

## REVIEWS

### **The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church. Vol. 5. Moderatism, Pietism and Awakening**

Hughes Oliphant Old

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2004; xviii+620 pp., £29.99; ISBN 0 8028 2232 0

Old's first volume in this multi-volume large paperback series issued from the press in 1998 when he was a member of the Centre of Theological Inquiry at Princeton. A Presbyterian pastor, he had already made a name for himself by well-received studies on worship. He is now Dean of the Institute for the Study of Reformed Worship at Erskine Theological Seminary in Due West, South Carolina. This well-produced volume maintains the standard set in the earlier ones, and will be of particular interest to Presbyterians, although it is by no means limited to them.

The main focus of the book is the eighteenth century but coverage in some areas is much wider. Old divides the material into nine chapters and within each chapter has distinct sections on notable preachers. He begins with Moderatism. No doubt to the initial consternation of those who associate this term too narrowly with the worldly preachers of eighteenth-century Scotland, he considers John Howe, John Tillotson and Matthew Henry from Britain, and Jean-Frederic Ostervald of Neuchatel, the eloquent Huguenot, Jacques Saurin, and the Zuricher, Johann Lavater. We have a geographical spread, and also a very helpful entrée into the Enlightenment period and the approach of orthodox preachers.

Old moves through Pietism, with sections on Spener, Francke, Wesley and Whitfield, among others. New England comes next with some 130 pages of coverage on leading preachers such as Thomas Shepard, Samuel Willard and, of course, Jonathan Edwards. Chapters 4-6 respectively cover preaching in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (particularly Hungary), in Spanish California (by the Franciscans) and in Romanian Orthodoxy under the Turks. A further 40 pages are devoted to the evangelisation of Russia in which both eleventh-century background and eighteenth-century developments are covered.

The chapter on Scotland (pp. 429-540) focuses on Thomas Boston, John Willison, Robert Walker, Hugh Blair, together with Andrew Thomson and Thomas Chalmers. An all-too-brief section (pp. 541-78) on Evangelical Anglicanism concludes the volume, the featured preachers being Samuel Walker of Truro, William Romaine, John Newton, Robert Hawker and Charles Simeon.

This survey of the book's contents indicates the wide range and ecumenical interest of Old's work. The page layout makes it easy to read, and it is not overly academic in style or overburdened with footnotes. It includes an excellent bibliography and detailed index. It is quite fascinating in its depiction of preaching methods, styles and content, and is edifying in the best sense. As a preacher himself Old is concerned at the lack of good preaching. Of his own nation he writes in Volume 1 that it was created by preaching, yet today there are plenty of pulpits but few preachers who are up to filling them. The same could be said more generally. Old does not profess to have written the definitive book on the history of preaching. Nevertheless, where else can you find anything of such breadth and authority on the subject? The selections will not always please everyone but they have been made with a view to helping understand the importance of the reading and preaching of the Scriptures in worship, and the set will undoubtedly further that end. This is a splendid book, well informed, and spiritually sensitive, by a preacher for preachers and for those aspire to be better preachers.

*Rowland S. Ward, Knox Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia,  
Melbourne*

### **Martin Luther's Tabletalk: Luther's Comments on Life, the Church and the Bible**

Christian Heritage Imprint, Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, 2003; 482 pp., £15.99; ISBN 1 85792 415 0

*Tabletalk* is as good an introduction to the personality of Martin Luther as any of his writings but to know his towering intellect one must read his *Bondage of the Will*. From the time of his marriage to Katherine von Bora in 1525 until his death 21 years later Luther lived in the Black Cloister in Wittenberg with his family of six children. A spacious building, it was overrun by all sorts of people. A friend wrote, 'A miscellaneous and promiscuous crowd inhabits Dr. Luther's home, and on this account there is a great and constant disturbance.' A maiden aunt of Katherine, several orphaned nephews and nieces of the Reformer, poor students rooming there in return for clerical and other services, a constant

flow of guests and a few servants all made the Black Cloister bustle. The main meal of the day was served at ten o'clock in the morning and at five in the afternoon supper was served. The meals were often shared with exiled clergymen, former nuns, government officials, visitors from abroad, colleagues of Luther from the university, and men like Philip Melancthon. In the relaxed atmosphere of the home there was spirited conversation, and some of the men who listened to the talk began to take notes, with the encouragement of Luther. The conversation was bilingual in German and Latin. We know that Katherine von Bora understood Latin quite well.

The first edition of *Tabletalk* was published in 1566 by John Aurifaber. He was an indefatigable collector of the sayings of Luther and an editor of Luther's Works. A century ago more collections of Luther's sayings were brought to light, altogether more than thirty manuscripts having been discovered. All the writers had expanded their skeletal notes taken at the table, smoothing out the style and writing fair copies back in their rooms. There are copies, and copies made of copies, and attempted improvements. Yet these manuscripts are judged today to have taken us closer to the actual conversations at Luther's table than the text presented to us in this book which is a selection of those sayings which were collected by John Aurifaber. Work on the more definitive edition was done over many years by Ernst Kroker in his six volumes of the *Tabletalk* in the Weimar edition of the works of Luther a century ago.

In 1652 Captain Henry Bell published an abridged English translation with his curious introduction (which has been preserved in this Christian Heritage Imprint). Then in London in 1848 William Hazlitt made a new translation containing a quarter of Aurifaber's text. This is the edition before us which has been frequently reprinted. An abridgement of this work last appeared in Philadelphia in 1952. Then in 1967 Theodore G. Tappert brought out the most up-to-date selection of Luther's *Tabletalk*, in the 54th volume of Luther's Works published by Concordia Publishing House.

John Aurifaber, judges Tappert, was guilty of 'expanding his sources by inserting material of an edifying nature' (Theodore G. Tappert, *Luther's Works*, Volume 54, p. xvii). 'One must concede that Aurifaber showed some skill and imagination in expanding the notes of earlier reporters' (*op. cit.* p. xviii). The impact of Luther's own spirit and vitality must be a little muted by such treatment, but it is still mightier than any editorial tamperings of Aurifaber. We are grateful that an edition of *Tabletalk* is back in print. This is a bedside book, to dip into and savour. Luther's freely offered observations are on everything under the

sun. Calvin was a more guarded personality, but there could have been no Reformation without Luther. We have groaned when our own garrulous tongues have been quoted to our shame. We appreciate Melancthon's annoyance at one report he read of his own contribution at a table conversation with Luther. Unable to retrieve the words, he finally wrote to the copyist,

Everything don't try to tell,  
Silence would at times be well.

*Geoffrey Thomas, Alfred Place Baptist Church, Aberystwyth, Wales*

## **Rescue: Jesus and Salvation Today**

Peter Selby

SPCK, London, 1995; 114 pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 281 04897 5

Bishop Peter Selby is perhaps best-known nationally for prophetically critical comment on government shortcomings some years ago. He is, however, a far cry from the turbulent priest. His work breathes a pastoral, humble and incisive spirit, addressed to Christians and their failings as much as to society and its. This is not a conventional writing on the doctrine of the atonement. It asks about the *impact* of salvation more than the theory of it. The author laces the book with gentle but powerful truths, such as: 'It is easy enough to reflect that "we do not live by bread alone" when we are not in the midst of a famine.' Or again: 'And most of us do not readily remember, when we feel someone is indebted to us, the size of our own debts.'

There are many wise thoughts here on what salvation ought to achieve. According to Selby, rescue is not so much passive reception as a call to freedom and responsibility (though could it not be both, if we take 'justification by faith' seriously?). Consequently, salvation must mean that things change. The status quo loses its privileged position. Links with the powerful cease to be important. Solidarity with the disabled and deprived is one of the signs that a change has taken place. Moreover, the gospel does not just bring bread to the needy, for that on its own was of the essence of the temptation of Jesus. It means also 'the opening of the ears of an unhearing society so that the mouths of the voiceless can be unstopped'.

The author's themes can be summed up in three motifs which result from the church not so much turning the world upside down as 'turning it inside out': transformation, inclusion and reconciliation. So there is some

doctrine in it too, for we are told that the root of this viewpoint is the death of Jesus which brings a total reorientation of priesthood, sacrifice and messiahship. Most of the trenchant and perceptive thoughts in the book stem from this reorientation.

A book from the heart, where the truths are occasionally sounder than their immediate exegetical basis. Easily read – a lifetime to live out.

*Roy Kearsley, South Wales Baptist College, Cardiff*

## **Active Evangelism**

Derek Prime

Christian Focus Publications, Fearn, 2003; 183 pp., £5.99; ISBN 1 85792 880 6

Derek Prime claims in the introduction to *Active Evangelism* that the book of Acts is 'not a manual on evangelism'. Having read his book, one can only conclude that he has succeeded in proving that Acts would make a significant contribution if one was to draw up a manual for evangelism. The book provides a wealth of practical instructions for evangelism, all based on biblical truth as it is found in the Acts of the Apostles.

The author draws the 'ingredients of the message' from Peter's sermon at Pentecost. He emphasises that the focus of the message is the death of Jesus as 'the most important thing he did for us', whilst at the same time emphasising that the 'cross was not the end'. The author repeats in a variety of ways that nothing must be allowed to compromise the core message. In this context, his handling of the issue of the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to miracles and healing is sensitive and instructive as he draws from other parts of the New Testament to support his interpretation of the issue in Acts. As he rightly states, God is not limited, and we should always be 'open to His doing the unexpected'. But, in jealously guarding the centrality of the cross, he reminds us that 'healing is not the norm', and warns us that 'to say or to imply that proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ *demands* signs and wonders may well be a subtle denial of the unique power of the cross'.

