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# Book Reviews

## GENESIS 1–15 Volume 1 Word Biblical Commentary

Gordon J. Wenham

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1987 liii + 353pp. No Price. ISBN 0 8499 0202 2

Those who know the author's two previous commentaries (*Leviticus* in the New International Series, 1979 and *Numbers* in the Tyndale Series 1981) will hardly need a recommendation for this new volume from his pen. It is a fine work of conservative scholarship, worthy to stand alongside the best on this great theme. The plan is a little unusual (it follows the general pattern of the Series). Dr. Wenham has several distinct classes of reader in view. Thus in dealing with a section of the text (e.g. Genesis 6.9–9.29) there comes first a specialized Bibliography. This is followed by the author's own translation of the Hebrew which (one judges) concentrates not on literary style but on exactitude of meaning. Notes on the peculiarities of the Hebrew text and word-forms supplement this; Hebrew characters are not transliterated. Then comes a longer section headed *Form/Structure/Setting* which deals with issues relevant to pentateuchal criticism (in the present example this includes a three-page extract from Speiser's translation of the Gilgamesh Epic). Finally there are a verse-by-verse *Comment*, and an *Explanation* in broader terms of the significance of the passage for to-day. This rather complex organization is intended to make the work suitable for the needs of theological students, Biblical scholars, and those with pastoral responsibilities. The latter will certainly find the *Comment* and *Explanation* full of instruction, suggestiveness and deep spiritual insight, in fact highly rewarding.

How does the Commentary stand on the question (troublesome for many) of Genesis and Science? Briefly, it does not make this a major issue; it is concerned to understand Genesis in its own terms rather than in those dictated to it by modern thought. It is an anti-mythical 'tract for the times', an 'inspired retelling of ancient oriental traditions about the origins of the world' with a view to instructing men about the sovereign power of God the Creator; about their own central importance as bearing His image; and about humanity's plight as the result of disobedience. The account of the Fall is paradigmatic, but it is also 'protohistorical' (by which I think the author means that it has historical concreteness). The 'six days' are a schema (like others such as the repeating formulae, the grouping of words and phrases into tens and sevens, the arrangement of acts into matching groups, etc.) employed to stress the system and order that have been built-in to creation.

The specialized bibliographies before individual sections are supplemented by many others at appropriate points. The work closes with an extensive Index of Authors Cited; a brief Index of Principal Subjects; an Index of Key Hebrew Words; and, longest of all, an Index of Biblical Texts. All in all, this is a magnificent commentary. We shall eagerly await the second volume.

## Churchman

to speak of our 'failing to take seriously enough the New Testament requirement. . .' (p. 173). In fact, the impression that came across strongly in many places was that this book had been rather loosely worded and some of what it says uncritically expressed (unless I have quite misjudged the author). Here are some other examples.

The New Testament is the Spirit's first word about God's final word, Christ himself . . . but the Scriptures are not themselves God's last word about Christ. The Spirit has had more to tell us than we could bear to hear at the beginning; in continuity with Scripture and its explication, he has gone on revealing Christ in new ways to his people. (p. 84).

What the author means here is a bit enigmatic; it looks as if he means that the Canon is open-ended. 'The Spirit flows far beyond the Bible, as a great river flows far beyond its headwaters . . . absorbing into itself all sorts of tributaries' (p. 81). I am afraid I find this language quite confusing, and its obscurity only deepens as one reads on. What is one to make of:

The glory that Christ receives is a little like the glory a subject receives from having his portrait painted by the master artist himself [the Holy Spirit]. It is totally inspired by that subject but nevertheless it gives to that subject a distinction that he did not have before it was painted . . . [Christ received thus] a new glory that he did not have before. (pp. 85, 86).

I do not find this helpful. To glorify God (or Christ) is surely not to bestow on Him anything He did not have before; it is to display to the Creation that is inherently His already. Dr. Smail's writing is unfortunately often turgid, repetitive, full of theological clichés and not always clear in its logic. It is this which makes his attitude to Scripture a little uncertain.

Having been so far critical I would like to end on a note of appreciation. Dr. Smail has a very interesting, informative and helpful discussion on the relationships between the three Persons in the Trinity. He draws heavily on Eastern Orthodox traditional views and strongly supports the priority of the Father and the subordination of the Son and the Spirit. All are equal in essence; the subordination is in function. This has always been maintained by the Eastern Church, and runs counter to some of the clauses of the Athanasian Creed (which has never been accepted in the East). He notes Augustine's view of the Holy Spirit as the Divine Love, the *vinculum caritatis* between the Father and the Son. He regards this as inadequate in that it fails to allow for the Personhood of the Spirit; and he introduces an analogy of the Roman Catholic theologian H. Mühlen (1963) appealing to the human family, in which the child is the offspring and expression of the parents' love. No doubt this analogy has great dangers and needs to be used with great caution; but if the constitution of the human family, parents and child, in any way mirrors the inner relations of the Trinity (and this receives some support from Gen.1.27 and 1 Cor.11.3) then (although the point is not made by the author) this would seem to have great theological significance for the theology of feminism, and probably, too, for the debate over the ordination of women. It would provide a theological datum of the utmost significance in our understanding of the man-woman relationship in the purposes of God, the man corresponding to the Father and the woman to the Son. Perhaps someone has already commented on this.

There is much of value in the author's discussion of the place of the Holy Spirit in the life of prayer, worship and fellowship. I fancy most of it would be commonplace in the works of the great Puritans, and of the leaders of the Evangelical Revival. Incidentally, Isaac Watts (almost a late Puritan) has sometimes been thought to have inclined towards Unitarianism in his later years (Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1957); but as David Fountain remarks (*Isaac Watts Remembered* 1974) 'Basically he believed in the Trinity, but was not sure that the Athanasian Creed was the best way of expressing it'. Perhaps it was the clause affirming that 'none is afore, or after other: none is greater, or less than another' that gave him pause. If this be so he might have agreed with Dr. Smail's position.

There is a useful index.

