gets two and a half pages whereas Michael Ramsey gets four as does Newman! Simeon (who was a more important person historically than theologically) receives three pages and Ryle half a page. But one does appreciate that the editor must have been faced with real difficulties from his contributors.

We do miss a number of matters which might have been given more weight. For example, Lampe's work on initiation was more seminal than it is given credit for being. Headlam's contribution to the thinking of Christian Socialism is not noted. The Wesleys' major contribution to theology, apart from the great sermon on the New Birth, was surely their teaching on sinless perfection which has had a baleful influence ever since, as Knox showed in his magisterial *Enthusiasm*. But in these brief articles it may be that one expects too much.

Few people will pick up this book without learning something. However, teachers who give it to their students at theological colleges and on courses need to warn them of its inadequacies.

It seems to me that the time for such a book is long past. Can there be anyone who has studied theology who is not indebted to whole hosts of writers who are not Anglican (one only has to mention Lesslie Newbigin to recognize the truth of that statement)? Do we really want to be self-consciously Anglican in these days? I fear that there are some who do.

JOHN PEARCE

READING THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS: AN INTRODUCTION

Clayton N Jefford, with Kenneth J Harder and Louis D Amezaga Jr

Hendrickson: Peabody, Mass 1996

192pp

No price

pb

ISBN 1-56563-154-4

This book is a guide to reading the so-called 'Apostolic Fathers', a collection of documents produced in or shortly after New Testament times by Christian writers, most of whom are anonymous. The nine texts covered in this volume are the Epistle of Barnabas, the *Didache*, the letters of Ignatius, Polycarp and Clement, the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, the *Shepherd*

of Hermas and the *Letter to Diognetus*. They are not included in the volume, but each chapter tells the reader where the text comes from, how it has been preserved, what it says in outline and how it is related to Scripture. There is also a bibliography for further reading attached to each text discussed. The book is well written and beautifully presented. Without any doubt it is the best thing currently available on the Apostolic Fathers, and should persuade many to get to grips with the texts themselves. It is to be highly recommended.

GERALD BRAY

PHILIP MELANCHTHON (1497-1560) AND THE COMMENTARY
Timothy J Wengert and M Patrick Graham edd

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1977 304pp £45.00 hb
 ISBN 1-85075-684-8

Published to mark the fifth centenary of Melanchthon's birth, this volume is a series of essays devoted to different aspects of his literary style, particularly as this relates to his commentaries. Melanchthon has had a hard time of it in recent years, particularly as the revival of interest in Luther has highlighted the latter's uniqueness as a thinker and preacher. Melanchthon has inevitably come across as a lesser figure who did much to undermine the great reformer's theology and to create a form of 'Lutheranism' which in many key respects was quite different – and far less appealing – than what the master originally intended.

In this book, the different essayists take a fresh look at Melanchthon – almost without taking Luther into account, in so far as that is possible. Great emphasis is placed on his early years as a student in Heidelberg and Tübingen, where he learned the arts of rhetoric and dialectic, which he was later to combine to such good effect in his commentaries. It is hard to realize it now, but Melanchthon was only 21 when he began to lecture in Greek at Wittenberg, and he was already writing major commentaries before he was 30. In a remarkably short period (1522-4) he penned some of his most influential works, including the first edition of his commentary on Romans, though admittedly he went over them later (occasionally more than once).

Melanchthon's method was based on the principle of *loci*, for which he is still famous today. This meant finding theological principles, in particular scriptural verses, which could then be generalized and applied to other parts of the Bible. Melanchthon's *loci* were in effect a systematic theological index to Scripture which he developed as the framework required for overall interpretation. This led him into conflict with Calvin, who placed much more emphasis on the development of the argument in

any given biblical context, relying for his interpretation less on abstract theological principles than on the flow of the immediate context. However, as Richard Muller points out in what is the most profound essay in the book, differences of method by no means always led to different conclusions. Melancthon and Calvin were much closer to each other than their different approaches might suggest, and there is no doubt that Calvin (at least) borrowed material from his counterpart.

This volume contains a very useful summary of Melancthon's commentary writing as well as a catalogue of Melancthoniana in the Pitts Theological Library in Atlanta. The latter feature is explained by the fact that one of the volume's editors (Patrick Graham) is director of that library, though the article is written by one of his colleagues, David Rettberg.

