

## REVIEWS

### **Family Matters: The Pastoral Care of Personal Relationships**

Sue Walrond-Skinner

New Library of Pastoral Care, SPCK, London, 1988; 179pp., £4.95;  
ISBN 0 281 04350 7

This book, as with its companions in this series, is for those who are involved in pastoral care at any level. Sue Walrond-Skinner contributes effectively a distillation of her extensive experience as a family counsellor. By 'family' is meant the whole group of persons who form a household over a period of time and who may be related by blood or law in addition to their emotional ties.

This book offers real insight into the reasons for meeting with the whole family group together, and describes the tools available for helping that group and its members to continue to mature. The author succeeds in instilling confidence into her readers by repeated observation that employment of skills as a counsellor in the midst of the family group matrix can unlock new resources and energy within that family. This can happen even in the unstructured but intentional visit by a pastorally alert person to that home. However, structure and form and knowledge of the dynamics of human relationships belong to the 'how' of family counselling. The 'content' belongs to the initiative of the whole family. Sue Walrond-Skinner leads through the whole process. She provides a theoretical framework for understanding by the offering of a description of a family 'life-cycle' (Carter and McGoldrick). She takes her readers as colleagues through the meeting with the family group, offering them a view of the subsequent process under the headings of the structural, strategic, psychoanalytic, and experiential approaches.

The 'strategic' approach will surprise those who emphasise Rogerian 'non-directiveness' in their counselling philosophy. The appropriateness of contracting with the family members that they should all try to remain as they are and avoid changing their behaviour is not easily questioned. Most parents have employed the method of instructing children to continue with repeated irritating behaviour, having learnt from experience that this imperative produces the actually desired and opposite result! Surprise though this may be for some, Sue Walrond-Skinner's introductory chapter suggests she has had a poor experience of some 'individual counselling': 'family therapy ... is associated with a restructuring of the system in which problems are embedded, rather than the removal of symptoms of individual pain.'

If this is a minor criticism, then so is the observation that the text appears at times to be written for the lecture room. Words like 'systemic', 'triangulation', and 'congruence' imply an attitude of the author to her audience. This series is such a valuable commodity that it is a pity indeed to allow such a significant contribution as 'family matters' to be tagged with the symbol of elitism. The occasional illustration of church life from the narrow confines of Anglicanism will jar in Scotland too. The attempt made to move towards a theology of the family is to be admired. One wonders whether the series editor would include a book on theology of pastoral care at some time.

This book's content is superb value for a very small outlay. The splendid references are as ever, a bonus.

*Peter Bowes, Morningside Baptist Church, Edinburgh.*

**Theology Beyond Christendom: Essays on the Centenary of the Birth of Karl Barth**

John Thompson (ed.)

Pickwick, Allison Park, Pennsylvania, 1986; 350pp., n.p.;  
ISBN 0 915138 63 8

This volume deserves wider publicity than it is getting and everyone interested in Barth should get hold of it. It is appropriate here to take the reviewer's lazy way out and record the contributors and their contributions.

There are seven essays in the first part on the theology of Karl Barth. Thomas Currie launches off with a brief contribution on how Barth's understanding of the being and act of God affects the theological task. (His essay includes the puzzling assertion that 'nowhere does Calvin provide us with an explicit doctrine of the Trinity', p. 7.) *Church Dogmatics* dominates the next essays. John Thompson himself expounds Barth's doctrine of the Trinity, querying only his understanding of the Spirit; Christina Baxter exercises a studied neutrality in presenting the 'nature and the place of Scripture in the *Church Dogmatics*'; Thomas Smail offers the most critical of the engagements in an essay on Barth's doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and Stuart McLean gives an account of a fairly slender but relatively unfamiliar portion of Barth's discussion of creation and anthropology. In the midst of these, W.A. Whitehouse discusses 'Election and Covenant' more with reference to Barth than as a concentrated exposition, while Martin Rumscheidt concludes this part with a sortie outside *Church Dogmatics* into 'The First Commandment as Axiom for Theology: a Model for the Unity of Dogmatics and Ethics'.

