

# Book Reviews

## **LAW AND THEOLOGY IN DEUTERONOMY J.G. McConville**

J.S.O.T. Supplement Series 33, Sheffield 1984 214 pp. No price

ISBN 0 905774 79 5

The truly brilliant often has a beautiful simplicity so that, once we have seen it, we cannot understand why we did not see it like that long before. To which, of course, the reply is that such brilliance of understanding and of presentation is hard won and comes not in the intuitive flashing of inspiration but by the hard graft of learning what words mean and counting up how they are used and labouring at a passage until at last it is seen in its proper balance and analysis. Not for McConville the mistake so prevalent among commentators to call 'analysis' what is no more than a preliminary 'list of contents'—as page 67 of his book reveals.

The book is a revision of Gordon McConville's doctoral dissertation. Taking advantage of the fact that 'a rigid documentary view of pentateuchal source analysis no longer exerts the influence it once did', McConville takes up key issues in Deuteronomy (and therefore in deuteronomistic studies), subjects them to penetrating theological and literary scrutiny, relates them to the theology of Deuteronomy and to related passages in the Pentateuch and the historical books and draws sturdily independent but solidly based conclusions. In this way he deals with the Altar-law and Centralization, the Sacrifices, the Tithe, the Law of Firstlings and Priests and Levites. The important bearing of such a review not only on Deuteronomy but also on Pentateuchal studies need not be laboured. The result is seriously to call into question 'the time-honoured association of Deuteronomy with Josiah's reform'. McConville sees clearly—and indeed demonstrates—that the very idea of a law 'code' has in fact blinded specialist eyes to the real nature of Deuteronomy where codification is not the leading intent but rather 'to inculcate a spirit of law-keeping' and to further its own theological concerns.

But important as such conclusions must be for the future shape of the deuteronomistic debate, readers will emerge from reading this fascinating book much more deeply aware of the shape, purpose and importance of Deuteronomy itself. Discussion of the relation of chapters 1–11 to chapters 12–28 may in fact prove to be just as influential as anything McConville has to teach about dates, origins and individual topics of law and religion. We owe him a great debt—as indeed also we do to the publisher for bringing this rich material within our reach.

**ZEPHANIAH, A PROPHETIC DRAMA** Paul R. House

Almond Press, Sheffield 1988 J.S.O.T. Supplement Series 69 146 pp. £22.00  
ISBN 1850 7507 50

The history of the interpretation of Zephaniah has not been a happy one. There has been a consistent tendency to see Zephaniah as a second class prophet, adding little or nothing to prophetic truth, and, all too often, the text of Zephaniah has fallen before the fragmentists. House contends that both of these misadventures have arisen through failure to apply to Zephaniah the sort of criteria which would have resulted in a correct genre-classification.

Following on this introduction, he consequently devotes nearly forty pages to a fascinating and most informative discussion of genre—broadly in relation to prose and poetry and more narrowly in relation to sub-genre and mode. This is typical of much of the best Old Testament specialism of today—and reminiscent of some of C.S. Lewis's caustic comments on New Testament Literary Criticism. The big, wide world of literary study has much to teach, methodologically, regarding the Old Testament. At any rate, when House applies accurate canons of literary appraisal via a 'close reading' of Zephaniah the result is to see the work as a drama, with plot, sub-plot, conflict and resolution, working out structurally in alternating speeches of the Lord and the prophet, and focussing on 'the Day of the Lord'. Zephaniah, House contends, will not be understood unless seen as a drama in this sense. The remainder of his book is a detailed working through Zephaniah in the light of this overview, including the author's translation and (very useful) textual notes.

In a word, this is a study for which we can only be grateful. It is a treat to be introduced to such a wide ranging discussion of literary criticism and to share the consequent impressive view of Zephaniah and his work. An interesting question, however, remains. Even without House's thorough command of this field of literary study, would a serious study, simply and consistently determined to pursue a holistic approach to Zephaniah, have come to markedly different conclusions—even if he never heard of 'genre-criticism'? The point of view seems more important than the particular road this much appreciated study has chosen to go.

Christ Church Vicarage, Westbourne, Bournemouth

ALEC MOTYER

**THE PARABLES OF JESUS** (The Jesus Library, Ed. Michael Green)

**David Wenham**

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1989 256 pp. £6.95 ISBN 0 340 48811 5

Broadcasting in January 1942, when his imagery came across with startling relevance, C.S. Lewis said 'Christianity is the story of how a right king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage.' As Dr. David Wenham sees it, the parables of Jesus are the charter of this sabotage programme—or God's Revolution as he would prefer to call it. Phrases like 'to enter the revolution', 'Jesus himself is the kingdom or revolution of God' and 'the revolutionary message of God's love' echo and re-echo through these pages: perhaps the idea is a little bit overdone. Yet, to one who first heard the parables as a very small child and

who therefore needs ever to be helped away from viewing them as children's stories (superb as they are in that context), though the recurring 'revolution vocabulary' began to jar, it served its purpose. The glorious simplicity of the Lord's teaching is in fact the subversive cry of a born revolutionary to all who will respond and commit themselves to newness in thought, speech and style.

From this perspective David Wenham provides us with a comprehensive coverage of the parables of Jesus in eight sections ('The Revolution is here'; the New World; the Lord's Coming; Good news for the Needy; Bad news for the Establishment; Neighbourliness; Living with the God of the Revolution; Call to Decision). The whole treatment is a model of careful exegesis and exposition and is recommended reading for every Christian and a 'must' for preachers. Deep scholarly mastery of the subject is apparent but never allowed to obtrude unhelpfully; the written style is beautifully fluent and lucid and all in all this book is a delight.

Three more technical appendices deal respectively with 'The Authenticity of the Parables', their Interpretation, and their Purpose (majoring on Mark 4:10-12). Presumably these were made 'appendices' so as not to come between the general reader and the meat of the actual text but no one could fail to find them easy to read or to be enriched by them. It is perhaps a pity they come last and not first. I certainly benefitted by reading them before I read the rest of the book. David Wenham steers a careful interpretative course between the old frozen orthodoxy that each parable contains only one truth and the wilder fringes of allegorization as far as interpretation goes; as regards the purpose of the parabolic method I would have welcomed a more prolonged emphasis (following out the background in Isaiah 6:9ff.) on the use of parables to make the truth unmistakably plain and to put the hearers in an inescapable position of responsibility (and culpability). But miniscule reviewer's niggles increase my sense of being a very small mouse faced with free access to a mountain of cheese.

Christ Church Vicarage, Westbourne, Bournemouth

ALEC MOTYER

**BE DYNAMIC (ACTS 1-12) Warren Wiersbe**

Victor Books, Amersham 1988 160 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 946515 40 9

This is an excellent bible study guide in the 'BE' series. The author's argument is simply expressed, enthusiastically communicated and would be stimulating for many newly converted and hungry Christians.

In this study of Acts 1-2 Warren Wiersbe encourages us to be dynamic:

for, after all, God's people today share the same spiritual dynamic that energized the early Saints. If we are yielded to the Spirit, we can be adding new chapters to the exciting story of the Church.

The key verse is Acts 1:8 and this verse gives a general outline (p.9) of the Book of Acts as it describes the geographical spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem (Acts 1-7) to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-9) and then to the Gentiles and to the ends of the earth (Acts 10-28).

Later on in chapter 8 of the study guide entitled 'A Church on the Move', Warren Wiersbe stresses the period of transition in Acts 1-10 from the Jew to the Samaritan to the Gentile and warns that:

It is dangerous to base any doctrine or practice only on what is recorded in Acts 1-10 for you might be building on that which was temporary and transitional. (p.102).

In Chapter 1 we learn of The Faith of the First Christians waiting for Pentecost, that once-for-all event that will not be repeated (p.25). In Chapter 2, Power from Heaven, he goes into detail to explain the baptism of the Spirit which historically took place at Pentecost and today takes place whenever a sinner trusts Jesus Christ and is born again (p.26); and that baptism of the Spirit is final; the fullness of the Spirit is repeated as we trust God for new power to witness (p.27). There is a study of the Holy Spirit's activity prior to Pentecost, in Creation, Old Testament history and in the life and ministry of Jesus (p.25). I found helpful the explanation of languages and tongues in the Section The Spirit Spoke (pp.27-29). There was a reminder too that:

God wants to speak to every person in his or her own language and give the saving message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

We then go on to The Church witnessing to the Lost (pp.29-33). 'Witness' is a key word in the Book of Acts and we are informed that it is used twenty nine times as either a verb or a noun (p.14). Peter addresses the crowd and the Holy Spirit takes Peter's message and uses it to convict the hearts of the listeners. Peter told them how to be saved: they had to repent of their sins and believe on Jesus Christ. They would give proof of the sincerity of their repentance and faith by being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, thus identifying themselves publicly with their Messiah and Saviour. We are reminded by the author that it is unfortunate that the translation of Acts 2:38 in the King James' Version suggests that people must be baptized in order to be saved, because it is not what the Bible teaches (p.32).

We study The Church walking in the Spirit, In the Power of His Name (chapter 3); Persecution, Prayer and Power (chapter 4). This chapter shows that the early church prayed and God answered in mighty power. God is still willing to answer. Are We Praying? (p.57).