For those who know little about Melancthon and want to learn more, this is a very useful book to have and to consult. At the very least, it helps us to appreciate its subject as a thinker and theologian in his own right, who moved with the greatest men of his age but who made an original contribution of his own, all the same, which deserves to be better understood than it is. The editors are to be congratulated for having produced a handsome and readable text, which illuminates the reader on every page. Perhaps their success will encourage others to undertake similar work on other lesser figures of the Reformation era, so that the scholarly world and the general public may both acquire a broader view than the one which concentrates so exclusively on the giants, Luther and Calvin.

GERALD BRAY

THE EPISTLES TO THE COLOSSIANS AND TO PHILEMON: A COMMENTARY ON THE GREEK TEXT

James D G Dunn

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster Press 1996 xvii+388pp

No price

hb

ISBN 0 85364 571 X

Professor Dunn does better than could reasonably be expected at meeting the aims of the New International Greek Testament Commentary series: to provide detailed, thorough and theological exegesis interacting with significant research, which makes its own scholarly contributions while keeping in mind the student beginning her study of Greek and the pastor whose language has lapsed a little. Dunn's research, while not exhaustive, is thorough and wide-ranging, relevant and normally appropriate to the point being made. Moreover his prose is effective, clear and readable, and one is not normally left struggling to understand the commentary itself. The layout combines parentheses within the text (for relatively straightforward references) and footnotes at the bottom of each page (for

more extended discussions). The Greek text is printed throughout and forms the basis of the comments, so those without Greek will struggle, but second or third year students should have no difficulties. The approach is very word centred, which makes the discussion easy to follow, but leads to an over-emphasis on definition and word-study parallels. There is relatively little help for more advanced Greek students, for example on syntax, sentence flow, or verbal aspect. A number of issues struck this reviewer as of wider interest.

On the authorship of Colossians Dunn finds the critical view – ‘that the letter comes from a hand other than Paul’s’ – to be confirmed by his own intensive study of the study and theology of the Epistle: it reflects significant theological and ethical differences from the undisputed Paulines. Nevertheless, he also acknowledges the difficulty of explaining 4:7-17 as a pseudonymous post-Pauline composition and is led to the view that Timothy wrote the Epistle at Paul’s behest, during a period of Paul’s imprisonment in Rome (Rome wins out over Ephesus only by 55% to 45%). This is an interesting and serious proposal, which might be said to give due weight to the claim of the Epistle itself: ‘Paul ... and Timothy ... to ... Colossians’ (1:1). It also has another advantage, as it allows Dunn to affirm the arguments of critics (‘this phrase doesn’t sound like Paul’) and conservatives (‘this phrase does sound like Paul’) without choosing one ultimate solution over against the other.

Whether this view is deemed satisfactory will depend partly on what one makes of Colossians 4:7-17. Dunn makes clear in his comments on these final greetings that the evidence is most compatible with the full involvement of Paul. It seems clear that this involvement must extend beyond simply ‘Paul in the background’ because of: (a) the language of verse 7 (‘all the news about me’); (b) the tone of the reference to Mark in verse 10; (c) the highlighting of circumcision in verse 11; (d) the legal note of testimony sounded in verse 13, and (e) the present obscurity of verse 17. Dunn’s position results in a rather odd situation where Paul basically dictates the final greetings of Colossians, and personally dictates or writes the whole of Philemon at a similar time while leaving the theology and ethics of Colossians to be expressed by Timothy in a manner that is significantly different from his own. The oddity of this situation suggests the frailty of the hypothesis, which is in any case hardly able to cope intelligently with the material in 1:23-2:5 (during which Dunn simply reverts to ‘Paul’).