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

### **JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY The Preacher and the Poet**

**John Capon**

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1988 158pp. £2.25

ISBN 0 340 48584 1

This small book bears the marks of hurried composition. It took five months to write, says the author. The fact is that in trying to pack two long lives into a small parcel the book has become colourless, neither of his subjects emerging as the scintillating characters they were. John Capon's stark account of the misdemeanours of the Wesley family, the unhappiness that often reigned, the sister who committed an immoral act, two sisters who separated from their husbands, and John's traumas, indecisiveness, and at times hard-heartedness, do not make pleasant reading. In terms of character and disposition the quiet sensitive Charles appears to have been the finer man. Yet it remains that John became the founder of world-wide Methodism. In few words, the author tells a story that makes his book a fitting introduction to understanding two remarkable brothers. Unfortunately, he has little to say of John Wesley's teaching on Holy Communion, and gives scant attention to his doctrine of holiness, and his relationship to Anglican evangelical clergy, except Whitefield. What is of point in the ministry of the Wesleys is their firm grasp of saving faith and assurance of salvation as hall-marks of the true Christian. Capon rightly points out that the essence of John Wesley's message was: 'All men need to be saved, all men can be saved, all men may be saved to the uttermost'. His creative zeal and amazing journeys are revealed in the book to prove this truth. In spite of its weaknesses and short compass this is a work to be read and enjoyed.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

### **RELIGION AND THE WESTERN MIND Ninian Smart**

Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1987 142pp. £25 (cloth)

ISBN 0 333 41803 4

The chapters of the first part of this book formed the substance of the 1985 Drummond Lectures, delivered at the University of Stirling, which were designed to present 'the exciting and explosive possibilities of the modern study of religion', to quote their author. The second part of the book brings together a number of reflections on the current state of the various world

religions and the possibilities for inter-faith dialogue in a world torn by rival nationalisms and political faiths.

Ninian Smart is a Scottish Episcopalian who has become a leading advocate of religious pluralism in the broadest sense; he is against reserving any special place for Christianity in the schools or public institutions of a traditionally Christian country like Britain, and believes that all religions should be taught with equal sympathy and detachment. The notion that this might lead to contradictions, since not all religions or their adherents are equally tolerant, does of course occur to him from time to time, but at the end of the day he insists that his version of liberal humanism is the one which ought to prevail, on the ground that it gives the greatest amount of freedom to the greatest number of people.

Whether or not one agrees with the author clearly depends on one's own religious position; suffice it to say that convinced Christians are unlikely to agree with him that their faith is merely one among many and should be regarded as such. Of course, the author is right to say that other religions and world views (to his credit, he does not forget Marxism and other secular 'religions') should be studied fairly and examined sympathetically; prejudice is never very enlightening and should be avoided as much as possible.

Having said that though, it does not follow that one should not be convinced of the superiority of one particular world view over others, nor that it is wrong to try to convince others of that fact. Neutrality in the basic issues of life and death, which form the substance of all major religions, is not really possible; it can only be achieved by relapsing into an indifference which Ninian Smart would be the first to repudiate. Given that fact, some value judgment is necessary, and Christians need hardly feel ashamed if they maintain that on historical, moral and sociopolitical grounds, as well as on philosophical ones, they have a better claim to truth than their rivals. This does not give Christians the right to go around putting others to death, but neither should it oblige them to be silent in the face of other religious claims, and certainly they should not be expected to bow to them!

The author is greatly encouraged by what he sees as signs of syncretism—Christians taking on aspects of yoga, Buddhists becoming more evangelistic, and so on. He speculates that this may in time lead to a global ethic, though he is realistic enough to sense that this is unlikely apart from the corresponding triumph of the Western secular humanism which invented the concept of 'inter-faith dialogue' in the first place. Much of this book is stimulating, and it will challenge Christians to rethink their position at many levels, but it cannot really be said that the author's commitment to what he calls 'cross-cultural dynamic worldview analysis' is very convincing, or that it will get us very far in the real world of conflicting belief-systems and ideologies.

Oak Hill College, London, N.14

GERALD BRAY

**LATER VICTORIAN ENGLAND 1867–1900** Edd. T.R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day

Macmillan, London, 1988 347pp. £7.95

ISBN 0 333 42494 8

This is another of the excellent volumes in the 'Problems in Focus' series. Each volume is devoted to a specific problem or period and consists of a series of essays which deal with important issues. The eleven essays in this

volume are unified by their concern with how the existing institutions and power elite in late Victorian Britain dealt with the forces for change and still managed to maintain a stable society.

Individual articles examine the rôle of the professional middle class and institutions of the political system in providing a bridge between the old and the new. The working classes were not alienated from the political system as in other European countries and the system served both to meet their aspirations for change and those of their employers for stability. Other articles deal with the rôle and strategies of 'outsiders' such as women and Irish Catholics, the loss of industrial domination when faced with more efficient competition and the gradual emergence of a public science policy as the relevance of technology for industry became evident.

The most interesting article for readers of this journal is Stuart Mews's study of the established church's reaction to the Salvation Army's methods of confronting dechristianization. At a time when the Church of England was beginning to feel particularly insecure because of the challenge from nonconformity and Roman Catholicism as well as the growing dechristianization of the working classes the Salvation Army introduced a new kind of aggressive radical evangelism. It impressed some Christians, horrified and embarrassed others and at least for a short period of time was considered by the Bishops of the Church of England as a possible ally in dealing with the unchurched masses and confronting the challenge of dissent. The high point of this move towards cooperation occurred in 1882 when a committee including such important bishops as Benson, Lightfoot, and Westcott as well as Randall Davidson, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, was set up in response to a resolution of the Lower House of Convocation asking the bishops 'to enquire into the teaching and techniques of the Salvation Army and explore the possibilities of cooperation'. Unfortunately, the committee's report was never written as Benson, who was to prepare the first draft, was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury before he could complete his work, and by April 1883 the sensationalist methods of the Army had alienated so many Anglicans that the Upper House of the Convocation discharged the committee. There were limits to the tolerance of the establishment, and when leaders in the Church of England were confronted with the full extent of the Army's unconventional methods, they were, unfortunately, so alienated that they could no longer consider cooperation in a common cause.

This is a very readable and well researched book which presents a realistic picture of a late Victorian society that avoids oversimplifications and clichés. Late Victorian Britain was a society which has something to teach us and even the much maligned church had many positive features. Despite the inability of the Anglican establishment to accept the radical but effective methods of the Salvation Army the fact that they were at least willing to investigate the possibility of cooperation suggests a good deal more openness to innovation than is normally attributed to the Victorian church.

Oak Hill College, London N 14

RUDOLPH HEINZE

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION 1875-1980 Alan P.F. Sell**

Croom Helm, London 1988 252pp. £35.

ISBN 0 7099 5458

The reviewer of this volume must first of all be careful to specify what it is not. It is not a study of the philosophy of religion as such, but of the work of

philosophers who have made religious themes, in particular the existence of God and the question of metaphysics, an object of study. Second, it is largely, though not exclusively, confined to Anglo-Saxon philosophers, which means that some movements of thought, notably existentialism, receive less attention than they might otherwise deserve.

A good feature of the book is the way in which it brings to our attention the work of British philosophers who have largely been forgotten nowadays. This is an excellent and most useful accomplishment, particularly at a time when the field of philosophy is so much more open and eclectic than before, and when the approaches of an earlier generation need to be re-examined. The beginning student, in particular, will get a very good overview of the writers of the period from this volume.