Beware of the Serpent (chapter 5) reminds us that Satan, having failed completely to silence the witness of the Church decided to attack from the inside and uses people who were part of the fellowship (p. 59). After the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira we see a wave of godly fear sweeping over the Church.

During the following chapters we have a number of character studies which I found very refreshing. In chapter 6, Truth and Consequences, we look at Gamaliel: Avoiding the Truth (pp. 75-78). Chapter 7 is Stephen, the Man God Crowned. In chapter 8, A Church on the Move, we study Saul, a zealous persecutor; a faithful preacher, Philip; a clever deceiver, Simon the Sorcerer; and a concerned seeker, an Ethiopian.

In chapter 10 Peter's Miracle Ministry, Mr. Wiersbe asks: What is the greatest miracle that God can do for us? He says:

I think that the greatest miracle of all is the salvation of a lost sinner. Why? Because salvation costs the greatest price, it produces the greatest results, and it brings the greatest glory to God.

We have already been reminded in chapter 5, p. 68, that 'We now have the

completed Word of God and we test teachers by their message, not by miracles (1 John 2:18-29; 4:1-6); and page 69:

The greatest miracle of all is the transformation of a lost sinner into a child of God by the Grace of God. That is the miracle that meets the greatest need, lasts the longest and costs the greatest price—the blood of God's son. And that is one miracle we can all participate in as we share the message of the Gospel, 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth' Romans 1:16.

In chapter 10 we see Peter being prepared by God to take the message of salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48) and the following events at the household of Cornelius. We are reminded, too, that when God saved Saul of Tarsus, He got hold of His special envoy to the Gentiles. Now was the time to open the door of faith (Acts 14:27) to the Gentiles and bring them into the family of God (p.125).

Chapter 11 is Making Room for the Gentiles and the problems that Jewish Christians had with the new experience of fellowship with Gentiles. We see them accepting the Gentiles (Acts 11:18) after Peter's explanation of his actions, encouraging Gentiles and receiving help from Gentiles.

Chapter 12 Wake up to a Miracle! looks at Herod arresting some believers, James' death and Peter's miraculous escape from prison. This chapter has much to teach us about praying, persecution and God dealing with our enemies. As a body of believers we are reminded (p.151) to pray and how best to pray for those Christians in prison today (see Heb. 13:3).

The Bible study guide closes at the end of Acts 12. Acts 13-28 go into the ministry of Paul and no doubt Warren Wiersbe will prepare another study guide at a later date.

He has already made a lively contribution in an area where new Christians must be careful what they read. I look forward expectantly to further contributions.

Fulham, London S.W.5

NICKY COOK

**THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS** New International Commentary on the New Testament **Gordon D. Fee**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids; Paternoster Press, Exeter 1987 880 pp. £22.90

ISBN 0 8028 2288 6

In his recent study of Romans 9-11, *Israel in the Plan of God*, Stephen Motyer remarks in relation to a particularly knotty passage, that 'a difficulty of this sort is something positive, not something to be regretted. For the very process of wrestling with a text like this is an education in itself . . .' In this regard Dr. Fee's monumental and excellent commentary is an education indeed. The Corinthian correspondence abounds with cruces and it is delight and instruction in equal parts to join an instructed, biblical and devout mind in wrestling with them.

Fee takes the view that, in the case of Corinth, Paul was not involved in countering a misguided party in the Church or in combatting the introduction of heresy from outside, but rather was faced with the possibility that the Church itself would discard the protection of apostolic authority and truth and go its own way—ever, it would seem, the peril of the solipsistic tendency of

over emphasized and under-comprehended dramatic gifts. Seen in this light First Corinthians is more than ever a tract for our disjointed times and one's only regret over the size and price of this volume is that many who need it will not read it.

Dr. Fee brings illumination to every passage and is a master of lucid presentation of an impressively wide reading in the abundant literature on this epistle. He will delight any who are bitten (a happy infection!) by the bug of scripture-analysis. He insists that to see the structure of a verse or passage opens the first door to its exposition and this is followed through in all his treatment of the epistle.

Space does not allow the indication of Fee's views on all the many debated issues in First Corinthians but we may note that he understands Paul to assert a 'no divorce' rule, with judicious pastoral exceptions. The 'Pauline permission' however is permission to stand back and allow the unbelieving partner to 'depart' and does not include permission to remarry. Remarriage is not part of the question as Paul sees it. Regarding women in the Church, he believes that the problem at Corinth arose from 'eschatological women' who believed that the new age had already come—'over-realised eschatology'. He sensibly sees that chapter 11 envisages women taking part in the Church meeting—and he argues vigorously that 14:34, 35 is not Pauline. He can come to no settled conclusion about the 'veil'. His treatment of the whole section on the Lord's Supper is helpful and indeed beautiful but 14:20ff.. Paul's use of Isaiah 28:11ff., marks his one lapse into serious obscurity of presentation.

This is a truly great commentary.

Christ Church Vicarage, Westbourne, Bournemouth

ALEC MOTYER

### **SHOWING THE SPIRIT: A THEOLOGICAL EXPOSITION OF I CORINTHIANS 12-14 D.A. Carson**

Baker Book House, Michigan 1989 229 pp. £10.95

ISBN 0 8010 2521 4

Many theologians are coming to the opinion that the cessationist position with regard to spiritual gifts is no longer tenable. D.A. Carson is one of these. This book consists of a series of lectures given at Moore Theological College, Sydney where the 'charismatic' viewpoint would be seriously questioned. This adds importance to what is written.

Given in this context as what is really a number of Bible studies (based on previous studies for his church), the writer is anxious to show that these chapters have a continuous theme. In accepting this principle he sees in chapter 13 v. 13 justification for acceptance of the continuation of all the gifts within the church. He recognizes that Paul is using this letter to answer questions that have been raised by the Corinthians, which have highlighted their overrealized eschatology and their divisions. So it is that in the first three verses of chapter 12, he sees no grounds, as some have suggested for ecstatic manifestations, nor even a confessional test to enable Christians to distinguish true from false spirits, but a provision of a sufficient test to establish who has the Holy Spirit at all. (p. 27). In short all believers possess the Holy Spirit and are given some manifestation of the Spirit 'for the common good'. The lists as found in Scripture are not exhaustive, so no Christian with a particular gift is to dismiss

in any sense a fellow believer who has some other gift. Spirit-baptism is the incorporation of the believer into one body, so that each congregation is the body of Christ, not simply a part of the people of God. This means that each congregation need not have, for instance, apostles on site. If this is the case and, Carson powerfully argues it, then we cannot make any one charisma the criterion of a certain endowment of the Spirit. As he puts it 'How dare we make tongues the test of the Spirit's baptism?'. If 'charismatics', he goes on to suggest, renounce maintaining this second blessing many problems would be overcome. If, as he suggests, love does not become an entire way of life, charismata would be judged worthless. He does not accept that *agape* is a love that is particularly divine, but a love which is altruistic and not egocentric.

When then do these gifts cease? What is meant by perfection and the imperfect? To him they are 'related to the parousia' and therefore, he argues cogently that 'Scripture offers no shelter to those who wish to rule out all claims to charismatic gifts to-day'. This does not, however, mean that everything that passes for prophecy &c. is genuine. Taking this line he has to face what such gifts as prophecy, tongues and interpretation of tongues are. He gives a whole chapter researching the scriptural evidence for their existence and purpose. Having acknowledged their existence, he outlines how order needs to be exercised in their restraint, observing as he does so that 'overconcentration on glossolalia is a mark of immaturity'. (p.108). In the chapter summary he quotes the difference between a charismatic and a non-charismatic on the tongues issue. The first would consider tongues as indispensable while the other would see the practice as dispensable though not forbidden. (p.134). In short he sees worship being exercised in a framework intelligibly, appropriately, seemingly, with dignity and peace as this is the nature of the God we worship.

His last chapter consists of a series of reflections on tongues, miracles, and the baptism in the Spirit as found in the Acts of the Apostles. He then deals with the issues as evidenced in Second Blessing theology, in Revelation, in history, and in the 'Charismatic' movement. He is able to draw from his own pastoral experience and recount how he dealt with the tensions in the church. This section is of extreme value and makes a fitting conclusion to a very valuable book, and one I would recommend to any who face the pressure in the ministry or its training caused by any 'charismatic' emphasis. There is also a very full bibliography (28 pages). There is an interesting misprint on p.43, line 8.

14 Cambridge Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire

JOHN BOURNON

**THE RELEVANCE OF JOHN'S APOCALYPSE Donald Guthrie**

Paternoster Press, Exeter 1987 121 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 85364 460 8

The Didsbury Lectures for 1985, delivered at the British Isles Nazarene College in Manchester, have now been made available in this short but fascinating paperback, by Donald Guthrie. Those who have appreciated his more substantial work on the New Testament will enjoy his judicious style and his breadth of treatment. He is that rare writer who can hold his readership

through any sort of detail, and who is always consistently faithful to a conservative Evangelical position.

In terms of the Book of Revelation this is not easy, since conservatives have long been divided over what its true significance is. The temptation towards dispensationalism is an ancient one, and it has become virtual orthodoxy in certain circles, particularly in the U.S.A. in modern times. Guthrie avoids falling into that trap without alienating those who hold to a dispensationalist interpretation. He does this by concentrating on the book's themes, rather than on the question of the relationship between the visions and actual historical events.