One explanation for Paul’s trust in Timothy’s ability to handle the theological and ethical material in his own way, is Dunn’s view that the problem in Colossae was not that serious. Dunn makes a strong case (already anticipated of course in Wright’s Tyndale Commentary and a

number of specialist studies) for the view that the false teaching or problem in Colossae was essentially a confident synagogue-based Judaism, with some mystical elements and not Gnosticism or syncretistic hellenistic thought. This, he argues, makes good sense of: (a) the numerous incidental theological indications that the Christian faith is rightly understood within an OT and Jewish framework (so even in the comments on 1:1f), and (b) all the polemical material in the Epistle, especially the concern with circumcision, Torah, food laws, and calendrical observances in 2:18-23. The 'worship of angels' (2:18), which is sometimes taken as a reference to human worship directed to angels (an objective genitive, supporting a more syncretistic Jewish or hellenistic background), should in Dunn's view be taken as participation in worship offered by angels to God (a subjective genitive, following F O Francis). Dunn makes a strong case, without perhaps resolving the matter conclusively. He himself struggles somewhat to articulate the points of disagreement between the Colossian philosophy (understood as a non-messianic synagogue-Judaism) and Paul. For example, what exactly would Paul have found problematic about participation in angelic worship? Numerous indications suggest it was an acceptable idea (eg 1 Cor 11:10; 13:1; cf 2 Cor 12:1-10; 1 Tim 5:21 etc), so Dunn is forced to hypothesize about the boastful and individualistic aspects of the Colossian philosophy.

On 1:15ff Dunn writes: 'the passage can be quite properly classified as an early Christian hymn in which Christ is praised in language used commonly in Hellenistic Judaism in reference to divine Wisdom.' This means that the text does not necessarily predicate Christ's actual pre-existence any more than Jewish Wisdom speculation entailed the actual pre-existence of the Torah. With this Dunn returns to controversial ground covered in his *Christology in the Making*, and his more recent work on the *Parting of the Ways*, in which Pauline Christology is understood as non-controversial in his day (because the christological material does not go beyond acceptable Jewish monotheism). A full account and critique would be welcome (but not in a book review!). Four points might be made here: first, Dunn's approach to 1:15ff over-emphasizes word-studies and background material rather than the flow of argument; secondly, the overall thrust of Christ's involvement as God's agent and expression in Creation and Redemption tends to be lost (contrast Wright here); thirdly, he fails to integrate his own observation that what is said here about Christ, a human person known to have lived and died a generation beforehand, exceeds any previous talk about Wisdom; fourthly, there does seem to be abundant evidence (from Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp 168-75 cited by Dunn on p 89) that the association of Torah with Wisdom *did* lead directly to belief in the actual pre-existence of Torah (as the first of God's creations), and hence that Paul's language does predicate the actual pre-existence of Christ.

We have not said much yet about Philemon. The numerous complex issues raised by this short Epistle are fully discussed by Dunn, with special emphasis on Paul's rhetorical techniques and emotional involvement in the restoration of Onesimus to Philemon. One oft-raised question is how and why Onesimus, the runaway slave, found Paul (especially problematic if Paul was in Rome). Dunn develops the hypothesis (of Lampe, Rapske and Bartchy) that Onesimus left his master's house deliberately to seek out Paul in order to gain his mediatorial help. This view is carried through into the exegesis and shown to be quite plausible.

In conclusion it seems clear that this commentary, which will doubtless take an important place in the scholarly literature on these Epistles, containing as it does a wealth of material and stimulation beyond that which can be discussed in a short review, cannot be straightforwardly recommended as the first port of call for preachers and pastors seeking to expound them. Students and learned pastors will, of course, want to exercise their minds in careful and prayerful wrestling with the crucial issues raised here.

PETER M HEAD

THE RHETORIC OF THE REFORMATION Peter Matheson
Edinburgh: T and T Clark 1998 267pp £23.95 hb ISBN 0-567-08593-7

This is a book which seeks to break new ground by treating the Reformation primarily as a literary event. Obviously such an approach can only be one among many, and it cannot be regarded as central by anyone who takes theology seriously. Dr Matheson recognizes this, but his concern is to shed light on a neglected aspect of the period, and in this he has succeeded remarkably well. Modern readers are shocked when they discover that their Reformation heroes, and Luther in particular, had foul mouths and used them whenever the occasion presented itself. It does not square with our sense of propriety to call the pope 'Antichrist' or to describe priests and cardinals in terms normally found on lavatory walls. One suspects that in such company even Ian Paisley would come across as a mild-mannered gentleman!

But Reformation polemic was bitter on all sides, reflecting not only the seriousness of the issues at stake, but also the sense that for the first time ordinary people had a reasonable amount of freedom to say what they wanted to. Pent-up emotions are liable to blast off in unpredictable (and unpleasant) directions, and Dr Matheson suggests that this is what happened in the sixteenth century. Once it became possible to attack one's enemies, real or imagined, with relative impunity, imaginations ran riot, and the whole arsenal of abuse was unleashed. Given that those who

engaged in this kind of polemic had almost all received a good literary education at the height of the Renaissance, it is not surprising that their inventiveness was as luxuriant and colourful as it was.