On the other hand, the book has serious limitations as a specialist study which will make it less valuable at that level. For a start, the concentration on British philosophy has distorted the presentation not only of existentialism, but of Neo-Thomism and of Neo-Calvinism as well. This is inevitable, since these movements all have their focal point elsewhere, but it is a pity, since constructive work in the philosophy of religion has never been done in isolation from Continental models.

It is also necessary to note that the approach, which gives primacy to authors and periods, necessarily makes it difficult to follow through certain themes. There is obviously a good deal of discussion about the validity of metaphysics, though even that tends to be incidental to a discussion of the writings of different philosophers, but it is hard to follow a major theme like the credibility of miracles, or the nature of evil. It is also difficult to know quite what is meant, at the end of the day, by 'philosophy of religion'. The author seems to use this phrase to cover the writings of any philosopher who mentions God, whether or not he is concerned with philosophical proofs for God's existence, and it is not clear where ideas like providence, free will, morality and so on fit into the picture.

On the whole, therefore, it is better to regard this book as a dictionary of modern Anglo-Saxon religious philosophers, rather than as a study of the philosophy of religion during the period covered in the title. This does not make the book any less valuable, but the reader should be aware of what he is buying before spending what is, after all, an enormous price for only 252 pages.

Oak Hill College, London, N 14

GERALD BRAY

**THE STUDY OF ANGLICANISM** Edd. Stephen Sykes and John Booty  
S.P.C.K., London 1988 468pp. £17.50 pb. ISBN 0 281 04330 2

Two similar volumes have been published in this series by S.P.C.K., *The Study of Liturgy* (1978) and *The Study of Spirituality* (1986). The format is much the same. In this case there are 31 contributors each responsible for a chapter. The subjects covered seem encyclopaedic from 'The History of Anglicanism', 'The Gospel in Anglicanism', 'Authority and Method', and 'Anglican Standards' to 'Church Sacraments and Ministry', 'Anglicans in Practice' and 'Prospects'. The contributors include Henry Chadwick (on 'Tradition, Father and Council'), Peter Toon (on 'The Articles and

Homilies') A.M. Allchin (on 'Anglican Spirituality') and Paul Avis (on 'What is 'Anglicanism'?')

Clearly this was published to coincide with the Lambeth Conference but it will be a useful background book on the tradition of Anglicanism for many years to come. Nevertheless I find it to be one of the most depressing books that I have read for many years. As I read every word in every chapter I wondered how and why these contributors really felt able to commit themselves to this particular world-wide communion. Few of them have any concept of a Protestant and Reformed church which, maintain a proper continuity with the church of the ages. Yet it appeals in a way far clearer than many other churches to the final authority of Scripture as the only rule of faith and conduct.

It is perhaps significant that the historical section begins at the Reformation. Is it really true that the '*de facto* distinctness of Anglicanism began in the sixteenth century'? William Haugeard's chapter emphasises 'the savage forms of torture and execution' which were wreaked upon the Roman Catholic priests during the reign of Elizabeth but simply refers to the '300 martyrs' of Mary as if these were roughly balanced against each other and were for the same reason whereas a case can be made out strongly that the executions in Elizabeth's reign were essentially political acts.

What constantly recurs is the statement that the Church of England has ever been a 'non-Confessional Church'. Many chapters make this point. And yet until very recently every single clergyman was required to assent to the Thirty-nine Articles. Surely what set the Church of England firmly with the Churches of the Reformation was its confessional nature. And when it is said that the laity were not 'exposed to' the Articles it is forgotten that they were read out on induction to a living and, moreover, they were in every house in the realm once the Common Prayer Book was freely available in print.

Perry Butler writing on the second half of the history is more balanced and his chapter is a model of clarity. It is interesting that he freely concedes that liturgical changes in recent years have in fact 'modified doctrinal emphasis'. Indeed Louis Weil even admits the dishonesty of the operation: 'The new rites reflected significant theological changes.' The unanswered question remains as to why so many leading Evangelicals were so happy to adopt the new services without amendment!

Nevertheless as with every symposium what is true of one chapter is not true of another and Stephen Sykes's chapter on 'The Fundamentals of Christianity' makes amends handsomely.

R.H. Fuller has a revealing passage when he suggests that 'the incarnation together with the Trinity is, for Anglicanism, fundamental to the faith'. How often we have heard this statement in one form or another in a church whose liturgy is wholly Cross-centred! It will be appreciated that most of the contributors to this volume are really the heirs of the Tractarian movement, the folk who have for so long 'made the running' in our church and have purveyed an understanding of our church and of its history which is, to say the least, one-sided. It is for that reason that one regrets that Peter Toon's excellent chapter is so brief—only 10 pages out of 468.

John Booting writes on 'Standard Diviners' and does not find it necessary to expound Bishop Jewel but includes Laud as a significant figure in the

'formative period of modern Anglicanism'. Once again we find this appeal not to Cranmer and his companions but to the later period with its swing back towards a more 'Catholic' doctrine of the church. Hooker is expounded at length but Lightfoot, Hart and Westcott figure prominently in the chapter.

The chapter on 'Initiation' makes no reference to the Gorham Judgment and the chapter on the Holy Communion fails to perceive that the Anglican receptionist doctrine is not about a 'real presence' but a conditional presence—which depends on faith in the receiver.

The chapter on 'Ministry and Priesthood' majors on the A.R.C.I.C. I report and asserts that 'the Anglican ordinal calls into question the notion of a sacrificial priesthood'. Surely 'clear-cut rejection' is more consonant with the facts! The report 'Priesthood of the Ordained Ministry' which was badly mauled by the Synod is called into aid to support the idea that 'the eucharistic elements are offered to God by the priest as a commemorative sacrifice' . . . 'has remained a consistent presence in Anglicanism from the Caroline period.' Certainly there have always been some Anglicans who have held this view but the question is have they held it with loyalty to the plain formularies of the Church of England? They have not.

The many criticisms which have had to be made of individual chapters and indeed the general drift of this volume must not be allowed to conceal the fact that some chapters are models of objective writing. Peter Hinchliff on 'church-State Relations' is one example and W.S.F. Pickering on the 'Sociology of Anglicanism' is another—with a most useful summary of an Anglican sociology in a very few pages.

Perhaps Paul Avis may be able to sum up why this volume left me so depressed. He says

The tacit consensus as to the Protestant character of the Church of England and hence of wider Anglicanism, that undoubtedly pertained until the Oxford Movement began to make its influence felt, and resided in acceptance of the doctrines of the supremacy of Scripture, justification by faith, and the national connection, together with the rôle of the sovereign (a lay person) in the government of the church has faded . . . A.R.C.I.C. I could sponsor the view that though the universal primacy of the Bishop of Rome could not be derived from Scripture, it ought nevertheless to be accepted as God's will for the church.