In moving from his focus on the message to his focus on the people, the objective is clear: 'our chief task is for people to see the meaning of Jesus' death'. The goal is clear and there are specific steps to achieving it. He reminds us that 'it is not enough to ask if someone wants to ask Jesus Christ into his life'. There must be a basic understanding of the doctrine of God and the doctrine of man. As far as the author is concerned this means that we must understand our sinfulness. 'People', he says, 'will not understand why Jesus had to die unless, with the Spirit's help,

we show them how much our sin offends our holy and good Creator.' He reflects upon death as that which 'all human beings fear'. And in a subtle reference to the doctrine of hell, he reminds us that we have to convince people that the salvation offered in Jesus Christ is a salvation that will save us from 'being ushered into a worse, *undead* existence'. The author insists that these truths must be presented to the people. We must not 'play down the cost', perhaps because we are 'afraid we might put them off becoming Christians'.

When it comes to discussing who should be involved in evangelism, his inclusivistic approach draws attention to a fact that we are too often apt to overlook. Preaching, he says, 'is not limited to pulpits or platforms'. From the story of Stephen he shows us that 'the leadership of the early church saw that they were in danger of losing sight of their spiritual priorities through being bogged down with other tasks'. The author makes it abundantly clear that 'all of us are called to witness, whether we *feel* specially gifted or not'. Our approach to evangelism is illustrated from Paul's strategy as an evangelist. The lessons are clear. We must 'start where people are'. Like Paul, we must be able to adjust to different situations. Paul was a 'market place' evangelist and a 'synagogue' evangelist and 'like Paul we must express the gospel in terms that are intelligible to the hearer without altering at all the message'. Personal prejudices are often a stumbling block to evangelism. The author gives an instructive illustration of this difficulty in the story of Peter and Cornelius.

We all have our duty to evangelise the world, but the author reminds us that the key to *effective* evangelism is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the 'director of evangelism'. The Holy Spirit is the one who always 'works behind the scenes, directing the outworking of God's plan of salvation in the lives of countless individuals'. The author draws attention to the fact that we must be 'sensitive' to the promptings of the Holy Spirit by studying the story of Philip and the Ethiopian. In his illustrative description of Philip's part in the conversion of the Ethiopian, the author sums up the role of the evangelist well: the evangelist is 'at most, a spiritual midwife' in bringing an unbeliever to faith in Christ.

There is one other key aspect to effective evangelism on which the author lays great emphasis. He emphasises the need for personal holiness. The person who evangelises must seek to have a living, growing, fresh relationship with Jesus Christ. We need to have what he calls an 'up to date' testimony in the sense that we 'must first shine like stars in the universe by our blamelessness and purity'. Without this 'up to date'

Christian experience our 'testimony lacks freshness and spontaneity' and render our efforts fruitless. This 'up to date' testimony is also what the author claims will give us strength to persevere in the midst of difficulties. It will be, as it was for Paul, 'the secret of our staying power' when we are tempted to 'throw in the towel'.

Derek Prime states in his introduction: 'I hope that finding out about evangelism from Acts will fire you with fresh enthusiasm for sharing the good news of Jesus, the Son of God, the only Saviour.' It certainly did this for me. The questions for discussion at the end of each chapter help to make this a valuable, practical handbook for all those who are serious about giving obedience to the command of our Lord to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt. 28:19).

*Malcolm Macleod, Free Church Manse, Shawbost*

## **Jesus Remembered. Christianity in the Making. Vol. 1.**

James D. G. Dunn

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003; xvii+1019 pp., £39.95; ISBN 0 8028 3931 2

Professor Dunn has embarked on a major project which can be seen as a summary of a long and distinguished career in New Testament scholarship: a three-volume work entitled *Christianity in the Making*. Volume One is devoted to Jesus. The title signals the main thesis of the work: Jesus is portrayed in the writings of the NT as he was remembered by the early Christians.

The work is aimed at two types of readership (just as most of Dunn's works are): mainly teachers and students of the NT, but also at an interested lay readership in the church. The book is both scholarly and readable. Words of the biblical languages are transliterated, and the details of the secondary literature are provided in footnotes. The book is clearly structured. The five main parts cover the following themes: I. Faith and the Historical Jesus; II. From the Gospels to Jesus; III. The Mission of Jesus; IV. The Question of Jesus' Self-understanding; V. The Climax of Jesus' Mission.

In Part One, Dunn provides a good and detailed survey of the history of the research of the 'historical Jesus'. This part especially, but also the book as a whole, will be a useful guide for students. Dunn always gives his own view as well, but in most cases in a reserved way, acknowledging that scholarship has to be cautious in claiming conclusive results. On occasion this leads to overcautious, weak conclusions, indicating that the traditional view on a certain matter cannot be held

conclusive either. This could be regarded as the only weakness in an otherwise positive, helpful and informative book. We shall focus on some of the positive results in this review.

Dunn maintains the view that in searching for the meaning of historical texts like those of the NT, the text as 'historical text' should provide the 'parameters for the meanings to be read out from it' (p. 134). The faith of the early Christians should not be excluded from the historical study of NT texts: 'All we have in the NT Gospels is Jesus seen with the eye of faith' (p. 127). Dunn calls for 'critical realism' in scholarship (p. 110).

One of the most important emphases in Dunn's work is that Jesus must have made an impact on the disciples; the effect of Jesus' activity was that he was remembered by his followers. Most of the NT material goes back to this earliest layer (the memories of the disciples, see for example p. 131), even in works usually dated to the later decades of the first century.

Dunn devotes a detailed analysis to the sources (Part Two, ch. 7). He maintains Markan priority (p. 146); he makes use also of the Q hypothesis, but in a very cautious way. Dunn does not assume a stratified Q (p. 158), and he does not make an attempt to describe a distinct community behind Q (p. 152). Dunn's strength is in pointing to the significance of the oral tradition (see ch. 8). He rightly ascribes differences in the Synoptic Gospels to variations in the oral transmission, rather than to the usual solution by scholars who argue that the evangelists changed their sources.

Dunn exegetes many key texts in his book, and he offers useful tables for seeing the 'synoptic' parallels. He uses the example of the story of Paul's conversion, narrated in Acts three times with minor variations (p. 211). He shows that the key message is the same, but there are minor differences at the periphery of the narrative. In the same way, oral tradition can be responsible for minor variations even in texts usually assigned to Q (p. 213), and in texts where other scholars argue for literary connection (i.e. one evangelist changing the text of the other, e.g. pp. 217-21). Variant liturgical practices may lie behind the differences in the versions of the Lord's Prayer and of the Last Supper.

Chapter 9 discusses the context of Jesus' activity; section 9.9 offers a good outline (p. 312) which is worked out in the remaining chapters of the book. For example, ch. 12 (in Part Three) on the Kingdom offers a good survey of the secondary literature, but sadly the conclusion in many cases is that the historian cannot claim high probability. One example of the too cautious dealing with the sources is the discussion of the birth



narrative. Dunn leaves open the possibility (with many liberal scholars today) that Jesus was born in Nazareth rather than in Bethlehem (p. 344). However, readers will find much good exegesis in this compendium-like summary of what we can know as historians about Jesus (e.g. texts concerning the Son of Man in Part Four, ch. 16, pp. 737ff., and resurrection traditions in Part Five, ch. 18, pp. 828ff.).

*Peter Balla, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest, Hungary*

## **The Confessional Presbyterian: A Journal for Discussion of Presbyterian Doctrine and Practice. Volume 1.**

Chris Coldwell (ed.)

Naphtali Press, Dallas, 2005; 184 pp., \$25 per annual issue; ISBN 0 9704638 1 2

This new journal is a substantial publication, in more than one sense. It is physically a remarkably large volume, containing enough material for a sizeable book. Approximately two thirds of the journal contain major articles on a variety of topics, with the remainder taken up with an eclectic mix of reviews and items of interest.

More importantly, it is a substantial volume as a call to (mainly American) Presbyterianism to recover its confessional roots. The large charcoal drawing of Samuel Miller of Princeton which dominates the front cover is a deliberate – and fairly successful – pointer to where the journal really wants to go: to a modern application of the principles of Old Princeton.

The editor of the Journal is Chris Coldwell of Naphtali Press, and the Journal's publication 'is under the oversight of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Rowlett, Texas', although the contributing editors represent a wide range of denominations, including the PCA, the OPC and the ARPC. Information on the Journal is available at [www.cpjjournal.com](http://www.cpjjournal.com).

The first article is a sermon by Miller on James 2:18, followed by a bibliography of Miller's writings. This is followed by a set of major articles: Chris Coldwell on Carruthers' work on the text of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Gary Crampton on Jonathan Edwards on Scripture and Salvation, C. N. Willborn on the 'Ministerial and Declarative powers of the Church', J. V. Fesko on N. T. Wright's doctrine of Justification, and F. Smith and D. Lachman on the worship views of John Frame and R. Gore.

One can see the American interest immediately, but that is not to say that the Journal does not address issues relevant to Presbyterians

everywhere. The articles represent a judicious mix of historical theology, systematics and practical theology, and usefully bridge the gap between academy and church.

Thirteen pages of review follow, then a piece entitled *Psallo*, an introduction to and new metrical rendering of Psalm 109. While the Journal is not coming out of an exclusive psalm-singing context, it does recognise the importance of the Psalter, and introduces metrical psalm-singing to us, although quite why Psalm 109 was chosen first is not clear. *In Translatione* is an attempt to resurrect some older documentation of interest to confessional Presbyterians, and *Antiquary* is a forum for bibliographical discussion.

