

B O O K R E V I E W S

LOGOS BIBLE SOFTWARE: Anglican Gold Base Package (<http://tinyurl.com/Logos6Anglican>)

Bellingham, Wash.: Faithlife, 2014. \$1,549.95 (approx. £1000 in February 2015).

It is hard to know where to start when reviewing a software platform that comes bundled with nearly 900 resources. This review will split, somewhat artificially, into two parts: firstly, the Logos 6 platform, and secondly, the resources included in the Anglican Gold bundle. I have been using this software since version 3 (2008) and while at college sold my fairly small library of commentaries and bought into the Logos system. (For the sake of transparency, as is standard practice in reviews like this, I should declare that I was given a free upgrade to Logos 6 Anglican Gold in order to write this review.)

The Logos Platform

The Logos ecosystem is built around a library of resources that includes books, data sets and media. These resources can be accessed via a web interface, a smartphone (Android or Apple), Kindle, or a desktop (Windows or Mac) client.

The desktop client is the most feature-rich way of interacting with the resources. Here you can simultaneously open multiple books in a highly-customisable tabbed interface. Customisable ‘guides’ mine data across the entire library to present relevant exegetical, topical, word study, or sermon preparation resources.

Highly complex Bible searches, drawing on original language words and grammar, can be achieved using the powerful search tools. The list of relevant verses can then be incorporated into a passage list and compared in multiple Bible translations. There are tools to create bibliographies, handouts, sentence diagrams, word searches, reading plans (e.g. M’Cheyne), prayer lists (to organise what to pray for and how often), and word lists (great for learning vocabulary).

The Logos software links in with the Faithlife social network to facilitate interaction around the resources. Documents, highlighting, and reading lists can be shared with a group to enable collaborative learning within Logos. Help and support is readily available through extensive online tutorials, a friendly community message board and the friendly customer support team. Logos also has several sibling products focussing

on humanities (Noet), popular Christian books (Vyrso), and collaborative church presentation and worship software (Proclaim).

The Logos interface is modern and easy to learn. Getting relevant resources usually only takes a few clicks and with the powerful search functionality it is possible to find information quickly. With a big library, there is an almost overwhelming amount of information available, but it is easily filtered and navigated. Hovering over a hyperlink displays a preview, which makes reading books so much easier because you're not constantly flicking back and forth through the Bible and other cross-referenced books.

Texts can receive annotations and highlighting, which are automatically synchronised to the cloud and onto all your other devices. Right clicking on a word or phrase provides various options to search or share. Parallel resources (e.g. other Bible translations or commentaries on the current passage) are readily accessible, and interlinear translations are available, which can be customised to include transliterations, morphology and links to dictionaries.

Logos texts are very well 'tagged', and this is one of the areas that has received significant development in version 6. Different base packages contain different datasets, and it is important to pay close attention to this when comparing products.

Dates link into a timeline feature and places link into the atlas feature. Biblical 'things' (people, places, objects, events, cultural concepts) are tagged so that you can search for every time Jesus is referenced, even if he's not explicitly named. Speech is tagged by the speaker, so it is easy to search, e.g. for every time Samuel mentions the word 'king.' These can be accessed via the 'Factbook' which links in with dictionaries, encyclopaedias and media in the library. Logos makes it very easy to export information into other software like word processors, and a particular highlight for preachers making presentations will be the Visual Copy feature which creates stunning slides from a Bible verse or quote at the click of a button.

Interactive media is also new in Logos 6. These open up various aspects of history, geography, linguistics, and theology. I can see myself using the Weights and Measures Converter regularly, although 'Who Killed Goliath?' less so. Others include a map of ancient inscriptions, biblical sites, infographics of Bible people's timelines, days of creation, Proverbs and Psalms thematic explorers, analyses of biblical feasts, characters in narratives, and several others besides. It is hard to describe the depth of information available through the Logos interface.

Resources

A number of the Logos resources have already been described above, but what about the specifics of the Anglican Gold bundle? They represent the breadth of Anglicanism today.

Bibles include the ESV and NRSV, but not NIV. The Revised Common Lectionary makes it easy to follow the Anglican calendar. Commentaries include Black's NT, Simeon's sermon skeletons, Tom Wright's NT for Everyone, John Goldingay's OT for Everyone, and a couple of commentary series covering the lectionary. The original language texts are a little disappointing with only the Logos-owned Hebrew and Greek texts rather than the standard BHS and UBS/NA. Other ancient texts include LXX, Apostolic Fathers, Apocryphal NT, and Philo but it should be noted that these are not usually the most up to date critical editions. A range of dictionaries are included, such as Strong, Holladay, Swanson, Liddel & Scott abridged, BDB, EDNT, Gesenius, and TDNT (Kittel).

The rest of the resources are probably best approached chronologically, and there is only space to mention the highlights. From the Patristic era there is the complete Early Church Fathers (37 vols covering Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers) and Kelly's standard work on Early Christian Doctrines. The range of Medieval works includes some by Bede, Thomas à Kempis, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, Anselm, and St Patrick.

From the Reformation we have Erasmus, Calvin's Institutes, Jewel's apology, and the complete works of Nicholas Ridley, Richard Hooker, William Tyndale and Thomas Cranmer. In terms of spirituality and liturgy, it ranges from BCP (in various editions) through to Ignatius of Loyola and the Sarum Missal.

The 17th Century authors include Jeremy Taylor, Lancelot Andrewes, John Lightfoot, John Cosin, and Thomas Ken. Into the 18th Century, we receive the works of Charles Wesley, Joseph Butler, and William Law, as well as Whitefield's sermons. The 19th Century is dominated by the Tractarians, Newman, Fore, Pusey and Keble, but is balanced by a good 18 volumes by J.C. Ryle.

The modern authors include Paul Avis, Mark Chapman, J.I. Packer, Alister McGrath, G.K. Chesterton, Joseph Ratzinger(!), Evelyn Underhill, Gregory Dix, and John Milbank. The last time I checked, Ratzinger was not an Anglican, but perhaps he will be of interest to those with a more Roman leaning. There are SPCK collections on Anglican Studies, Prayer, and Ministry, as well as a complete set of N.T. Wright's scholarly and popular books.