Dr Matheson brings this world to light, not only in the magisterial conflict between Luther and Rome, but in the less prominent (though equally bitter) struggle against Thomas Müntzer and the so-called radicals of the Reformation. If the pope was Antichrist, then Müntzer was Satan as far as Luther was concerned, and what is more, he believed it. For as Dr Matheson points out, these were not terms of abuse, but attempts to formulate reality. When God is at work, as Luther obviously believed that he was, it was only to be expected that the devil would renew his attacks, and this is how Luther saw and judged his opponents. The rest is only a question of style. Theological discussions no longer take place in this atmosphere, but political debates often do, as anyone who has watched the House of Commons live on television knows only too well. If people whom we trust enough to lead the country can behave like naughty schoolboys, why should church leaders not do the same, especially in an age when they possessed political power? This, indeed, may be the essence of the whole problem. It was not so much theological conviction as the reality of political power which produced the supercharged atmosphere of which we read in this book. In the sixteenth century, those who lost a theological argument might well find themselves roasting in their opponents' fire – quite literally. We have to admit that nothing like that would happen today, even if name-calling has not totally disappeared.

This is an interesting book for those who engage in ecumenical discussions (or who dislike ecumenism in all its forms), because it reminds us of the unfortunate legacy of exaggeration and misrepresentation which we have to overcome. Perhaps the very excesses of the past are enough to give us the courage to do so, since few of us today are likely to be attracted by this kind of language or behaviour. If Dr Matheson can help us to be more civilized, without losing our convictions, then so much the better. The Reformation can do with a good study of its less attractive side, and this book is one contribution towards that aim.

GERALD BRAY

**YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL? A NEW APPROACH TO JOHN AND
'THE JEWS'** **Stephen Motyer**

Carlisle: Paternoster Press 1997 260pp £19.99 pb ISBN 0-85364-832-8

In a recent documentary entitled the 'unauthorised biography of the devil', Karen Armstrong made the accusation that the Gospel of John is anti-Semitic – not simply in its general character, but that the gospel *repeatedly*

labels the Jews as being of their father, the devil. Such is the state of political correctness that inaccuracies are easily passed by. Yet there is a definite need to address such questions, and to face up to one of the most damaging accusations made against the Christian faith – is it anti-Semitic? The broad nature of such a question, and the range of meanings it can have, cannot hope to be answered by one publication. Yet Motyer's work concentrates on one crucial aspect of this issue – the picture painted of the Jews in the Fourth Gospel. Hence the title of this work, which refers to one of the seemingly most severe remarks within the NT corpus.

Although concentrating on this saying, Motyer provides no mere apologia for the evangelist. This comprehensive work assesses recent work on methodology in NT studies, and seeks a way forward between the synchronic and diachronic means of interpretation. His discussion of methodology is mirrored in the rest of the work. Firstly, the work attempts to listen to the whole of the Fourth Gospel, and pick up 'points of sensitivity' within it which signal the original setting of the material and relate to the issue in hand. Such indicators include the Temple and the festivals (reflecting the increased importance being given in NT scholarship to a consideration of the place of the Temple), the law, revelation, as well as Judea and 'the Jews'. This latter aspect is of course fundamental to the study, and Motyer identifies 'the Jews' as having, (a) a primary sense which is those who adhere to the religion of Judea, and (b) secondary referents which can be both those strict Jews who are centred around the Torah and Temple, and also the world. This nuanced understanding attempts to take into account a range of possible meanings, whilst also being clearly linked to the other 'points of sensitivity' within the Johannine material.

Motyer's second stage is to listen to the contemporary world, that is Jews and Judaism after the destruction of the Temple. The Jews faced a major question – what could account for this calamity? Punishment for sin, the devil, or perhaps God's plan? In addition, their need was to respond to such searching questions. It is in the light of these vital issues that Motyer then returns us to the text, circling around chapters 7 and 8 before descending on the crucial passage. Of particular interest is his comparison of John with the prophetic material of Hosea, such that 8:44 and its context is seen as a prophetic warning about what the Jews, and then the reader, could become, rather than what they were. 'Far from being heard as insulting and denigrating, this passage would have served as a powerful appeal to Jews in the later first century to believe in Jesus Christ' (p 209). Towards the end, Motyer offers some tantalizing links between this theory and both the realized eschatology of the Fourth Gospel and the possible evangelistic purpose of the Gospel.

