Book Reviews

THE EARLIEST GOSPEL MANUSCRIPT? The Qumran Fragment 7Q5 and its Significance for New Testament Studies P. Thiede
Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1992 80 pp. No price ISBN 0 85364 507 8

When I wrote *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke* (1991) I had been impressed by the strength of O'Callaghan's arguments for identifying the text of the tiny fragment 7Q5, found in a cave sealed in AD 68, with the Gennesaret passage in Mark 6:52–53. I felt that the many who were dismissing it were not altogether fair, and that the possibility of its truth should not be forgotten. But I was quite unprepared to put any weight on the identification in arguing for a Marcan date of about AD 45. After reading Thiede's thorough evaluation of the evidence, not dependent on photographs but on his own repeated examination of the original, I consider that he has proved his case beyond reasonable doubt. He has added a powerful reinforcement of my position.

He first discusses P52, the John Rylands's fragment of John 18, hitherto regarded as the earliest New Testament manuscript, showing how firm conclusions can be gained about small fragments in spite of internal problems similar to those also found in 7Q5. He then discusses the fragment letter by letter in close detail and deals meticulously with the arguments brought against O'Callaghan, including the use of the letter *tau* where we should expect a *delta* and the omission of *eis ten gen*. I found the argument totally convincing.

He adds a short chapter showing how in classical philology even smaller fragments are confidently identified. His final chapter discusses in less detail the other texts in Cave 7, including 7Q4, which O'Callaghan firmly identifies with 1 Timothy 3:16–4:3. He then discusses various scenarios to explain how this cave came to contain Christian documents, thinking that there may have been close contacts between the first Jerusalem Christians and the Essenes. Finally, there are good illustrations of the manuscripts discussed.

It is a fascinating and important work of scholarship.

55 Bainton Road, Oxford JOHN WENHAM

FROM JEWISH PROPHET TO GENTILE GOD: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology Maurice Casey
James Clarke & Co., Ltd., Cambridge 1991 200 pp. £22.50
ISBN 0 227 67920 2

Casey is a lecturer in theology at the University of Nottingham, where he teaches Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins, and this book is a rather late revision and expansion of his 1985–86 Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham. His purpose is to present 'a new way of analysing the evidence, and to use this in elaborating a new theory to explain why New Testament Christology developed as it did.' (p. 9). For Casey, Christology is essentially functional, serving to hold together a large, mixed Jewish-Gentile group of followers of the Jew,

Jesus. Crises and inner-conflicts drove the conceptualization of Jesus ever higher, until he was imaged as being fully deified, a stage reached at the time of the community which produced John's gospel. No surprises here, and indeed his final argument is that belief in the deity and incarnation of Jesus should be regarded by us today as false, on the grounds that it contradicts the Jewish identity of Jesus and the first disciples.

However, Casey's book does break some significantly new ground, and will, I believe, prove to be an extremely important contribution to the study of New Testament Christology and Christian Origins. What is new is his proposed methodology for approaching the texts and the communities which produced those texts. There are three major aspects of this approach. In the first place he centres his thinking on three inter-related concepts which he rightly considers 'powerful', and also undervalued and ignored by most New Testament scholars: these are *identity* (by which he means identity-within-community), *ethnicity*, and *orthodoxy* (sadly he gives this little attention when it comes to achieving a suitably sharp definition). He presents an eight-point 'identity scale' for the definition of what would have been acceptable as Jewish at the time of Second Temple Judaism. The eight factors which he singles out are 'ethnicity, scripture, monotheism, circumcision, sabbath observance, dietary laws, purity laws and major festivals' (p. 12). Of these, monotheism is presented as the ultimate watchdog on the development of Christology or any other faith system (p. 136). To score nil out of eight would be to be purely Gentile, and to be perceived as such, 'even if such a person wrote a midrash or contributed to a collection for the poor in Jerusalem' (p. 13). To score eight out of eight would be the hallmark of a true Jew, even if such a person 'healed on the sabbath, or refused to attend the Temple on the grounds that the priesthood was illegitimate and corrupt' (p. 13). An intermediate score would indicate that a Jewish person was somewhere along a continuum leading to full assimilation. There is obviously fruitful work to be done here, and the Messianic Jewish communities today will be able to help us enormously.

Secondly, Casey introduces a methodological distinction between what he calls 'static' and 'dynamic' parallels between New Testament Christology titles and ways of thinking about Jesus, and those of the Jewish religious world more generally. The former are 'discrete items of known Jewish belief about intermediary figures which are also found as beliefs about Jesus' (p. 78), and he places the titles Lord, Messiah and Son of God in this category. Dynamic parallels refer to 'evidence that an intermediary figure was involved in a process which increased its status, or function, or both' at the time of Jesus (p. 78). Casey finds evidence of sixteen such figures, including Melchizedek, Moses, Wisdom and Word. It is very suggestive that this implies that Christological developments within the early Christian communities were taking place in a context where such development was not rare, and therefore could have occurred at an earlier date than many scholars are prepared to allow.

Casey's third major contribution is to present a case for three stages of growth in the early Christian community (chapter 7). Stage one consisted of an entirely Jewish movement of followers of Jesus; a sect within Judaism, if you will. At stage two, significant numbers of Gentiles were joining the movement, but without becoming Jewish themselves. By stage three, the community has become overwhelmed by Gentile Christians, and it is now 'identifiable as a Gentile religion' (p. 97). This is the stage, he reckons, at which John's gospel was produced.

I believe that using the combination of these three approaches will prove beneficial to us in attempting to analyze realistically the N.T. and other early Christian and Jewish texts which are relevant to us. Our task is to try to uncover the authentic relationship between text and community. Casey has not achieved this, but he has given us the prototype for a useful new research tool.

All Nations Christian College, Ware, Herts. WALTER RIGGANS

IDIOMS OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT Stanley E. Porter

Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1992 340 pp.
£27.50 cloth ISBN 1850753571
£14.98 paper ISBN 1850753792

Sheffield Academic Press is planning a series of books on New Testament Greek, one for classroom use by beginners, one really advanced reference book and this intermediate-level volume. Porter is in the forefront of Greek grammarians and fully *au fait* with modern linguistics. This makes him critical of the work of A.T. Robertson and Blass-Debrunner who taught us so much at the beginning of the century. He stresses the importance of tense-aspect as the key to understanding the verb, he attempts to explain the tenses in terms of kind-of-action. He repudiates also the eight-case system for nouns based on earlier Indo-European usage.

This book is aimed at those who have completed one year of Greek. He warns his readers that they may find the first chapter difficult—with reason, for this is his first italicized proposition:

> verbal aspect is defined as a semantic (meaning) category by which a speaker or writer grammaticalizes (i.e. represents a meaning by choice of a word-form) a perspective on an action by the selection of a particular tense-form in the verbal system.