'Karl Barth in Dialogue', the second half of this volume, also gets seven essays. The late Harold Nebelsick provides the longest of the collection, treating Barth's understanding of science, while Thomas Torrance then proceeds to show the influence of the Greek Fathers on Barth, engaging yet again with the Moriarty of dualism as he detects the defects of the West. Professor Torrance's thought heavily influences the next contribution too, in which Ray Anderson aspires to use elements of Barth's theological anthropology to establish a 'new direction for natural theology'. Alasdair Heron then looks at 'Barth, Schleiermacher and the Task of Dogmatics', emphasizing parallels and agreements, before Colin Gunton returns to the assault on the West by celebrating the possibilities of a Barthian 'theology after christendom' as alternative to Augustinianism and the Enlightenment. Finally, J.K.S. Reid gives an account of 'Karl Barth and Ecumenical Affairs', leaving just Geoffrey Bromiley, who has more than a passing acquaintance with *Church Dogmatics*, to bring us back to some of its themes in an essay on the abiding significance of its author.

Rather than weighing up the relative merits of these essays, let me commend the collection and congratulate its editor. But what of Barth

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himself? His stature needs no emphasis and we who are his inferiors will always learn much from one who really was concerned with God, and not human construction. Yet I confess a niggling worry. It starts when we are told in the opening essay that Barth's starting-point 'has enabled us to think about God in a new way' (p. 2); deepens on reading Nebelsick's account of Barth's false starts in theology; climaxes on being told by Professor Gunton that the Enlightenment is 'the rebellious but true child of Augustinianism' (p. 289), Augustine being the Grand Dualist. It is surely *not* any Augustinian dualistic errors that led the Enlightenment (and what was that?) away from God; to ascribe to that kind of intellectual error the capacity to ruin belief is to misunderstand the logic of unbelief. Secular culture is not produced by the Augustinian kind of mistake; why did the 'Enlightenment' not correct Augustinian Christianity instead of abandoning all it stood for? Gunton's diagnosis overestimates the role of conceptual schemes in relation to faith, and Barth's experiments with theological conceptualities, serious and important as they may be, can be treated by the earlier contributors too with an undue sense of their religious and theological importance. The reviewer suspects Barth himself of a version of intellectualism, which this charge involves. And yet in a review the allegation must go by default for lack of precision in the charge and production of evidence for it. So readers will do well to read this collection and judge for themselves.

*Stephen Williams, United Theological College, Aberystwyth.*

### **The Giving Gift**

Tom Smail

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1988; 214pp., £6.95; ISBN 0 340 41503 7.

Familiar influences are here – Smail's Barthian Reformed roots, his contact with Fountain Trust – but also this time, a growing appreciation of the Orthodox tradition leads to a development in his thinking and changes of emphasis, while his critical approach means that there are no wholesale, unthinking changes, and much continuity with *Reflected Glory* and *The Forgotten Father*.

This book largely fixes on the personhood of the Holy Spirit. The motif of giving and gift, 1) reminds us that we are in the sphere of grace, 2) gives a dynamic picture of movement, of relationships, and 3) emphasises that we are in the personal realm. The biblical and orthodox teaching of the Spirit as divine, as a different person from both Father and Son, is lucidly explained and defended against modern aberrations.

The importance of the work of the Spirit in the life of Christ is prominently featured, correcting an imbalance indicated, *e.g.* in our focussing on Jesus' birth story (found in only two Gospels) to the relative neglect of his baptism. There are very important keys here to giving us a better Christology as well as important points for understanding the person and work of the Spirit. The incarnational and spirit Christologies are not competitors, but complementary. This is not only a word to others, but a clear advance on Smail's position in *Reflected Glory*.

Our use of Scripture should also be affected by giving proper place to the Spirit's life and creativity, so that Scripture is the primary but not final witness to Christ. We are left to discern the Spirit's present creativity for a fuller witness, 'a far more delicate and subtle business than simply looking for biblical texts to support a position'. While this does stress the place of the Spirit as a divine centre of activity distinct from both Father and Son, it surely leaves us with more problems than it solves when it comes to discerning what that fuller witness is.