In his first chapter, Guthrie takes us through the different schools of thought which have applied their minds to the interpretation of this book, reminding us that the major Reformers appear to have avoided it altogether! Then he gives us a brilliant analysis of the Christology which the book contains, pointing out its many similarities to the Fourth Gospel. Here he is on good ground, not least because many scholars have been inclined to deny or downgrade the book's emphasis on Christ as the centre of all God's work. He then takes us into the realm of ecclesiology, giving full attention to each of the Seven Churches. This section has benefitted from the large amount of recent research which has gone into these churches, which must make them now the most thoroughly investigated of all the early Christian communities.

The final chapter is a brief examination of the conflict between good and evil which forms the main section of the book, and ends with the assertion that the Kingdom of God will triumph over its enemies, however strong and diverse the latter may sometimes seem to be. It is at this point that most readers will probably find themselves wishing for something more, since it is here that the controversies among Evangelicals are strongest. But in faithfulness to his original intentions, Guthrie avoids getting involved in this aspect of the subject, and therefore confines himself to general observations. These are no less valuable for that, but it is certain that many readers will be disappointed that he has not expressed a more definite opinion on the matters of debate with which many of them will probably be already only too familiar!

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

**THE SON IN THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH** John Thurmer

Paternoster Press, Exeter 1987 102 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 85364 449 7

The Chancellor of Exeter Cathedral is one of that vanishing breed of Anglican churchmen—intellectual without being incomprehensible, conservative without being stuffy, and pastorally-minded without being sentimental. It is a combination which was once the glory of Central Churchmanship, and the stuff of which the best bishops are often made. Sadly, it is unlikely in the current climate, that Canon Thurmer will ever be given the preferment which he so obviously deserves!

The reason is that he is prepared to take Christian doctrine seriously, both as the historical outworking of the Christian tradition of faithfulness to the Scriptures, and as a living power at work in the life of Christians today. For the former, he can perhaps be forgiven by the liberal establishment, since it does

not make much difference how benighted people like Athanasius and Augustine were, now that they are safely dead! For the latter, however, there can be no forgiveness, at least in this world (which is the only frame of reference the liberals worry about). Here the author has dared to suggest that the Father-Son imagery of Scripture has a permanent relevance for the life of the Christian community, both in the need to maintain an all-male clergy as an iconic representation of the divine, and as an alternative model to monogamous marriage, which for many people is inappropriate or even unattainable.

The boldness with which Canon Thurmer has connected feminism with homosexuality and doctrinal error will not make him popular in the Church, which is not to say that he will ever be shown to be wrong. Indeed, it seems more than likely that here he has hit on something which we all suspect but which few are prepared to admit in this tolerant age (tolerant that is, of deviation from the traditional norm). Whether he is right to link his conservative stance with the Trinity in quite the manner in which he does will of course, continue to be a matter for discussion. At best, the iconic model which gives this book its underlying structure, is open to question, and it is interesting that Canon Thurmer seems to take it for granted, giving little thought to the Barthian objection that God is Wholly Other in his Being. Nevertheless, he has shown that traditional orthodoxy does have something to say to present controversies, and that its voice is far from being a soothing one. The reader of this book will be expected to acquire a familiarity with the great minds of the past in a way which is all too rare nowadays, and he will be made to understand that their voice, though not enumerated in General Synod vote-taking, is not for that reason to be ignored.

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GERALD BRAY

**ARIUS: HERESY AND TRADITION** Rowan Williams

Darton Longman and Todd, London 1987 348 pp. £19.95 (cloth)

ISBN 0 232 51692 8

In this major work of theological research, Professor Williams has attempted to give us what will possibly be a definitive statement about the background and doctrine of the arch-heretic Arius. It comes at a time when there has been a good deal of reappraisal of Arius and his activities, including not a few attempts to rehabilitate him in the eyes of the Church at large. In this study, Professor Williams neither attacks nor defends his subject, but seeks to understand him in the light of the controversies of the time in which he lived.

We know that Arius became embroiled in the troubles of the Alexandrian Church at a particularly sensitive moment in its history. After centuries of persecution, the Church was just beginning to emerge into the light of day, and the Arian question was the first major problem with which it had to deal. There were other schisms about, of course, some of them connected with people who were not at all thrilled with the Constantinian settlement, and this made the issue at once more delicate and more pressing. The Nicene crisis was one which had to be settled quickly if the Church was to retain its unity and its strength, and it was Arius' misfortune to represent a way of thinking and teaching which was no longer regarded as appropriate. In many ways he could claim to be

more faithful to the tradition of the Church than his opponents, but this tradition was then at a point where it needed to be modified in significant ways, and here Arius lost out to more powerful forces.

In theological terms, Professor Williams tries to show that Arius was a product of Alexandria, rather than an Antiochene import, as has so often been thought. He does not rule out all Antiochene influence, of course, but his main contention is that Arius developed his thinking from what he already knew on the basis of the teaching of the Alexandrian Church. He was a follower of Origen who wanted to stress the absolute unknowability and also the absolute simplicity of God—two ideas which ruled out the Trinity as this was subsequently defined. He also points out that Arius was not isolated from the major philosophical currents of his time, but was in many ways wrestling with their concerns as well.

The treatment which Arius receives here is far from being uncontroversial, and no doubt there will soon be articles and reviews challenging this or that aspect of Professor Williams's thesis. But on the whole it must be said that his treatment of his theme is judicious and sympathetic, without losing sight of the fact that Arius lost in the end—and for a reason! What the book does not discuss, and what is equally fascinating, is why Arianism caught on, both in the imperial household and among the barbarians, some of whom perpetuated it (in however diluted a form) until the end of the sixth century. As a theologian, Professor Williams feels that Arianism cannot be divorced from Arius himself, but the Church historian will doubtless want to question this, perhaps on the grounds that it is Arianism which in the end makes Arius interesting and important for posterity. Perhaps another book will appear to enlighten us on this question!

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GERALD BRAY

**JOHN BUNYAN** Frank Mott Harrison

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1989 213 pp. £2.95 ISBN 0 85151 105 8

Many lives of Bunyan are in print, some critical, others fulsome, yet others, like Vera Brittain's, are factually related to his locality. Sociologists, politicians, psychologists, literary historians, such as those who addressed the Open University's two day Bunyan Conference in 1988, have given their evaluation of Bunyan's life, work, and writings. Harrison's book is different. He presents a living portrait of a man intensely human, easily given to tears, a devoted husband and father, a lover of music, a zealous preacher, and a devoted servant of Christ. Written in the present tense as if the author were with Bunyan noting his moods, emotions and actions, it is never dull but is dramatic throughout and reads like a good novel. It is one of the most tender and heart-moving Bunyan biographies as is to be expected from an author acclaimed to be the outstanding twentieth century student of Bunyan. He draws much on his subject's autobiography *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, which is the best interpretation of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and makes passing references to some of Bunyan's fifty nine other books that emerged as expanded sermons and which are being re-published by the Oxford University Press.

Although highly imaginative, the people and scenes that Harrison describes are factually based. But at times Harrison allows himself to over-spill into sentimentality and fancy, as in Bunyan's trial before the magistrate, Francis Wingate, and his first night in 'The Town Clink' on Bedford Bridge. But he can be forgiven in reading too much into Bunyan's character and personality for he presents to the public a work that grips the mind, fires the imagination, and touches the heart. It is Harrison's treatment of the spiritual content of Bunyan's religion that forces attention upon the reader and may challenge him to seek a deeper relationship to Jesus Christ. For those ignorant of Bunyan, or who know little about him or only through *The Pilgrim's Progress*, this reprinted biography may lead them to appreciate the Bedford brazier, and drive them to read his other books.

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ARTHUR BENNETT

**CATHOLICS, ANGLICANS AND PURITANS Hugh Trevor-Roper**

Fontana Press, London 1989 317 pp. £5.95 pb.

ISBN 0 00 6861 58X

When Trevor-Roper's biography of Archbishop Laud was published in 1940 he established himself as an academic historian of no mean order. His present volume of five essays covering the turbulent period of Church and State in the seventeenth century enhances his reputation further. It is a scholarly work of sound judgment, ready wit, ease of expression, and masterly treatment of opposing ideas and movements that illuminates one of the most difficult periods in English history. It is shot through with a bewildering array of personalities and facts, civil and ecclesiastical, all inter-woven into a dazzling pattern of post-Elizabethan English life.

The opening essay on Nicholas Hill, a Catholic philosopher and scientist, adds considerably to what is known of him, especially in view of the author's claim that no historian has thought to notice him. Of particular interest is Hill's possible involvement in Sir Robert Basset's conspiracy to take the English throne instead of James I. Of great value is his treatment of Hill's concept of Utopia, and his philosophic views of God and the universe.

Of far more importance is the essay, 'Laudinism and Political Power' in which the author sees three over-lapping intellectual movements, Dutch Erasmianism, Geneva Calvinism, and German Lutheranism that blossomed in Charles I's reign, and challenged the Elizabethan consensus of Church and State. His thoughts on Arminianism, a doctrine held by those in power, which led to feuds, controversies and conflicts is worth noting. As to Archbishop Laud, he makes clear that although, like Cosin of Durham, he favoured excessive ceremonial in public worship he was anti-popery throughout. Of importance is Trevor-Roper's point that in the hands of Charles I and his associates, Arminianism became tyranny. He quotes Laud as saying, 'I desire to have my own power'. To that end, what he calls 'The Battle for the Universities' in which Arminian heads of colleges were appointed who, with Bishops of like mind may have catholicised the Church of England had not the civil war occurred. What is surprising is that Trevor-Roper omits all reference to the exodus of thirty thousand clergy and laity to colonial America during the years 1630-1640 who could not accept Laudianism.