Returning to the historical question, Motyer has provided a strong case in defence of the Fourth Gospel. Anti-Semitism, of an ontological kind, is not present in John. Yet the implications of the Gospel for the unique claims on Jesus are unavoidable. It is these charges of anti-Semitism in the light of which the church has to live and the church has been ably helped by the work of Motyer.

TONY GRAY

NINETEENTH CENTURY ANGLICAN THEOLOGICAL TRAINING: THE RED BRICK CHALLENGE David Dowland

Oxford: Clarendon (University) Press 1997 241pp £37.50 hb
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This book examines the life, work and philosophies of five Anglican theological colleges from the time of their founding until the early years of the present century. It is based on the author's Oxford D Phil thesis and is firmly rooted in rich veins of archival material.

Dowland begins by underlining the fact that the traditional nurturing grounds for clerical education were the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and to a lesser extent Trinity College, Dublin and Durham. Almost all the bishops believed that Oxford and Cambridge provided a superior course of training, offering a greater breadth of cultural opportunity and a wider social circle than the later theological colleges which were often situated in country towns or the confines of a cathedral precinct. The study is based on five colleges; St David's, Lampeter; King's College, London; the Society of The Sacred Mission, and the evangelical foundations of St Aidan's, Birkenhead and St John's, Highbury.

The book highlights very well the hard struggles with which the founders of 'red brick' theological colleges had to grapple. In the mid-Victorian years most bishops were reluctant to give ordination to those who came from them. Academic standards often had to be kept low because the colleges were dependent on student fees. If the level of academic attainment was kept at too high a level, colleges were unable to recruit sufficient numbers. Financial constraints also meant that the new theological colleges had very small numbers of staff, who usually represented only one shade of opinion and churchmanship. This meant that ordinands graduated with very little concept of the wider Church of England.

Dowland shows that as the nineteenth century progressed some bishops became strong defenders of the 'red brick' theological colleges. Archbishop Sumner for example, was a sympathetic patron of St Aidan's,

Birkenhead and Randall Davidson gave help and encouragement to King's College, London. By the end of the nineteenth century most of the 'red brick' theological colleges had established links with universities and their general academic standards were rising. Nevertheless Dowland suggests that even at the end of the Victorian era, non-graduate colleges and their alumni still faced daunting obstacles in winning acceptance. The colleges and their founders are viewed both sympathetically and critically in what is a well-written account of an important aspect of Victorian church history.

NIGEL SCOTLAND

**CANON LAW IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION – A
WORLDWIDE PERSPECTIVE** Norman Doe
Oxford: OUP 1998 409pp £65 hb ISBN 0-19-826782-7

This is not the sort of book whose title is likely to appeal to a mass audience, and there are no doubt many people who will never get beyond the cover. 'Canon law – put it back on the shelf' will be their automatic reflex. This is a great pity, because Norman Doe's latest masterpiece is arguably the most important, and certainly the most detailed and authoritative book ever to have been written on the Anglican Communion. His achievement is all the greater because much of what we normally think of as Anglicanism today is not mentioned in the book at all. For example, it says virtually nothing about high church or low church, and nothing about Evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics, or charismatics. There is not a word about homosexuals, and women's issues are kept firmly in their place, with only a very brief mention here and there. To those who have followed the reports of the recent Lambeth Conference, such a book must appear to have come from another planet.

And yet, far more than anything emanating from official church circles, this volume captures the essence of Anglicanism and defends it as a unified ecclesiastical polity in a way which has not been done in our generation. Dr Doe is the founder and director of a master's degree course in canon law offered at the University of Wales in Cardiff, which is now all but indispensable for anyone responsible for the legal aspects of the church's work. He is also prominent in the Ecclesiastical Law Society, founded in 1987 and extremely influential behind the scenes, even though most church members have never heard of it. An earlier book of his, *The legal framework of the Church of England* (Oxford, 1996) has already established itself as a leading authority on its subject, and in many respects the present volume may be regarded as a sequel to that work, broadening its scope to embrace the whole world.