From considering who is the Spirit, the final three chapters move to his giving of life, fellowship and worship. While the first of these entails repetition of material found earlier in the book, the third climaxes in a superb treatment of prayer. For combining his robust theological skills and warm pastoral concerns, the focussing of debates on the real issues, and the demonstration of how we can grow and develop through new influences, this is a worthy book. I hope he will develop his seminal references on Christology into a fuller book, and that that book will give us as hilarious a misprint as the one on p. 115, n. 15. Take a look just for this!

*Gordon Palmer, Ruchazie Parish Church, Glasgow.*

### **Theology from the Womb of Asia**

Choan-Seng Song

S.C.M. Press, London, 1988; 241pp., £8.95; ISBN 0 334 02357 2.

Many years ago, at a conference in India, I heard the Japanese Christian, Dr Koyama, say that what the West had given Asia was 'fish in bread', but that Asia needed 'fish in rice'. In other words, it needed a presentation of Jesus that would be meaningful in Asia's rice-eating culture. This important, original, and deeply moving book attempts to do just that. This book is not the full answer, but it has important things to say that should not be ignored.

The writer, a professor at the Pacific School of Religions in California, is a Taiwanese, and the deeply significant translations of Asian poetry, parables, folk-stories and cries for justice (many made by the writer) come mainly from an East Asian background: there are many examples from Taiwan, China, Korea, Japan, and the Philippines, as well as some from Aboriginal Australia, Mauri New Zealand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and India – but none at all from Islam. It would be narrowing its range to describe the book as 'liberation theology', but it is full of cries of oppressed underdogs and suffering people – the 'potato' of Taiwan 'eaten' by foreign rulers, the Korean going to execution, the oppressed daughter-in-law, the unwanted child of the starving mother 'cruel, yet loving', the woman in the pangs of childbirth, the widow of a husband tortured and killed, the Tamil in Sri Lanka oppressed by the followers of the 'compassionate' Buddha, and many more. We used to sing

Lands of the East, awake!

Soon shall your sons be free.

In many Asian lands freedom has not yet come.

The writer pleads for a theology that penetrates and images the eternal overtones of life, passionate for the right and yet compassionate towards the weak, keeping its vision of God's tomorrow. It registers a protest against the cerebral, intellectual Western approach to theology, which it feels is divorced

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from real life. Many Bible stories are retold, and it is fascinating to see what they look like through an Eastern mind. For instance, the Hosannas of Palm Sunday:

It is now the time for the people to shout out loud and for the leaders to keep dead silence. The hour has arrived for the pent-up bitterness of the humiliated to rise from the bottom of their hearts in a magnificent chorus venting its sorrows and shouting its hopes... That is why Jesus refused to order his followers to be silent... He was not apolitical.

When the writer says of a Vedic Hymn

A hymn such as this – and there are many many more, not only hymns, but dramas, stories, arts, that speak out of the life and history of Asian people – does it have no theological meaning? Does it not share some fundamental questions we Christians seek to answer in our faith? Is the hope expressed by it completely alien to the hope cherished by us Christians?

We may be ready to agree, and the book is a goldmine of the kind of longings that only Christ can satisfy. Where I would take issue is when the writer goes further, questioning the uniqueness of Christianity, and suggesting that Asian religions not only asked questions but had adequate answers. He retells the story of the grateful Samaritan whose leprosy had been cleansed:

Jesus said to him, *Your faith!* It was not the faith cultivated by the religion of the Jews, but his faith as a Samaritan, that cured him.

What is omitted in the comment is that it was the faith of a man who had just *met Jesus*. In the same way, the Buddhist pantheist who 'sees the Buddha' in another is not a true parallel to the 'Inasmuch...' of Matthew 25.

Another valid criticism would be that the writer's doctrine of the cross is one-sided, stressing compassion, but ignoring judgment:

Wherever he went, a community of compassion came into being. It was a loving, saving, and suffering community. And Jesus brought that community all the way to the cross, where he loved the whole world and suffered with it. Salvation takes place within a community of compassion.

It is impossible in a review as short as this to do adequate justice to a memorable book. It should be required reading for missionaries going to Eastern Asia – there is so much helpful material in it – even if they find themselves unable, as I do, to agree with all its conclusions.