But the text does get easier and there is much of exegetical interest for those who wish to make progress with their understanding of the Greek New Testament.

55 Bainton Road, Oxford JOHN WENHAM

RELIGIONS IN CONVERSATION: Christian Identity and Christian Pluralism Michael Barnes

S.P.C.K., London 1989 200 pp. £9.95 ISBN 0 281 04418 X

Michael Barnes, S.J. has served the religious and academic communities well in this book. It provides a good primer for the reader fresh to this area of interest, but also contains sufficient new arguments for it to be taken into account by people well-established in the field of inter-faith studies.

The structure of the book is straightforward. Part One, entitled 'Theologies and Religions', surveys the existing debate about Christian approaches to other religions which has engaged the attention of theologians from various Christian communities and in the light of this survey proposes a 'new problematic'. The book provides an accessible and judicious account of the three major approaches proposed by Christian theologians. This constructively critical survey of 'exclu-

sivism' (Bath and Kraemer), 'inclusivism' (Danielou and Rahner) and 'pluralism' (Hocking, Cantwell Smith and Hick) would be particularly valuable to undergraduate students in both Theology and Religious Studies, as well as to the general reader, since it includes substantial reflection on theological method in relation to the study of religions. Barnes does not claim in these surveys to rival those made more extensively by others (he is particularly indebted to Knitter's writings), but he does claim to offer critically positive comment on the current fashion for a threefold paradigm in the theology of religions and to negotiate an escape from what he refers to as this somewhat rigid patterning of Christian theology. This escape turns out to be through his identification of a *fourth* paradigm for a theology of religions. This paradigm he considers to be a theology *of* dialogue rather than a theology *for* dialogue.

Part Two, entitled 'Religions in Dialogue', provides the space for Barnes to develop his new problematic (paradigm) and represents his creative contribution to the debate about inter-religious encounter. Seeking to go 'beyond inclusivism', Barnes seeks to establish the shape of a paradigm which is fundamentally characterized by Panikkar's concept of 'interpenetration' (it is unfortunate that the index does not include this word). To develop this paradigm he draws on ideas derived from Geertz, Lindbeck, Cantwell Smith and to some extent later Wittgenstein as well as Panikkar. His summary of the paradigm (which in some places he refers to as 'dialogal theology') stresses that at its centre are persons in dialogue seeking to understand themselves through understanding each other (p. 172ff.). Religions, for Barnes, are not competing ideologies but represent different ways of being human. Each religion is unique, but as religious people grow in understanding of each other they become increasingly interdependent (p. 131). But Barnes recognizes that he has to find a way through which the 'openness' which is required for dialogal theology is not achieved at the expense of the equally important requirement that the Christian theologian be 'loyal' to the Christian tradition. 'Faithfulness' must be achieved both with regard to the 'other' and to the 'self'. How is this possible?

Of the many moves which Barnes makes in pursuit of his dialogal theology, three are crucial. They are, respectively, philosophical, religious and theological in emphasis. Each of these moves has its own inner consistency, but for Barnes's overall case to be sustained he needs them to interconnect and to support each other.

The philosophical underpinning of his argument derives mostly from Lindbeck's account of the nature of doctrine since Barnes regards Lindbeck's 'cultural-linguistic' account of doctrine as the most satisfactory basis for a theology of religions (p. 100). On this basis, he builds his attempt to show that the central task of a 'theology of religions' is to find a 'common structure; rather than a 'common essence' by which to achieve interpretation of understanding. As Barnes says, his theology of the unity of religions lies in identifying the interpersonal structure of human religiosity (of which more later) and the accompanying common experience of dialogue (or, even better, 'conversation'). A viable theology of the unity of religions does not lie, he says, in identifying common elements or common ideas in religions (p. 155). Rather, the great religions reflect exactly the same pattern so far as their grammar of communication is concerned. By this Barnes means that instead of concentrating exclusively on the *content* of the act of faith and the language of Christian (or other) confessions, the theologian of religions should look at the *process* by which religious believers come to know anything, including God, and how they speak to each other about this (p. 142).

'Faith', following Cantwell Smith, is the *universal* from which can be distinguished 'beliefs' which are the intellectual and cultural forms which faith takes within a *particular* tradition (p. 126). But it is the mistake of the Cartesian subject-oriented approach to theologizing which turns faith into the mental functioning of embodied rational animals rather than being their fundamental acknowledgement of creatureliness in the face of what a person takes to be the transcendent. The meaning of faith arises from what people *do* together as human beings (pp. 127–8). Thus, the usual search for common essences or elements is mistaken, or at least less productive than a search for common structures. Religions are dynamic structures which, though wedded to particular cultural expressions, seek to transcend them. Barnes gives examples of ways in which he claims religions have common structures despite their differently expressed beliefs. Thus, Tamil Shaivism is as clear as is Christianity, he says, in its confession of human sin and its reliance on God's grace. Similarly, *Nirvana* in Buddhist thought is not some 'thing' to be grasped but is the peace which, in Barthian terms, allows God to be God (p. 106). A Christian theology of religions can, through the fourth paradigm, approach religions not so much as variations on common themes but as comprehensive interpretative schemes, embodied in myths and narratives and expressed in rituals which structure *human* experience of the world—and which thus reflect within their structures of thought what is essentially common to being human (Lindbeck again, p. 96).

The second connected move which Barnes makes is to develop a theory of 'human religiosity'. He introduces this somewhat inelegant term to create room for his opposition to the reification of religion. His main concern is to ensure that religious *practice* is held within his model of religion. The very core of religion, says Barnes is the power it gives people to cope with change (p. 103) and to expiate suffering (p. 98). But an important aspect of religiosity is that religions offer people a *transcendent* as well as an *integrative* experience—they provide an understanding of God as well as an understanding of the world of men and women. These integrative and transcendent dimensions of religious thought and practice are held by religious believers within a dialectical structure in their cumulative traditions (religions) which enable persons to come to terms with their confusing and challenging existence. Thus, the dialectical structure of human religiosity makes plain the extent to which individuals are dependent on their cultural and social setting for their sense of personal identity and therefore (*sic*) for their knowledge of God (p. 111). A theology of religions must, therefore, have in its foundations a full appreciation of the connexion between religions as separate thought-systems and the underlying common structure of human religiosity. Barnes's theology of the unity of religions lies, then, in the inter-personal structure of human religiosity, in the common experience, not in common elements of religions (p. 155).