It should be said at once that its importance does not merely lie in the

amount of factual detail which it contains, massive as that is. Those who enjoy poring over footnotes are here presented with a gargantuan feast, matched only by the learnedness of the main text. What Dr Doe has done is to provide an explanation of how the Anglican Communion functions as a complex but recognizably unified organism, deriving from a common source in both history and theology.

Anglicanism is a means of having an ancient, apostolic church, which faithfully continues the traditions inherited from the past, but which is at the same time open to reform. It is cohesive without being a dictatorship, and although it is remarkably flexible and creative with its inheritance, it does not move beyond a certain established framework.

That framework is expressed by the Anglican tradition of canon law, which is both linked to and distinct from the legal inheritance of the Christian churches as a whole. The church-state aspects of this are the ones which will be the most immediately familiar, since many people persist in thinking that Anglicanism owes its very existence to the selfish desires of a libidinous monarch. But as Dr Doe points out, Anglicanism in its living reality is anything but a state creation, and in most parts of the world it flourishes as an entirely free entity. Even in England, it possesses an internal legal system which makes such freedom possible, even to the extent that it is based on principles which in some respects are fundamentally at odds with the common law of the land. All Anglican Churches have a synodical structure which allows decisions of various kinds to be taken, and which establishes a chain of responsibility which is recognizably the same everywhere. At a time when the Communion's break-up is widely feared because of different theological or ethical views, Dr Doe demonstrates that it is rooted in legal principles which give it a much deeper unity, as well as a distinctive personality in the wider world of Christendom.

He deals at great length with the roles played by archbishops and bishops, with the ministry of priests and deacons, and with the ministry of the laity, which is one of the more obvious differences between us and Rome. He covers the church's faith and doctrine, including the mechanisms available for disciplining those who step out of line. That these mechanisms have not been used in the way they should have been is not Dr Doe's fault; his job is to point out that they are there, which is the first step towards putting them to work for the purposes for which they are intended.

Inevitably, in a book on Anglicanism, liturgical issues take up a good deal of space. Dr Doe discusses them in general terms, before devoting a chapter to the sacraments and another to marriage (including divorce),

confessions and funerals. To that is added a chapter on church property, and finally another one on ecumenical relations and the legal arrangements which govern them. In all of these matters Dr Doe comes across as immensely well-informed, yet at no point does it appear that he has a particular axe to grind. Considering the many bitter controversies which some of the above subjects have generated in the past two centuries, that is an achievement bordering on the miraculous! The result is a book which all Anglicans can own as a clear and detailed expression of the church in which they live and worship. No matter what else they may disagree about, all can come together at these points – and it is well to remember that these points take up about 400 closely packed pages!

The only improvement to this book which can be imagined is that it should be published in paperback and made widely available at an affordable price, preferably with a study guide for the use of Parochial Church Councils and the like, for whom it ought to be a basic reference work. The Anglican Communion has never made exclusive claims to Christian truth, and neither does Dr Doe, but he has succeeded in demonstrating its coherence and in justifying its existence as a valid and viable option in the modern pluralistic world. The present reviewer came away from it heartened and pleased to be an Anglican, which is in itself an experience sufficiently unusual these days to make this book a must for anyone who thinks seriously and cares deeply about the church to which he or she belongs.

GERALD BRAY

INDEX OF REVIEWS

BOWKER (ed), <i>The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions</i> (O Thomas)	367
DOE, <i>Canon Law in the Anglican Communion – A Worldwide Perspective</i> (G Bray)	379
DOWLAND, <i>Nineteenth Century Anglican Theological Training: The Red Brick Challenge</i> (N Scotland)	378
DUFFY, <i>Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes</i> (A Pollard)	368
DUNN, <i>The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text</i> (P Head)	372
JEFFORD, HARDER & AMEZAGA, <i>Reading the Apostolic Fathers An Introduction</i> (G Bray)	370
LOCHMAN, <i>Zeal for Truth and Tolerance: The Ecumenical Challenge of the Czech Reformation</i> (M Thompson)	364
LONGENECKER (ed), <i>The Road from Damascus</i> (E Moll)	366
McGRATH (ed), <i>The SPCK Handbook of Anglican Theologians</i> (J Pearce)	369
	381