*William G. Young, North Kessock, Inverness-shire.*

### **A Call for Continuity: The Theological Contribution of James Orr**

Glen G. Scorgie

Mercer University Press, Macon, GA, 1988; xiv + 189pp., n. p.; ISBN 0 86554 308 9.

This is a fine study of a Scottish theologian who has exercised an enduring influence over conservative Evangelicals. Glen Scorgie, now associate professor of theology at Canadian Bible College in Saskatchewan, did his research at St Andrews. His subject, James Orr (1845–1913), was a United Presbyterian minister brought up in Glasgow, trained at the University there and in pastoral charge at Hawick for seventeen years before going on to

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theology chairs in his church's colleges in Edinburgh and Glasgow. He was to win an international reputation as a defender of the faith.

Scorgie does well to reconstruct Orr's intellectual formation. He owed a large debt to the tradition of Scottish 'common-sense' philosophy as modified in a Kantian direction by Sir William Hamilton, but also imbibed a small dose of Hegelianism. The result was a progressive thinker who in the early years of his ministry helped secure the issuing of a Declaratory Statement by the United Presbyterians modifying the demands of subscription to the Westminster Confession. The breakthrough to fame came in 1893 with the publication of his first book, *The Christian View of God and the World*. It was a call, then unusual, for the adoption of an integrated worldview in which all branches of knowledge would find their place. From that standpoint Orr subsequently resisted Ritschlianism, drastic biblical criticism, evolutionary theory and doubts about the virgin birth and physical resurrection. At the end of his career Orr was particularly concerned to popularise his position, not least through four contributions to the pamphlet series *The Fundamentals*. He was remarkably successful. The American apologist E.J. Carnell, while regretting Orr's refusal to endorse inerrancy, was heavily swayed in the 1940s by his rational case for Evangelical orthodoxy. And throughout his career Orr was notably free from rancour. Opponents vied with each other to praise his courtesy in debate. The man compels our esteem.

Scorgie's readable analysis is pitched at the right level. Each book is located in relation to contemporary trends, but the author never lingers too long to lose our attention. The most obvious deficiency is the lack of human interest. Orr's wife is given only one sentence. Even the circumstances of Orr's own life are not pursued, though that is primarily because of the paucity of biographical materials. The analysis of his thought and its context is in general highly persuasive. It is true that the persisting power of British Hegelianism is minimised by Scorgie, and consequently the extent to which Orr was directing his polemic against a Hegelian target is underrated. The overall case is nevertheless sustained. Orr was clearly a theologian who, having diagnosed the challenges of his day, read massively and wrote powerfully. He urged a continuity of belief in the supernatural on readers of his day – and of ours.

*D.W. Bebbington, University of Stirling.*

### **The Question of Healing Services**

John Richards

Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1989; 182pp., £3.50; ISBN 0 232 51762 2

### **A Healing Fellowship: A Guide to Practical Counselling in the Local Church**

Mary Pytches

Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1988; 142pp., £2.25; ISBN 0 340 48701 1

### **Preaching to Sufferers: God and the Problem of Pain**

Kent D. Richmond

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Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1988; 160pp., £9.95; ISBN 0 687 33873 5

### **A Christian Guide to Sexual Counselling**

Mary A. Mayo

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1987; 261pp., \$16.95; ISBN 0 310 35990 2

These four books are concerned with different aspects of Christian caring. John Richards is well-known for his writings on healing and deliverance (exorcism). He has wide experience of the Christian healing ministry and in this book he discusses most of the questions which arise about public services of healing. He considers the case for and against the holding of such services, and gives sensible and practical advice about organising them. The book provides a lot of information not available in so small a compass elsewhere and would be very valuable to anyone interested in the ministry of healing, whether or not they intended to arrange services of healing.