In order to incorporate all these Anglican resources, some resources from the ‘Standard’ Gold base package have been dropped. In the Bibles category, you miss out on some quite important versions including the historically valuable Wycliffe, Tyndale and Geneva Bibles, and the more recent Good News, HCSB, NASB, NIrV, NIV and NET. Bible commentaries are quite different too, with the ‘Standard’ package including the Pillar, Socio-Rhetorical (mainly Witherington), NAC, NIGTC, UBS Handbook, Calvin, Keil & Deiltsch, Matthew Henry and various others. For theological texts, the standard version includes Bloesch, Strong, Berkof and Hodge. The full comparison between the packages is available on the Logos website.

An ‘Anglican’ package is never going to please every (any?) Anglican. The selection here certainly includes a number of valuable resources, although too many Medieval and Tractarian works for my liking. The limited range of Bibles and commentary series is a bit unfortunate. It would be good to see some Latimer and Grove publications being made available via Logos, and it is worth noting that the Churchman back-catalogue is currently being prepared for release. Evangelical Anglicans might consider the ‘Reformed’ family of base packages as being a closer fit to their interests.

There is also a wider question of how large a base package one should buy. The resources in a base package come at the best possible price, but it is likely that not all of them are going to be read. This is part of the Logos ethos and allows discovery of new resources via the intricate web of inter-linking. However, some might argue that it is a bit greedy to buy more than you need. Certainly the Logos sales department are very adept at creating tantalising ‘best price ever’ offers that must be approached with wisdom and self-control.

Evaluation

As a platform, Logos is a delight to use. The interface is powerful and intuitive and well supported. It does require a decent modern processor to run smoothly, especially while building the search index when new resources are added to the library. This happens fairly regularly because resources are reviewed and updated to correct typos and errors in the cross-references. As a result of these (admittedly optional) updates, the product can also be quite bandwidth heavy, downloading many 10s of megabytes a month. For most Western users this will not be a problem, but for those with less well developed infrastructure it should not be overlooked.

The upside of electronic books is their portability, but the downside is that they cannot be lent to friends (though there are not many technological restrictions on copy-and-paste or printing). Unlike a physical book which you own, Logos books are licensed, and so they depend to a certain extent on the longevity of Faithlife as a company. Their corporate strategy seems sound (though it does appear to require constant growth in order to be sustainable), and it is likely that a corporate buyer would snap up the customers and technology if Faithlife were ever to encounter problems. These issues have not stopped me investing heavily in a Logos library.

I have minimal experience of other Bible software, but I find that Logos works well for church ministry with its balance of features and resources. This base package may not be quite so good for scholarly work, since many of its historical texts are not the latest critical editions, but rather older translations and compilations.

I have no hesitations recommending the Logos platform for people involved in Christian ministry; I use it on a daily basis. I am not sure the Anglican Gold base package will have a particularly wide appeal with its combination of resources and price, but for people wanting to get into the Logos system, it is certainly worth setting a budget and then exploring on the Logos website what base package fits. Perhaps this would be a good investment for the Church of England grants that are offered in the early stages of ordained ministry!

JOHN PERCIVAL
All Souls, Eastbourne

WHY ARE WOMEN MORE RELIGIOUS THAN MEN?

Marta Trzebiatowska and Steve Bruce

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012 224pp £25hb
ISBN: 9780199608102

A cursory glance around most Christian congregations in the UK today will show that there are more women than men present. But why? This slim but densely-packed volume by Marta Trzebiatowska and Steve Bruce seeks to show why women are more religious than men, and thus more likely to attend church.

It should first be stated that the authors do not write from any confessional faith perspective. Indeed, they are at pains to show that their theories and findings apply across cultures. Within the book, they discuss

not only Christian faith but also other world religions, and what might be termed 'new religious movements.'

The authors begin by defining what they mean by religious. In essence, they examine data relating to church attendance, and responses to questions about how important faith is to men and women. Those objective data show a marked difference in commitment between the sexes.

Having established that women are more religious than men, the authors begin to explore reasons why. They suggest that a complex interweaving of social factors, not biology, is responsible. The first factor is that, in general, women are still much closer to issues of life and death than are men, being those who give birth, have a larger part to play in child-rearing, and a greater involvement with caring for the sick and dying. That brings more women into contact with churches and leads to a greater commitment to religion.

They also suggest that there is still some understanding in society of a notion of vicarious faith, and so men may be willing to 'delegate' church attendance to their wives. Whilst Reformed Christians would want to refute that notion, it may well be a factor in society that needs to be acknowledged and addressed.

The control of human sexuality seems to play a part, both with men encouraging women to conform to religious practice and in helping women to escape from male sexual demands.

The final piece of the answer is, in some ways, the most challenging. The authors assert that in fact the difference is lessening over the generations as younger women are affected by secularisation and join men in rejecting religious practice.

The book is cogently argued and a helpful contribution from a secular perspective to an understanding of how those seeking the (re-) evangelisation of our nation need to address the important question of reaching men as well as women.

FIONA GIBSON
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THIRTY-NINE NEW ARTICLES: An Anglican Landscape of Faith**Martin Percy**Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2013 192pp £16.99pb
ISBN: 9781848255258

Buyer beware! This is not, as the title might suggest, a fresh attempt to expound systematically the teaching of the 39 Articles of Religion for a twenty-first century audience. This is, rather, a loose collection of ‘articles’ (i.e. short essays) previously written by Percy on a whole range of theological themes, here gathered together and grouped under a series of five broad headings: ‘A Catholic Faith’, ‘Personal Religion’, ‘Corporate Religion’, ‘Miscellaneous People,’ and ‘For Good Measure’. For this reason, what you make of the book will probably depend, more than anything else, on whether you share Percy’s particular doctrinal outlook and concerns. I found it in parts illuminating, and in parts infuriating. It is clear that Percy is possessed of a creative and agile theological mind (he has recently been appointed Dean of Christ Church, Oxford), and is not afraid to skewer certain liberal fantasies when they cross his path. And yet on other issues he seems utterly in thrall to those same liberal fantasies—such as in his contention that, ‘the few [biblical] references that may refer to homosexuality, and it is a ‘may,’ are opaque and problematic.’ This book is, in short, a classic case of a ‘curate’s egg,’ good in parts—albeit not one that has left a particularly pleasant taste in this curate’s mouth!