Thirdly, Barnes makes a theological move. He claims that *theocentric* and *christological* foundations for a theology of religions belong to the 'old problematic'. His new problematic requires a *pneumatological* basis (or elsewhere, a *trinitarian* basis). He is aware of the risk of this approach, since it would be easy to ignore the historical nature and specificity of the Christian revelation, thus turning Christ into little more than a cosmic principle which in meaning everything means nothing. Nevertheless, he regards a spirit-centred theory of the interpenetration of religions as helpful in solving the 'loyalty-openness'

dilemma experienced by Christian theologians when seeking inter-religious conversation. One can look, on this basis, for the way the spirit of Christ is active in all religions in revealing the mystery of Christ—the mystery of what God is doing in the world. The world is redeemed in Christ, it is a new creation inaugurated with the outpouring of the Spirit. The glorification of Christ cannot therefore be limited to the confines of the Christian Church, but is already being extended to all peoples (p. 143). The Spirit can thus be said to be active within all religions (p. 155). The Spirit is the common ground in which we live and move and have our being.

Thus, inter-religious conversation can proceed, according to Barnes, on the basis of what is *really* common to all religions. At one level, this common factor arises from what it is to be human since, as human beings, all religious believers have a common religiosity. A philosophical account of this common factor can be given in terms of the common structures which characterize human knowing. At another level, that of the divine, the common factor is the work of the Spirit. Thus a compatible theological account is also available. And it all builds on the common reality of human religiosity.

However, such a thesis poses at least three deep problems for Barnes. The first of these is that he needs a much more robust philosophical account of 'truth' and 'meaning'. Are the inter-religious conversations which Barnes seeks conversations about truth systems or meaning systems? Barnes use of Geertz, Lindbeck, Cantwell Smith, Panikkar and Wittgenstein leaves this quite unclear. It is crucial that clarity is achieved on this point. Secondly, there is something very odd and possibly offensive in his proposal that the most distinctive and difficult Christian doctrine, namely that of 'trinity', be the basis for constructing a theology of the unity of religions. Why should a Jew or a Muslim not be deeply offended by the Christian theologian proposing that the basis of conversation between them be the peculiar Christian claim that God is not 'One' in the simple meaning of that word? And lastly, there is far more difficulty in arguing that the nature of God as 'other' is knowable through that which is not the 'other'—namely human religiosity—than Barnes seems to be aware. His statement that to speak of religions in purely cultural-linguistic terms is only half the story since although language shapes us we also shape it sounds very akin to wanting to have one's cake and to eat it. A more thoroughgoing theology of religions in the Geertz-Lindbeck style ought to be possible and would be more consistent.

Westminster College, Oxford BERNARD FARR

IN DEFENCE OF THE CHURCH CATHOLIC: THE LIFE OF STEPHEN GARDINER Glyn Redworth

Blackwell, Oxford 1990 354 pp. £45 ISBN 0 631 16392 1

The Reformation in England is a complex story, perhaps more so than in any other country. Recent decades have seen a vast amount of research, particularly into the political and administrative history of Tudor England, which has shed light on the religious movements of the time (but which has not always convinced all scholars). One of the great merits of this book is that it takes full account of this research—and, indeed, adds to it. It examines the life of its sub-

ject in the light of what is probably (on the whole) a more accurate understanding of the context in which that life was lived than that which has previously obtained.

The subject is Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, Tudor diplomat, Lord Chancellor of the realm under Queen Mary and, according to John Foxe, the martyrologist, an arch opponent of the gospel.

The author is well qualified for his task, having completed doctoral studies on Gardiner's middle years, and having further pursued his researches, particularly in the diplomatic field in which Gardiner was so deeply involved. (He lived in the days when bishops often served not only—sometimes not so much—in the ecclesiastical and theological fields, but also in the political, administrative and diplomatic areas of national life.). The book is extremely well documented, revealing mastery of both primary and secondary sources. Written in a clear, readable style, it is marred only by the occasional obscure word and by a score or more of misprints.

In this down-to-earth study, Stephen Gardiner is seen as 'a very human person' whose story is 'much closer to the experience of the average person during the tumultuous years of reformation than that of saintly martyrs'. His failings are not hidden—for example, his occasional lapses of judgment, his shortness of temper on occasion, and, implicitly, his ambition and deviousness.

Theologically, Gardiner is portrayed as a defender of (Roman) Catholic doctrine, particularly in relation to the Mass—the issue that assumed a crucial rôle in the English Reformation. He came to terms with the royal supremacy (while it lasted), and wrote in its defence, but gladly played a not inconsiderable part in restoring the church in England to communion with Rome.

This important work suffers certain limitations as a biography, some of which are self-imposed. It deliberately omits detailed treatment of matters, such as Gardiner's trial, which are fully treated in the still valuable biography written by J.A. Muller, published as long ago as 1926 (followed by his *Letters* in 1933). It lacks background and personal details (to some extent because of absence of evidence), and it does not deal in any detail with theological and polemical matters, which are often relegated to footnotes. It is clear that the author's major concern is with the political and diplomatic activities of his subject which, it must be granted, absorbed so much of the latter's attention.

45B Haylane Copse, Pennington, Hants HAROLD ROWDON

CALVIN'S PREACHING T.H.L. Parker

T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh 1992 202 pp. £16.95 ISBN 0 567 29211 8

Does Calvin need an introduction? Hardly, to *Churchman* readers, but one cannot be sure of anything these days!

John Calvin (1509–1564) has been called 'the greatest theologian and disciplinarian of the great race of the reformers' and 'the only international reformer'.

John Calvin was born at Noyon, France, son of the Secretary and attorney for the bishopric of Noyon. He was a brilliant scholar, trained first for law, and studied at Paris, Orleans and Bourges. When twenty-three years old he experienced what he himself described as 'a sudden conversion' and it is significant

for understanding this great biblical scholar and expositor that he believed God had addressed him through the Bible and had to be obeyed. He adopted as his crest a flaming heart on an outstretched hand with the inscription, 'my heart I give Thee wholly and freely'.

In 1535 Calvin produced his 'immortal' treatise, called the Institutes of the Christian Religion, a comprehensive and orderly summary of Christian reformed doctrine, which was later edited and enlarged. But it is Calvin's preaching material which has been neglected and so much, perhaps most of what he accomplished in Geneva, was due to his expository preaching above all else. He was a preacher *par excellence* and reformation students not yet convinced of this should purchase the Banner of Truth's current half-price offer of the (facsimile) sermons on the Book of Deuteronomy—a veritable masterpiece, probably worth £200–£300 on the second-hand market.

T.H.L. Parker's book on Calvin's preaching will close a very obvious gap. There is no question about the importance of studying Calvin's preaching and this new book (I think slightly overpriced!) gives a complete review of Calvin's preaching, activity, purpose, method and style. Included, are the theological considerations that moved Calvin to preach the way he did; his view of the preacher's office, his duty, and the congregation's active participation; and historical account of the preservation of his sermons; Calvin's expository method and not least important, the way he applied scripture to the needs of the congregation, and the form of the sermons, with the familiar style that he employed.