Oh what a fall was there! Even Evangelicals today use 'Protestant' in a pejorative sense. The question remains: can the Church of England or the Anglican Communion be won back to a Scriptural faith? On the evidence of this book, it is clearly too far gone but it may be that God has some better thing for us yet to be revealed. May it be true! AMEN.

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JOHN PEARCE

**REFORMING FUNDAMENTALISM Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism George M. Marsden**

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1987 xiii + 319pp. £16.35

ISBN 0 8028 3642 9

This sympathetic but non-partisan history of the development of Fuller Seminary from its foundation in 1947 to the present day reminds one

inevitably of Christian's passage through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, with the ditch on one side and the quag on the other. Fundamentalism in America had reached a critical stage; it was increasingly being identified with such things as dispensationalism, pre-millennialism, and taboos on certain forms of pleasure and entertainment. Increasingly, too, it was suffering from an 'uneasy conscience' (Carl Henry) over its apparent indifference to the ills of society; and it was gaining an anti-intellectualist and obscurantist mind-set. Strangely in these circumstances it was the radio-evangelist Charles Fuller ('The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour') who had the vision of reforming Fundamentalism through establishing a seminary where the highest in Biblical scholarship and contemporary concern would be linked with a thoroughly conservative theological outlook, a sort of Princeton reborn. The idiosyncrasies of modern fundamentalism would be dropped; its loyalty to Scripture maintained. Charles Fuller was in a position to guarantee a financial base and a constituency, but he had no scholarship. To provide this he gathered round him the best men he could find—including Harold Ockenga (the first president), Carl Henry, Wilbur Smith, Everett Harrison, Edward Carnell, and, for a time, Béla Vassady. The seminary grew rapidly, then explosively. It had around 40 students in its first year; in 1972 it had 474; by 1982 it had over 3000, though many of these were part-time. Meanwhile however the tensions inherent in its legacies from classical Reformed Protestantism, raw fundamentalism and American evangelicalism, all with differing strategies for opposing modernism and liberalism, were bound to cause internal strains and dissensions. They did; and the story is one of increasing influence and usefulness on the one hand and internal power struggles on the other. It is a familiar one which has been repeated in connexion with different issues over and over again in the history of the Church. It is about rigorism (of some sort) and its opposite. At Fuller its main concern was over the question of Biblical inerrancy; did this extend to such things as dates and scientific matters as well as to spiritual truth? Could a strict discipline about this be consistent with Christian love and largeness of heart? It was the ditch and the quag again, and no doubt it always will be. It may be that just as 'omnipotence' is a conception which cannot be given a precise definition (see P.T. Geach, *Providence and Evil*) and yet cannot be surrendered, so neither can 'inerrancy'. At any rate, the tensions were there; and one tragic consequence was the breakdown and death (possibly by suicide) of the highly respected and eminently conservative second president, Edward Carnell. The rise of the charismatic movement, feminism and the increasing enterprise of the other great world faiths all imposed, and continue to impose, further stresses.

This is an exciting story, well-told and highly instructive. There is no discharge in this war, and the constant effort to avoid both the ditch and the quag will be with us to the end.

The book is well produced. There is an Appendix giving statistics of how Fuller has changed over the years in the nature of its staff and students, and in the emphases of its doctrinal and moral stances. A general Index completes the work.

**DILEMMAS: A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO MORAL  
DECISION-MAKING** Richard Higginson

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1988 238pp. £7.95

ISBN 0 340 41061 2

Although one is naturally cautious of a review which praises a book to the sky, such caution can be put to one side in the case of Richard Higginson's *Dilemmas*. Of the many books which have appeared in recent years designed to introduce people to Christian ethical thinking, this volume is by far the best to date. There is always a danger for any writer in this field to tend towards one of two extremes: either to focus so much upon the ethical wood that there is a failure to see the moral trees or conversely, to spend so much time analysing the knots on the trees that the wood is lost sight of completely! Well, we can thank Dr. Higginson that he helps us to see clearly both the wood *and* the trees in approaching moral problems.

There are a number of aspects to this book which are strikingly impressive. The first thing is that as a most able communicator the author makes available to the non-specialist areas of ethical thinking which might otherwise not be open to him. Issues are stated simply without ever being simplistic and are dealt with in a manner which is clear and penetrating without ever bordering on the superficial or banal. Certainly some serious thinking is called for, but with such a skilled guide as this to hand the process is never intimidating, indeed it is a sheer delight.

Secondly, the discussion throughout is earthed in concrete examples of the many moral conundrums ordinary folk have to grapple with on a day-to-day basis as well as some of the more major ethical issues. We are therefore treated to a consideration of a whole host of moral questions ranging from, whether to be totally open in selling a car with a faulty gear box, to the issues raised by new medical treatments such as I.V.F. (In Vitro Fertilization). What is more, actual, rather than theoretical examples are given to highlight the problems involved in working through moral dilemmas. Thus there are references to the bombing of Libya, the 'Baby Arthur case' and the Falklands War.

In the third place the writer does not shy away from tough questions. He is the only person I have come across who in writing, has faced up to the full implications of the 'Lesser of the Two Evils' argument, in that if there is an 'inevitability' to sinning in this fallen world (*pace* Thielecke), then how is this to be squared with the Christian belief that Jesus remained sinless while being 'tempted in every way as we are'? The solution he gives is worthy of serious consideration.

Having begun by showing that many of the moral dilemmas we encounter are in fact 'multilemmas', rarely turning on two options, Dr. Higginson assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the two predominant ethical views in the West which are often seen as rivals—the consequentialist view and the deontological or rule-governed view. He then shows how both these positions have Scriptural precedents such that the Bible is concerned about *both* rules and effects. Similarly a survey of the work of such contrasting thinkers as Augustine, Aquinas and Barth reveals a concern by all of them for rules and principles as well as consequences.

Turning to the relation between private and public morality, Dr. Higginson provides a most helpful chapter on Luther's idea of the 'Two

Kingdoms' and Niebuhr's understanding of 'Love and Justice'. Indeed it is the latter which provides the author with the basis for his own proposals in approaching moral difficulties, although with considerable modifications, having the strengths of Niebuhr's insights without the attendant weaknesses.

But before outlining his own way forward in tackling moral problems, Dr. Higginson carefully avoids the pitfalls some ethicists fall into with their almost exclusive focus upon moral *acts*. He does this by considering matters of character and virtue with special reference to the important work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas. What we *are* will affect, and to some extent determine, what we *do* and the sort of things we do will, in the long run, shape the sort of people we are to become. As in his weighting of the relative merits and demerits of other ethicists such as Thielecke, Fletcher and Ramsey, Dr. Higginson is most judicious in his treatment of these two outstanding advocates of the primacy of 'Virtue' in ethical thought.