MARK SMITH

All Saints, Little Shelford

PRINCETON SEMINARY (1812–1929): Its Leaders’ Lives and Works**Gary Steward**

Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014 319pp £10.99pb ISBN: 9781596383975

The Princetonians are often thought of as defenders of orthodoxy with little note taken of them as pastors, churchmen or even missionaries. Yet, as Gary Steward argues, we have half a picture if we see them as intellectuals who neglected ministry and spirituality; they were men who, in his words, ‘stressed learning and piety.’ From Princeton’s proto-history as Tennent’s Log College to its reorganisation in 1929 Steward shows that the men behind the seminary were pastor-theologians of the highest order.

Princeton Seminary is the latest edition to ‘The Guided Tour Series’ edited by Stephen J. Nichols. It functions as a popular introduction and as such reads easily, is not encumbered with footnotes, has numerous pictures, and writes to edify as well as inform. Steward—who admires the Princeton theologians as ‘heroes’—is a doctoral student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, pastored for some years in Newfoundland, Canada, and is part of a scholarly renaissance in Old Princeton studies. Thus he is well-suited to publish such a book.

Steward opens by setting the background to the seminary’s founding. He then details the life of representative figures and select elements of their thought. Each gets a biographical chapter, focusing on piety and learning, followed by a chapter summarising a key primary source. Steward gives helpful summaries of each writing with lengthy quotations to allow his subject to speak for themselves. This is a highlight as readers are offered a glimpse into the hearts of men like the Alexanders and the Hodges. So we read of Archibald Alexander on religious experience and Samuel Miller on the role of elders. I found the summary of J.W. Alexander’s ‘Familiar Letters’ to be an especially attractive chapter.

In effect, this book is as much about pastoral theology, ecclesiology, and spirituality, as it is history. There is an apologetic strand running carefully through its pages that is consummated in the final chapter where Steward reorients Old Princeton in light of fresher interpretations. Adhering to the pastor-theologian trope, Steward aligns himself with revisionists who convincingly argue against the idea of the Princetonians as arid philosophical sell-outs. The one drawback is that Warfield is hardly mentioned—this is because the publisher is devoting a separate volume to him. It would be wonderful to have Steward put the Lion of Princeton through the same interpretive grid! In light of all this, pastors, theologians, and students will benefit from this easy and enjoyable read.

IAN HUGH CLARY

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GATHER GOD'S PEOPLE: Understand, Plan, and Lead Worship in your Local Church**Brian Croft & Jason Adkins**Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014 112pp £7.99pb
ISBN: 9780310519355

Gather God's People is a book about planning and leading worship services written by two pastors at a Southern Baptist church, and it's clearly written for people entering the pastoral ministry within that tradition. For example, it assumes familiarity with *The Baptist Hymnal* and even has tables with hymn numbers in.

Reading it as a British Evangelical Anglican is something of a cross-cultural experience. And like any cross-cultural experience, there are some things that seem strange, some places where their arguments assume things that simply are not true here, some points of happy familiarity, and some places where there is wonderful difference from which we can learn.

The book's biggest weakness is probably the first chapter. Croft and Adkins seek to set out a theological vision for worship. In doing so, they nowhere mention that worship is a whole-life activity of which the church's corporate worship is an important part. Neither do they recognise the diversity of biblical material relating to worship, instead arguing that the New Testament gives us precise instructions about what should be done in worship, and that we should only do those things—a position commonly known as the Regulative Principle. Ironically, they then use their church tradition to decide which of the New Testament instructions and examples to follow—there is no mention here of mutual confession (Jas 5:16), tongues and prophecy (1 Cor 14), shared meals (1 Cor 11), sharing a holy kiss (1 Cor 16:20), raising hands in prayer (1 Tim 2:8), and so on. They don't even consider the Normative Principle as an alternative, even though it seems to fit their arguments better.

Croft and Adkins are trying to be generous to churches that don't agree with them on everything, but they never quite succeed in stepping out of their own bubble and so their attempts don't really work. This book could easily offend women who introduce songs or lead singing (p. 97), as well as Christians like the apostle Thomas (or myself) who were baptised before they came to believe and so would be politely asked to refrain from receiving communion (p. 114).

There are however great strengths here as well, especially on using Scripture in the service. Many evangelical Anglican churches have rejected the Lectionary because of its omissions, seeming randomness and lack

of pastoral relevance. In doing so, we have also lost the valuable early church tradition of multiple readings; you can often hear more Bible read in those churches which we feel take its message less seriously! Croft and Adkins, however, offer some helpful suggestions for ways to get more Bible into the services without losing thematic coherence. Their section on leading prayers is also very helpful for thinking through how we can better bring Scripture into our corporate prayer life. Indeed, most of the material on planning and leading elements of the service is useful.

Their conclusion is also helpful advice to a young minister—that even if they may feel passionately about some aspect of worship, they should at first ‘only eliminate what is clearly unhelpful and obviously unbiblical’ and bear with the congregation in love.

All in all, an interesting book to read. It seems that there is much that we can learn from our Southern Baptist brothers and sisters; I sometimes wish they’d be clearer in saying the same about us.

JOHN ALLISTER
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CHRISTMAS CAROLS: From Village Green to Church Choir

Andrew Gant

Profile Books, 2014 247pp £9.99hb ISBN: 9781781253526

‘[He] had the happy knack of combining the most painstaking scholarship with a real enthusiasm for his subject and an engaging and readable style.’ It takes one to spot one: did the author realise that he was describing not only the Benedictine Dom John Stéphan, expert on *Adeste Fideles*, but also himself?

The Lecturer in Music at St Peter’s College Oxford uses such gifts well, and his attractively-presented book has many pluses. Twenty-two carols are printed with text and music, following their background stories in a style ranging from historical minutiae—it helps to know some Latin, French, and German—to a chatty sense of fun. Skip it if you disdain words like brainy, dodgy, wonky, or boozy; even (one step lower?) sozzled. Prepare to meet ‘such red-knuckled sons of toil as Tony Blair and Ed Miliband’—guess which carol—to be updated in future editions?