Apart from essays on Archbishop Ussher and John Milton, that on 'The Great Tew Circle' is worthy of highest praise. This scholarly group which met regularly in Oxfordshire in the 1630s, in his view preserved Anglicanism from gradual decay during Charles I's latter days, later provided grounds for its restoration under Charles II.

As the modern Anglican Church has given a date to Archbishop Laud in its 'Lesser Festivals and Commemorations', it becomes its members to note from Trevor-Roper's book the kind of man he was and the conflict which he, with others, aroused in the nation and its church.

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ARTHUR BENNETT

**THEOLOGICAL POLITICS** (Latimer Studies 29–30) **Nigel Biggar**  
 Latimer House, Oxford 1988 84 pp. £3.00 pb. ISBN 0 946307 28 8/29 6

*Theological Politics* is a learned critique of the much publicized report *Faith in the City* (1985). Biggar believes that 'as a collection of social scientific data about U.P.A.s [Urban Priority Areas] in Britain, *Faith in the City* is undoubtedly impressive' (p.6) but its 'weakest dimension is its theology' (p.7). Few Evangelical Christians disagree. Moreover the author gives solid arguments to bolster his claim. In some four chapters, which are at times heavy going, he deals with the main [theological] issues raised in *Faith in the City*. Subjects such as the nature of Biblical compassion, of justice, of community, of individual responsibility and potential, and of Christian Theology determining motives and action, are all tackled in a trenchant and sensitive manner (chapter 2). In chapter 3 the author provides some helpful comments about 'Thatcherite' culture and the Church and Government Policy. He then moves on to consider the Political Calling of the Church (chapter 4), whilst in the final chapter (chapter 5) he presents some guidelines for the future. Two Appendices follow the fifteen pages of notes.

The great value of this study is that it presents us with both a challenge and an example. The challenge is to think theologically, and to do so with consistency and rigour. The example is that Biggar endeavours to do just that. As far as he is concerned we must not merely call for compassion to the poor. We must also shed light on what we, as individuals, ought to do. One of the most serious defects of the *Report*, says Biggar, is that it concentrates on public compassion and social action (hence the programme it presents to both Government and the Church Bureaucracy) at the expense of providing practical advice and moral vision to individuals. In an age of confusion and relativism we need to be rooted in Scripture and a true Biblical Theology. *Faith in the City* though, lets 'ethics loose from its theological moorings' (p.35). Throughout it lacks both definition and precision. The reason appears to be because the Church of England lacks 'any single, generally authoritative tradition of social ethics' (p.62). It 'continues to display what R.H. Tawney deemed the characteristic English vice: the reluctance to test the quality of practice by reference to principles' (p.64).

We are to be thankful that Biggar has highlighted and illustrated the main weakness of *Faith in the City*. However not all will agree that the way forward for the Church of England is to develop a 'permanent programme for official

bodies to present a representative variety of fully-fledged, theological social ethics, together with corresponding moral judgments, as material for debate within the church' (p.63). But may it not be that that is the best that can be hoped for in the present spiritual climate? Until Revival comes let us at least pray that Biggar's study and call do not go unheeded by the powers-that-be in the Church of England.

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

GEORGE CURRY

**ACCEPT THIS OFFERING: THE EUCHARIST AS SACRIFICE  
TODAY** Kenneth Stevenson

S.P.C.K., London 1989 96 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 281 04405 8

Kenneth Stevenson is a member of the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England. He has published this book with one aim in mind. He wants to demonstrate that sacrifice, rather than being an outdated way of understanding the Eucharist, lies at the heart of what we do at the Lord's Table. He argues in his book that sacrifice is a powerful metaphor which conveys the power, the passion and the feeling of the Eucharist. He has made his intention clear! What follows is, I am afraid, an all too typical attempt at an Anglican rationale which appears to be out of touch with the clear teaching of scripture, with our historic Anglican roots, with contemporary movements and life within the church and with the world to which we are called to minister.

I searched in vain through the book for any attempt to expound, understand or apply the cross of Christ. Stevenson appears to interpret Cross from Eucharist and, therefore, enters into the subject pleading all along the line for contemporary practices, liturgies and theological understanding.

He says that the New Testament does not speak of Holy Communion as sacrifice in any way that relates to the Old Testament sacrificial system, but then assumes that the Last Supper is charged with an atmosphere of sacrifice. He thus rejoices that the mainstream churches of the West have rediscovered the Eucharist but have failed equally to enter into the cost of the Eucharist in liturgy. He calls for an entering into the 'inner potential' of the Eucharist. This reviewer thinks evangelicals need to press constantly and ask what language like this actually means. What is it that is supposed to be happening in the Eucharist for it to be couched in language apparently so removed from clear New Testament concepts? Our question should be 'What is the bottom line in terms of what God is doing in the Eucharist for the many in Anglicanism who follow Stevenson's theme?'

The book assumes, surprisingly, that Cranmer included deliberate ambiguity in the 1552 Service. I confess this came as a surprise. He assumes that Cranmer's intention was to widen the doctrine of the Word. He describes the Liturgy of the Word as the 'sacrifice of attention' which seems to be about involvement in liturgical actions. He argues that sacrificial flavour in liturgy brings a seriousness to worship, and calls for a formal reinstatement of the 'altar' as the focus of Christian worship. All this seems to be a tortuous route for avoiding the clear teaching of, say, the epistle to the Hebrews on the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ. He believes that the earthly altar symbolizes the altar in heaven, but recognizes that this is a difficult notion because of

contemporary problems with heavenly worship. A clear biblical grasp of what has been affected in heaven by the sacrifice of Christ would clear away the confusion that this teaching gives rise to now just as it did at the Reformation. The emphasis on the two axes of worship, the vertical and the horizontal, is helpful, but the attempt to define sacrifice and offering in terms of presenting fails. Few of us, I think, would be happy with the 1979 American Episcopal Eucharist prayer which Stevenson quotes. It runs as follows: 'We offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all: presenting to you, from your own creation, this bread and this wine'.

The surprising conclusion of the book is an attempt to argue that Isaac Watts's great hymn 'When I survey the wondrous cross' derives its power and its emotional appeal from the Eucharist. The writer is concerned that the Reformation insistence on the saving work of Christ as single and complete nails Christ to the cross and renders him immobile. From a conclusion like this we part company and, however well argued and strongly pleaded, the author's case remains unproved. The publication is, I believe, a sad reflection on the state of theological awareness in the church today.

St. Mary's Vicarage, Maidenhead, Berkshire

TREVOR PARKIN

**THE MAKING OF THE MODERN CHURCH, CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND SINCE 1800 B.G. Worrall**

S.P.C.K., London 1988 312 pp. £9.95

ISBN 0 281 04382 5

As with many books nowadays, the subtitle is more illuminating than the main heading. Christianity in England since 1800 is basically what it is all about, though there are also some interesting forays into other parts of Britain, the U.S.A. and Germany.

Broadly speaking, the book covers the main events in English Church history since the beginning of the last century. A prominent place is obviously given to events in the Church of England, but the Free Churches and Roman Catholicism also receive their share of attention. The author's method is to explain history as much as possible in terms of personalities, and so much of the book is taken up with potted summaries of prominent people and their ideas, or their contribution to the life of the Church as a whole. Such a method is understandable, though it has its drawbacks. Rather eccentric characters like Stuart Headlam are liable to be treated much more fully than Lord Shaftesbury or General William Booth, though the latter two were far more influential. Evangelicalism will be underplayed, because of its lack of an outstanding series of leaders, whereas Anglo-Catholicism will benefit from the prominence of its main theologians.

The result is a book whose bias will be familiar to students of the period, and from time to time the author makes plain his own lack of sympathy with Evangelicalism. As far as he is concerned, belief in such things as sin, hell and the exclusive claims of Christianity is a sign of a retrograde religion, and he is happy to report any tendencies he may discover to illustrate that individual Evangelicals grew out of such ideas at different stages of their ministry.

The main weaknesses of the book, apart from its bias, can be listed fairly simply. First, it is heavily clerical in emphasis. People like C.S. Lewis receive a

mention, but only just, and little is said about recognizably Christian activities outside the Church establishment. At a time when far more research is being done on women's rôle, for example, in the Victorian Church, this is a disappointment.

Then there is the tendency to emphasize certain aspects of the Church to the detriment of others. Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement are extremely well treated, as is modern Restorationism, but there is not a word about Westminster Chapel and the ministry of such giants as Campbell Morgan and Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Again, Evangelicalism is inevitably the chief sufferer, and many readers will come away less than fully informed about this side of the Church.

Finally, there is a tendency to ignore the boundaries set by the book's title, a tendency which grows more obvious as the time draws nearer to the present. Figures like Dwight Moody and Billy Graham loom larger than contemporary British Evangelicals, though at least it can be argued that they both had a personal impact on England. It is harder to explain why there are several pages on Karl Barth and on the German Church Movement of the 1930s. Certainly, these were both influential here, but in a fairly narrow circle. It is hard to justify the large amount of space which they receive in a book of this kind.