As far as his own proposals are concerned, Dr. Higginson cogently argues that there are two pivotal principles which lie at the heart of all Christian decision making and action, namely justice and love. Both are of central concern to the Bible and both need each other for mutual direction and correction. With reference to Scripture and present day examples the author shows how these two 'first-order' principles interrelate and assist in clearing away much of the fog that can impede clear and sensitive thinking on moral issues. To the principles Dr. Higginson adds a number of 'second-order' principles—viz. never treat a person merely as a means to an end (Kant), never directly harm the innocent, as well as other principles which are enshrined in the Just War Theory. To complement these, a hierarchy of duties is suggested to enable the Christian to weight relative obligations when there appears to be a conflict of duties or loyalties. Again we are amply furnished with specific examples to illustrate how this approach might be worked through.

Whichever moral problem you may care to think of, it is highly likely that it receives some treatment in this book either directly or indirectly, not so much by way of providing 'the' answer but by encouraging the reader to think through the issues Biblically and consistently. Therefore one would hope that not only will this book find its way onto the compulsory reading list for students at theological college but also into the hands of all those who wish to cultivate a distinctively Christian approach to making moral decisions.

Keele University.

MELVIN TINKER

### **THE ISRAELITE WOMAN**

**Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative** Athalya Brenner  
J.S.O.T. Press Sheffield, 1988 144pp. £5.95 ISBN 0 905774 83 3

Dr. Brenner lectures at Haifa University and is equally at home in Hebrew and English. *The Israelite Woman* is readable, informative, and stimulating for anyone brought up in a Christian tradition. The author is a feminist, and wonders why in Judaism, by contrast with other cultures, women were given such lowly status and small scope. In areas of female intrusion in a male-dominated society—politics, literature, prophecy, sorcery etc.—she finds that except by exploiting their sexuality, women had small chance of gaining

influence.

The book attributes bias to the Hebrew writers who recorded or edited the 'legends' of the Old Testament. They would white-wash the mothers or ancestresses of Heroes despite their moral failures, and blacken women who put other loyalties before Judaism (like Delilah). Nationalist devotion justified the breaking of moral codes.

The author is engrossed in literary types. Her Biblical women are all cast as paradigms, and are constantly paired (Sarah/Hagar, Leah/Rachel etc.) or put into sets. This I found artificial eventually, especially when Potiphar's wife was slotted with Ruth and Tamar. The theory is interesting but stretched too far. These were individual people: to suggest that the writers used them simply as Shakespeare used characters, is an exaggeration and distorts the truth. In fact to anyone who reads the Old Testament as well as the New as 'God-breathed' (N.I.V.) the methodology of this exclusively literary approach has something lacking.

Often one finds one's (Christian) values reversed. Thus Ruth:

After she despairs of any other means of salvation she decides to take the initiative herself, and to resolve the situation which is intolerable from her point of view. . . . The woman's weapon is her sexuality. She chooses her victim with an eye to his social standing, and exploits his male vanity as well as his weakness for drinking.

Jezebel and Athaliah on the other hand are respected for being the only women who actually became rulers through their own ability. Jezebel as a princess of Tyre and High Priestess of Baal, had been trained for government and ran her own establishment alongside her husband's.

By the time I had reached the sad conclusion of the book, the debasing of womanhood which is seen as the result of Hebrew interpretation of the stories of the Fall, I was rejoicing afresh at all that Jesus' attitude, example and recorded words had done to liberate women and affirm their selfhood and worth.

Leyburn, N. Yorkshire

HELEN LEE

**STRESS: THE CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN CARING** Gaius Davies  
Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne, 1988 286pp. £6.95 ISBN 0 86065 401 X

It is a sad reflection on modern society that such a book as this had to be written. A heavy debt is owed Dr. Davies, for attempting it.

Its author, a sometime General Practitioner, and now a consulting Psychiatrist at King's College Hospital, London, writes from a balanced Christian standpoint, and a sensitive understanding of neurotic and spiritual ills. He offers his book to help Christians change their attitude, and to give practical suggestions to counsellors of the sick. He sectionalizes his work into Stress and the Christian, Everyday Problems, Patterns of Behaviour, and Controversial Issues. The result is one of the most comprehensive treatises known to your reviewer on this subject.

Of particular importance to Dr. Davies is the emotional stresses that a Christian might undergo. Of depression, he offers practical advice how the sufferer can help himself by rest, relaxation, and meditation, and points out

that the risk of heart trouble may arise from submerged beliefs and fears. Stresses of sex call forth his condemnation of pornography and of homosexuality as contravening law and love, and he laments that the A.I.D.S. epidemic is amongst hetero-sexuals. He questions, too, the wisdom of published articles of a medical type and the effect of Television on the public when describing illnesses. His common sense outlook pin-points the dangers of being too spiritual. Here, some of his judgments may alarm Christians, holding that at times it may be right to be angry, that prayer without medication can be harmful, that sometimes it is necessary to be self-assertive, and how illness may mimic demon possession.

Some readers may find it difficult to accept his view that so called evil-spirit possession is a medical as well as a spiritual problem, and that so-called divine healing opens the door to false claims glorifying the healer more than curing the malady. But he does not decry alternative medicine.

Few will read Davies's book without seeing something of themselves in it. A young minister may be thankful to have it in his hands, and the aged minister may regret it was not his in his earlier days. The laity will find it a book of keen Christian and medical insights that will help them to understand their neighbours.

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ARTHUR BENNETT

### **ORIGINS AND DESTINY: A SCIENTIST EXAMINES GOD'S**

**HANDIWORK Robert Gange**

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1986 193pp. No price

ISBN 0 8499 0447 1

Readers of *Churchman* will not need convincing that God exists, but occasionally it is helpful to have something to lend to doubters. Such a book is *Origins and Destiny* (an unfortunate title, considering that Wilder-Smith's *Man's Origin, Man's Destiny* has been around for twenty years). Robert Gange is an American professor of engineering (laser, holograph, computers etc.), and this is a strong plug for theism—somewhat on the lines of R.E.D. Clark's (1945) *The Universe: Plan or Accident?* Like Clark, Gange is not a Young-Earth creationist: he accepts the 'millions of years' astronomy but quarrels with Darwin over the origin of man and beast. By Bacon's classification his book is one to be tasted rather than swallowed, unless your knowledge of physics is much greater than mine. As with many American writers on creation, his science is solid but the history and theology are shaky. At times he can be devastatingly banal, but not infrequently his analogies are apt and original.

As a background to the book, it may be of interest to quote the opinion of Prof. Radmacher, President of a Conservative Baptist Seminary:

The National Academy of Sciences has stated in their work *Science and Creationism* that 'the hypothesis of special creation has, over nearly two centuries, been repeatedly and sympathetically considered and rejected on evidential grounds by qualified observers and experimentalists. In the forms given in the first two chapters of Genesis, it is now an invalidated hypothesis.' It is my strong opinion that Dr. Robert Gange's book . . . will demonstrate the error of that statement in his careful appeal to the Genesis record and the latest findings of science . . .