Mary Pytches wrote a book on the ministry of inner healing to which *A Healing Fellowship* is a sequel as well as a response to various questions arising from it. She describes inner healing as taking place in a person's life 'when the Holy Spirit brings to the surface an unresolved issue, which has been previously repressed or suppressed, in order to bring a resolution. These unresolved issues include such things as unconfessed sin, broken relationships, unhealed hurts, inner vows, wrong choices and attitudes.' The term 'inner healing' thus appears to be a trendy term for what has always been accepted as part of the work of the Holy Spirit. Mrs Pytches rightly insists that inner healing is best practised in the fellowship of the Christian community and in a mature and secure caring relationship. The techniques of counselling and even inner healing appear to owe a lot to secular psychology and psychotherapy, and this book uses (and explains) psychological terminology extensively. The author is not altogether successful in answering the question of whether inner healing as now conceived is truly biblical. There is no doubt that Christian counselling may include the use of secular psychological techniques based on a knowledge of the human mind as created by God. The book can be recommended to those looking for a practical and sensible guide to Christian psychotherapy.

The third book is by Kent Richmond, a Methodist hospital chaplain in Wisconsin. His book aims to help those called upon to preach in circumstances of suffering. It is a book of theodicy attempting to justify the ways of God to human beings. He first defines the nature of the problem and then considers six possible answers, all of which he finds to be inadequate. His own answer to the age-old problem of the relation of God's goodness and omnipotence to human suffering is that God suffers with us in our suffering, and this is worked out in terms of 'process theology'. He then considers the place of the pastor in the hospital setting in the light of his special resources of prayer and spiritual comfort. He concludes the book with an appendix of sample sermons and a selected bibliography.

The title of Mary Mayo's book is ambiguous. Is it *A Christian Guide to (Secular) Sexual Counselling* or *A Guide to Christian Sexual Counselling*? In fact it appears to be both, for it derives its material from both Christian and

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secular sources in the same way that Mrs Pytches does. The author is married to an obstetrician/gynaecologist and is a licensed marriage and family counsellor in South Carolina. She is very critical of the church's failure to provide positive teaching on sexuality. Consequently she maintains that one of the most important tasks for the church in the decades ahead is to teach 'with accuracy and compelling clarity the purpose and validity of human sexuality'. The book is designed to set out these aspects of sexuality and contains a great deal of biological and medical information. It is firmly based on Scripture and in her examination of Scripture teaching she suggests that the Song of Songs provides 'The Christian Sex Manual' and proceeds to expound it as such. The book is published in Zondervan's Ministry Resources Library and provides a good introduction to sex therapy for ministers who want to know what it is all about and whether it is for them. It would also be valuable for those who practise sex therapy, but need to integrate their practice with their Christian faith. Finally, it would be useful to Christian married couples with sexual problems who are wondering if sexual counselling might help them. It should be said, however, that the book reflects the North American scene rather than the British. The lack of an index is a serious defect in a book which presents so much detail about its subject, to say nothing of the numerous Scripture quotations. Nevertheless, the book is warmly recommended to those interested in its subject as a competent and lucid survey.

*John Wilkinson, Edinburgh.*

### **Science and Hermeneutics (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, Vol. 6)**

Vern S. Poythress

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1988; 184pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 310 40971 3

### **Science and Providence**

John Polkinghorne

SPCK, London, 1989; 114pp., £5.95; ISBN 0 281 04398 1

Both Poythress and Polkinghorne have similar backgrounds – being mathematicians to doctoral level and beyond and currently lecturing in theological faculties.

*Science and Hermeneutics* is a fascinating attempt to apply some of the insights of Thomas Kuhn to biblical interpretation. Kuhn is one of the key figures in the philosophy of science for his thesis that science does not progress in a linear fashion, each new insight added to what was already known. He claims that science advances through radical conceptual changes – a sort of *Gestalt* shift from Newton to Einstein.

Drawing on this, Poythress suggests that the problem in biblical debate is that it is often carried out from different frameworks which make any meeting of minds difficult. He challenges us to accept that all our views are coloured in some way. 'What we know is colored by the framework in which we have our knowledge. Our basic commitments 'control us and our interpretation more than we control them'.



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Poythress takes as a case study Romans 7 – a difficult chapter to understand and with a long history of divergent interpretations. Utilising the insights of Kuhn he demonstrates that not all of this chapter easily fits any single interpretation. But this is in line with general scientific investigation where interpretations often have anomalies which are not considered sufficient grounds for rejecting that view.