Nevertheless, a reviewer must recognize that it is never an easy task to write contemporary history, and the wealth of the available material makes selection both inevitable and invidious. The author is to be congratulated on having produced a very readable and accurate book, and it is to be hoped that students of the period will find it a useful introduction to their studies.

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GERALD BRAY

### **C.S. LEWIS MAN OF LETTERS. A Reading of his Fiction**

**Thomas Howard**

Churchman Publishing, Worthing 1987 193 pp. £6.95 pb. ISBN 1 85093 080 5

Few modern fiction writers have so captured the imagination of young and old as C.S. Lewis. Howard's approach to his literary motives is to analyse the essence of his stories. Lewis's aim, he judges, was 'to lead his readers to a window, looking out from the dark stuffy room of modernity, and to burst open the shutters and to point us all to an enormous vista . . .'. From this angle, Howard attempts to interpret five of Lewis's tales of fancy and to find in them hidden truths and patterns, many of which he believes are derived from Greek and pagan mythology.

Narnia he considers to be 'the very homeland which lies at the back of every man's imagination'. Thus, Cair Paravel exists in the mind as a beautiful world such as Eden. But he warns that Narnia's characters and sites are not to be taken as allegories or emblems. They are to be noted as elements in stories and nothing more. He admits to difficulty in discovering what Lewis's space trilogy teaches, and in what Lewis intends in his portrayal of Ransom as he appears in 'Out of the Silent Planet' and 'Perelandra'. He asks what Lewis meant by the ultimate, the good, reality, the meaning of personal identity, as in 'The Green Lady', and what are emotions? He finds himself lost in trying to treat Lewis's 'That Hideous Strength', and describes it as The Miserific Vision relative to the

Tower of Babel. As to 'Till we have Faces', he sees Lewis using the Greek myth of Cupid and Psyche. Of much interest here is his point that in the characters of this tale self-freedom can thicken and harden into self-destruction in contrast to the true joy that is found in surrender to God.

Howard's book opens a window into Lewis himself leaving us to ask, 'What more can be said of him as a fiction writer?' Here is the mind of Lewis in his tales. To understand these stories as Howard does is to understand the author himself. But Howard's continual questioning of elements in the tales may destroy the impact Lewis intended. Whether Howard has reached the heart of Lewis as a Christian story-teller is left to the reader's judgment. Nevertheless, this book is a sheer joy to read.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

### **THE GREAT BRAIN ROBBERY: CREATION OR EVOLUTION?**

**David C.C. Watson**

Privately published, 1989 140 pp. £3.25 (incl. p.&p.) ISBN 0 9514538 0 7

(Available from FOCUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES, 6 Orchard Road, Lewes, E. Sussex BN7 2HB)

In his penultimate chapter David Watson writes, '... in almost every University of the world a stupendously improbable non-fact is being taught as if it were true.' Is this verdict on the theory of evolution rational, or is it the conclusion of an obscurantist?

*The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines an obscurantist as an 'opponent of enquiry, enlightenment and reform; one who deliberately avoids clarity or withholds explanation.' In popular use the word has another meaning; it is employed by the man who wishes to express opprobrium for those who challenge the establishment, the repository of the spirit of the age and current 'accepted' dogma. Such a man claims to see both sides of an argument—his own view and the wrong one. The establishment, that amorphous entity to which we appeal in such expressions as 'experts agree . . .', is *ipso facto* right. He who disagrees with it is therefore an obscurantist and worthy of the derisive scorn which all ages, our own included, pour on those who pursue enquiry in a spirit of enlightenment and reform. The option is always to join the band-wagon or be labelled obscurantist. In one age the band-wagon is secular and Gnostic; in another it is the main-line denominations of formalized Christianity. Today it is thoroughly secular. In every age a majority will always be found to hold in veneration the unproven 'facts' of popular contemporary fashion. Sadly, some Christians today make the historical error of forgetting that the genuinely obscurantist church of the past is no longer the guardian of men's minds or the custodian of dogma which rules men's lives. They are fearful of supporting an institution which made mistakes in the day of its power; they support the new establishment which is equally corrupted by its power.

David Watson is brave enough to defy the pendulum. Challenging the evolutionists has cost him his teaching career, but he will not recant. Indeed, he is not alone. Highly competent scientists from outside the Christian scene make the same challenge, sometimes in scathing terms, even in the pages of

*The Times*. Most of them hasten to substitute some new theory, on the flimsiest of evidence, lest they should be thought to be supporting biblical creationism which, of all explanations, must be denied a hearing. Watson defies even this prejudice; again, however, he is not alone; the volume under review is replete with statements by a wide variety of experts in support of the biblical account, starting with a Foreword by Professor V. Wright.

Science must surely, however slowly, dig its own grave by its persistence, both in ignoring what cannot be disproved and in treating God as a hypothesis, and one so readily disposable as never to be countenanced. Miracle and revelation, however well-documented, are non-facts to science. It must be difficult, if not impossible, for a Christian to believe in any miracle and at the same time be accepted as a scientist—unless he keeps his faith well out of the limelight. He will be accused of inconsistency if he sets aside his science by believing that Christ turned water into 'the best' (most mature) wine, and yet denies that God made a mature earth with a mature man and woman. How 'old', would he say, were the loaves and fishes multiplied to the crowd by Christ? If God's Son dispensed with the time normally necessary to mature fish, bread, and wine, is God too small to dispense with time in the creation of a mature universe? Alliss was surely right to comment that 'limitless time is a poor substitute for that Omnipotence which can dispense with time.'

Scientists who, as Christians, would like to reconcile the theory of evolution with the Bible, need reminding that Hebrew experts such as Burgon, Barr, Young, Bruce, and others, declare that Genesis chapter One is a plain historical narrative of current events, sober history, neither hymn nor poetry, describing original creation (not restoration) and written by one deeply interested in chronology and calendar. These present-day scholars echo all the Old and New Testament authors who treat the creation story as sober truth and build crucial Christian doctrine upon it. The attempt to reconcile evolution with Genesis chapter One requires belief in mutually contradictory 'facts' and a degree of credulity that most people do not possess. The credulous who feel able to explain away the Bible's account of earth's beginnings are bound to cast doubt, in many minds, on the reliability of the Bible's account of earth's end.

It is the evolutionists themselves who, with commendable honesty, are producing an ever-increasing flow of evidence against the theory which they are gradually learning to discard. Professor Hoyle has concluded that the planets cannot be made from material torn from the sun. Professor Lovtrup forecasts that the Darwinian myth will be ranked the greatest deceit in the history of science. Professor Spieker shows how large a part of geological dogma is unsupported theory. The inventor of carbon dating was the first to warn of its possible unreliability. Among other defects it suffers from reliance on two unproven assumptions: first, that the amount of C<sup>14</sup> in the air has remained constant, and secondly, that the speed of light is constant. Pitman finds that language is programmed into human beings; far from evolving, it is devolving from complex to simple structures. The best explanation of the lack of connecting links between major language groups is given in the biblical account of the Tower of Babel.

So much for the experts. What of independent minds who can look objectively at the preconceptions of both scientists and theologians? Watson cites Solzhenitsyn, C.S. Lewis and Winston Churchill. The great Russian thinker accuses us of over-willingness to agree with the arguments of science. Lewis is

clear that evolution is a sterile theory incapable of reconciliation with divine revelation and with all that we know of God. To do away with the real, historical, physical base of divine teaching about spiritual truth is to make spiritual truth itself unintelligible. Is there any significant difference between the Christian who 'spiritualises' Genesis chapter One, and the Bishop of Durham? Winston Churchill was convinced of the historical accuracy of the Bible.

The serious student will want to move on from this introductory book, which is an up-date of the 1975 original, to further reading. Appendix A carries quotations from non-Christian anti-Darwinian scientists, and Part II ends with a list of creationist organizations and publishers. In the light of this it would be churlish to cite areas of debate or evidences which are omitted or too briefly handled. In a future up-date the chapters on the Flood might be usefully expanded; a number of proofs that the Bible cannot be referring to a local flood are omitted. Some mention might be made of new work on the speed of light, its implications for atomic 'constants' and the age of the earth. The present reviewer can only say that the material covered in a one hundred and forty page book which claims no more than to provoke its readers to 'think again', is a tribute to Watson's gift of selection and condensation.

The page numeration on the Contents page needs correction, and the two reading lists could usefully be combined into one. These are minor defects in a book which certainly provides enough evidence to enable the reader to discern who are the real obscurantists.

Stone House, Stone Street, Sevenoaks, Kent

TONY WILMOT

## **THE SPIRITUAL SITUATION IN OUR TECHNICAL SOCIETY**

**J. Mark Thomas**

Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia 1988 213 pp. \$30 pb.

ISBN 0 86554 292 9

This series of unpublished essays and speeches of Paul Tillich covering forty years is his careful analysis of the World Situation relative to the Societies through which it has passed. He traces four of these to the triumph of the present bourgeois Society that he now sees in crisis, the guiding principle of the latter being a belief in reason that has displaced truth and justice. Further, he argues that having created the secular state, it has failed in every aspect of human life, and has disunited mankind, in having smothered it by a technological Frankenstein.