Not everyone calls DIX ‘a nice tune’; Mr Dix himself, author of ‘As with gladness’, didn’t; but this is not among the chosen texts. ‘Lo,

he abhors not the virgin's womb' attracts no comment; at least seven 'improvements' of that mistranslation are in print somewhere.

More serious is the omission from 'Angels from the realms of glory' of 'Saints before the altar bending', surely heard at more carol services than 'Sinners, wrung with true repentance', which is included. Other more-or-less obscure lines are carefully explained.

Most sadly, this book confirms the Cambridge-driven impression that Christmas requires us to retreat a century or more, ignoring the riches of the past fifty years. Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000) is briefly noticed, but not his best carols; and the penultimate page hints at the global treasures now available. Yet it is hard to acclaim a contemporary title entirely bypassing the words of Bell, Dudley-Smith, Perry, or (more widely) Margaret Clarkson, Shirley Murray, Jaroslav Vajda or Thomas Troeger; and the music of John Barnard, David Iliff or Norman Warren. It may be useful, even entertaining, to annotate medieval whimsy or Victorian myth; but must we keep singing it among neighbours needing the Gospel?

CHRISTOPHER IDLE
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CHRIST CRUCIFIED: Understanding the Atonement

Donald Macleod

IVP, Nottingham, 2014 272pp £12.99pb ISBN: 9781783591015

This, the latest book from the prolific Scottish theologian, begins as all works of theology should, with the acknowledgement that proclamation is accompanied by explanation. In this refreshing and deep book, Macleod masterfully, carefully, and accessibly unpacks what is going on the atonement of Christ—both the event of the cross and the surrounding events, and implications of the passion and resurrection. This is systematic, biblical theology from the old school—not bowing to sociological or philosophical fads, but engaging with the text at every level.

MacLeod deftly demonstrates the way that the atonement is at the heart of Christian theology by weaving in (amongst others) the central doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation, in his powerful and deep fourth chapter, 'Substitution: the man for others.' With notable works of systematic theology often seeking to consider what it means to understand that God is 'with' and 'for' us, it is refreshing to see this particular book respond resoundingly with the message of the cross.

The book is well organised, and divided into two parts. Firstly, the initial three chapters consider and explore ‘The way of the cross,’ the path walked by Christ, and considers carefully some of the key questions that arise around the ‘event’ of the atonement. MacLeod is deeply scriptural, thoughtfully pastoral, and provocative in the present context. The second part, comprising chapters four through eleven, delves into the ‘word of the cross,’ which explores the wide range of implications and challenges that the message of the atonement can be seen as spelling out in the New Testament, and implying for disciples of Christ in the present day.

Comparisons could be drawn, perhaps, to Stott’s magisterial *The Cross of Christ*, but this is a different beast. Drawing from both Scripture and a life lived in the light of the truth proclaimed here, MacLeod’s contribution is a welcome reminder of the doctrine of the atonement, and a provocative challenge to those who would silence the roar of the heart of the gospel.

THOMAS CREEDY
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TRUE DEVOTION: In Search of Authentic Spirituality

Alan Chapple

London: The Latimer Trust, 2014 238pp £10.99pb
ISBN: 9781906327279

Converted at college, discovering Christian biography, doctrine, apologetics and commentaries, your friend has been active in church-based service and evangelism ever since. But in recent years you detect a ‘moving on.’ Those evangelical books have been supplemented from the groaning shelves of the ‘spirituality’ section, from medieval mystics to contemporary gurus of intimacy who are less cerebral or academic. More wary of labels, they speak rather through feelings, silence or repetition, open to multiple religious insights relating to the whole person and leading us into unsuspected depths of soul and self. Petition, even intercession, is now looked down on as somewhat inferior, so even the Lord Jesus (‘When you pray, say...’) becomes unwittingly marginalised.

If this sounds familiar, this excellent book could be just the one to read, lend, or give; it may help some travelling in the opposite direction, or others who are vaguely uneasy without being sure why. With firm biblical roots, its Australian author sets about these subtle new/old diversions

with pastoral skill. He clearly distinguishes the often illusory world of ‘contemplation’ from the simple but searching discipline of Scripture-based meditation, with a working example from Psalm 77.

While the author’s targets include some expected names, some from the average church bookstall may be more surprising and all the more necessary. Yet the book is both humble and humbling, breathing the sweetness of Christ rather than landing hammer-blows to trounce the enemy.

Dr Chapple quarries the Reformers and Puritans for some pithily apt quotations (he prefers Flavel to Foster, Goodwin to Gillett, Manton to Merton), but only as supporting evidence, never as alternative sources of truth. He too has a gift for the punchline: ‘A crucial mark of authentic spirituality is that it is robust enough to deal realistically with suffering’; ‘To have this Saviour is to have everything that God has to give us—but to have everything without him is, in the end, to have nothing.’

There is a good summary but no index. My only reservation is the number of footnote references; even to follow up the thousand-plus texts referred to suggests a study-course rather than a useful read. Without any dumbing down, might a slimline version be provided which that friend would be more likely to open?

CHRISTOPHER IDLE
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READY, STEADY, GROW!: Equipping Today’s Gospel Churches

Ray Evans

Nottingham: IVP, 2014 224pp £10.99 ISBN: 9781783591138

My training incumbent and I independently discovered this book around the time of its publication as we were thinking through how to develop the church in which we serve. Ray Evans helped us to understand that our church was awkward. This is not by any means a description of the church members, but rather a term that describes the particular challenges associated with our size.

Evans helpfully distils wisdom and research on the dynamics of differently sized churches: small (<50), medium (<150), large (>400) and the ‘awkward’ size in between those latter two. We learn of how relationships, communications and structures that once facilitated growth can end up hindering the very growth they have produced.