This useful book reminds us that biblical and scientific investigation are often not dissimilar. Nevertheless differences are noted – *e.g.*, in biblical studies the field of investigation has authority over the researcher, whereas in science the investigator has control over the field of research to a greater degree.

Poythress writes in an easy and popular manner and explains any scientific technicalities introduced. The same cannot be said for the second work. Like his earlier work *Science and Creation*, Polkinghorne has a tendency to introduce complex scientific technicalities with a minimum of explanation. This may be fine for those versed in physics but many readers will be lost, and I suspect tempted to skip over such portions.

Polkinghorne argues for a view of God in which he continuously interacts with his creation. The deistic God-of-the-gaps and more modern ideas of the universe as the embodiment of God are countered. Indeed much of this short work is taken up with countering other viewpoints and one is sometimes left wishing for a fuller statement of the author's own views.

After a helpful introduction Polkinghorne has short chapters on providence, miracle, evil, prayer, time, incarnation and sacrament, and hope. The discussion on evil is significant for the fact that the Fall is ignored. The chapter on time reveals a view of God who does not so much know the future as is 'able to make highly informed conjectures about its possible shape'. Yet Polkinghorne fulfils his stated purpose which is 'to consider whether such a personal, interacting, God is a credible concept in this scientific age'.

*John C. Sharp, South Church of Scotland, East Kilbride.*

### **An Asian Theology of Liberation**

Aloysius Pieris, S.J.

T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1988; 144pp., £7.95; ISBN 0 567 29158 8

This book consists of nine articles written at different times on Poverty, Liberation, and Theology of Liberation, in Asia. The author is a Jesuit priest from Sri Lanka. The language of the book is highly technical and philosophical, and for someone unfamiliar with Roman Catholic usages as well as modern missiological terms like 'inculturation' it is heavy reading. Be prepared for a sentence like the following:

Asian theology is not the fruit of excoitation but a process of explication, or more specifically, a christic apocalypse of the non-Christian struggle for liberation.

In the Gospels, the writer insists, God's competitor is not sex but mammon. Therefore the vow of poverty is the most important of the monastic vows.

The affluent are called to be poor so that there be no poor... The few who renounce their possessions are not 'founded and rooted in Christ Jesus' if

the many who have no possessions to renounce are not the beneficiaries of that renunciation.

Again and again monastic communities, whether Buddhist or Christian, have become rich at the expense of the poor!

Local churches *in* Asia are not *of* Asia. Where there is a large Christian presence, as in the Philippines, it is because the church there has lost its Asian roots. There are broadly speaking four Western models of inculturation: 1. The Latin model: incarnation in a non-Christian *culture*. 2. The Greek model: assimilation of a non-Christian *philosophy*. 3. The northern European model: accommodation to a non-Christian *religiousness*. 4. The monastic model: participation in a non-Christian *spirituality*.

Attempting to transplant the first three to the East is futile, because religion = culture = philosophy. Only the fourth offers a way forward. The solution Pieris sees is the formation of 'basic *human* communities' consisting of Buddhist and Christian monks working together with people who are unjustly poor and exploited. Some of this is being done in Sri Lanka. In Latin America Liberation Theology is a specifically Christian phenomenon. But 'Asia, as circumstances clearly indicate, will always remain a non-Christian continent', and therefore Christians must work together with the Buddhists, who have a monastic system, and are present in most Asian countries.

True inculturation is a rooting of the Asian church in the *liberative* dimension of voluntary poverty... with Christian and non-Christian membership, wherein mysticism and militancy meet and merge: *mysticism* based on voluntary poverty and *militancy* pitched against forced poverty.

The Asian church... must be humble enough to be baptized in the Jordan of Asian religion and bold enough to be baptized on the cross of Asian poverty... Our desperate search for the Asian face of Christ can find fulfilment only if we participate in Asia's own search for it.