T.H.L. Parker, is as most of us are aware, a Calvin scholar of considerable reputation. Those who have read his book on John Calvin will find this work of the same high standard. For the avid Calvin reader, pages 179–200 are particularly useful containing, as they do, references to his copious works and will be invaluable if producing a thesis or writing a book oneself.

This book is laced with Calvin quotations which only adds to the authentic message. It is scholarly without being boringly scholastic, relevant without robbing Calvin of the reverence he deserves, and biblically applied, as we need application today. For example,

> Calvin, always tried to make Scripture familiere. He plainly meant more than that he wanted the people to become familiar with the Bible in the sense of 'knowing their Bibles'. Familiere might be better rendered by the word 'personal', used in the colloquial modern sense—to make the message of Scripture a personal matter, not just a collection of historical ideas; so that we know that it is God who is speaking to us!

How true this is and how important for us to adopt Calvin's familiere if we are to affect our generation for Christ. Far too much contemporary reformed preaching is cerebral at the expense of being personal. No doubt Calvin believed in the authority which was not afraid to say 'You', like Nathan the prophet, 'Thou are the man'.

Reformation scholars will need this book to augment their library. All preachers would gain from it. And, if Reformation is to take place in today's Church and world, we shall need a new generation of preachers in the John Calvin mould. The thing about Calvin's preaching is that his recorded sermons are connected series on books of the Bible—usually the New Testament,

Sunday mornings and afternoon, and Old Testament during the weekdays. How this fits in with Anglicanism and the Christian Year only the reader can determine, but we are deeply indebted to the Reader Emeritus, University of Durham, for much light in an otherwise dark field!

Broughton Rectory, Lincolnshire BARRY SHUCKSMITH

CALVIN'S CONCEPT OF THE LAW I. John Hesselink
Pickwick Publications, Allison Park, Pennsylvania 1992 311 pp. $27.90 pb.
ISBN 1 55635 007 4

Few theologians have been as much both honoured and reviled as John Calvin. Generally regarded as the chief architect of Reformed theology, he has nevertheless been caricatured as a dour legalist with little knowledge of, or appreciation for, the love of Christ revealed to us in the Gospel. The negative assessment of Calvin is not confined to his natural opponents, but can be found among Lutheran, and even among some modern Reformed theologians as well.

Dr. Hesselink is convinced that this picture is fundamentally wrong, and in his important doctoral thesis he set about demonstrating that Calvin's view of the Law was infinitely more positive and Christ-centred than has normally been assumed. He had the great privilege of being able to work in Basel with three of the greatest Reformed theologians of the twentieth century—Karl Barth, who supervised his thesis, Emil Brunner and Oscar Cullman. It is all the more astonishing therefore that this thesis has had to wait over thirty years to find a publisher!

Calvin's understanding of the Old Testament law was intimately bound up with his doctrine of the Covenant. He believed that the Covenant was manifested supremely in the Ten Commandments, and in his commentary on Exodus-Deuteronomy he endeavoured to subsume all the precepts of the Law under one or other of them. That was not always an easy task, as Dr. Hesselink points out, but Calvin's main concern was to demonstrate the theological coherence of the Old Testament law, and in this he succeeded remarkably well.

For Calvin, the importance of the Law begins with the nature of God, who cannot act in a way contrary to his nature. He believed that the inner consistency of the divine being was the basis for all law, and the assurance that our faith in God and his promises will not be betrayed. This assertion leads Dr. Hesselink to insist that Calvin had a positive approach to natural law, which was both an indicator of human sinfulness and a pointer towards what is right and just. Without this inner witness, Calvin argued, civilization as we know it would be impossible. At the same time, Calvin did not use natural law as the basis of a natural theology. Knowledge of God can only come through revelation, which brings with it a true understanding of the law.

In the light of this, Dr. Hesselink goes on to assert the spiritual value of the Old Testament, even without the specific revelation of Christ. Calvin believed that it is in and through Christ that we come to a proper understanding of the great issues of sin and redemption, but this does not diminish the fact that the saints of the Old Testament enjoyed a real spiritual knowledge of God. It is at this point that Calvin and classical Reformed theology differ so significantly from Karl Barth, who insisted that Christ alone was the unique source of our

knowledge of the divine. Calvin saw the Law and the Gospel as two parts of a single reality—the revelation of God to man. In his mind there was no place for the modern dualism, which tends to see these two forces in conflict with each other.

In spiritual terms, the purpose of the law is to bring us to repentance, and to provide us with a model of what the true life in Christ should be. Calvin did not understand this literally of course: he was always very careful to insist that the Law is spiritual, and that it can only be understood by spiritually minded people—and only in a spiritual way. Dr. Hesselink contends that it is the relative neglect of this dimension in Calvin's thought which has contributed so much to the common misunderstanding of his position. In the final analysis, the purpose of the Law in Calvin's mind was to recreate the image of God in us. In this way, the Law became the foundation of both theology and ethics, without detracting in any way from the Person and Work of Christ.

Dr. Hesselink's book is easy to read, and his thesis is amply supported by quotations from original sources. It will be of immense value to students who want to reach an understanding of Calvin and the Scriptures themselves. The notes and the bibliography are both extensive, and they have been updated to take more recent research into account. This book will be a valuable addition to any library, and should be well-thumbed by theologians concerned with the issues with which it deals.

Tyndale House, Cambridge — GERALD BRAY

THE CHRISTIAN IN COMPLETE ARMOUR Volumes 2 and 3
(A Modernized abridgement of the Puritan Classic)
William Gurnall

Banner of Truth, Edinburgh 1988 & 1989

Volume 2	398 pp.	£2.95	ISBN 0 85151 515 0
Volume 3	319 pp.	£2.95	ISBN 0 85151 560 6

These volumes are pure gold, ridiculously cheap, and of increasing value to those who possess the original puritan work, first published in 1655. The original runs to almost twelve hundred pages and is a weighty volume to read in bed, next to a tired wife who does not appreciate the puritans, as some do! The original is solid—and I mean solid! But it is solid meat for solid Christians and a diet for which our Church and the present generation of Christians starves. No ordained man should be without the original (obtainable also from the Banner of Truth). The reviewer considers this to be, along with Thomas Watson's Body of Divinity, the best book on his shelf. As apostasy deepens Christians will need deep wells from which to draw and refreshment cannot be found better than that in William Gurnall's larder. He is a Master in Israel and a Victorious Warrior in battle against the Adversary. And these modernized versions may do just the trick for our ill-informed, Bible-shallow, superficial age, that the original did for other generations of believers engaged in the battle against spiritual wickedness in high places.