The appearance of the first volume has set a high standard, which we trust the editors will be able to maintain. Their aims are laudable ones, and we trust that the journal will serve as a useful means of recovering the confessional foundations of Presbyterianism everywhere.

*Iain D. Campbell, Back, Isle of Lewis*

## **Asylum and Immigration: A Christian Perspective on a Polarised Debate**

Nick Spencer

Paternoster/The Jubilee Centre, Carlisle/Cambridge, 2004; 182 pp., £7.99; ISBN 1 84227 271 3

The author begins by pointing out many misconceptions regarding this polarised and emotive debate. There is a great deal of misinformation and paranoia about asylum seekers. Figures are whipped around by the media and politicians, each using the panic in the public to their own advantage. However, what is the truth about the asylum seeker? This isn't easy to answer; as the author says, 'One of the most contentious elements in the whole debate, the number of illegal immigrants present in a nation is, almost by definition, completely unknown' (p. 12). The author has sought to both highlight and correct the extent of ignorance, e.g. 'when MORI asked people in June 2002 what percentage of the world's refugees they thought the UK hosted, the average answer was 23 percent, several times higher than the correct figure'. Also, when it comes to the amount they might be getting each week to live on, most people thought it was £113 when the actual figure was around £37 (p. 11).

The book deals with the motive behind the majority of applications for asylum. It is fear that has driven most people from their homes to flee to countries like the UK. The vast majority come from countries where

there has been conflict, e.g. Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, and more recently from Iraq (p. 17).

The book also discusses the issue of immigration. This is very different, as 'Immigrants are not the same as asylum applicants.' They are not all Muslims and do not generally have poor English. They are often people with many qualifications, like nurses, dentists and lawyers. The author points out how attitudes in the UK have changed since the 1950s when the race riots began in 1958 (p. 38). Worth noting is that successive governments have tightened up the legislation to reduce the flow of immigration into the country. There was a period in the UK when emigration was higher than immigration. Immigration has not brought economic hardship to anyone in the UK. Most of these people work hard to earn a living and have contributed to the GNP.

Christian leaders and policy makers would benefit greatly from reading this book. It deals with the challenge that the situation presents to the church. The author focuses on guidelines given to the nation of Israel in the OT on the way in which they were to treat aliens and foreigners, making extensive reference to the Hebrew text. It would have been helpful if he had included the equivalent for the Hebrew in English for the sake of clarity.

It is well spaced out with seven chapters and plenty of notes and information at the back of the book for those who wish to research further, especially from the internet.

I heartily recommend the reading of this book because of its thoroughly biblical stance. Sadly, too many Christians have allowed the world to influence and dictate attitudes towards those who are in great need. In the final chapter the author states that the debate for the Christian should move away from the benefits, or otherwise, that the asylum seeker brings. The focus should rather be on the moral case for asylum.

The book concludes with a reminder for us all, 'As aliens and strangers in the world, God's call to us to love the alien as ourselves is challenging, sometimes difficult to work out and ultimately uncompromising. There are, however, fewer higher calls to which we can respond.'

*Gurnam Singh, Melbourne Hall, Leicester*

## **Beyond the Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity**

John Piper, Justin Taylor, Paul Kjoss Helseth (eds)

Crossway, Wheaton (Ill.), 2003; 416 pp., £13.99; ISBN 1 58134 462 7

The title of this volume encapsulates its thesis: open theism undermines biblical Christianity and must be considered beyond the bounds of what Christian churches can legitimately permit. Justin Taylor contributes an introduction and bibliography and eleven authors set out their case under five rubrics: 'Historical Influences', 'Philosophical Presuppositions and Cultural Context', 'Anthropomorphisms, Revelation, and Interpretation', 'What is at Stake in the Openness Debate?' and 'Drawing Boundaries and Conclusions'. The overall tone of the volume is certainly polemical and not irenic, but the authors hold that this is necessary because open theism is dangerous as well as mistaken and that while love is always in order, peacemaking sometimes is not.

Multi-essay collections are often uneven and it is the case here. On the one hand, the principal difficulties with the claim that God does not exhaustively foreknow the future are well summarised by Bruce Ware in his contribution on 'The Gospel of Christ'. His book-length study of *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism* also makes the case well and, despite room for demurral at aspects of his approach to the question of evil in both the longer volume and the present essay, this latter presents about as compelling a case against some of the main tenets of open theism as we are likely to find in a short piece. On the other hand, those of us who seriously disagree with open theism might be forgiven for being drawn to a favourable attitude to the open theists themselves after reading Wayne Grudem's treatment of 'When, Why, And For What Should We Draw New Boundaries?' After listing biblical warnings against false teachers or teachers of false doctrine, Grudem includes in their number annihilationists (so out goes John Stott); those who believe it is possible to be saved without actually hearing the gospel (so out goes Martyn Lloyd-Jones); and those who deny inerrancy (so out goes one of the distinguished authors of *The Fundamentals*, James Orr). Grudem does not name these names and concedes that someone who resists inerrancy, while not being a genuine evangelical, might be a genuine believer, but his work exemplifies a narrow sectarianism that finds it hard to distinguish between the teaching of Scripture and its own interpretation of that teaching and to include in the circle of worthies those who differ on interpretation, except over a narrow range of issues.

The most rewarding section of this volume is the third part, featuring essays by A. B. Caneday and Michael Horton that are helpful, persuasive and useful beyond the bounds of the question of open theism in particular. They respectively boil down to an exposition and defence of the anthropomorphic character of all biblical language about God and of the way of analogy. Undoubtedly, fellow-travellers on the theological road will take philosophical issue with them, but they arguably lay bare the hermeneutical heart of the debate with open theism. Both contributions are warmly recommended.

The politics of the debate in the United States, whose shadow engulfs the volume, has significantly moved on since the publication of these essays. 'Politics' can be taken as a pejorative term, but it also loosely signifies an entirely appropriate dimension of ecclesial concern, for the issues treated in this volume are not academic. It is important that the kind of discussion we find here should continue, provided that it is carried out in the right spirit. Here we should certainly agree with the principle sustained by the authors of *Beyond the Bounds*.

*Stephen N. Williams, Union Theological College, Belfast*

## **At Variance: The Church's Argument against Homosexual Conduct**

Kevin Scott

Dunedin Academic Press, Edinburgh, 2004; 88 pp., £5.95; ISBN 1 903765 37 4

I have to confess that, having read so many books defending traditional teaching on homosexuality, I wondered what I would get out of this slim volume published with the support of The Scottish Order for Christian Unity. However, I knew its author – Kevin Scott – when he was curate at St Ebbes, Oxford and I was an undergraduate, almost 20 years ago. Among his fellow local clergy then was Richard Holloway, who subsequently was Kevin's bishop for many years in Edinburgh, and became increasingly strident against the traditional viewpoint. The book was short and I knew it would be readable and that's not true of all books on the subject.

It is, in fact, a masterly piece of polemic 'in that it takes a definite stance against homosexual conduct and hopes and expects to win the argument or, at the very least, aims to present to the reader points which will have to be answered before homosexual practice could be thought of as permissible' (p. 3). There is plenty of bad polemic in this debate and certainly many in the church will not like much of what is said here –

Kevin knows it may 'rise ire'. However, those who do not like it will need to address its central arguments if the church is to have any serious theological debate.

The book's focus is clear from its title – homosexual conduct not orientation or relationships or people. That in itself will frustrate some. Certainly its rigorous, detached, analytical and solid approach to its specific subject matter (you don't need the back cover to realise Kevin Scott's doctorate is in science) makes it open to the criticism of lacking pastoral sensitivity and I would be very cautious about recommending it to someone struggling in this area. Its treatment throughout is 'big picture' rather than the sort of detail one finds in something like Robert Gagnon's study. Although there is limited reference to such studies, there is obviously knowledge of these micro-debates and the book is clear and reasoned and not slapdash in its more broad-brush macro-approach.

Chapters 2–4 cover the biblical material in less than 40 pages. Rather than detailed studies of Sodom (which is not even mentioned) or Leviticus we see how Israel came to know God as the One who in creation establishes order in the face of chaos and then redeems a people from the disorder of sin and reorders their life by his law. The thinking is clear: among the chaos and disorder is sexual immorality and among sexual immorality is homosexual conduct: 'Sexual relationships that have neither sacramental coherence nor procreational function are, by Jewish and Christian standards, ruled out on the grounds of their disorder. Can there be any justification for acts which have no biological logic, no reproductive value, no sacramental significance, or which are incoherent with the orders of creation?' (p. 18).

Turning to Jesus and the Gospels, Scott shows how Jesus' ministry seeks to remove from Israel all that would keep her in exile and that sexual immorality was included within this. Again he is short and sharp in his discussion of Jesus' alleged silence on homosexuality and the relevance of his clear teaching on immorality (*porneia*): 'We cannot say that homosexual conduct is admissible while incest is to be deplored. Conversely, if we want to exclude incest, then homosexual conduct must go with it' (p. 29). He concludes with a helpful discussion of Jesus confronting us with the infinite demand of God, his infinite acceptance of us as sinners, and the sufficiency of Christ's reigning power (illustrated with reference to John chs 5 and 8) and the issue of defining our identity: 'We cannot define ourselves as gentile Christians, or Jewish Christians, far less as 'gay' Christians. We can only define ourselves as Christians, followers of Jesus Christ' (p. 35).

The discussion of Paul draws heavily on Richard Hays to see homosexual conduct as an 'anti-sacrament' – an outward sign of an inward rebellion – and rightly stresses this rebellion is not specific to individuals tempted to homosexual conduct but general to fallen humanity. After brief responses to attempts to silence or disregard Paul in this area, the stark challenge is put – with a powerful quotation from John Keble – that the church doesn't like being unpopular and that 'the effort to make homosexual conduct acceptable is driven, not by some new discovery that our understanding of Scripture has been faulty up till now, but simply by a desire not to offend, nor to be afflicted by, those who clamour for the change' (p. 47).