As will be evident from the above quotations, there is much in the writer's presentation with which readers of this *Bulletin* will disagree. It is frankly syncretistic: it approves of the 'gnostic' approach of Buddhism as equally valid with the 'scriptural' approach of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It has little time for the Asian missionary work of the early centuries, and writes off the contribution of the ancient Oriental churches. Christianity for the writer is a Latin, Western importation. Certainly it is true that many Asian churches are far too Western, but the solution does not lie in the surrender of Christ's claim to be the only way to the Father.

*William G. Young, North Kessock, Inverness-shire.*

## Israel in the Plan of God

Steve Motyer

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1989; 172pp., £4.95; ISBN 0 85110 671 4

In 1966, the IVF published *Men Made New*. This small paperback by John Stott was a clear and most helpful presentation of Paul's argument in Romans 5-8. Based on Keswick Convention Bible Readings it wrestled with Paul's meaning in a manner the average reasonably intelligent Christian, with little

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previous technical knowledge, would find to be within his range of understanding. What John Stott did for Romans 5–8, Steve Motyer has done for Romans 9–11, although at rather greater length and without the Keswick background. All we now need are volumes on chapters 1–4 and 12–16. Perhaps somebody reading this review will rise to the challenge!

Twelve of the fifteen chapters expound the three Pauline chapters while the first and the last confront the important issue of the Christian church's attitude to the Jews today. Are we to regard non-Christian Jews as unbelievers or fellow believers? Is the persecution which sadly characterised earlier centuries to be replaced by evangelism or dialogue? The author is right when he says that 'contemporary Christian thinking about Israel amounts to a confusing clamour of voices'.

In chapter 2 he prefaces an examination of the structure of the Epistle with an account of Jewish issues in the early church and in the ministry of Paul. In this way the scene is set for a close examination of Paul's major treatment given in Romans 9–11. He insists on the need for listening to Paul and allowing him to speak to us, and strongly criticises writers like Dodd and Leenhardt, who seem to allow their preconceptions to get in the way of such listening. Although this is so, it must be said that he is fair to the views of others. These three chapters are notorious for their difficulties. Steve Motyer evades none of these. He makes out a good contextual argument for so translating Romans 9:5 as to apply the term 'God' to Christ. He has some very helpful comments on 'hardening' and sees the importance of the allusion to Job 9:19 in Romans 9:19, an allusion overlooked by most commentaries. He vindicates Paul in the way he uses O.T. Scripture in Romans 10.

It is, of course, in chapter 11 that Paul deals with the relationship between God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles in his own day and in the future. The author gives special attention to the words, 'and so all Israel will be saved' (11:26), examining contending views and concluding that by 'all Israel' Paul means 'all elect Israelites' just as 'the fulness of the Gentiles' means all elect Gentiles. So God's electing purpose is clearly seen at the end in his dealings with all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles.

Altogether this volume handles this important passage and its practical implications for Jewish-Christian relationships most helpfully.

*Geoffrey Grogan, Bible Training Institute, Glasgow.*

### **Theology and the Justification of Faith: Constructing Theories in Systematic Theology**

Wentzel van Huyssteen

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1989; 205pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8028 0366 0.

This English translation of a work which first appeared in Afrikaans in 1986 provides a stimulating and informative analysis of a cluster of central questions in modern theology. Central among these is the question of the *objectivity* of theological statements. In other words, how do theological statements about God relate to God? To what extent are they open to correction and modification, and in the light of what considerations should such modifications and corrections be made? A significant theme of van

Huyssteen's work is the role of Scripture, as the Word of God, in theological theorizing, especially in the light of the fact that Scripture is often invoked to justify widely diverging theological opinions.

Readers interested in this field of theology will find this a most helpful work. Van Huyssteen delves deeply into the writings of such luminaries as the Vienna Circle, Karl Barth, Karl Popper and Thomas S. Kuhn in his investigation of the manner in which theology is capable of making rational statements. His frequent appeal to analogies in the philosophy of the natural sciences highlights the similarities between Christian theology and the sciences, which has gained increasing recognition in recent years, on account of the work of individuals such as Thomas F. Torrance. (Torrance, unfortunately, is not mentioned in this work, which would unquestionably have gained in value through responding to his *Theological Science*.) He then moves on to deal with the question of how theories are constructed in systematic theology, focussing upon the work of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Gerhard Sauter. The inclusion of this latter writer is of especial importance, in that Sauter deserves to become more widely read in English-language circles. Finally, the work concludes with two chapters discussing the nature of the theological statements, in the light of the considerations noted earlier.