The National Academy of Sciences' booklet referred to was circulated to 44,000 American high schools in order to combat 'creationism', which has been defined (at the Arkansas Trial) as a reinterpretation of scientific data to bring it into harmony with the *literal* understanding of Genesis One and Two, i.e. the Days are 24-hour days. Gange makes no attempt to defend this view, nor does he attack it—a wise decision, since he is no theologian. In fact he has very few comments to make on 'the Genesis record'. So Radmacher is wrong in anticipating that Gange will 'demonstrate the error' of the NAS, but he is right in affirming that Gange has scored some good points for the Bible view of man and the essential distinctiveness of animal species.

The first 13 chapters elaborate William Paley's argument that the Watch (universe) must have had a Watchmaker, and Life must have had a life-Creator. It is a pity that Gange did not know about Dawkins's *Blind Watchmaker* published the same year (1986), because his expertise would have made him a shrewd critic of Dawkins's famous computer-analogies. As an engineer-designer he deals trenchantly with Darwin's argument from similarities, e.g. the pentadactyl limb in mole, bat, monkey etc. and man. (Of course it has long been known that such similarities do *not* prove common ancestry, but the argument is still used in school textbooks!).

The next six chapters are about Apes and Anthropology. Here the physicist is on less familiar territory: he makes no attempt to examine in detail the hominid-to-homo sapiens theories, but relies on commonsense arguments to prove the uniqueness of man. The last chapter explores rather ingenuously the question of Destiny, concluding with, '. . . it is not so much that man is bad, as that he is *bad off*' (G's italics)! There is no discussion of the Problem of Pain, the Age of the Earth, or Fossils and the Flood. Some curious theology is propounded, such as 'Jesus Christ himself confirmed that it was not the eating by Adam of the literal produce that produced the change because Jesus taught that nothing a man eats can defile him. . . .' and some curious history, such as 'Materialism emerged as a popular description of reality in the wake of the Renaissance. . . .' and the whole Gospel is squeezed into a 10-line Appendix. Nevertheless, within its limited scope, here is a non-polemical competent resource-book worth consulting for your 'Sermons from Science'. I agree with Prof. Radmacher that it will 'challenge some traditional (Darwinian) views and deepen appreciation of the revelation of our great God in nature and in Scripture.'

3, St James Close, Stretham, Ely

DAVID C. C. WATSON

**THE CRISIS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** John Burn & Colin Hart  
with a foreword by The Baroness Cox

Educational Research Trust 1988 39pp. £1.95

ISBN 1 870 560 01 9

This booklet presents the case for making Christian worship and Christian instruction mandatory in all state schools. The authors argue that:

1. The 1944 Education Act requires every state school to provide religious instruction and a corporate art of worship for all its pupils *unless* their parents wish them withdraw.
2. The clear intention of the 1944 Act was that such Religious Education and worship should be Christian.

3. Many locally Agreed Syllabuses have changed, particularly since the 1970s, from being predominantly Christian to a multi-faith approach . . . and the trend is growing.
4. The result is that there are now wide differences in teaching in schools in different parts of the country. In many, Christianity is no longer the major focus of Religious Education.
5. These differences are reinforced by the new syllabuses for G.C.S.E. courses which strongly emphasize world religions. In the majority of courses Christianity plays only a minor part.
6. Surveys show that less than ten percent of schools begin the day with a collective act of worship for all pupils, as the 1944 Act requires.
7. Government spokesmen have stated that Britain is no longer a predominantly Christian nation. This is contradicted by surveys which show that about eighty five percent regard themselves as Christian; only five percent adhere to other faiths.
8. There is therefore a need for Parliament to require that predominantly Christian Religious Education and Christian acts of worship be provided in all state schools, while continuing to recognize parents' well-established right of withdrawal and the necessity for providing all pupils with some knowledge of other faiths.
9. This need is paramount because our culture, laws and democratic institutions have been profoundly influenced by Christianity and cannot be understood without it. All future British citizens need to be introduced to the spiritual tradition which has inspired our country's history for nearly two thousand years.

All this is very sound and sensible. Any Christian must be thankful that there are influential men and women *not* content to see our schools decay into a rotting jungle of polytheistic agnosticism, as seems to be happening today. But one wonders: *what went wrong* after 1944, when the vast majority of teachers recognized that 'religion' did mean Christianity, yet they failed to obey the Parliamentary directive? It would be extremely naive to assume that failure was due to the omission of that word 'Christian' from the Act. For the true cause we must search deeper, if the failure is not to be repeated in the 1990s.

To your reviewer (Religious Education teacher 1971–76) it seems that much of the blame lies at the door of liberal theologians. In the wake of the 1944 Act there grew up a new brand of professional 'Religious Education specialists' who wrote commentaries on the Gospels incorporating higher-critical 'insights', and set examinations requiring a knowledge of these neologisms. Whereas 'Scripture' used to mean reading the Bible as history, now the textbooks suggest fifty reasons for doubting the miracles, questioning authorship (and thus authority), and wondering whether Jesus actually said the words attributed to Him. Can this be called 'Christian religious instruction'? Is not it really *anti-Christian*? Bishop Handley Moule once enumerated the great non-Christian religions as 'Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and *unspiritual Christianity*'. Of the four, I fear that the last is the most dangerous to our rising generation. What Britain needs for the 1990s is Religious Education text books written by real Christians with a concern that children from *any* background may have an opportunity to know the Truth in Christ.

We applaud the zeal and sincerity of those who hope to propagate faith and morals by Law, but we doubt of their success. Look westward, and note that in the U.S.A. where the Bible is banned from 'public' schools, Sunday schools for all ages flourish and thousands of new Christian independent schools have sprung up in the past twenty years. It is encouraging to learn that there are now over forty such schools in this country, too. God is certainly not beholden to any Government or Administration for His work: that is why my hopes for the future of Christianity in Britain are invested in education that is avowedly and unashamedly Christian, rather than in Acts of Parliament.

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DAVID C.C. WATSON

**IN THE MINDS OF MEN Ian T. Taylor**

T.F.E. Publishing, Toronto 1987 498pp. £16.95 casebound,

£11.95 pb.

ISBN 0 9691788 1 6

Ian Taylor is a London graduate who for over twenty years worked as a research metallurgist in North America. For another five years he was a producer-writer on television for a science documentary series. Now he has taken up authorship, and this is the revised edition of a book of the same name first published in 1984. It is a well-written (one might almost say excitingly written) discussion of Darwinian evolution from what would probably be described in Britain as a conservative evangelical point of view. It is not just an attack on the scientific aspects of Darwinism. It contains much more of broadly humanist concern; one of its attractions is the large number of portraits of men who have figured in the story from the earliest ages till now—men of science, philosophy and religion. The style is pleasant; the author is well-read and builds up his case persuasively, concluding with a salutary chapter on the dominance of evolutionary thinking in the secular humanist movement, and the dominance of this movement over our educational thinking. Scientifically the author argues his case on the basis of a young earth, the immense gaps in the fossil record, the inadequacies of natural selection as a mechanism, the improbability of the spontaneous generation of life, the extravagancies associated with the early finds of fossil hominids and the baneful effects of the theory on social politics. It is all very capably and sincerely done.