William Gurnall was Minister of Lavenham in Suffolk, where he pastored Christ's Flock for almost thirty years and is renowned as one of those who did not secede in 1662. The additional value of the original is a forty-three page

Life of the Author by Bishop J.C. Ryle, himself a Suffolk Vicar at Stradbroke, when he wrote in 1864.

Basically *The Christian in Complete Armour* is a series of expository sermons (in the days when sermons were certainly not sermonettes) based upon Ephesians 6:10–20. Some of these sermons must have lasted two hours—maybe longer. To be realistic, it is unlikely that today's Evangelicalism will produce a 'Gurnall' appetite—certainly not for the original strong porridge—but this modern abridgement may go some way towards giving new life to struggling souls.

The transliteration is, in my opinion, extremely well done and it is interesting to find David Wilkerson—of *The Cross and the Switchblade* fame—among the modern enthusiasts. Few corners are cut. The language is easy and loses none of the original attraction and power. For preachers, needing constant illustrations, there is an abundance here, for Gurnall is typically puritan in his desire to reach the people, like our Lord, with parable, story, and visual word. Like the typical puritan again, he manages to get the whole theology in a single work. He proceeds through each piece of the Christian's armour and has this marvellous way of division and subdivision, which squeezes the last drop of juice from the spiritual drink. It searches, it rebukes, it enlightens, it exhorts, it comforts, it heals, it equips, it informs, and it is so very practical.

Take for example the third volume and just one section—'The Pre-eminence of Faith above Other Graces'. There follow fifteen sub-headings and under just one of the sub-headings are six 'sermons'. Can you really afford to be without these volumes? Do we not all need this searching, faith-strengthening food? Gurnall preaches

> Faith supplies all the graces with work, faith helps all the graces to receive strength from Christ. Faith defends the Christian with the exercise of all his graces, faith alone gains acceptance with God for all the other graces and their works.

So spiritual, so heartening, so Christ-centred. Wonderful stuff. There is so much published 'Spirituality' around today—much of it Mediaeval. Do not waste your money—just buy this modern abridgement. Remember what C.H. Spurgeon once said:

> Gurnall's work is peerless and priceless; every line is full of wisdom, every sentence is suggestive. The whole book has been preached over scores of times, and is, in our judgment, the best thought-breeder in all our library.

I will finish with another Gurnall quotation before you dash out to order your copies—and incidentally Volume One is available as well . . .

> If you are a believer sin does not have the same strength in your soul that it did before you knew Christ, His Word, and His ways. Although you are not what you want to be, yet you are not what you have been.

Thank God this is true. If you have Gurnall's original these cheap paperbacks will serve as a good introduction. If you cannot handle the original then at least sample the alternative—you will never regret it. And take my word for it, any Christian not dressed for battle will be very vulnerable indeed for what

is coming in the latter part of this decade. Soldiers of Christ arise, and put your armour on.

Broughton Rectory, Lincolnshire BARRY SHUCKSMITH

THE CHRONICLE OF THE HUTTERIAN BRETHREN, Volume 1
Hutterian Brethren
Plough Publishing House, New York 1992 887 pp. No price
ISBN 0 87486 021 0

At first glance, this book seems to be a very dry chronology of a little-known sect, suitable only for the serious historian of the Radical Reformation. Yet with a little historical imagination you will be transported to an age of intolerance, where saints with tremendous faith faced persecution in a way reminiscent of the Acts of the Apostles. The main difference being that it was not Jews, or Romans, but our great reformation heroes, Calvin and Zwingli, as well as Papists, who were ordering the executions, for crimes as heinous as 'believer's baptism' and 'pacifism'!

It is a very detailed source for the academic Church Historian and gives a clear log of the personnel, persecutions, and peregrinations of the Anabaptists from Zurich in 1525 to Moravia and the Tyrol. They spread to Hungary and Transylvania two centuries later. The researcher can easily find sections on belief, history or biography and the casual reader can dip into a few pages and soon find something interesting and thought-provoking.

Prepared by the sect itself, this Chronicle obviously deals with just one branch of the Anabaptist movement and from a very biased view-point; but I think it has many messages for us today. The Hutterian Brethren have five basic Articles of Faith: Adult Believer's Baptism by Immersion, the Lord's Supper rather than the Eucharist, Communal holding of Goods, Divorce from unbelieving Partners, and Strict Pacifism. Some of their ideas have influenced or coincide with those of more familiar protestant denominations, such as Mennonites and Baptists. Moreover the bearing of arms, the legitimacy of War, the payment of taxes and the validity of Divorce have become subjects of hot debate in almost every Christian Community, for a long time now. Yet in the sixteenth century, such ideas were not acceptable either to Protestant or Roman Catholic Church Leaders and certainly not to Princes, who united their people by common doctrine and uniformity of worship.

Like the reformers, the Hutterian Brethren arrived at their Articles of Faith by appealing to the New Testament and their purpose was to return to New Testament Principles in life and behaviour. In fact the Chroniclers go to great length to shew that their first Founding Elder, Jakob Hutter, was not inventing a new sect but continuing the Truth Faith. The bulk of the Chronicle describes the way the Hutterites were hounded for their faith and forced to move on from one region to another, though often respected for their honesty and industry. But we may well ask, 'Why were Brother after Brother and Sister after Sister racked and tortured to make them recant from their 'heresy', or betray sympathisers? And why were Men of God so afraid of these peaceful people that they went to the extent of drowning them, in an evil parody of immersion-baptism; thereby discouraging others from joining them?' (Zwingli did this to some in

the Rhine!) Their heterodoxy seems only to have been in principles of behaviour and matters of church order, not, as far as one can judge, in points of 'catholic' doctrine. They did however eschew credal statements and claim to rely solely on the Scriptures. Be that as it may, we cannot imagine, in this tolerant age, the need to execute those who disagree with us in religious practices! Yet there are many things in this Chronicle concerning the relationship between Church and State which are relevant to our own Country today, in our modern 'Pluralistic Society', especially with the challenge of Fundamentalist Islam seething within our borders!

The accounts of individual sufferings and martyrdoms found in these pages are bound to inspire even the most casual reader. They have almost been wiped out several times and been forced to flee all over Europe and in later years to the U.S.A. and Canada. Yet even among such godly communities the unacceptable face of inflexible fundamentalism has shown itself with even minor disagreements resulting in condemnation of dissenters, leading to schism. But that is not the main impression we receive from this Chronicle; it is rather a challenging presentation of a people who have consistently down the centuries resolutely eschewed the use of force to defend themselves and trusted in God alone to vindicate them in life or in death. And their creative community life still proves that their ideals are by no means impracticable, especially when linked to faith in a Loving God.