The work is at points difficult to read, and occasionally reflects its South African Reformed origins (e.g., the bibliography abounds in Afrikaans-language books and articles). Nevertheless, it will be welcomed by all concerned with defending the rational content of Christian faith. Van Huyssteen provides his readers with arguments which will give new encouragement to those wishing to defend a critical realism in theology. It also represents an important attempt to generate an understanding of biblical authority which avoids the weakness of the liberal position that Scripture cannot 'be absolute, divinely inspired, or final', while avoiding the fundamentalism which van Huyssteen ultimately regards as failing to engage with the rational content of Scripture. In summary: a stimulating work for those concerned with the authority of theological statements in the light of modern theories of knowledge.

*Alister McGrath, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.*

## Book Notes

If the hundredth anniversary in 1989 of Horatius Bonar's death went largely unnoticed, St Catherine's Argyle Church in Edinburgh, formerly Chalmers Memorial Free Church of which Bonar was the first minister, marked it with the publication of *Horatius Bonar and His Hymns* by Graham L. Gibb (31pp., £1.50). It uses its short compass to very good effect, publishing a sermon and other items from Bonar's papers still held by the congregation, tabulating the occurrence of his hymns in modern hymnals, and noting the strange providence that such a natural hymn-writer (even when riding a camel across Sinai) should belong to a Church that still today sings only Psalms. Faith Cook's *Grace in Winter. Rutherford in Verse* (Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1989; 91pp., £4.95; 0 85151 555 X) is her transposition of sections of his letters into rhyming verse. It is sensitively done, and decked out with colour plates.

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into rhyming verse. It is sensitively done, and decked out with colour plates. Halcyon Backhouse has edited 67 letters from John Newton's *Cardiphonia, or the Utterance of the Heart in the Course of a Real Correspondence* (1781) in *Collected Letters* (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1989; 287pp., £2.95; 0 340 51294 6). They include the unabridged first section – 26 letters to a nobleman, and a long introduction by David Russell of Dundee from 1824. The letters are dated, but the correspondents are not identified beyond 'the Rev. Mr P.' and the like. Letter-writing may be a dying skill, yet is still an indispensable medium of spiritual care and pastoral counsel. Newton is a fluent and easy writer and may still instruct us by his example, not least in the secure theological grounding of his engagement with personal experience – his own and others'. *Grow in Grace* by Sinclair Ferguson (Banner of Truth, 1989; 139pp., £2.50; 0 85151 557 6) likewise offers guidance on 'how we develop and mature as Christians' – more systematically, rather than person-to-person, but with a similar persuasion of the supreme importance of biblical and doctrinal teaching as the dynamic of spiritual growth.

John V. Taylor was formerly bishop of Winchester. His latest book, *Kingdom Come* (SCM Press, London, 1989; 114pp., £4.50; 0 334 00841 7) sets out to restate 'in the terms and in the experience of our world' what Jesus meant when he declared the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God. The book represents, for the serious lay reader, an interpretation of the ministry of Jesus that reflects moderate mainstream Gospel study and is sensitive to the social and political dimensions of the message of the kingdom.

Another centenary fell in 1989 – of the *Expository Times*, published since 1890 by T. & T. Clark and faithful still to its quite unique mix of pastoralia and homiletics with the reviewing of current biblical and theological studies. May the second century prove as successful as the first!

The questions raised by *Does God Speak Today* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1989; 102pp., £1.95; 0 340 51092 7), by David Pytches, a prominent Anglican charismatic figure (formerly bishop in Latin America), range beyond prophecy and vision to the sudden 'word from the Lord' and the 'remarkable coincidence' of more traditional Evangelical piety. Most of the book retails individual anecdotes, with a few concluding 'counterfeit revelations' for balance and a postscript (NB!) on the need for discernment. The reach is wide (Spurgeon, Evan Roberts, the desert Fathers, Brother Andrew, and many an unknown), the issues tantalising.