Throughout the book Evans seeks to remain grounded in biblical exposition and principles, always aware of the dangers of using worldly methods for growth. As he does this, he also makes good use of the common grace wisdom we can take from outside the church. Evans writes as someone who has lead a church in an 'ordinary town' (Bedford, UK) for over 30 years, so his ideas are always down-to-earth in their application and British in their context. This is very valuable given that so much of the church growth literature is written for an American context.

Evans' philosophy of ministry is deeply rooted in preaching and teaching the Bible. This means that all the structural and organisational strategies he proposes are focussed around maximising the effectiveness of Bible ministry in the local church. The actual work of word ministry does not receive a huge amount of attention, because he is well aware that there are plenty of other books that help in that area. What Evans has written encourages the creation of structure and ethos that will serve and resource word ministry, rather than hindering it.

Those in church leadership have likely received good training in biblical studies and theology, and certainly there are many conferences that help us develop in those areas. However, in the area of leadership, we are much less well-resourced. As a church leadership team we are still digesting this fantastically helpful book (with the help of discussion questions at the end of each chapter), and I would commend it to church leadership teams to read and discuss together.

JOHN PERCIVAL
All Souls, Eastbourne

YOU CAN PRAY: Finding Grace to Pray Every Day

Tim Chester

Phillipsburg: P&R, 2014 176pp £9.99pb ISBN: 9781629950754

It has been said that for the truly great Bible-teachers their theology is all application and their application is all theology. This new book on prayer by Tim Chester is certainly in that mould, and yet perhaps the greatest strength of the book is that the author doesn't sit above us as a great teacher, but walks alongside us as a fellow struggler, and points to the one truly great teacher, saviour, and Lord.

I can honestly say that I have never read a book on prayer like this one—it is theologically incredibly rich: it addresses the Trinitarian

nature of prayer, and such knotty issues as divine sovereignty and human freedom, but in a way that feels light and unpretentious. Chester is simply concerned to introduce us afresh to the God whom he knows, and then allow us to explore, appreciate, and enjoy our relationship with him, expressed in prayer.

The book is wonderfully grounded—Chester has done his homework by surveying many ‘normal’ Christians to get to the heart of their questions about prayer. It is clear at every point that he is a real bloke, talking to real people about the real God. He identifies and expresses our problems with prayer in a way that is refreshingly honest (I don’t pray because...I’ve got more enjoyable things to do). This then enables him to teach God’s word into the reader’s life with both clarity and transforming power. Regularly I found my heart warmed as Chester expertly applied insights both from theology—such as the liberating and motivating power that comes from grasping God’s sovereignty—and from Scripture—such as his exploration of the ‘problem’ of unanswered prayer from the book of Lamentations.

I was particularly helped by his emphasis on the way that Christ’s priestly ministry transforms our prayers, so no matter how pathetic they may seem to us, they are pleasing to God. I also valued his consideration of a number of contemporary spiritualities and his gentle suggestion that they may at times sail slightly too close to the Colossian heresy for comfort—essential reading for anyone involved in Anglican ordination training! Perhaps my favourite point though was Chester’s repeated teaching that prayer suffers when we see it primarily as an exercise to be performed or a skill to be mastered. Instead prayer comes alive when we see it as a child asking their Father and enjoying their relationship.

The book falls into three parts—Why Prayer is Easy, Why Prayer is Difficult, and What we Pray. I’m excited by the prospect of reading this book with a men’s group at my church over the course of three hearty breakfasts! Right, enough time writing, time to go and pray...

BEN THOMPSON
Moreton-in-Marsh

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY

John Arnold, ed.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014 608pp £95hb

ISBN: 9780199582136

In around 802 A.D., the Emperor Charlemagne halted a baptism at the feast of Epiphany in his palace at Aachen when the godparents, ‘blushing deeply,’ admitted that they did not know the Lord’s Prayer or Creed off by heart. This is just one of numerous fascinating vignettes of medieval Christian life in this volume, as the writers seek to show how Christianity was ‘made, re-made, performed, debated, rejected, embraced, embodied, pursued, and generally *lived* in different times and places.’

As this suggests, the volume does not set out to provide a chronological narrative of the development of medieval Christianity. Instead it takes a thematic approach, offering a wide-ranging collection of essays, grouped into sections on ‘Spaces,’ ‘Practices,’ ‘Ideas,’ ‘Identities,’ and ‘Power.’ The effect is kaleidoscopic and sometimes disorientating, as the chapters jump across time and space and from topic to topic, including newly fashionable subjects such as doubt and atheism, the history of emotions, gender and the body, and material culture alongside traditional themes such as the conversion of pagan kingdoms.

There are some excellent essays along the way, which do just what the Oxford Handbook series says on the tin; they provide up-to-date surveys, critical analysis of historiographical debates and suggest new directions for future research. Overall, however, the volume demonstrates the inevitable difficulties of eschewing a narrative framework and the collection often lacks coherence. If there is an overarching guiding principle, it is to emphasise plurality within medieval Christendom; for example, we get essays on medieval ‘monasticisms’ and “‘popular” religious culture(s).’ This is not unhelpful; a number of essays usefully challenge a monolithic view of the ‘medieval church’ and sensitively unpick traditional binary categories of analysis (e.g. elite/popular religion; clergy/laity; Church/State; heresy/orthodoxy; Christians/‘Other’).

This book is not (and does not claim to be) a ‘beginner’s guide’ to medieval Christianity. Most articles assume some prior knowledge of the historiography, structures, doctrines, and practices of the medieval church. In practice, it will be most useful for scholars seeking a wider geographical and chronological perspective on topics of which they already have some knowledge, such as pilgrimage, monasticism or medieval liturgy. The book’s real strength lies in the superb bibliographies

appended to each essay; detailed and bang up-to-date, they provide an excellent starting-point for further reading, particularly as the essays themselves are necessarily brief.

Perhaps the volume is most interesting as a summary of the current state of research. Readers are warned against taking ‘too literal, narrow and theological an approach to the history of medieval Christianity, in which confessional and historical truth-claims have previously been confused.’ The historiography of medieval religion, we are informed, has now moved on to a “post-secular” and resolutely non-confessional approach.’ This judgment might seem a little premature in a field that is still dominated by historians with faith commitments (mostly Roman Catholics). Nonetheless, it raises interesting questions for Christian scholars working in the field of medieval religion. Even as we rightly acknowledge some of the inaccuracies of a traditional ‘Protestant triumphalist’ view of the late medieval church, and make use of the insights provided by newer methodological approaches drawn from sociology, anthropology, and cultural history (after all, a great deal of medieval religion can be studied as man-made cultural and social phenomena), we need to maintain a very different epistemology when it comes to convictions about religious truth.