Such is Tillich's basic view.

The author claims to be a Protestant theologian standing on the boundary of religion and science between which he sees no reconciliation if religion holds fast to its historical and traditional dogmas. His own answer is the concept of the holy as the spirit in all things. The 'holy' is the reality that is found in nature, culture, historical events and persons. To describe a man as a religionist is a term Tillich abhors. To him, religion is a catena of symbols to be rationally understood, Christianity's contribution to the modern situation being to rediscover and re-apply symbols of the past. As religion is 'the experience of ultimate concern', it must understand the depths of the world situation in order to speak to it.

As to the Church, its rôle is to provide a solution to the economic, political, and international orders, but it has succumbed to the over-riding fashion of secularism.

Tillich pays particular attention to the nature of man. He holds that all who act against depersonalized forces, as Karl Marx did, are the 'saviours' of personal existence through whom the power of life will re-appear. Otherwise, man will destroy himself. But these 'saviours' are not the Church, for it has no power against de-personalized forces. Here, he discards Christian absolutes of God, man, and creation and replaces them by symbols. He admits that religion in the western world is increasing numerically, but argues that its resurgence shows the predicament of modern man in his lack of depth and meaning of life, its adherents having become tools of technology. By it man has lost the view of himself, and has become a thing. The Church must therefore re-discover its old prophetic religion, yet without its fundamentalism.

In the end, Tillich leaves nothing of Christianity as traditionally understood; its God of creation and revelation, the meaning of sin, redemption, and divine grace. The 'resurrection of the body' is for him 'a literal absurdity'. There is no personal devil only a 'demonic force'. In his view Christianity appears to be a system of thought, part of a changing culture, not a faith. In this book there is no indication that it is basically a personalized experiential religion in relation to a personal God. In fact, there is no God at all.

He uses the term 'spiritual' in a way wholly other than its normal meaning. He defines it as the creative function of man's spiritual character, otherwise his mind or mental activity. Yet he agrees that evangelical faith in a personal God, and in particular evangelical pietism and warmth that was known in the early church, has retained its vitality until modern times, but has been submerged in the ethical type of practical Christianity.

The value of this book lies not in the solution which Tillich offers to the relation between religion and science, but as a contribution to his thought. It is not a book for the ordinary reader, and even Christian theologians would part company with many of its tenets.

If theology is 'the science of God' these essays have nothing to say about an eternal divine being with whom man can have personal contact. What Tillich offers is a life force by whom there can be no incarnation, saviourhood, or lasting communication of himself in an after-world. The Bible, then, has no integrity or authority but is only a mumble-jumble of symbolic thoughts.

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ARTHUR BENNETT

**EVANGELISM ON THE CUTTING EDGE** Ed. **Robert E. Coleman**  
Fleming H. Revell Company, New Jersey 1986 \$8.95 ISBN 0 8007 1482 2

This book is a symposium edited by Robert Coleman. The reviewer came to it with the wrong assumption that it would be similar in content and style to Coleman's 1963 publication *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Such was not the case. The book gathers together ten distinguished contributors including Gary Collins, Walter Kaiser, Kenneth Kantzer and Arthur Johnston.

The aim of the book is to accelerate the evangelistic outreach of the church. There is much help here but the book suffers badly due to its uneven nature

and the limited space that each contributor has to open up his theme. Eight pages only from Gary Collins on the relationship between the gospel and current psychological movements and models serve only to open up the issues and gives no depth of treatment. Kaiser's similarly brief essay on leadership for evangelicals in theological education hardly gets beyond the introduction stage. Coleman himself contributes a chapter on the 'Great Commission Lifestyle', but, compared with his earlier work, it is very disappointing.

This reviewer found himself wondering for whom the book was produced. It whets the appetite but the main course appeared to be lacking. Its style is not popular and, therefore, much as the aim is to be applauded, I doubt whether this particular publication will do what it sets out to do.

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TREVOR PARKIN

**THE INCOMPARABLE BOOK W.J. McDowell**

Banner of Truth, Edinburgh 1988 13pp. 50p.

ISBN 0 85151 543 6

The author is a retired Minister of the evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland: the booklet is sound and solid, and written (one would judge) mainly for young people. He reminds us of the historic Christian attitude to Scripture: its unity, inspiration, accuracy of translation, inerrancy and self-authentication. Some twenty Bible verses are referred to, and comments quoted from distinguished evangelical scholars. This is very good as far as it goes, but how many teenagers today know anything about B.B. Warfield, C.H. Spurgeon, Sir Robert Anderson, J.J. Machen, J. Vos, John Murray, E.J. Young, G. Smeaton, Bishop Hopkins (1846), or even Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones? This heavy reliance on writers of 50-150 years ago is a weakness; only one footnote (out of twenty four) refers to a book written in the 1980s.

In spite of this, *The Incomparable Book* (a good title) does strike a much needed note in these days of faithless bishops, Christless theology, and syncretistic religious education. It will not set the Thames on fire, but for those interested it could be a useful introduction to the bulwarks of our faith erected by two thousand years of devout scholarship and robust apologetics.

31 Harold Heading Close, Chatteris, Cambridgeshire

DAVID C.C. WATSON

**THE SYNPROB LETTER: CONCERNING THE RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST William**

William and Son Publisher, Troutdale, Oregon 1986 45pp. No price

ISBN 0 9607266 8 3

William begins by attacking the traditional approach to the Synoptic problem, that of comparing the accounts of the four evangelists. Working on the premise that an original gospel, common to the apostles, was broken down into four parts he argues that this original gospel can be reconstructed by conflating Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

This patchwork of ill-constructed chapters seeks to explain the principles

underlying William's lengthier books *The Companion* (the four gospels set out in parallel) and *The Gospel of Christ* (the final conflation). Any misgivings occasioned by the author's eccentric style will, I am sure, be quickly allayed by this observation:

Now the Father is the very WILL of the I AM . . . the Son of God. Thus THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST according to William is in truth the gospel of the Son according to the Father . . . according to WILL.I.AM (sic).

London Bible College, Northwood, Middlesex

IAN MACNAIR

**CHRISTIAN TAKE HEART Tom Wells**

Banner of Truth, Edinburgh 1987 174pp. £2.45 pb.

ISBN 0 85151 508 8

This book by an author who, although it is not stated, is undoubtedly a pastor, certainly fulfils its object. Owing up to have misled persons in the past, Tom Wells, through further study comes to the conclusion that there are only two kinds of people before God, those who are saved and those who are not.

In a very readable manner, he decries the practice of nominating Christians as either carnal or spiritual. His concern is to prove from Scripture that this view is untenable and from practice to show that many followers of Christ have become despondent through such teaching. He seeks to show that the Christian life is not just an ideal but a fact. Thus when Jesus speaks of living water flowing from within a believer, he means every believer. When Paul states 'sin shall not be your master', he really means it. His whole emphasis is to encourage the discouraged and carefully traces where this discouragement has arisen. In this he shows that an obedient walk is not the cause of salvation but arises from it. In other words we should not be seeking assurance, but testing our assurance. Assurance does not exist for the elect few, but is true for every believer. We call God 'Father' because the Holy Spirit puts this into our hearts, at the same time giving us a sense of our own deep sinfulness.

In a detailed appendix of 20 pages he shows that 1 John 3 v.6. teaches that Christians can never be lost. At all events the reading of this book will certainly give heart to any Christian who doubts his salvation or sanctification.

14 Cambridge Road, Stamford, Lincs.

JOHN R. BOURNON

**HOW REVOLUTIONARIES USE CHILDREN Ed. Helene Roux**

Lone Tree Publications, P.O. Box 1994, Halfway House, 1685 Republic of South Africa 1988 62pp. No price

Helene Roux is a South African with a strong conviction that the world should know what terrorist organizations are doing, worldwide, to children and adolescents. She feels her country is misjudged over its handling of an acute threat to the rule of law, and ultimately to its survival as a governable state. Whatever one's political viewpoint, this short book deserves to be read.

Exploitation of children as front-line activists in revolution is not confined

to Africa: Russia, Germany, the Middle East, Latin America, Ireland have all seen the same tactics, details are supplied. Children from as young as 6 or 7, in an unstable society, are exceptionally vulnerable to indoctrination in hatred and violence. The witnessing of murder has an appalling psychological effect on them, cynically promoted by revolutionary leaders. Lenin himself wrote, 'Children should be present at the execution and should rejoice at the death of enemies of the proletariat.'

In a spine-chilling chapter composed of testimonies of children aged mostly 11-15, they tell in flat, cold detail of personally stabbing and burning adults to death with 'necklaces'; of the destruction of cars, buses and houses; of the waylaying and torturing of women who had gone shopping in 'white' shops; of 'people's courts' comprised of juveniles, condemning and executing suspected members of other organizations; of murder carried out on an 'informer' on the sole evidence of a teenage neighbour. There is no remorse. Violent behaviour is not deviant but the norm for the gangs of 'Comrades' to which these youngsters belong. For many of this lost generation neither parents nor schools offer any control or security. They have closed their own schools, using whips and death-threats.