So much for the good points; now for the less satisfactory ones. Orthodox evolutionary theory faces some very grave problems: granted. But so does the 'special creationist' viewpoint taken by the author; and about this he is absolutely silent. Take the doctrine of the 'Young Earth' for example. Has the author read *Christianity and the Age of the Earth* by Davis A. Young; *God's Time-Records in Ancient Sediments* by Dan. Wonderly; or *Creation and Evolution* by Alan Hayward? All are creationists in the broad sense. He should have answered their powerful arguments for a very ancient earth. It is very easy to 'Blind with science'; and the author who writes for laymen on subjects which require the assessing of scientific evidence needs to be very careful to present with strict fairness the best arguments on *both* sides. Especially is this so when he is writing as a Christian apologist, the servant of the God of Truth. I am afraid the present work falls down here, as does much

of the 'creationist' literature. Apologetics must be argued fairly, and be seen to be argued fairly, or it will never win the intellectual battle and convince those it wishes to convince. Sometimes the author's science seems a bit adrift. He has no adequate grasp of the synthetic theory (Neo-Darwinism), nor does he really understand the significance of Eldredge and Gould's 'punctuated equilibria'. The logic of his use of the Second Law of Thermodynamics quite escapes me; he suggests that the great universal constants (such as the velocity of light, or the nuclear decay constants) may be in process of being downgraded in accordance with it. He seems unaware of the possible implications if this were true for the common 'creationist' standpoint. For if even the great constants are varying what becomes of the assertion that the 'days' of Genesis were of genuinely twenty four hours, that is that the earth's rotational speed has not varied? To say that it has not becomes one of those statements which can be asserted or denied with equal logic.

It is a pity, finally, that there is virtually nothing in this book of biblical exegesis. When ignorance of the Bible is so deep and widespread it is not good enough to assume that everyone knows exactly what its doctrine of creation is, especially when that doctrine is so profound, so majestic and so all-embracing. Even allowing for the author's main purpose there would have been every reason for including a summary of the Bible's doctrine.

The book is well-produced, well-illustrated and very pleasant to read; but I would not recommend it as a balanced account. There are thirteen tabular appendices; twenty six pages of notes; nineteen of references; and a good Index.

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

**TRANSFORMING ECONOMICS Alan Storkey**

S.P.C.K. London, 1986 212pp. £5.95 pb.

ISBN 0 281 04225 X

Alan Storkey considers that economists have failed us. From Enlightenment onwards, they have treated the economy as a mechanism to be studied, but a mechanism largely beyond human control. They have sought to predict rather than to guide. Yet, whilst allegedly scientific in their moral neutrality, their analysis has assumed that the pursual of self-interest is both natural and right. Sub-Christian presuppositions have been built into the very foundation of their theories. Labour is seen as a means to the end of maximizing consumption.

Storkey devotes three short chapters to a critique of the Monetarist, Keynesian and Marxist economic policies. He suggests that each does not work, and lacks an adequate moral dimension. Monetarism, he asserts, ignores the power of producers and consumers to influence their markets. The present government has not in practice been able to hold down money supply, as the theory would suppose that it could. Nor has the theory provided an answer to unemployment. The Keynesian model fails to grapple with income flows within banks, companies and families in an era of great social change. As a policy it worked in the 1950s and 1960s, but no longer. Marxism, whilst valuing labour, underestimates the importance of the market and its efficiency. By labelling capitalism alone as the evil empire, its analysis wears moral blinkers.

It is because the traditional theories do not work, are unable to guide moral choices, and unwilling to take Biblical justice seriously, that Storkey develops a Christian alternative.

A Christian approach cannot be fatalistic, but must be open to the Creator. Man is held responsible to be a steward, and is not to pursue self-interest, even if economic theory tells him that it is for the common good. There must be scope for a consideration of 'sin' and 'repentance' in economic life. Work is not valuable merely for its own sake, but as an expression of mutual service. As such everyone should have the opportunity to serve. In looking for solutions to economic problems 'the fulcrum of the situation is human accountability before God, not our own clever answers'.

Much of the book looks in some detail at the economic activity of social institutions : at the financial system's neglect of capital investment; at companies' lack of response to consumer demand; at what Storkey calls 'the professional closed shop'—he seems to have no time for doctors! He suggests that two-job families are forcing other families onto the dole. He provides five models of the Welfare State, and outlines the protectionist bias of the E.E.C. His insight into the way the Welfare State is collapsing through lack of coherent argument in its defence is most valuable.

Storkey lays great stress on the internal economic activity of social institutions. What is not clear is why such a study is thought to be peculiarly Christian. His suggested reforms—concisely listed—may spring from a Christian moral position, but to concentrate on social policy, as he does, is not Christian per se.

Whilst Storkey intends to be practical, one does wonder whether there is the social will to implement the kind of institutional reform that he recommends. Will we see membership of company Boards split three ways between consumers, workers and shareholders; or a reduction of the E.E.C. tariff wall; or a reduction in two-job families? But it does no harm to point the way.

Storkey admits that in his critique of economic theory he saves space by missing out the argument: we have only his conclusions. He does not consider that computer technology will have any long-term effect on unemployment, but he does not substantiate this. The book is not always well-written, but it is well laid-out and argued. It is an ambitious book that covers a great deal of important ground.

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STEPHEN LLOYD

**STRENGTH IN SERVANT LEADERSHIP Paul A. Cedar**

Word Books, Waco, Texas 1987 173pp. No price

ISBN 0 8499 3086

In church work it is often the sheep who lead the shepherd. This book is an attempt to prove that shepherd and sheep are all called to leadership servanthood. The author gives a number of case histories that are apposite to his subject and are, in his view, applicable to business affairs and home life. Taking Jesus' life and ministry as an example he holds that self-giving love is the basis of servant leadership, and in this there is power. A minister must therefore equip his people for serving love, a spirit that begins in the heart's attitudes and motives as the person commits himself to God and opens his life

to him, as did Moses and Paul. He believes that while some Christians are called to be special leaders all are called to be leaders too. On this point one is bound to ask, If all are leaders who are the led? The end result is bound to be a denigration of the accredited ministry, for in Cedar's view the unity of a church is not to be built around the appointed leader but is achieved through all members of the congregation recognizing their own gifts. What is therefore the rôle of the accepted leader? Not, he says, to create a kingdom around himself, but to exercise self-giving servanthood, with humility and gentleness, and as one who watches over others for whom he must one day give account.