ANDREA RUDDICK
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LIVING IN THE LIGHT OF INEXTINGUISHABLE HOPE: The Gospel according to Joseph

Iain Duguid and Matthew Harmon

Phillipsburg: P&R, 2013 202pp £9.99pb ISBN: 9781596385429

The story of Joseph occupies more chapters in Genesis than are given to any other patriarch, which may suggest that he has a lot to teach us! This thoughtful and richly applied study brings many treasures out of those fourteen chapters, thereby giving the reader fresh insights into ourselves, into God’s great plan of salvation and above all into the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the fulfilment of the entire Old Testament.

The authors have clearly laboured hard in their studies to understand the text of Genesis. Insights are drawn from study of the original Hebrew, the context of the story within the broader sweep of Genesis, and the message of the narrative to its original hearers. However, the great achievement of the book is the way in which the authors have maintained

a clear determination to serve the church and not the academy: the chapters read more like sermons than commentary. Thus large portions of each chapter are devoted to soul searching application—I was struck by how honest the authors are about their own struggles with sin—and heart-warming encouragement to see Christ more clearly.

The book is part of a series which is intended to give the lay person a richer understanding of how Christ fulfils the Old Testament, and a constant highlight for me was the multifaceted way that Joseph prefigures the Lord Jesus, and similarly how the brothers in many ways prefigure us.

It was not always obvious when the authors were asserting a clear typology between Jesus and Joseph, and when they were simply recasting the gospel using language and symbols drawn from the Joseph narrative. Perhaps at times the applications were drawing more on a wider Reformed systematic theology than on the details of the text—like for example the consideration of temptation and how to fight it from Genesis 39. And yet I would struggle to suggest that was a weakness of the book—the job of the Bible teacher is to draw on a whole range of disciplines (too often compartmentalised by the academy) so as to serve the people of God, and that is what this book wonderfully achieves.

If you are intending to spend some time with Joseph, then it's certainly worth having Duguid and Harmon along for the ride as well.

BEN THOMPSON
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HIDDEN IN THE GOSPEL: Truths You Forget to Tell Yourself Every Day

William P. Farley

Phillipsburg NJ: P&R, 2014 126pp £8.99pb ISBN: 9781596387461

All theology is meant to be applied theology and devotional theology. *Hidden in the Gospel* is a book written for Christians to preach the 'wide-angle gospel' to themselves every day and so grow in wonder, joy, and Christ-likeness.

William Farley starts with Lloyd-Jones' foundational piece of pastoring in *Spiritual Depression*. We need to be preaching to ourselves not listening to ourselves. In each of the following eight chapters, Farley unpacks eight key gospel doctrines (election, incarnation, the active obedience of Christ, his penal substitutionary death, resurrection, ascension, return and final judgment, new creation). He first explains

them, dealing with issues and objections where necessary, before showing how they should affect our lives as believers. Each chapter ends with an example of how to preach that particular truth to ourselves before offering some discussion questions and further reading. This is an excellent start in concise devotional reformed theology.

Particular strengths include the sweep from eternity past to eternity future, clearly introducing and applying various key theological terms (e.g. double imputation) and whole chapters on areas often neglected in the UK, particularly Jesus' active obedience and Jesus' ascension.

Working in a context in which theology, and protestant theology in particular, has perhaps been neglected, I have grappled with whether I would feel happy giving this to my congregation. In the main it is a solid yes. But I would have liked chapter 2 in its present form to be later on in the book, or slightly reshaped.

Chapter 2 is about election. Farley could be clearer on whether sovereign love is an expression of election or whether election is an expression of sovereign love. He starts chapter two: 'The good news of the gospel begins in eternity past with the doctrine of election.' William then quotes one Puritan writer: 'the doctrine of election containeth the whole sum and scope of the gospel.' At the same time he also says 'unconditional election is an exercise of God's free and unmerited grace, mercy, and love.' So which is the start of the gospel: election or sovereign love? This was an issue that divided the puritans and continues to divide. It inevitably shapes how we present election, and how Trinitarian that presentation is.

However, he ends the chapter with the horse and cart in the right order and so makes clear heart-warming and assuring applications. And his suggested prayer makes it clear: 'You picked me and sent your Son to save me simply because you are love...' This may well sway the unsure reader. If they make it this far, they will then be in for a soul-feeding feast in the rest of the book.

It is obviously written into a US reformed market and occasionally assumes some terms such as 'Calvinist.' There is a danger that it gives an individualist view of the gospel with little mention of the 'us.' But, this is an easy to read engaging starting point, first, to show how the biblical gospel is multi-faceted and life-changing and, second, to start to train us in preaching the various facets to our own lives.

NICK GOWERS
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ANTINOMIANISM: Reformed Theology's Unwelcome Guest?**Mark Jones**

Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013 145pp £12.99pb

ISBN: 9781596388154

A rather unappealing title conceals a fascinating and valuable book.

Underplaying holiness has been a persistent problem in all churches in every epoch. Saving faith in Christ and full-throttle discipleship are, biblically speaking, coinherent with one another. Justification is of a piece with sanctification. Any breach between Christian birth and Christian growth, or between forgiveness and living commitment, effectively removes the vital moral edge from gospel teaching. Such a tendency is one common expression of 'antinomian' teaching and practice.