The fifth chapter looks at the views of the Early Church which are clear: 'there is a general verdict that homosexual conduct is not only depraved, but both diabolically and incomprehensibly so... it is self-evident to the Ancient Church that these practices are vile, degenerate and absolutely inconsistent with the teaching of Scripture and the logic of the Judaeo-Christian tradition in which they stand'. He particularly focuses on the 4th century and St John Chrysostom's Homily on Romans 1 which is reproduced as an appendix. The argument from nature is starkly and shockingly put to equate homosexual conduct (and approval of it) as a form of madness equivalent to a man who puts food into his ears, revealing perhaps the book's (largely implicit) focus on male homosexual conduct and particularly anal sex.

These chapters articulate in a short, sharp manner much that can be found in more detail (and sometimes more gently expressed) elsewhere. For me, the last two chapters are the particular value of the polemic. In chapter six, 'The Church's Plight', it is claimed that the church has experienced its own form of degeneracy similar to Romans 1; having abandoned orthodox faith and bought into a liberal reductionism that includes suspicion of Scripture and a quest for self-fulfillment (for all of which Feuerbach is particularly blamed), we should not be surprised if we are given over to acceptance of homosexual practice. Although the argument is sketchy (seven pages), its force is powerful and challenging.

This suggests why this issue is so significant and suggests – again rather colourfully – an internal logic: 'We could have predicted this more than a century ago if we had been sufficiently astute. Once the inevitable connection is made between failing to give God credit and the discredited mentality which follows from it, the inward part of the anti-sacrament is in place. It is only a matter of time before the hideous logic of unbelief manifests itself in the outward visible sign of perversion' (p. 62). It shows the need for more serious repentance: 'Repudiating the outward

visible sign of this anti-sacrament will not be enough. The repudiation of the inward unbelief, which is its counterpart, is much more important and involves the whole Church, not just a few individuals' (p. 63). And it clarifies that although part of the issue is the unwillingness of the church to be 'at variance' with the world, the deeper problem is that 'the Church has long since ceased to think as the Church should'. The good news though is that 'if through penitence, the Church reverses the inward sign of unbelief, then the outward sign of sexual disorder will retreat from it and the anti-sacrament will be dissolved' (p. 63).

But what if there is not such penitence? The last chapter addresses where we find ourselves now in the Anglican Communion and is clear: 'there can be no easy fixing of the plight into which the Church has fallen, and certainly there can be no compromise, no 'third way' by which both sides of the argument can co-exist in one communion' (p. 64). Here Kevin Scott's insight and his skill at sound-bites (with all the strengths and weaknesses that skill brings) reaches its height as he points out the seriousness of what is involved: 'If we were to accept homosexual conduct as right and valid, we would necessarily break our fellowship with all the saints and Christians of history' (p. 67). The Cross itself is at stake 'if we were to make any sin not a sin any longer'. Furthermore, 'all Christians in the past who confessed that sin were wrong to do so, were not absolved, and wasted their spiritual energies in penitence and in striving against the temptation' (p. 69). Practically, to change the church's teaching here means that for many the church 'will cease to be a safe haven and become a moral snare. The effect would be exactly the same as on married people if adultery were to be legitimated.' The church would be dissolved and 'any right-thinking person would have the duty to avoid it' (p. 70).

Finally, Scott shows that hard though this sounds, this is the truly pastoral approach. The language of being 'pastoral' relates to Christ the Shepherd and 'the pastoral ministry is not established by some consensus with the flock, adjusted appropriately here and there according to the preference of the sheep, but it takes its bearings from Jesus and the Apostles. In this way, the good of the flock is guaranteed, their safety procured and their needs met' (p. 74). If the church ceases to proclaim and live out the good it has learned from Christ, it would mean, in the book's closing words, 'the flock would inevitably become scattered and prey to the wolf' (p. 74).

Polemical essays are a particular genre of theological work. As a genre they are poor at sympathetic engagement with one's opponents and can slip into attacking caricatures and making statements with minimal



justification. They are therefore not generally conducive to facilitating listening and dialogue. All those features can be found in this work and many will therefore strongly dislike it. However, good polemic – and this is good polemic – also strengthens people to stick to their beliefs and oppose error, and challenges those who disagree to respond to the gauntlet thrown down. As yet, revisionists have consistently failed to do that when challenged, relying on social and political pressure and ‘pastoral concern’ rather than serious theological argument to advance their cause. Let’s hope that Kevin Scott’s ‘no-holds-barred’ approach to them provokes such a response, whether in a return polemic or a more careful rebuttal of his serious charges.

*Andrew Goddard, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford*

(This review first appeared on the internet at <http://www.anglican-mainstream.net/news182.asp>, and is republished with permission.)

## **20 Controversies That Almost Killed a Church: Paul’s Counsel to the Corinthians and the Church Today**

Richard L. Ganz

P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 2003; 259 pp., £7.95; ISBN 0 87552 790 6

*20 Controversies That Almost Killed a Church* is a popular study of problems faced by the church in Corinth, and which continue to be of relevance to the church today. The homiletic style of the book suggests that it originated in a series of sermons preached by Dr Ganz, who is the senior pastor of the Ottawa Reformed Presbyterian Church in Canada and President of the Ottawa Theological Hall within the RPCNA.

The book consists of twenty chapters each of which focuses on a specific theme of 1 Corinthians, and include themes such as ‘Divisions in the Church’, ‘Lawsuits against the Church’, ‘True Spiritual Behaviour’ and ‘Is There Meaning to Life?’. Most chapters include highlighted portions of the text to be expounded. There are series of study questions and a Scripture index – but no introductory material or even a basic bibliography or suggestions for further reading.

Ganz’s exposition contains some acute observations on issues which continue to concern the church. With respect to divisions in the church he notes, ‘So often... the church is run down most by the people who should be building it up’ (p. 19). In commenting on marriage he remarks, ‘[Paul] crushed the idea of sexual promiscuity, the idea of having as many sexual partners as you please. But he also crushed the idea of a lacklustre sex life within marriage, because the Scriptures, in condemning immoral

sex, never condemn marital sex! In fact... Paul argues *for it*' (emphasis original, pp. 100-01). In a chapter on 'Christian Liberty' he helpfully observes that 'Christ's interest in the weaker brother is greater than his interest in you exercising your freedom' (p. 132). And with regard to spiritual gifts he wisely affirms that they are given 'for the edification of the church, not for private pleasure or a for a demonstration of the supposed highest level of spirituality' (p. 166).

Ganz's traditional understanding of headship in the church will not be universally agreed with, whilst his understanding of the obscure practice of baptism for the dead (that by such baptism Corinthian believers were participating more in 'a memorial service for the martyrs of the faith than a baptismal service', and so identified with Christian martyrs [p. 230-31]) is less than convincing.

His style is popular and dynamic – though it is perhaps sometimes too dynamic, as when he suggests that Paul 'crushed' Corinthian ideas of sexual morality (p. 100), or that a meaningless life is 'smashed' in Christ (p. 244)!

This book will be of help to the Christian who is concerned about the life and witness of the church in many parts of the West today.

*Ian D. Glover, Livingston Free Church of Scotland*

## **When Should We Divide?**

Michael B. Thompson

Grove Books, Cambridge, 2004; 28 pp., £2.75; ISBN 1 85174 572 6

Subtitled 'Schism and Discipline in the New Testament' this booklet is part of the Grove Biblical Series booklets tackling issues of interest in the modern church. Michael Thompson is an American Anglican, Vice-Principal of Ridley Hall, and therefore the possibility of schism is very much on his mind.

The booklet is divided into seven chapters. There is a short introduction, in which Thompson quotes the lament in *2 Clement* that Christians were not loving one another as they ought. Thompson's aim, he says, is to encourage those have not yet left the church (and he has the worldwide Anglican communion in mind) to consider whether it might not be better to stay. Immediately, we realize that this is going to be a plea for the disenchanteds to remain where they are.

He then considers why Christians divide: doctrine, the authority of Scripture, a desire for holiness, anger at being sidelined, fear of compromise.

Next there follows a fairly exhaustive tour of New Testament texts in which schism is condemned and false prophets are criticised. To end with, Thompson gives some practical ideas as to how angry and frustrated evangelicals within mainstream denominations should respond and argues for the supremacy of unity.

Everything Thompson says is good up to a point. Yes, New Testament schismatics were trouble-makers; yes, the root of today's troubles lie in an unwillingness to discipline the unorthodox in the past; yes, this generation ought to apply discipline more readily.

The weakness in the argument is that Thompson fails to address the situation where a 'church' ceases to be the Church; where the doctrine and practice of the church has wandered so far from biblical standards that it is difficult to recognize the Body of Christ. What are Christian pastors to do when their leadership requires them to subscribe to articles of religion which flatly contradict historic, orthodox, biblical Christianity? Unlike New Testament times, the schismatics tend to be loyal to Scripture. As for discipline, the problem is that evangelicals aren't the ones holding the strap!

Thompson wants us to play the long-game. He says, 'Although serious error may flare up and affect a generation or two, schism can last for millennia.' Applying Thompson's logic one doubts there would have been a Reformation. There would be no Baptists, no Puritans, no Congregationalists, no Free Church (Scottish or English).

He says (p. 27): 'But I would rather be part of a group that risks erring on the side of tolerance than one that 'safely' errs on the side of separation.' I wonder how Chinese Christians, who separate themselves from the state-sponsored Three Self Church, would respond to such thinking. Biblical principles should be applicable to the church universal.