All this is greatly applauded by their leaders in the name of revolution. The police on the other hand are fiercely criticized for putting these exploited and dangerous young people into custody. Helene Roux gives the police statistics on child detention (much lower than claimed) and tries to set the record straight on the humane treatment for young offenders. She links the use of children by the A.N.C., S.A.C.P., and U.D.F. with their exploitation by revolutionary Communism worldwide, and analyses the reasons for the easy foothold that the practice has gained in South Africa, where urbanization of blacks and population explosion have contributed. She asks what future have these 'children of the storm', and sees little hope for them.

Would it all have happened without apartheid? Possibly not, but it is happening in Ulster. The book is a cry for sympathy with a developing 'Khmer Rouge' situation. A book to read and ponder with prayer.

Leyburn, North Yorkshire

HELENE LEE

**CHINA—THE CHURCH'S LONG MARCH** David H. Adeney

Kingsway (MARC & O.M.F.), Eastbourne 1988 256pp. £2.95 pb.

ISBN 0 86065 666 7

**STRENGTH FOR THE STORM** J. Sung; (tr.) Arthur Reynolds

O.M.F., Singapore 1988 157pp. £2.25 pb.

ISBN 9971 972 62 X

The attention of many people is focussed today on political developments in the Soviet Union, yet Christians would do well to examine the remarkable flourishing of the church in China too. There is much encouragement and hope for the future to be found in the present situation of Chinese Christians. David Adeney's book is the best introduction available to what is happening. This edition is a reprint of a work first published in 1985.

The book is a mixture of personal reflection and factual analysis. David Adeney is a former missionary with a long association with China and is therefore eminently qualified to write on this subject. As well as giving a

## Churchman

miniature history of the church in China, he also presents an account of the current political situation, especially as it relates to the church. The last few chapters outline government religious policy and the tensions resulting from the explosive growth of Christianity over the last ten years. It is particularly important that Western Christians recognize the existence of the house-churches which refuse to be part of the official church, the Three Self Patriotic Movement.

*Strength for the Storm* is a book which complements that of David Adeney. It consists of sermons by some well-known Chinese Christians which were given between 25 and 50 years ago. The subject matter of these sermons varies widely, covering many different aspects of the Christian life. The common thread is that they all exhibit the depth and vitality of the Chinese church just before the advent of Communist government. The title reminds us that it was the spiritual strength of sermons such as these that prepared the church for the terrible persecution under Mao. It was that strength which has been used by God to produce so much fruit in recent years.

Both books are to be most warmly recommended. Together they provide us with vision, encouragement and warning. Use them to introduce yourself to the Chinese church that Hong Kong will join in 1997.

Harold Wood, Essex

MARK BURKILL

Editor's Note: This review was received before news of China's recent unrest.

### **PAGANISM AND THE OCCULT** Kevin Logan

Kingsway, Eastbourne 1988 223pp. £4.95pb.

ISBN 0 86065 628 4

Kevin Logan sets out in *Paganism and the Occult* to inform and challenge Christians. He wants us to be aware of the extent and nature of occult practices in the United Kingdom today. He also seeks to galvanize us into action. Hence the sub-title of his book is *A manifesto for Christian action*. Just how successful he is the reader must judge.

It is clear that Mr. Logan is both well-read and experienced in this field. You will find in this volume a wealth of useful information and some extremely helpful guidance. Chapter 16 (*How Christians Can Help*), for example, contains much practical and sound wisdom. The value of the earlier chapters should not be underestimated. Mr. Logan, using his journalistic skills to the full, presents us with some excellent cameo sketches of occult activity today. He is neither alarmist nor sensational. He is careful to warn as well as to inform. And he sets all in as broad a context as possible. His comments on the *New Age* movement are particularly apposite.

However, I think the author may well be open to the charge of being, at times, too anecdotal. I also feel that he ought to have included at least one chapter on what the Bible teaches. In these days of confusion Christians need good solid summaries of what the Bible says on this subject. True, Mr. Logan is himself rooted in Scripture and he does refer to the Scriptures, but the value of this book would be enhanced if the author had presented a summary of the biblical teaching in a separate chapter.

Sadly, once again, it is necessary to point out that the proof reader has not done his stuff. For example, archaeologists (p.11), labelled (p.12), always (p.29), repentance (p.41), technicolour (p.64) and fellowship (p.200) are incorrectly spelt. The publisher (Banner of Truth) of Dr. Lloyd-Jones's volume *Authority* is omitted on page 191. And on p.212, note 10 should be 'to an inherited baronetcy'.

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GEORGE CURRY

**ABORTION & THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE** Ed. J.H. Channer  
 Paternoster Press, Exeter 1985 151pp. £2.95 ISBN 0 85364 417 9

This is a worthwhile collection of seven essays written to promote morally conservative views of abortion by authors possessed of a variety of expertises—biblical, theological, philosophical, ethical, medical and legal.

In his Foreword, Eric Mascall appropriately opens consideration of abortion as a moral issue in the narrow sense by locating it in the larger context of prevalent cultural values: in particular, the loss of any firm conviction about the intrinsic connexion between the procreative and the erotic functions of sex; the commonly assumed right to instant happiness; and the defence of the rights of women.

Immediately following in Chapter 1 is an essay by Philip R. Norris, 'Medical Aspects of Abortion', which is unfortunately prone to be tendentious in the style of its argumentation. Norris argues that the decisive moment in the development of the embryo/fetus is that of fertilization, when the unique genetic package of an individual is composed; that all other stages of development so overlap as to make arbitrary the choice of any other moment as decisive; and that the natural wastage of zygotes/embryos/fetuses is no more problematic for their personal status than is the 'natural wastage' of adult persons.

J. Foster follows with a lucid and circumspect piece of casuistry in 'Personhood and the Ethics of Abortion' (Chapter 2). He holds it insufficient to argue that, since it is arbitrary to posit the inception of a human being at some point in embryonic/fetal development, therefore it must be posited at conception; for, after all, a house does not yet exist at the laying of its first brick. Instead he prefers to rest his weight on the nature of the zygote as a living organism growing spontaneously according to intrinsic laws, which means that all development subsequent to conception is the gradual realization of the inherent potential of a single biological entity. At this point he turns to address the opinion that a fetus is a human being but not a person (entitled to personal rights) until cerebrated and possessed of the capacity for consciousness. He points out that since the actual mental capacity of a newborn baby is about equivalent to that of an adult cat, we cannot accord it personal status (as he assumes we shall want to) without appealing to its *potential* mental capacities; and that is something which is possessed by the fetus at conception. Foster concludes his substantial essay by tackling two kinds of 'hard' cases: abortion in the events of rape and of the severe handicap of the fetus. In response to the first, he argues that, if the fetus is considered to enjoy the rights of a person, then the victim of rape may not act

so as to kill it unless her own survival is at stake; and that it is a false description to describe a fetus conceived during rape simply as a 'trespasser', since the womb is biologically designed to house and nourish fetuses. And in response to the second, he denies that severe mental handicap necessarily robs the born of a significant capacity for human fulfilment, mundane or spiritual; there being, besides, no right to terminate a person's life without that person's consent.

After providing another instance of the argument for conception as the most clearly decisive moment in personal development, G.B. Bentley considers, in his contribution, 'A Moral-Theological Approach' (Chapter 3), the claim that a woman's rights over her body are sovereign. Here he holds it to be a false description to describe an embryo/fetus simply as part of a woman's body, since from the moment of conception it is clearly a distinct centre of vitality. He also reasserts the long-standing moral principle that no part of anyone's body (one's own included) should be harmed unless the health of the whole depends on it. With regard to the hard case of abortion following rape he contradicts Foster (p.47) in contending that the presence in the victim's womb of the effect of her rape is indeed a prolongation of it; and that the embryo here may fairly be described as an aggressor, carrying as it does the genes of the rapist. Of course, the embryo cannot be held responsible for being an aggressor, but in this case 'the sin of the father is visited on his child and deprives it of its right to life' (p.69). Bentley concludes with consideration of the question of the implications of the possibility of division or fusion for the personal status of the zygote, arriving at the same conclusion as Foster (pp.39-40)—that it makes no difference—but by an alternative route (pp.71-2).

In the fourth chapter, J.W. Rogerson treats the matter of 'Using the Bible in the Debate about Abortion.' The first half of this essay, which is of variable quality, is largely devoted to criticizing (in rather unattractive tones of contempt) 'literalist text-quoting' (p.85). He points out that when the Bible speaks of 'conception' it cannot be taken to express modern medical understanding (meaning 'fertilization'), but rather only something much less technical (for example 'becoming pregnant'). He also rightly denies that one can elicit from texts such as Job 10.10 or Psalm 139.13-16 anything more than the affirmation that God is intimately involved in the growth of the unborn. In the last half of his essay Rogerson proposes a hermeneutic that appropriately finds the Bible's relevance to the particular moral issues of abortion, not at the level of readily applicable texts (at all?), but more indirectly in the moral implications of its central theological message—'the imperatives of the biblical proclamation about God' (p.85)—some of which we must think out for ourselves. In the end, he implies that, though the Bible makes it clear how we are to treat persons, especially vulnerable ones, it does not tell us unequivocally whether and at what point the unborn belong to that class. That judgment, it seems, must be made on the basis of scientific data (p.89).