Mark Jones seeks here to analyse recurring elements of antinomian thought and by so doing assist ministers tasked with proclamation in the current cultural arena. The author is thoroughly committed to the Westminster Standards and interacts extensively with post-Reformation orthodoxy, and with Puritan writers particularly. His initial aim is to define theological and practical 'antinomianism' with all its subtleties and complexities. Its main characteristics are:

- 1) An 'imputative' tendency, which over-privileges justification, de-centres union with Christ, and de-emphasises the moral responsibility of believers.
- 2) A rejection of 'moral law' as an instrument of the Holy Spirit in ongoing sanctification.
- 3) The related conviction that law commands and gospel promises are radically opposed to one another.
- 4) The thought that obedience is actually unnecessary for salvation and that good works receive no reward.
- 5) A belief that because God's love is unconditional, he is therefore neither angry at disobedience among his people nor pleased by their devotion.
- 6) The idea that justification alone is sufficient in assuring believers of their eternal destiny regardless of the degree of their sanctification.

Each of these issues receives chapter-length analysis. In combination, Jones opines, they comprise 'antinomianism.'

The book's ultimate aim is to offer Reformed responses to existential challenges and pastoral conundrums. The book's main strength is its robust

Christology and overarching emphasis on the believer's union with Christ and his work for us and within us. Christ himself provides both the source of Christian life and the pattern for it. Obedience to God's law is Christ's gift and the believer's responsibility. Disciples participate in the life to come as the Triune God dwells with and within them, yet unconditional grace brings a limitless moral demand requiring rather more substance than mere gratitude. The moral law is designed to structure this.

Jones will likely attract criticism on a couple of main fronts: from orthodox Presbyterians (and others) for downgrading the primacy of gospel justification and side-lining thankfulness as the main motivator for holiness; and also from biblical scholars for over-simplifying the complex array of scriptural approaches to 'law'. Greater clarity about accurately interpreting the content of 'God's moral law' might also be desirable. But as a work of careful historical erudition, rigorous theological argument, and warm pastoral concern, Antinomianism is impressive stuff. It deserves careful reading by anyone keen to consider the dynamics of biblical godliness.

BENJAMIN DEAN

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LUTHER ON THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: Cross and Freedom

Carl R. Trueman

Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2015 214pp £11.99pb ISBN: 9781433525025

Carl Trueman's great new book in the series 'Theologians on the Christian Life' is the best book I have read this year.

Trueman's writing is as stylish and readable as ever, but the Luther who emerges in these pages is a figure quite foreign to post-modern evangelicalism, not the hero of modern individualism or revivalism.

We need to hear Luther, not merely because he is so stylish, readable, and brilliant, but because of his flashes of utter genius which light up our culture and church situation. Trueman starts by exploring Luther's insistence on the difference between two theologians: one of Glory and the other of the Cross. Luther asserts that theologians of glory (who focus on experience of good things) miss out the cross as the place of revelation and a summons to a life of suffering. Luther challenges us to see that the cross is not only about atonement, but the fundamental basis of knowledge and life. In a society and church that wants to focus merely on

power and positive things, Luther calls us back to the cross, and Trueman says it has things to say to the struggling single mother, the old man facing death, the widow, and the orphan.

Trueman also covers Luther's most famous doctrine: Justification by faith alone. Outward appearance contradicts inner reality: we may appear to be righteous, but in reality full of sin, and we may appear to be despicable but are righteous in God's sight. Today, when Luther's doctrine of justification is under fierce attack, it is important to understand what Luther really says about justification: the objective, divine reality is what really counts.

Further, Luther argues that the Word is objective; it is true whether we receive it or not, (the objective Word comes before subjective experience). Preaching is better than private Bible reading because someone else brings us the Word. Here Trueman challenges the usual view of Luther as individualistic and existentialist: Not so! The solution to private struggles is to make sure that you are regular at church and in receiving the sacrament. It is the objective Word that banishes subjective suffering for, Trueman argues, Luther's so-called 'tower experience' was first of all an exegetical discovery and never a means of validating Luther's own assurance.

Many evangelicals will find Luther's views on prayer very odd: Luther thinks that the heart of the Christian's prayer life is meditating on the 10 Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, not personal requests for healing. Interestingly, Trueman suggests that when it came to the Christian life, Luther had a place for the third use of the Law: you can see how central it is for Luther in his Small Catechism!

Most foreign to us today is Luther's insistence that the sacraments are central to Church and Christian life. Luther reckons that Anabaptists are really semi-Pelagian: they make our own subjective, individual, experience central to baptism, not the objective, churchy, reality of God's promise. While most of us would think that Luther is dead wrong on the Lord's Supper, it is worth hearing Luther out. For Luther, words create reality (not that reality creates words). God's Word is supremely creative and real, so if Christ says bread is his body, the Word must create the reality. For Luther, the objective reality of the sacraments is a key to assurance.

For Luther, a pastor's job is to preach the objective Word, to administer the objective sacraments, to provide care in the shape of the applied Word, and to receive the confession of sins. Indeed Luther would argue that the solution to all pastoral problems is very simple:

take people back to the cross. Not for Luther is the modern emphasis on psychotherapy.

Trueman comes from a Reformed perspective and does not agree with Luther on some things, but he argues that reading Luther is good for us. Above all, Trueman captures Luther's humanity, wit, and his humour. Trueman tells the story of how Luther heard that a woman scared off the devil by breaking wind in his face, but Luther counsels that he wouldn't make this into a rule for scaring off the devil! Who said that Germans lacked a sense of humour?). Wonderful. Buy it; it will be a blessing for your Christian life and your ministry.

ROHINTAN MODY

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THE PLAUSIBILITY PROBLEM: the Church and Same-Sex Attraction
Ed Shaw

IVP, Nottingham, 2015 174pp £8.99pb ISBN: 9781783592067

Few of us need reminding that issues of human sexuality have become increasingly political. From the legalisation of gay marriage without an electoral mandate, to the Church of England's increasingly open attitude to same-sex relationships in church. All of us however need to remember that this is not simply a divisive political issue—it is a deeply personal one. Of the numerous books published recently on the church and same-sex attraction, this is the most helpful both in its fidelity to Scripture, and its personal pastoral sensitivity.

Ed Shaw writes openly as a man who is attracted to other men. His over-riding aim is to show that a life of celibate singleness is possible and that the world is wrong to assume that it is an implausible expectation. He achieves this by powerfully correcting nine 'missteps' the church has made over the years, each being one chapter of the book. With a combination of great honesty, careful exegesis, robust systematic theology, interaction with what others have written, and a pastor's heart, he shows how we can celebrate and support those whom God calls to celibacy—for whatever reason.