Thompson has provided us with a good place to start the discussion, but because he views the church through Anglican spectacles he will only be of limited use to those of us in other denominations.

*Ian Watson, Kirkmuirhill*

## **The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book: A Study Guide for Churches**

Joseph A. Pipa, Jr

Christian Focus, Fearn, Scotland, 2005; 416 pp., £9.99; ISBN 1 84550 030 X

The Westminster Confession of Faith continues to have a formative theological influence on new generations of Christians, and Christian

Focus Publications continues to play a part in encouraging and developing that influence. First reprinting Robert Shaw's exposition of the Confession and then Alexander Whyte's treatment of the Shorter Catechism, CFP has now launched a new book for the confessionally minded: Joseph Pipa's *The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book: A Study Guide for Churches*.

Pipa's book has three parts. The first is a student guide, containing 26 lessons. Each lesson is introduced with references to required reading in the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity. Pipa then proceeds to pepper the student with a series of thematic questions based on biblical passages or, in some cases, confessional texts. The questions vary in length and depth, some are personal, most theological. Occasionally the inductive method is replaced by a couple of paragraphs of instruction (e.g. Lesson 1, question 22) or with a personal to-do list (keep a prayer journal, write a sermon journal).

The second part (pp. 119-294) is alternately referred to as the 'teacher's guide' (in the subtitle) or the 'teacher's edition' (in the running title), perhaps indicating that at one time two separate editions of the work were envisioned. Two editions, one for students and the other for teachers, would certainly make sense. The teacher's guide not only provides answers to the questions, but it also repeats every word found in the first 117 pages of the book. This burdens both types of readers with the cost of the other's material.

Finally, the book concludes with 117 pages of appendices, two of which are mis-numbered on p. 412. The appendices contain the easily available texts of the Westminster Standards and Three Forms of Unity, debatable inclusions in what could have been two slim volumes.

Pipa's book aims to make Christians think biblically, theologically and practically. Certainly Christ's church needs members and leaders who reflect on the same truths that occupy Pipa's attention throughout these twenty-six lessons. But Pipa presupposes a serious commitment on the part of his readers: as the title's repetition of the word 'study' indicates, this is a book that requires considerable work – Pipa recommends a minimum of one hour per lesson.

What the title does not communicate clearly is the subject matter studied. *The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book* is not a guide to the Confession: confessional material is rearranged and omitted. Rather, as is the case with many guides and some commentaries on the Westminster Standards, confessional passages and ideas are used as launching points for theological instruction. Pipa's instruction is terse and pithy, and insights of theologians past and present are found

throughout the text. The author's discussion of definitive sanctification brings back memories of the best of John Murray (pp. 216-20) and a redemptive-historically sensitive comment on the eschatological implications of the penal sanctions in the Mosaic economy echo some of the insights of Meredith Kline that have become mainstream (p. 232).

There are a few typographical errors (e.g. pp. 9, 67), some inconsistent use of italic type (e.g. p. 145-6) and some compressed sections of text that are unpleasant to read (e.g. pp. 13-14). But as a theological and spiritual guide, *The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book* is sufficiently thoughtful and clear to be recommended to studious Christians with a good group leader.

*Chad van Dixhoorn, Wolfson College, Cambridge*

### **Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary**

Harold W. Hoehner

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2002; xxix+930 pp., £41.99 (h/b); ISBN 0 8010 2614 8

This commentary is a massive and detailed exposition of the Greek text of Ephesians. Originally scheduled to be part of a series, changes in publishing plans have led to Baker's publishing it as a stand-alone volume. The author, who has taught New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary for over thirty years, has provided a benchmark work on Ephesians which will hold a primary position in New Testament studies.

The layout of the commentary is clear, and is in three parts. The Introduction deals with issues of authorship, structure and genre, historical setting, purpose, theology and bibliography regarding authorship. The question of authorship is given wide discussion, as Hoehner lists the commentators who have accepted and those who have rejected Pauline authorship, further tabulating them in terms of dates and percentage. It is a detailed exercise to demonstrate that 'acceptance of the Pauline authorship of Ephesians has had a long tradition' (p. 20).

However, in dealing with the arguments on either side of the authorship question it is refreshing to find a scholar stating that 'it is extremely difficult to determine authorship on the basis of language and style' (pp. 28-9). Such assessments are extremely subjective, and Hoehner's discussion is exemplary in terms of how one should approach the vexed question of authorship. His preferred approach is to examine points of comparison with other letters (most notably Colossians), where

literary comparisons furnish more evidence for common authorship than questions relating to style.

Hoehner recognises that the question of the purpose of Ephesians, in the absence of any apparent 'problem' in the church, is complex. On the basis of the prominence given to the themes of love and unity, Hoehner suggests that 'the purpose of Ephesians is to promote a love for one another that has the love of God and Christ as its basis' (p. 106). Hoehner takes an interesting approach to this by looking at it in the light of the letter of Revelation 2:1-7, where the deviation from Christ's love marked the main point of declension in Ephesus.

Under 'theology', Hoehner looks at the doctrines of the Trinity, the Fatherhood of God, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology and reconciliation. This is a useful summary of the doctrine of the epistle. The footnotes and bibliography are breathtaking in their range and extent, and show the author's mastery of his subject.

The commentary itself follows a simple and clear outline, in which the Greek text of Ephesians is given, followed by the author's translation and comment. The outline looks at the calling of the church in chapters 1-3, and the conduct of the church in chapters 4-6. In the second part of the epistle, Hoehner notes the frequency of Paul's use of the verb to 'walk', and he deals with walking in unity, in holiness, in love, in light and in wisdom, followed by the injunction to 'stand' in warfare.

Hoehner gives a thorough and exhaustive treatment of the issues raised throughout the epistle. On 1:12, he correctly notes that 'the indwelling, baptizing and sealing ministries of the Spirit are bestowed on every believer at the moment of conversion... they are an integral part of the gift of salvation' (p. 240). His dismissal of the notion of a covenant of grace is disappointing (p. 358 on 2:12). No commentator can satisfy on every point, but a good commentary, as this is, consistently raises issues which are not immediately apparent.

The third element of the commentary are excurses, on textual problems in 1:1, views and structures of 1:3-14, the meaning of 'in Christ', election, the meaning of *pleroma*, mystery, household code and slavery in Paul's time. These enhance what is a magisterial piece of work; Hoehner will prove to be a reference-point in consideration of Ephesians for many years to come.

*Iain D. Campbell, Back, Isle of Lewis*

## **When Will These Things Happen? A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21–25**

Alistair I. Wilson

Paternoster Biblical Monographs, Milton Keynes, 2004; 272 pp., £16.99; ISBN 1 84227 146 6

*When Will These Things Happen?* is the published version of Alastair I. Wilson's doctoral thesis and addresses itself to the question of Matthew's depiction of Jesus as the eschatological judge in Matthew 21–25. While such a study, in and of itself, fills a significant gap in Matthean scholarship, the work is further intended to contribute to the area of Historical Jesus research, challenging the idea of a non-eschatological Jesus, particularly as it is found in the writings of Marcus Borg. The core of Wilson's argument is that the evidence of Matthew, a faithful transmitter of traditions associated with the historical Jesus, clearly presents the latter as the coming judge of all mankind, and that this Matthean evidence may not be disregarded in the way that Borg does.

Having established this as being his intention, Wilson begins by providing a thorough overview of the various understandings of the eschatological dimension of Jesus' teaching in Historical Jesus research. This is followed by an overview of scholarly opinion on Matthew's views on Jesus and judgement. Together, these surveys justify the need for a study that allows Matthew's distinctive preservation of the teaching of Jesus to inform our understanding of Jesus' own eschatological convictions.

The next two chapters set out the methodology to be followed in the study of the gospel, and justify the treatment of Matthew 21–25 as a unit. The methodology followed in the study is 'composition criticism', essentially a variant of 'redaction criticism' that is less concerned with source-critical issues and more with how editorial decisions function within the context of the final form of the narrative.

With all of this in place, Wilson turns to examine the text of Matthew 21–25 and the evangelist's presentation of Jesus as the eschatological judge. The material is divided into two sections, treated in separate chapters. Chapter 5 is entitled 'Jesus the Judge in Matthew: as Prophet'. This chapter is principally concerned with the prophetic material of Matthew 24 and includes an important discussion of the use of 'apocalyptic' language and metaphor as well as a useful study of the 'coming Son of Man' sayings. Chapter 6 is entitled 'Jesus the Judge in Matthew: as Sage'. This chapter examines the judgement motif as it occurs within the context of Jesus' parables in Matthew 21–25. Chapter

7 then draws the study to a conclusion, summarising the results of the Matthean study and employing them to criticise Borg's portrayal of Jesus as non-eschatological.

This is an important study for two reasons. First, it fills an obvious lacuna in Matthean scholarship by studying the presentation of Jesus as judge. Second, and in many ways more significantly, it breaks down the problematic separation of Historical Jesus research from the witnesses of the Gospels *as finished compositions*. Almost universally, the attempt to identify the Historical Jesus is founded upon a source-critical approaches that pays only lip-service to the actual witnesses we possess (the canonical Gospels). By critiquing such an approach by means of the final form of the Matthean text, Wilson has provided an important counter to this, and it is to be hoped that his study will encourage a greater respect for the actual Gospel witnesses in their final form within Historical Jesus research.