36 Elphinstone Avenue, Hastings JONATHAN JAMES

RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION AND THE RISE OF SCIENCE H.P. Nebelsick

T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh 1992 237 pp. £14.95 hb. ISBN 0 567 09604 1

Professor Nebelsick, of the Center for Theological Inquiry at Princeton, died suddenly in 1989, leaving a series of notes and half-completed chapters for what he hoped would be a major study in the history of science. His widow and one of his colleagues thought that the extant material was sufficiently important, and sufficiently coherent, to enable them to put together a modest book outlining his main ideas. They explain in the Preface that they had to omit a good deal, and the reader is aware from the start that what he has in front of him is but the foretaste of a work which was never completed.

The first chapter is an extended study of the Christian critique of Aristotle. It concentrates on the pre-Reformation era, and demonstrates the extent to which Aristotelian method had already been discredited by figures such as Roger Bacon and William of Ockham, long before it was challenged at the time of the Renaissance. The second chapter discusses the way in which Platonic ideas were used in the sixteenth century to undermine what had become Aristotelian orthodoxy, and the third (and last) chapter deals more specifically with the Reformation. Here the emphasis falls mainly on the work of Francis Bacon, whom Dr. Nebelsick holds up as the main inventory of modern natural science.

One of the main positive features of the book is the amount of attention paid to Arab philosophers and scientists. Most people are dimly aware of their contribution to the preservation and development of scientific knowledge, but few have the detailed appreciation of their work which Dr. Nebelsick brings to our

attention. The chapter on the Renaissance is equally fascinating for the way in which Dr. Nebelsick takes us into the weird world of Neo-Platonic speculation which was so popular then, and which is so alien to us now. He does not hesitate to point out that it was not enough for Renaissance thinkers to debunk Aristotle: their own alternative theories were scarcely more credible than his! What was needed was an entirely new world-view, and this, Dr. Nebelsick contends, was provided by the Reformation.

This thesis is not new of course, and the fact that Dr. Nebelsick died before being able to develop his thesis properly means that this part of his work comes across more as a kind of anticlimax than as the culmination of his thought. This does not make it any less interesting, but clearly what we have here is a programme for a book which remains to be written by someone inspired by Dr. Nebelsick's work.

One rather distressing feature of the book is the large number of typographical errors and factual mistakes. Dr. Nebelsick was evidently very keen on giving dates to both people and events, and it is a pity that so many of these are wrong. Even the Preface carries the date October 1901, which cannot be right! More serious though are the factual mistakes which have crept into the text. To take but one obvious example, the account of the English Reformation on p. 190 is flawed in several respects. First, Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy is dated 1543 (instead of 1534). Then we are told that someone called Thomas Cramner [*sic*] wrote the Forty-nine Articles, which he seems to think were adopted by Edward VI as part of the 'Book of Prayer'. Finally he portrays the Thirty-nine Articles as a more Catholic version of the earlier Forty-two—not the usual interpretation of the revision which was made under Elizabeth I. Errors of this kind on a subject which will be reasonably familiar to most readers puts us on our guard when it comes to matters further from general knowledge. This is a pity, since editing mistakes of this kind out of the text would not have taken a great deal of effort.

In sum, this is an unfinished work, which bears the marks of its author's sudden death. It contains a good deal of valuable information, which another scholar should take up and develop further. Dr. Nebelsick was on the right lines, and it would be a pity if his work were not to be followed up and result in a full-length publication in due course.

Tyndale House, Cambridge GERALD BRAY

THE DEMOCRATISATION OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY
Nathan O. Hatch
Yale University Press, Yale 1989 312 pp. £22.50 ISBN 0 300 04470 4

When I tell people that I am an American and that I have lived here for twenty-seven years they often say—'you must be a real Anglophile!'. I always answer the same way—'No, I have lived here too long to be an Anglophile'.

But, I have lived here long enough to know how it works. It is one of the advantages of the outsider. The outsider gains a view and a clarity which is not available to the natives. After these years I understand every innuendo, every shade of accent, and every half phrase. When we prepare for our Annual Thanksgiving Day Service at St. Paul's I know what it means when the eyes of

the Precentor meet the eyes of the Organist at the suggestion of some Aaron Copland. I understand the full meaning of the half phrase. Hearing that one of his people now worships at St. John's Hyde Park, a leading London Evangelical Divine was reported to say 'Oh, Yes, the American!' Meaning even less than n.o.c.d. ['not our class, dear.'].

With these rather special, even enviable qualifications, I have been approached to write this review of Nathan O. Hatch's remarkable book: *The Democratisation of American Christianity*. It is a wonderful book, but it is hard to imagine who in this country would actually want to buy it. It is as full of ideas as a chocolate chip cookie, but will people want or really need to know that Joseph Smith's parents went bankrupt trying to sell ginseng to the Chinese? This book is well organized, carefully researched, and its concepts supported by documented historical data. Ostensibly its purpose is to outline the development of American Christianity from 1776 to 1836 but in fact it provides us with a very skilful analysis of the relationship between culture and religion. The great trick of this book is that by reading about the relationship between religion and culture in America you actually learn about the relationship between religion and culture here. This book claims to be about the 'incarnation of the Church into popular culture'. By seeing what happened there, we obtain a good idea of what has or has not happened here.

The basic argument runs something like this. American Christianity has its own flavour and character and that flavour and character is drawn directly from the unique components which make up the rest of the things that combine to create 'American'. To understand American religion, you have to understand America, and to understand America you have to understand its social history from 1776 to 1836. Hatch looks at the historical development of five groups: the Christian movement, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Black Churches, and the Mormons. From this I would like to identify what I regard as the five principal factors which affected and then constituted the character of American Christianity. American Christianity is: Popularist, Expansionist, Pluralist, Entrepreneurial and Anti-establishmentarian.

The Church was popular in that it, like the people, had widely absorbed Jeffersonian democracy. This new Republic (Bill Clinton reminded us—'the world's oldest democracy') saw itself as the herald of a new age, a new republic, a government 'of the people, by the people, and for the people'. This was a Church which rejected 'learned clerics' and instead brought forth Church systems based on leaders who led because they were popular—not because they were either learned or ordained. Here we see the predecessors of Oral Roberts, Robert Schuller, and Billy Graham. This explains to this day why American Pastors derived their status from the size of their congregation. I was once introduced to an Episcopal Priest who was introduced to me as 'Rector of the second largest Church in Denver'—in other words this guy was a real V.I.P. You could hardly imagine introducing someone as Vicar of the second largest parish in Cambridgeshire.