This book will be a life-saver (indeed according to 1 Corinthians 6:9 an eternity-saver) for those who are wanting to be authentic, obedient disciples of Christ and who experience same-sex attraction. Perhaps somewhat controversially (and I was persuaded), Shaw believes that

people can be born ‘gay.’ However, he is wonderfully clear that this is not what defines him or indeed anyone else. Hence his preference for talking about ‘same-sex attraction’ rather than ‘being gay.’ He shows that sexual intimacy is not the only kind of intimacy we were designed to enjoy, and challenges his readers to value Christ-likeness above heterosexuality. Personally that last point struck me greatly, and will shape what I long and pray for, both for myself and my own children. Chapter nine on how Christ calls us to self-sacrifice not self-gratification is worth the price of the book alone.

This book will also be hugely beneficial to those who, whilst not same-sex attracted, are called by Christ to long-term singleness and therefore celibacy. Shaw shows how God’s call to sexual purity and celibacy is not only possible but good. I love the way that he roots his teaching in the deep earth of great doctrines like union with Christ, the centrality of the church, and the reality of eternity. The fact that this is such a great book for all of us links to my only slight quibble with the book. The title may make people think it is exclusively about homosexuality when in fact it is about us all being sexual beings in need of the Holy Spirit’s transforming power.

This is also an important book for church leaders and church members to read. For as Shaw shows, ‘We same-sex attracted Christians can’t build this plausibility structure by ourselves: you need to help us build it. And you need to recognize the many times when the church has (unintentionally) helped to destroy the very things that we needed, and will need, to help keep us living God’s way.’ In part, then, the book is a call for the evangelical church to repent of ways we have, even unwittingly, made life harder those who experience same-sex attraction. By contrast, Shaw paints a beautiful picture of the support and intimacy he finds in his local church. This should and can be true for all churches. We need to heed his call not simply to promote good marriages in church but also good friendships. If we’re to be authentic, obedient disciples of Christ we need each other. What most encourages Shaw in his battle? ‘I’m most encouraged to obey what God says about sex by the costly obedience I see other Christians make in some totally different areas of their lives—due to some very different demands.’ Church leadership teams would benefit hugely from this book as we seek to promote a gospel culture in the churches we serve.

God has a track record of bringing great good out of great evil. So it was moving to hear how the Lord has used Shaw’s battle with wrong same-sex desires to make him more like Christ. And it was stimulating to

think that just as in the past massive theological clarity has come out of divisive theological controversy, that the Lord may use this whole topic to help us re-discover, live, and proclaim the reality of our union with Christ and the joy of being his eternal bride.

We must work as hard to support single Christians (whatever their sexual orientation) as we do in fighting for the truth of God's word in the culture and the church. I know of no better resource to help us do both. Thank you, Ed Shaw, for your honesty, integrity, and Christ-like example to us all.

ROBIN WEEKES

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FIELDS OF BLOOD: Religion and the History of Violence

Karen Armstrong

London: Bodley Head, 2014 512pp £25hb ISBN: 9781847921864

Though it seems self-evident to many that religious beliefs are inherently prone to violence, Karen Armstrong believes this is a harmful demonisation. Modifying René Girard's theory she states that 'modern society has made a scapegoat of faith.' When critics seek stability through scapegoating they background many other causes of conflict. Further, 'religion' is a problematic term that is notoriously difficult to define. Historically it was impossible to separate sacred from secular. Modern 'secular' cultures did not create a transcendent-free society—they replaced one myth with another, and sanctified violence in that new name. Since humans are meaning-seekers, they naturally use religion and ritual to assign meaning to violence.

This well-written, multidisciplinary book is divided into three parts that trace the sad relationship between religion and violence from antiquity into modernity. Part one roots patterns of violence in the biological, social, cultural, economic, and religious development of humanity and examines the struggle between sacralising violence and yearning for peace in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. Chapter four considers the Hebrew dilemma of rejecting the agrarian state and its violence while needing the stability it provided.

Part two focuses on Christ, Christendom, Muhammad, Islam, jihad and the Crusades. Jesus and his followers denounced violence and advocated a present, through otherworldly, kingdom. When the church

fused with the Roman state, violence was Christianised. The victory of nonviolent Christianity ushered in violent Christianity and beliefs morphed with success. Centuries later a war-torn Christendom was assaulted by Islam—a group that always had a mixed relationship with violence.

Part three covers the last five centuries. Secularists created a new definition of ‘religion’ that enabled them to scapegoat, marginalise, and subordinate it. This occasioned a ‘fundamentalists’ backlash. Western nations went through a slow, gradual and internal process of modernisation and then forced this process on outside nations quickly and violently—causing many problems in the Middle East. Modern secularists then denounce religious violence as if secularism is not part of the problem. However, ‘terrorism is fundamentally and inherently political, even when other motives—religious, economic, or social—are involved.’

One of Armstrong’s strengths is her ability to generalise and make sense out of millennia of conflicts and a plethora of concepts. This is also a weakness since she tends towards oversimplification. Christians will disagree with many of her assumptions on God, scripture, exegesis, and the nature of faithful Christianity. She unhelpfully softens biblical violence by deconstructing the text—an approach that would never convince a Christian contemplating violence. Also, at times she under-emphasises the role of sacred beliefs in fomenting violence.

By looking to the past this book helps the reader better understand Boko Haram, Islamic State, the LRA, and lone-wolf terrorists. Armstrong rightly defends Muslims who find terrorism abhorrent and emphasises commonalities in how different faiths come to question violence. However, since there is no ‘generic’ sacred text, her study would benefit from considering the resources that the Bible provides for peace that are lacking in the Qu’ran. For example, Christians have Christ’s example as their culminating word on violence. Muslims have Muhammad and his violence. This stubborn reality might hinder Islam’s path toward peace.

That said, this book is beneficial because it: (1) promotes humility, charity, and empathy; (2) critiques the scapegoating of religion; (3) furthers a complex view of religion and violence; (4) criticises secular myths and justifications for violence; (5) and encourages Western self-examination with reference to national myths and foreign policy.

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