As far as criticisms go, only one substantial criticism may be levelled at the scholarship (one which was made known to me when it was levelled at my own doctoral thesis): in his treatment of Matthew 24:30, Wilson does not discuss the important study by John Collins of Daniel 7, the OT text that lies behind the Son of Man imagery (the study is found in Collins' 1993 commentary on Daniel, published by Fortress Press). Collins' work would suggest that the metaphorical/literal dichotomy in discussions of apocalyptic language requires to be nuanced further, a point that has some implications for Wilson's interpretation of Matthew 24:29-31. Such a criticism is relatively minor, however, and should not detract from the value of this important contribution to New Testament research.

*Grant Macaskill, University of St Andrews*

## **The Wages of Spin: Critical Writings on Historic and Contemporary Evangelicalism**

Carl R. Trueman

CFP Mentor, Fearn, 2004; 190 pp., £10.99; ISBN 1 85792 994 2

Carl R. Trueman is a Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. He is a man to watch for the future! This latest book is a compilation of numerous articles and talks which he has given in a variety of contexts in the UK and Europe.

The first section of the book comprises six 'evangelical essays'. The subject matter ranges from a critique of the Helsinki Circle, a group of Finnish theologians who have recently revisited the theology of Martin



Luther, to an analysis and appreciation of the ‘Princeton Trajectory on Scripture’, as seen through the eyes of B. B. Warfield. In this section there is also a wonderful essay entitled ‘The undoing of the Reformation’ where he argues that image and spin, rather than the plain use of words, have been the vehicles of communication for the church. This whole section is obviously the work of a renewed mind which has a passion to see Christians engage their minds and to reject the pietistic anti-intellectualism which has become a cancer on our spiritual landscape.

The second section, entitled ‘Short, sharp shocks’, is pertinent, prophetic and at times simply hilarious as he comments on various aspects of contemporary evangelicalism. The book is worth the price just for the following titles: ‘The Marcions have landed!’, ‘What can miserable Christians sing?’ and ‘Why you shouldn’t buy the big issue’. In the chapter on the Marcions he argues that Marcion is probably ‘one of the most influential thinkers in the modern church’. He unpacks this thesis by showing how the church of today has *de facto* ditched the concept of the wrath of God and has practically excised the Old Testament from its thinking. His article entitled ‘What can miserable Christians sing?’ puts Trueman right up there with Bono as one of the most articulate advocates of Psalm-singing writing in our present times. The following quotation gives us a flavour of the entire book: ‘A diet of unremittingly jolly choruses and hymns inevitably creates an unrealistic horizon of expectation which sees the normative Christian life as one long triumphalism street party – a theologically incorrect and a pastorally disastrous scenario in the world of broken individuals.’

I cannot recommend this book too highly. I have quoted from this book, given it away, used entire chapters as study material. It argues that the Reformed faith should be proclaimed and applied to the bench kids, the Starbucks set and the praise song junkies of our time. It engages with the pseudo-prophets of postmodernism, people like Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault. It argues that God should be seen as God.

And by the way, the big issue is not what you think it is.

*David C. Meredith, Culloden, Inverness*

## **City on a Hill: Reclaiming the Biblical Pattern for the Church in the 21st Century**

Philip Graham Ryken

Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2003; 209 pp., £6.99; ISBN 0 8024 4199 8

*City on a Hill* looks from a biblical perspective on how we should ‘do church’ in the 21st century. Its target audience is primarily pastors or

church leaders. It has been written with the USA in mind but I found very little which did not sit comfortably with the British church scene.

Ryken takes the view that there are two prevalent mindsets in society today of which we need to take serious note because they are unbiblical attitudes which can so easily infiltrate the church and affect our way of doing things. They are 'relativism' – the attitude that there are no absolutes today – and of 'narcissism' – the attitude that everything revolves around me and what I want. Taking these then as the prevalent outlooks in our world today, he then examines how they affect what we do by way of 'church' and takes the reader back to the Bible to examine how we need to redress the balance.

The book has nine chapters, eight of which focus on one of the central aspects of church life: preaching, worship, fellowship, pastoral care, discipleship, missions and evangelism, mercy ministry, repentance and renewal. The book concludes with a most helpful section called 'Action Guide'. It has two sections. In the first the reader is asked to evaluate his own ministry in each of the above categories. In the second the reader is given a series of practical suggestions. Each section concludes with a list of helpful resources if the reader would wish to study further on the subject. It is all laid out in a clear and easy-to-follow manner.

Ryken begins by taking his readers back to the first century church where he sees four essentials as a foundation from which any church should work: the teaching church, the worshipping church, the caring church and the growing church. In the section on preaching he argues strongly for the centrality of preaching – particularly expository preaching – arguing that preaching is still the best method to counteract some of the prevalent myths of our time and to undergird some of the doctrines that are under attack.

In the section on worship, he strongly underlines the need for us to worship God, arguing that in so much contemporary worship the focus is on the worshipper rather than the One who is to be worshipped. In the section on fellowship he argues that, in view of the current 'cult of aloneness', people searching for the ideal community will only find it in the fellowship of God's people. Ryken takes his readers through each section in a similar manner.

I had wondered before I began to read the book if it would just be a negative attack on all that is contemporary in the church today, but I found this not to be the case. The book gives many helpful insights into modern culture, and as a preacher myself always on the look out for anecdotes and quotations, I certainly found an abundance of these.

I would recommend this book for any who want to sit down and give their church a thorough review as to where they stand and where they are going in their current ministry. It is an easy but thought-provoking read, and seeks to be relevant to all we do today in our churches.

*William B. Black, Stornoway High Church, Isle of Lewis*

## **Wesley and the Wesleys: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain**

John Kent

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002; 229 pp., £14.99; ISBN 0 521 45555 3

Professor Kent believes that the key to Wesley and the ‘Evangelical Revival’ lies in an understanding of ‘primary religion’. By that much-repeated phrase he means the constant propensity in human nature to look for divine intervention, and to identify it with such things as visions, healings, dreams and ecstasies of emotion. Roman Catholicism accommodated its presentation of religion to this propensity, and the main theme of this book is that Wesley and his men did the same. Far from leading ‘a revival of primitive Christianity’, they simply met the needs of ‘primary religion’ in their hearers by preaching that could produce excitement, the ‘miraculous’ and ‘communal ecstasy’. Wesley’s message first prompted ‘the damnation trauma’, then induced ‘release’ – a process in which women suffered the most, sometimes ‘the virtual destruction of human personality’ (p. 106). Wesley was sincere, no doubt, but it was his misfortune that he did not question the biblical authority on which his education had relied and, not possessing the benefits of modern psychiatry, he was incapable of analysing what happened. On the basis of such arguments the author wants to convince us that the traditional idea of a ‘Revival’ in the eighteenth century is only a myth: it was not ‘an evangelical revival ... but a rediscovery of primitive religious energies’ (p. 118).

In essence this line of reasoning differs little from the writers and clergy who were the opponents of Whitefield and Wesley. Bypassing such questions as whether the rebirth is a reality, and whether a saving relation to God depends upon our works or the justifying work of Christ, the first opponents of the Methodists seized upon any faults they could find, and so magnified them that any idea of a work of God verged on the ridiculous. John Kent follows the same line. In his 207 pages of text I recall only one that might be called sympathetic. For the Wesleys, he tells us, ‘The goal was not holiness but respectability’ (p. 201), and the

best that can be said for them is that they achieved 'moralism' 'for a large number of men and women' (p. 207).

For his thesis Kent draws, in places, on some less-known sources but the extent of his grasp of eighteenth-century evangelical history has to be questioned when he can talk about Whitefield's 'independent history in America', and treat the evangelical movement in the Church of England as though it began with Wilberforce and the Clapham sect.

*Iain H. Murray, Edinburgh*

### **The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914**

Andrew Porter (ed.)

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2003; xiii+250 pp., £32.99; ISBN 0 8028 6087 7

Edited by Andrew Porter, Rhodes Professor of Imperial History at King's College, London, *The Imperial Horizons of British Protestant Missions, 1880-1914* is a product of what started life as the North Atlantic Missiology Project, now The Currents in World Christianity Project. This thoroughly researched and well-documented collection of nine essays elucidates the complex relationships between missionary theory and experience in an imperial setting over thirty-four years. The essays, although professional and thorough, are, nevertheless, for the non-specialist, a somewhat tedious trawl through the complicated and perplexing interface between Empire and Christianity. The book, as indeed the whole series of which it is part, has been well received and complimented by reviewers.

The nine chapters are: 'Atonement, Sin and Empire, 1880-1914' by D.W. Bebbington; 'Imperial Christianity? Bishop Montgomery and the Foreign Missions of the Church of England, 1895-1915' by Steven Maugham; 'Church, State and the Hierarchy of "Civilisation": The Making of the "Missions and Governments" Report at the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910' by Brian Stanley; 'Christian Missions and Mid-Nineteenth-Century Change in Attitudes to Race: the African Experience' by Andrew Ross; 'Missionaries, Science, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century Africa' by John MacKenzie; 'Rethinking Gender Roles: The Field Experience of Woman Missionaries in South Africa' by Deborah Gaitskell; 'British Missions and Indian Nationalism, 1880-1908: Imitation and Autonomy in Calcutta and Madras' by Chandra Mallampalli; 'Rethinking Mission in China: James Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard' by Lauren F. Pfister; "Who Did

Some might conclude that a book like this has limited value because 'diversity means superficiality'. That is not true in this case. The value of this collection is several-fold. Firstly it is relevant to the modern world and is a skilled reminder that theology is not and should not be divorced from such. Reymond's chapter on 'Angels' is not only a thorough study of the Bible's teaching on their being and function but an engagement with modern perceptions as exemplified by the TV series *Touched by an Angel*.