This Church was and goes on being an expansionist Church because American culture has been shaped and formed by the concept of the frontier. The society is driven by the need not just to escape the totalitarian repression of Europe, but to win the West and to conquer the country. The sedentary parochial systems of Europe were not designed for such times or such ways, but the circuit was. The Methodist circuit rider provided exactly the right con-

duit of organization for the evangelism of an expanding continent. American Christianity goes on being expansionist and has its effect all over the globe. English Christianity of course—is the religion of an island people and then only a tenth of those—an island on an island.

The Church was, and goes on being a very pluralistic Church. I think it was Dietrich Bonhoeffer who described the United States as the country most blessed by the invisible unity of the Church of God. The British are always pretty disdainful of this kind of religious pluralism, but that is not surprising coming from a culture where one kind of Christianity and only one kind was allowed under the law. Mark Twain sums up the American view:

> We *must* have a religion—it goes without saying—but my idea is, to have it cut into Forty free sects, that way they will police each other.

He goes on to describe an established Church as 'an established crime'. I have noted however that he did not refuse to accept his honorary doctorate from Oxford University.

This is an entrepreneurial Church—its life and character determined by the free flow of trade, information and services. This was a Church without endowment and each leader had to find the financial resources to sustain the work. This new America was fast becoming a liberal, competitive, market-driven society. Evangelical religion prospered 'largely because the price was right and the street was filled with vendors'. Only such a culture could have produced Bob Schuller—Pastor of the Crystal Cathedral, a Church he founded at a Drive-In-Movie for $500 with the slogan 'Come as you are in the family car'.

Finally this society and the Churches which have grown from it have always been deeply Anti-establishmentarian. Hatch observes that American Anti-intellectual populism has always worked within rather than outside the Church. Its principal denominations have gained strength from opposition to centralized authority and demands for a dispersal of power. He makes the point:

> No less than Tom Paine or Thomas Jefferson, populist Christians of the early republic sought to start the world over again.

These sentiments were echoed by Bill Clinton in his inaugural address on the 20th January, 1993.

I found what this book had to say very interesting. I was also interested in what it did not say. As you move from page to page you become not just aware of what happened there: the democratization of American Christianity, but you become equally aware of things happening differently in other places. Just as the United States contains more citizens who value religion than any other industrial western nation so this country contains among the fewest. Any given Sunday forty per cent of all Americans are in Church—here it is ten per cent of all in Britain. Here we have not seen contextualization so much as marginalization. The twentieth century has witnessed the almost 'complete dechristianisation of the British working class'. How has this happened? Looking around, there are some of the answers. Ronnie Knox was right—the Church of England is 'a religion for dons'. The Church has marginalized itself by its elitism and gentility. In return for preference and patronage this Church has become an elitist Church—associating itself with high culture, monarchy,

pointy-head music, elegant leadership and an air of gentility—but losing its credibility with working people.

As an American working in the Church of England I am sometimes still struck by the air of unreality, the great gulf between the national Church and the nation and I think of that opening line from *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* 'Camelot—Camelot, said I to myself, I don't seem to remember hearing of it before, name of the Asylum likely'.

18 Somers Crescent, Hyde Park, London THADDEUS BIRCHARD

EVANGELICAL EUCHARISTIC THOUGHT IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Christopher J. Cocksworth

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993 283 pp. No price
ISBN 0 521 40441 X

Dr. Cocksworth's study is richly rewarding, whether or not one agrees with his ultimate thesis in the 'Theological Analysis' at the end of the book.

He has produced a workmanlike survey of the story of the recent history of liturgical change in the Church of England, although without reference to the Anglican Communion as a whole, where some of the most interesting and controversial developments have occurred. There is a most useful and full bibliography.

He seeks to root his work in the understandings of the Reformers, both English and Continental. He looks at the thought of the Puritans and of the Evangelical Revival. But the majority of the space is taken up with a survey of what has happened since 1958.

As far as I can judge, having been involved on the periphery through 'The East End Five' and our survey of three hundred evangelical clergymen, Cocksworth's work is accurate and objective. It shows how we have reached the present *Alternative Service Book 1980* and 'sons of *ASB*'. He demonstrates the tragedy that there were so few Evangelicals who knew anything about liturgy—or at least about traditional catholic liturgies. It is sad to see just a few names constantly recurring and really this comes down to only two: Colin Buchanan and Roger Beckwith, with Trevor Lloyd arriving later. Colin was forced to be the standard-bearer for the Conservative Evangelicals (we are told) but, because he was isolated on the Liturgical Commission, his influence was inevitably very limited and he had to agree concessions which he might otherwise have sought to resist. This is the impression given by the book and it explains why Colin was such a protagonist for the new liturgies and in fact succeeded in persuading the majority of the Evangelical world in the Church of England to accept them somewhat uncritically.

When one ponders that period of liturgical work, it really is quite amazing that evangelicals were happy to accept a liturgy which shifted its theology firmly back from 1552 to 1549. It is no less incredible that evangelicals were happy to accept the authority of Hippolytus rather than the Scripture itself. In that action are presaged many successive shifts. Tradition came to be set above the Word. The very fact that the Holy Communion came to be called the 'Eucharist; is quite amazing when the only way in which it is possible to retain the flavour of the early Church—that is the scriptural position—is to refer to it

as 'The Lord's Supper'. Cocksworth does not attempt to assess the precise nature of the service, for example, in Corinth. Indeed very few writers bother to go back to that point and yet that is the only account which we have of the Breaking of Bread and therefore whatever is to be gleaned from 1 Corinthians Chapter 11 must be determinative for Evangelical Christians. And yet it has not been so. Only Moule in a brief work attempted to do it.

For example, is it not amazing that we have not been thinking hard about how we may return the Holy Communion to make it more like a meal and less like a ritual? But such thoughts have not surfaced at all in the last thirty years. What has been at stake has been the preoccupations of the Anglo-catholic: the nature of the presence, the *anamnesis*, the *epiklesis* and eucharistic sacrifice.

Another surprising fact about evangelical liturgical work in recent years has been the refusal to take seriously the last part of 1 Corinthians 11 and the clear statement that, as a result of wrong reception sickness and premature death may ensue. I suspect that it would be impossible to find anything at all written on this subject by any of the liturgical scholars of the past thirty years and yet it is the concern lest people should drink judgment upon themselves which has traditionally made evangelicals hesitant about 'The Parish Communion' and this is why Roger Beckwith and others have wanted to restrict the reception of the elements to adults or, at least, very mature teenagers. And yet now we are seriously considering whether to admit very young children to Communion!