In Chapter 5, Gerald Bonner provides a characteristically thorough account of early Christian thought about abortion. He notes that the early Church was firmly opposed to abortion, being the inheritor of the Judaeo-Platonic view of the fetus as endowed with a soul either at conception or during pregnancy on the basis of the Platonic belief that human-being is

essentially a soul making use of a body. He also notes the influence on the Septuagint's translation of Exodus 21.22-23, and thereby on a minority of early Fathers (including Augustine), of the Aristotelian distinction between the formed and the unformed fetus. Perhaps Bonner's most intriguing remarks are made when he notes that several of the major grounds upon which abortion is currently being defended tread ancient pagan lines of apology (p.111). This fine essay is brought to a conclusion with a plea for the Church to recover its early reputation for philanthropic work by adding to its arguments for the prohibition of abortion the provision of aid to pregnant mothers. This is one of the rare occasions when *Abortion & the Sanctity of Human Life* takes a (brief) pastoral turn.

In 'Again: Who is a Person?' (Chapter 6) Oliver O'Donovan clarifies and develops a fascinating theologico-philosophical theme earlier presented in his book *Begotten or Made?*. His basic proposition is that another's status as a personal subject (as distinct from that of being the bearer of certain attributes) is something that discloses itself to us only *after* we have committed ourselves to care for him as a person. The major development of the earlier form of this argument is to be found in the discussion of the criteria by which to decide when it is appropriate to commit ourselves in this way to another. O'Donovan's contention is that we are warranted in treating as a person anything that immediately *appears* to us to be human, even if it is later judged (for example in the light of advances in scientific knowledge) to be nothing more.

The final chapter in this book comprises an Appendix by C. Fradd on the history and current state of English law on abortion. One of its more helpful clarifications is the point that abortions are currently very common, not because the law positively sanctions them, but because it is very difficult to prove their illegality in terms of their failure to meet the conditions stipulated by the Abortion Act 1967. The problem, in other words, is one of evidence.

As with all collections of essays the quality of material in *Abortion & the Sanctity of Human Life* is variable, though none of it is simply poor; and because a considerable portion is very good, it is well worth its cheap price.

Latimer House, Oxford

NIGEL BIGGAR

### **THE DIVORCE DECISION Gary Richmond**

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1988 215pp. No price

ISBN 0 8499 3104 5

Gary Richmond is a full-time pastor to single-parent families in the Evangelical Church of Fullerton in the United States. It is a significant comment on the number of marriage breakdowns that it was considered necessary to appoint a member of the pastoral team with sole responsibility for this area.

After three years' experience in the job, Gary Richmond felt compelled to write this book. His purpose is to warn anyone considering divorce of the wide-ranging, long-lasting consequences of the 'divorce decision', and to encourage an effort at reconciliation and the rebuilding of a marriage even if it seems to have gone irretrievably wrong. The style is deliberately casual and colloquial. The Introduction begins, 'If you are trying to decide whether or

not to divorce your mate . . .' and the author constantly addresses his imaginary reader as if he were talking face to face.

The book is subtitled, 'What it can mean for your children, your finances, your emotions, your relationships, your future,' and the first six chapters deal with each of these areas which will be affected by a divorce. In each chapter Mr. Richmond illustrates tellingly and at considerable length by reference to couples and families which he has had to counsel and advise and he quotes from personal diaries and conversations. He endeavours to show that 'divorce is a process, not an event' and spells out the ongoing painful effects on the couple themselves ('leaver' as well as 'left'), their parents and friends, and most of all on their children, for whom he says the divorce of the parents produces 'a steady chain of excruciatingly painful events' and affects the whole of their subsequent lives, their personal and social relationships.

The fairness of the American judicial system comes in for some critical comment: it is even suggested that 'the ratio of competent family law [that is, divorce] lawyers couldn't possibly be more than one good one for every nine bad ones'. Be that as it may, the high cost of litigation is probably not always anticipated by separating couples, either in the United States or in the United Kingdom.

After these personal, outspoken and moving arguments on a practical level, there follow two chapters in which there is an attempt to view the whole matter of divorce from a Christian and Biblical angle. 'Is Divorce ever the Appropriate Course?' to which the writer gives a qualified 'Yes'; and 'How does God Feel about Divorce?' to which the answer is that He hates it. This chapter ends with a list of fourteen reasons why God hates divorce—a list compiled, significantly, from a survey of single parents.

These introductory chapters make up just over half the book. Having spelled out very clearly the intense pain and the complex relationship, financial and spiritual problems following on from a divorce, Gary Richmond goes on to a plea for those for whom the book is written ('If you are trying to decide whether or not to divorce your mate') to stop and think, and to make an effort at reconciliation and the rebuilding of the marriage. He says, 'You may be in a horrible situation, but if there is any way to salvage it, it would be easier than what lies ahead for you if you don't try.' Again he illustrates from case-histories of people whom he has counselled in his ministry. He knows that there are no easy answers but he gives clear, practical and realistic suggestions.

Is there a basic cause for today's increasing divorce rate? Gary Richmond suggests that one reason is the assumption that 'we have a right to be happy'. He quotes from an article by C.S. Lewis entitled 'We Have No Right To Happiness', in which Lewis examines the intentions of the framers of the American Constitution. Lewis points out that they certainly did not mean that:

man is entitled to pursue happiness by any and every means—including, say, murder, rape, robbery, treason and fraud . . . No society could be built on that basis . . . What we have attempted to do is isolate sexual happiness and make God's proclamations on morality exceptions.

Happiness cannot come from forsaking God's law, comments the author. There is some repetition, a few (to the reviewer) incomprehensible

Americanisms, and a tendency to generalize from personal observation and experience. Statistics are quoted, usually without source or verification, which to an extent limits their value. Once or twice the extremely personal style jarred: for example, when one of the people whose divorce experience the author is recounting is said to be 'my closest friend in the world', or another one is referred to as 'one of my favourite single parents'.

Nevertheless Gary Richmond's deep concern for men and women involved in breaking or broken marriages is very moving, and (as the back of the jacket suggests) 'will cause the reader to think'. If those in situations of marital stress would read the book, they might well be persuaded to think again and to seek help in attempting reconciliation rather than divorce proceedings. (But do people in crisis read books?). There is no doubt that it would be helpful to ministers and counsellors—in fact to all who have to deal with marriage problems.

One is left with a sense of the failure of society and of the Church—on both sides of the Atlantic—to prepare people for marriage, to support people in their marriages and to teach how to work at relationships in a practical and realistic way. There are some helpful hints here which could be a basis for marriage preparation as well as for reconciliation.

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MARY BRETTELL

### **MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE: A REPORT OF THE STUDY PANEL OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

The Free Church of Scotland, Edinburgh 1988 54pp. 75p. (10 or more copies at 60p., post free)

This booklet has been prepared by a study panel of the Free Church of Scotland and its intention is to 'identify principles which may help to solve the practical problems' where marriage, divorce and re-marriage are concerned. The standpoint is that of Reformed evangelicalism, and the guidelines are based on Biblical principles, interpreted against the background of civil and church law in Scotland from about the year 1000 AD to the present day. Questions examined include:

What is a valid marriage?

What are the Biblical grounds for divorce?

When can a missing spouse be presumed dead?

What about the re-marriage of divorced persons?

How should we treat those who are 'living together' without being married? Ministers of the Free Church of Scotland will have a clear and useful reference book for pastoral situations concerning marriage and divorce. Since Scottish law is on some points different from English law there will be limitations to its wider usefulness. But much of the practical and pastoral wisdom is of interest to those of us south of the Border, too. There is a particularly interesting brief study of the New Testament teaching on divorce and on St. Paul's pastoring of converts from societies where immorality abounded. From this, the Report takes 'comfort and courage for the future' as we face the widespread sexual permissiveness of our own day.

229, Little Ridge Avenue, St. Leonards-on-Sea

MARY BRETTELL

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## Other Books Received

- British Broadcasting Corporation** Rosemary Hartill, *In Perspective*. 1988, £4.95
- Eerdmans** Emilio Castro *Sent Free*, 1985, £5.95; Vernard Eller, *Christian Anarchy*, 1987, \$10.25
- Fuller Theological Seminary** Ed. Lewis Smedes, *Ministry and the Miraculous*, 1987, no price
- Lion Publishing** Ed. George Carey, *The Message of the Bible*. 1988, £14.95
- Marc Europe** Raymond Bakke with Jim Hart, *The Urban Christian*. 1987, £4.95
- Mowbray** Michael Perry and Chris Newlands, *A Handbook of Parish Worship*, 1989, (new edition), £5.95
- Saint Andrew Press** Graham Guest, . . . *Please Leave Quietly. People. Power & Purpose at Work*, 1987, £4.95
- Scripture Press** Joni Tada, *Secret Strength*. 1989, £5.95
- S.P.C.K.** David Aldridge, *One Body: A Healing Ministry in Your Church*, 1987, £4.95; Margaret Barker, *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and its Influence on Christianity*, 1988, £4.95; Richard Bauckham, *The Bible in Politics: How to read the Bible politically*, 1989, £6.95; Francis House, *The Russian Phoenix: The Story of Russian Christians from 988 to 1988*, 1988, £7.95; Ed. David Petersen, *Prophecy in Israel*, 1987, £3.95
- Word Books** Gerald Hawthorne, *Word Biblical Themes Philippians*. 1987, no price; Leslie Allen, *Word Biblical Themes Psalms*. 1987, no price

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