Secondly, it is the kind of muscle-flexing, academic compendium of individual 'refresher courses' which gives the busy minister who does not have the time to re-embark on full-length, comprehensive, theological study the opportunity to maintain his theological references and keep abreast of current thought. Furthermore, whilst each chapter is substantial in content, they are all self-contained and require no prior knowledge of the precise subjects being discussed. This means that the reader can either pick and choose his subject or simply dip into something briefly, yet come away having been exercised and edified.

On a negative note, the volume is, in the main, hard going. Perhaps that is a reflection of this reviewer but then again perhaps the author and even the publisher is also at fault in not taking enough care to present this good material in a form that is more readable and accessible to a wider audience. Theology must become more user-friendly if it is to be of wide benefit to the Christian public. Otherwise important issues will be lost to the very audience which needs most to have a good understanding of them.

Otherwise a meaty buy which will yield benefits to the serious reader.

*Iver Martin, Stornoway Free Church, Isle of Lewis*

## **Deconstructing Evangelicalism**

D. G. Hart

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2004; 224 pp., £21.99; ISBN 0 8010 2728 4

This book is essentially regarding the definition of the term 'evangelicalism' as it has been used in American Protestantism over the last few decades. It is therefore a very contemporary study of the church scene in the USA. There are, of course, implications and applications for us in the UK.

The author, D. G. Hart, confesses to being a strong reformed Presbyterian with a high view of the church, and this comes out in his book. In the preface, he states: 'For academics, this book poses a

question about accuracy in describing the American Protestant landscape. For religious leaders, it raises the issue of whether evangelicalism is a Christian identity sufficient to sustain serious faith.' His basic argument is that the term 'evangelicalism' would be better abandoned altogether, rather than redefined, not because it is theologically wrong or ineffective, but simply because it does not exist as a religious identity, maintaining that the term obscures as much as it reveals. Hart would agree that it has had its uses, but not because of its depth, only because of its width. He maintains the term has been hijacked by those who do not want to be labelled as 'fundamentalists' yet have a grudge against mainline churches.

The book is about the way neo-evangelicals built the evangelical edifice and how academics have maintained the façade of the building commonly known as conservative Protestantism. The first part examines the construction of evangelicalism during the last 25 years, looking at religious history, social scientific studies of religion and student public opinion in the USA. The last part of the book looks at how it has fragmented examining topics such as church polity; creeds and worship. Hart's thesis is that without a strong coherent understanding of worship, ministry and theology, evangelicalism has effectively deconstructed.

Some may argue that the themes he has chosen to examine the movement (creeds, church membership, theological agreement) are an imposition and will question their validity as effective tools for evaluating 'evangelicalism', but Hart is adamant that these issues are most relevant to the larger argument, and he makes a good job of convincing us that Christianity is serious business. A large part of the book is devoted to the *process* of constructing and deconstructing the term, and it could be said that his whole argument is based on these processes.

The book, obviously, consists of many quotations from, and references to, different authors, and surveys the Christian scene mainly in the USA. There are some very interesting reflections and notes on the various debates over the years regarding dispensationalism, the need for creeds, ecclesiology and fundamentalism.

Hart exposes his liking for 'high prebyterianism' but has pinpointed a very real issue which needs to be faced today, and has made a serious attempt at addressing the problem. In effect, Hart says that true Christianity cannot be reduced to the lowest set of common denominators with respect to convictions and practices. Hart's book will comfort and encourage many of his supporters, but, of course, the real question is will it win over his opponents? His book concludes by reminding us that

Christianity is more than, to quote from the very last paragraph of the book, 'the prefabricated items offered by low-church Protestantism'.

The book is beautifully produced and would make excellent reading for theological students and those who are interested in the doctrine of 'the church'. While the book is academic and deals with serious issues, it is not heavy going, and even Hart's wit comes through as he rebukes contemporary Christians for their cavalier attitude to Christian terminology.

*George Macaskill, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis*

### **Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education**

Michael J. Anthony (ed.)

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2001; 747 pp., £39.99; ISBN 0 8010 2184 7

This is a book by Americans for American readers but still useful for people in the UK. The defined goal of Christian education is, in brief, justification, sanctification and maturity leading to glorification. In the USA Christian education is a distinct profession with university faculties dedicated specifically to it, so the subject is attacked with a commendable transatlantic thoroughness by academic specialists. There are biographical entries for eminent figures like Robert Raikes, John Wesley and D. L. Moody; the psychologists are well represented with William James, Piaget, Freud, Jung et al., and there is full treatment of psychological and faith development in children and young people. There are entries on Christian youth and student movements like Inter-Varsity, but as I worked my way through the book from A–Z, I had a growing uneasiness. It gradually struck me that there is more than a whiff of the Evangelical ghetto about the whole book. Let me explain what I mean.

The separation of state and church in the USA means that Christian education happens in churches or in Christian schools and colleges – in the ghetto. In Britain, where churches are generally smaller and there are few Christian schools, the teaching of Christianity is still mandatory as part of Religious and Moral Education classes in every school. Moreover there is opportunity for Christian groups, like Scripture Union, to meet on school premises and in the school day. This puts Christian Education in the secular market place where it has to justify its place, and where Christians have to stand up and be counted. Seen from this perspective, this dictionary is directed to Christians in a more sheltered environment. For example there is a serious lack of topics relating broadly to Apologetics and indeed there is no entry for that topic or, extraordinarily,

for Evolution, Darwin, Creation, Science, Politics, Environment and many other topics which relate Christian belief to a secular society. That, in short, is my major objection to this book. It does not help to engage Evangelical Christians with many of the major issues of society, apart from sexual ones, which are thoroughly dealt with, starting with abortion and abstinence.

It is extraordinary that there are no articles specifically addressing such topics in a country where Creation Science and its relation to Evolution is such a hot subject in education. The nearest I could find was on Integration of Faith and Science and I quote: 'The inclusion of this article in this dictionary implies that science, *particularly the social sciences*, [my italics] is useful to and compatible with our goals in Christian education', but it does little to explain how this happens. So there are many references to developmental psychology and the work of secular sociologists yet a total absence of thought about the physical sciences. The USA more than any other society is based on science and its application in technology. Surely it must be relevant to Christian education that Christians, and particularly young ones, should be equipped to think critically about how this affects their faith. Surely, when we live in a decaying environment with a very real threat of destroying the world which God saw was very good, Christian education should have something to say on the matter. Surely, in a country which claims to lead the world in developing democracy, Christian education must help Christians to form political decisions based on biblical principles.

This dictionary has helpful articles on such topics as Maslow's Theory of Needs, Identity Moratorium and Role Reversal but nothing on Cosmology, Genetic Modification, Capitalism or Global Warming. I think that speaks for itself.

*Peter Kimber, Dirleton, East Lothian*

### **The Church Struggle in South Africa: 25th Anniversary Edition**

John W. de Gruchy with Steve de Gruchy

SCM Press, London, 2004; xxx+286 pp., £19.99; ISBN 0 334 02970 8

When the first edition of *The Church Struggle in South Africa* was published in 1979, it was not simply an academic project but a risky contribution to the struggle it described. A second edition was published in 1986, while South Africa was still under the *apartheid* regime. Now, 25 years after its initial publication and in a very different political



situation in South Africa, this new edition seeks to bring the story up to the point of the democratic elections of 1994.

There are six main chapters in this edition. The first provides some historical context, tracing the roots of the church in South Africa. Chapter two specifically addresses the role of the churches in the face of the growing crisis. In particular, de Gruchy devotes considerable space to discussion of the Dutch Reformed Church, or the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK), as it is now described in this edition. The third chapter is entitled 'The growing conflict' and reflects on the development of a 'confessing movement', with particular reference to the role of Beyers Naudé and the South African Council of Churches' statement entitled, 'Message to the People of South Africa'. The fourth chapter considers the church's involvement in the protest of black South Africans, including discussion of the 'Black Consciousness' movement and 'Black Theology'. The fifth chapter charts key moments in the final years of the *apartheid* regime, including the declaration of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches that apartheid is a 'heresy', the *Kairos* document and the final move towards democracy.

John de Gruchy's son, Steve, provides two significant contributions to the book. Firstly, he writes a postscript to the third edition of the book, providing a short response to criticisms of the first two editions. Secondly, he writes the sixth main chapter of the book, in which he reflects on the diverse 'struggles' which the church now faces under the new political regime since free elections took place in 1994.

I found this book very interesting. De Gruchy acknowledges that his treatment is selective, but his selections seem reasonable. He keeps his focus on the church, with the result that some matters which would require discussion in a comprehensive history of South Africa receive little discussion. Yet such choices enable the reader to cut through the many complexities of the recent history of South Africa to gain a greater appreciation for the role of the church in these remarkable events, and, as Steve de Gruchy notes in his 'Postscript', 'It is not just history. But neither is it just theology. It does not end with explaining "how and why", it wants to invite the reader to make a choice and to take a stand' (p. xxx).

One of the most striking features of de Gruchy's account is the emphatic claim that there were strong voices of protest against *apartheid* from the earliest signs of a growing problem. Even within the NGK, people like Beyers Naudé stood firmly against the *apartheid* regime. De Gruchy carefully avoids simplistic judgements which would affirm some churches and demonise others.

A weakness, from my perspective, is that de Gruchy limits his discussion to the contribution of the so-called 'ecumenical' churches. I would have liked to have heard more of how evangelicals contributed (either positively or negatively) to the struggle. There are a couple of brief references to African Enterprise (pp. 190, 196), but nothing of substance.