It will be recognized that this book is a really marvellous read and a serious contribution to liturgical scholarship. He is anxious to persuade evangelicals to concentrate less on the Cross and more on the Ascension. He wants to insist on the legitimacy of placing the offering before the reception of the Communion. He says that, for evangelicals, 'the elements are seen as symbols of the crucified body and blood of Christ rather than as the gift of his glorified presence.' I myself think that the former view is much more a Catholic insight and that evangelicals rather see the feeding as a renewal by faith of Christ's indwelling in the heart of the faithful. There is a major misunderstanding in a great deal of liturgical thinking. The Holy Communion is seen as a dynamic meeting with an objective Christ, rather than a commemoration of the Sacrifice once offered and a renewed communion with the Christ who is ever-present in and with the believer. Because Catholic and liberal practical theology has such a tenuous grasp on the constant presence of the Lord (for example, we do not need to 'practise the presence of the God' but to recognize that it is ever a reality for the born-again believer) arguments about the real presence become of great importance. The fact is that the real presence is always with the believer and therefore there is no sense in which the evangelical needs the sacrament to bring him closer to that presence. This is not to say that we can dispense with sacraments but our concerns are much more about a renewed awareness of the benefits of the Sacrifice.

It is still true that we shall never enjoy doctrinally sound liturgy until at last we begin to see that the movement of the service is not primarily from man to God but from God to man. It is a sacrament of our redemption and that is all one way. When that is appreciated, we might begin to worship more adequately.

Limehouse Rectory, 5 Newall Street, London E14 JOHN PEARCE

PERSONS, DIVINE AND HUMAN Edd. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin Gunton

T. &. T. Clark, Edinburgh 1991 165 pp. £16.95 hb. ISBN 0 567 09584 3

The first thing which has to be said about this book is that it is a collection of seven papers which were given by teachers and graduate students at King's College, London. They are grouped around the theme of Personhood, as their title suggests. The inspiration for this seems to have come from R.J. Illingworth's Bampton Lectures of 1894, as Dr. Schwöbel explains in his introduction. The authors appear to have gone back to a forgotten theme in Christian theology with the deliberate attempt to revive it, and in this they must be congratulated. The theme of Personhood is indeed of the greatest importance, and its relative neglect in modern times can only be explained by a too-abstract, philosophical theology. On the other hand, the theme is not pressed with equal vigour in every essay; each is independent of the others, and there is relatively little overlap between them.

The book is divided into three sections, of which the first is headed 'Theological Proposals'. There are two papers, put forward by Professors John Zizioulas and Colin Gunton. The first of these will be familiar to those who know Professor Zizioulas's other work. He concentrates heavily on ancient Greek and Greek Patristic themes, pointing out that 'personhood' could not have been used as a basic ontological concept in pagan philosophy, because it tends to stress the particular over against the universal. The Greek Fathers, on the other hand, overcame this problem with the help of the Bible, which offered them a picture of reality in which the Supreme Being was Three Persons in One. Professor Gunton concentrates more on modern writers, and gives a surprising amount of space to Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Most ordinary theologians will probably find his paper harder to follow than that of Professor Zizioulas, but it repays careful study. Professor Gunton has an admirable way of structuring his thought in a concise and logical manner, and those who persevere to the end will be rewarded accordingly.

The second section consists of four essays, one each on Augustine, John Owen, Edward Irving and John Macmurray. Apart from Augustine, the choice obviously reflects the interests of doctoral students. Dr. Brian Horne gives us a sensitive and lucid study of Augustine's *Confessions* pointing out once again what a unique work it was in antiquity, and how vast its influence has been since. The piece on John Owen, by Alan Spence, is probably the best in the whole book. Owen is a much-honoured but little read Puritan theologian, and it is refreshing to discover how his thought can be so clearly restated and defended. Of special importance is the fact that Dr. Spence points out that Owen's defence of Christ's humanity is incompatible with Karl Barth's revelational Christology. In a remarkable piece of work, he demonstrates that Barth's approach is fundamentally docetic, whereas Owen's gives full weight to the human nature of Christ, without forsaking his divinity. This essay is of as great importance for our understanding of Barth as for our understanding of Owen, and should be read carefully by anyone interested in Barthian thought.

The third essay, by Dr. Graham McFarlane, introduces us to the thought of Edward Irving. This is something of a specialized interest, though Irving has gained in popularity in recent years. Even so, he is unlikely ever to rank among the greats, and we read of him more out of curiosity than anything else. Much

the same can be said for John Aves's piece on John Macmurray. Like the paper on Irvine, it is interesting and helpful, but it is dealing with a thinker of secondary importance and is unlikely to be widely read.

The third section consists of a single essay which presents us with twelve theses outlining the basis of a Christian anthropology. There is a great deal in these, but they suffer from the complex way in which they are presented. Most readers will puzzle over what Dr. Schwöbel is trying to say and will miss his many points, which is a pity. This chapter really needs to be simplified for the ordinary public!

Looking at the collection as a whole, it has to be said that a good copy editor should have been employed to prune the various contributions. Several of them are hard to read, and there are a large number of typographical errors. This is singularly unfortunate, because the papers are important contributions to a little-studied subject.

Tyndale House, Cambridge GERALD BRAY

THE PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN Gordon Keddie
Evangelical Press, Darlington 1989 239 pp. £6.95 pb.
ISBN 0 85234 261 6

This book, like the others in the *Welwyn Commentary Series*, is for the serious minded Christian as well as the youth leaders and preachers. The author has written several titles in this series. He maintains the high standard we have come to expect from him. As he tells us in the preface, 'this book has emerged from the pastoral ministry, the unchanging goal of which is to address the Word of God to the hearts and consciences of men and women' (p. 11). Mr. Keddie certainly fulfils this aim in this work. In a straightforward manner he shows that, as the title of this book suggests, the letter of James is essentially 'a manual for practical godliness' (p. 11).

He divides the epistle into three sections—

1:2–27, *Coping with the real world* pp. 23–85.

2:1–5:6, *Case studies of faith in action* pp. 89–190. And,

5:7–20, *How to live until the Lord's coming* pp. 193–226.

In each you will find a wealth of practical wisdom derived from a careful and faithful exegesis of the text. The closing pages (pp. 227–239) consist of references which are well worth reading. See, for example, the footnote on chap. 3:15, where he briefly discusses the almost untranslatable Greek word *psuchikos*, and that on chap. 5:19, in which he refers to the bogus exegetical arguments of so-called 'biblical feminism'. It is also pleasing to see D.S. Allister's excellent work, *Sickness and Healing in the Church*, referred to in the exposition of chap. 5:14–16.

My only quibble concerns the position in the book of the author's *Outline* of the Epistle of James (pp. 17–19). Personally I should prefer it to come before the *Introduction* (pp. 13–16), in which the author expounds chap. 1:1, instead of after it. However this is a minor detail which in no way undermines the usefulness and value of this excellent volume.

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

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Our thanks to two readers who have responded recently. **Ed.**