The third edition of de Gruchy's book is to be welcomed, not only as a valuable and interesting analysis of the church struggle which takes the story on into more recent times, but also as a means of marking the significance of this book, in its various forms, and the contribution of this notable South African theologian.

*Alistair I. Wilson,  
Dumisani Theological Institute, King William's Town, South Africa*

### **A Study of Scottish Hermeneutical Method from John Knox to the Early Twentieth Century: From Christian to Secular**

Marc A. Clauson

Toronto Studies in Theology, Volume 94. The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston NY, 2005; 416 pp., £79; ISBN 0 7734 6416 6

The aim of Clauson's substantial work is to examine the contribution of Scottish churchmen to the field of hermeneutics, not only as an end in itself but in order to determine their influence beyond Scotland, particularly in North America. He presents his case by covering the extensive topic in eleven chapters, the first two setting out his methodology and the historical context of the Scottish Reformation, the remainder covering each successive century to the present day. His selection of Scottish churchmen vary from the obvious such as John Knox, Thomas Boston and William Robertson Smith, but also lesser known contributors to the field of hermeneutics such as Robert Traill and R. Lachlan MacKenzie.

The book's appeal will be mainly to those studying the field of hermeneutics or Scottish church history, but the fact that each theologian or minister presented for consideration by Clauson is contained in the index will make it attractive to the informed lay reader. Clauson has presented his material in such a way that it is easy to dip in and out of different chapters thus making it a useful reference book.

Clauson writes in a clear, comfortable style which is helpful when considering some of the more technical passages that are inevitable in a

work of this specialist subject. The fact that the book is the outcome of a Ph.D. dissertation is clear from its layout and, unfortunately, the typological errors that appear somewhat too frequently, the worst two being at p. 262 when 'Thomas Chalmers' as a subject heading is 'orphaned' at the bottom of the page and at p. 347 'Primitivist' in the chapter heading is mis-spelled. Other inaccuracies were his comment that Andrew Bonar was not a Presbyterian on p. 279, even though on p. 275 he correctly described him as originally ordained into the Church of Scotland ministry and later taking part in the Disruption, thus joining the Free Church. His comment on Alexander MacLean being a 'Scottish Baptist' (p. 374) was slightly inaccurate. MacLean was a 'Scotch Baptist' as the early founders of the Baptist movement in Scotland were known. A more important weakness was the dated nature of his reference material on the Scottish Enlightenment (footnotes, p. 143) with no reference that I could see to Arthur Herman's *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots' Invention of the Modern World* – a significant omission, though probably not published at the time of his original Ph.D. thesis.

The substance of his thesis is not essentially marred by these inaccuracies, however. He gives a clear and detailed description of the issues surrounding hermeneutics in each historical period, with substantial footnotes. In my view he tended to underplay his overall case for a clear connection between the pre-critical method of Scottish hermeneutics and the uptake of such a method in the United States; e.g. on p. 388 we read 'When we have found that a particular American interpreter has read a pre-critical Scottish work, we have also found that this person's biblical works have been very similar.' He goes on to argue, somewhat weakly, that this fact would be probable evidence of a co-dependence on Scottish works. Similarly, Clauson reveals his bias in somewhat dismissing those Scottish theologians who adopted the Higher Critical method as having no substantial place or influence in the United States, or anywhere for that matter, as 'the critical method could never deliver what the people in churches wanted – simplicity and relevance, combined with accuracy and reverence' (p. 392). Overall, however this book is an important work and will be a useful tool for those engaged in the study of the history of Scottish hermeneutics.

*Jack Quinn, Adelaide Place Baptist Church, Glasgow*

## **Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World**

Richard Bauckham

Paternoster/Baker Academic, 2003; xiv+112 pp., £5.99; ISBN 1 84227 242 X

This is a remarkable little book. It deals ably and lucidly with hermeneutics, missiology, biblical theology and apologetics within the space of a mere 112 pages. It bridges biblical text and contemporary context with academic competence and in popular style. And it does all this with a sense of enthusiasm, relevance and urgency that reflects a passion for Christian mission.

The book sets the mission of the church in the post 9/11 context. How can the church effectively communicate the Good News in a world confronted and threatened by the competing universal claims of McWorld and Jihad? Bauckham believes the answer lies in rediscovering the hermeneutic of God's mission to the world as the key to understanding, appropriating and telling the biblical story. The author traces through Scripture a recurring missiological movement from the particular to the universal, from the one to the many. He highlights three thematic trajectories in the Old Testament narrative that enable us to understand the global missional direction that suffuses the New Testament. These three major trends are (a) from Abraham to all the families of the earth; (b) from Israel to all the nations; and (c) from the king who rules in Zion to the ends of the earth. All three together anticipate the particularity and the universality of Jesus, and are reflected in the mission strategy of Paul.

Bauckham defends the biblical story against postmodern suspicions of master stories. It is, he claims, a 'non-modern' metanarrative; its storyline is written from a plurality of angles, little stories proliferate within the larger ones and are often ambiguous with open rather than closed meanings: 'The biblical story refuses to be summed up in a finally adequate interpretation that would never need to be revised or replaced.'

The author suggests five ways in which Christians may appropriately affirm the truth claims of their faith in face of the postmodern preference for diversity over truth. First, such claims ought not to be advanced as settled and closed, for we live short of eschatological finality. Second, any claims to truth may not be coerced. Third, biblical truth is to be claimed by way of witness. Fourth, we witness by telling again and again the biblical stories – especially that of Jesus – for such telling mediates the narrative identity God gives himself in the Bible. Fifth, our witness

is to live in conformity to the cross of Christ; only thus will we avert being subverted by the human will to power.

In Bauckham's view postmodernism can offer no cogent or effective resistance to the spectre of economic globalization. He firmly believes that it is the Christian metanarrative that can successfully counter the current dominance of the profit-motive and the culture of consumption. But only if the carriers and communicators of this Story resist its becoming a tool of today's forces of domination. They can do this, the author asserts, by demonstrating solidarity with the world's poor and by developing alternative lifestyles to the consumerist and selfist paradigms of modernity.

If Bauckham's thesis is valid, then Christian witness in today's world demands of us a prior and total submission to Jesus as Lord and Saviour, a boldness to share his Good News in multiple ways, a holistic commitment to develop Christian worldviews and lifestyles that will transform local churches into subversive counter-cultural cells of kingdom values, and a prophetic fearlessness to enter the public square and confront the powers of Mammon in industry, politics, and media. An awesome prospect? Undoubtedly! But what a privilege and opportunity!

*Fergus Macdonald, New College, Edinburgh*

## **Princeton and Preaching: Archibald Alexander and the Christian Ministry**

James M. Garretson

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 2005; 304 pp., £16.75; ISBN 0 85151 893 1

This highly readable and edifying book is based on the lecture notes in Pastoral Theology by Dr Archibald Alexander (1772-1851) of Princeton Theological Seminary, and his views on the work and office of the ministry from other sources. Dr Garretson's personal sympathy with the subject of his work is evident as he attempts to help readers 'to better understand the significant role that ministerial training played in shaping the ethos of American church history'. He draws a picture of a man with few character flaws, of gigantic abilities and eminent in piety, leaving the reader with a sense that they are also being instructed by a true master – a saint who in the highest sense 'walked with God'. Containing much biographical material concerning his subject from various sources, and many useful references to further reading material together with a full list of works by Alexander, this study also aims to 'assist pastors and preachers in their ministry and care of the people of God'. Dr Garretson,

an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America, is generally successful in both these important objectives.

The first chapter is a profitable biographical study of Alexander's spiritual experience and preparation for his role at Princeton Seminary as its first professor. The emphasis placed on piety in learning by the early Princeton educators, who doubtless emulated their godly predecessors, is thoroughly handled in the next two chapters. These deal informatively with the call to, and qualifications for, the Christian ministry. The link between Alexander and the earlier generation is not as clearly demonstrated as Alexander himself might have deemed necessary. Another important area only briefly alluded to is the place given to missions in Old Princeton's outlook. Alexander's contribution to ecclesiastical controversy and the demise of Princeton as a bastion of Calvinism within a generation of his death are unfortunately not touched upon in this study.

More fully handled is how Alexander addressed issues in his own day relating to the subjective experience of the Spirit and how it must be authenticated and interpreted by the objective revelation of divine truth. This subject continues to press for the attention of evangelicals with the emergence of the charismatic movement. The last and longest chapter, entitled 'A Scribe well instructed' summarises fully the contribution made by this excellent man of whom Charles Hodge spoke somewhat prophetically on hearing of his death, 'It is all past, the glory of our Seminary has departed.'

Building on the fundamental necessity for personal piety, Princeton demanded that all future ministers receive a liberal education. This book refers frequently to Alexander's use of Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric* and considerable attention is given to the preaching model advocated by Alexander. Chapters on 'Pulpit Preparation', 'The Matter of Preaching' and 'The Manner of Preaching' contain many useful and interesting points. Besides the necessity that preaching be Christ-centred and biblical, what is called 'characteristical preaching' is explained. This should be of interest to modern evangelicals when truly discriminating preaching is perhaps not given the prominence it deserves or once had.

Living at a time when revivals of true religion were common, Alexander does not come across as one who would support modern revivalism. Garretson's work highlights the importance he placed on the spiritual qualifications of preachers and on traditional preaching in a Presbyterian context. One aspect which does appear to this reviewer to be missing is the necessary emphasis on the Spirit's work in relation to the ministry and its effectiveness. It would be instructive to learn Alexander's

thoughts on this centrally important subject. This excellent book should find a wide readership and if it encourages the kind of piety and learning which characterised 'Old Princeton', today's church will be advantaged.

*David Campbell, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, North Tolsta,  
Isle of Lewis*

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