This is as much a devotional book as a practical guide to Christian leadership. Tending to be an apologetic from certain parts of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, it engages in sermonizing, and at times has too much of the author in it. Nevertheless it can be a helpful study for those in positions of church leadership; the Independent Minister in his first charge; a curate on entering a Team Ministry or Incumbency; an evangelist in his task; and the leader of any church group where the dynamic of Jesus is necessary.

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ARTHUR BENNETT

**HEALING THE FAMILY TREE Dr. Kenneth McAll**

Sheldon Press, London 1982 106pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 85969 3643

Over the past few years there has been a developing interest in the concept of 'inner healing' and 'healing of memories' in Christian counselling. This book carries the process one stage further in taking into account not only the living but the troubled person's interaction with dead ancestors—hence the title.

McAll's method is born of his experience as a surgeon in China and in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. He noted the common eastern experience of evil spirits and the practice of exorcism. Back in England, he became interested in the effects of mind and spirit on the body in dealing with psychosomatic illness. Patients were sometimes aware of 'voices' which, in McAll's analysis, were 'begging for help'. These voices belonged not only to the living but the dead, who included ancestors with occult involvement, criminal history, or even aborted babies and persons who had once inhabited the patient's house. McAll states that he has evidence of over six hundred cases of healing which have taken place after a Eucharist has been celebrated for aborted, stillborn or miscarried babies.

The purpose of constructing a family tree is to ascertain which voice, or unquiet spirit is oppressing the living person. Deliverance of both the living and the dead is held to be possible through the Eucharist in which forgiveness is sought and the unquiet dead are committed to the Lord; we not only forgive the dead, but ask them to forgive us. As McAll puts it, ' . . . both the dead and the living may be filled with Jesus' love, and through the Eucharist, we can destroy whatever invites evil spirits.'

What are we to make of this? The use of Scripture in the book leaves much to be desired. He is dismissive of such texts as Hebrews 9:27 and states on the evidence of the obscure 1 Cor. 15:29 that sacramental participation and prayers for the dead are legitimate practices. Surely the thrust of this verse in its context is that it was a practice of which Paul did not approve. Nevertheless, McAll states (p. 91) that 'Christians as early as the first century were aware

that it was incumbent upon them not to abandon their dead but to continue to help them towards God'. He also uses the difficult 1 Peter 3:19–20, 4:4 as evidence for the extension of the work of Christ to the physically dead, and seems to believe in the existence of a type of purgatory where 'the unquiet spirits carry with them all the unresolved battles of the flesh' (p. 96). Yet surely this passage of Scripture is referring to those who lived at a particular historical epoch, that of Noah? (verse 20). The most we can say is that this text ' . . . carries light into the tomb. But more than this we dare not say confidently on a mystery, where our thought fails and Scripture is silent.' (Westcott).

What are the implications of this book for pastoral work? The least that can be said is that it does make us take people's background situation seriously, the dark secret places of the heart where unconfessed sin lurks together with deep hurts. But I miss the centrality of belief in the Cross as the once-for-all act which takes away sin and the dread of condemnation, despite McAll's emphasis on the eucharist. It is the power of the Cross which 'breaks the power of cancelled sin' and delivers the believer from guilt. The healing power of the sacrament lies in its strengthening effect on the living Christian who receives by faith. The sacrament does not alter the status of the departed; its effect in healing on the living is on his or her perception of their past. The believing Christian need fear no condemnation from evil spirits, dead ancestors, or whatever, for he is incorporated into Christ.

I have little experience of psychiatry, but I do believe that there is a real danger of evangelical Christians resorting to techniques which replace dependence upon the crucified, risen and victorious Lord as the basis for assurance for the troubled person. Ultimately it is God's will for us to be aware of that deep commitment shown forth in Christ which enables us to stand accepted, loved and secure. McAll's book is a result of a counselling process being given an erroneous theological grounding on account of a misunderstanding of the message of Scripture. Our task is to proclaim the Lordship of Christ to the living in the sure and certain knowledge that he is Lord ' . . . in heaven and on earth and under the earth' (Phil. 2:12)

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TIM GOULDSTONE

### **CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE IN CRISIS David Phipers**

Marc Europe 1987 161pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 947697 13 6

That contemporary marriage is in crisis is an obvious truism. David Phipers, a one-time teacher and now a minister, has put Christians in debt by offering what he describes as 'a theology of marriage'. Much of what he has written arises from social studies with 'teenagers and from various ministries in which he has been engaged. Dealing succinctly with almost every aspect of marriage, he accepts the view that the permissive society of the last twenty years has directly created alarming marital problems for Society and the Church. The cause, he believes, is the abandonment of Christian principles and ethics on which Western Civilization was founded. He states bluntly that God's will for mankind is that one man with one woman should live for life in marriage, both equal before him, and intended to procreate children. In so doing they become 'one flesh' and mirror the union of the triune God, and of Christ and his church.

Of much importance is Phipers's view of male headship within marriage. While holding that such is the result of the Fall, ('He will rule over you' Gen 3:16), he considers that rulership is 'a primacy of love', in which the female's womanhood flourishes. Few would challenge his view that one of the scandals of history has been man's subjection and exploitation of woman on the false grounds of ownership. Taking St. Paul's axiom that as Christ loves and died for the church, Phipers stresses that man fulfils this ideal in marriage only as he serves, cares for, and enriches his wife in love continually, as she abides faithfully to him; but that this can only be as they are filled by the Spirit. To that end he stands by the ancient Christian tradition that children are necessary to marriage, and that artificial contraceptives can defeat this end. In this respect he laments the Alternative Service Book's change of order in the purposes of marriage by placing the mutual relationship of husband to wife primary and relegating the procreating of children to the lowest place, so making for a revolution in the Christian marital ideal.

In this book severe strictures are passed upon sex before marriage as a great moral evil of the present age in that it is sex without commitment, security, and normally without children. According to Phipers the 'one flesh' union is created by the sexual act, hence two people who sleep and co-habit together come to their wedding as already married people, and a person who has sex and then marries another is committing adultery. This, of course means that the evidence of a marriage is not the signed certificate but the one-flesh union. As to Jesus' teaching on marriage, in his analysis of the divorce-per-fornication question he confesses that he does not understand what the 'exceptive' clause meant on Christ's lips, and suggests that separation for 'something indecent' may be what Jesus and Paul taught.

Regarding divorce, Phipers thinks it has become a 'tidal wave' that is destroying the Christian view of marital indissolubility and threatening the stability of Society. Of much point is his view that if divorced people could not marry again for five years more reconciliations would occur. He is dubious whether Christ's blessing is attached to the Christian wedding service of a divorcée, and equally questions whether 'Services of Blessing' should be used after civil marriages of divorcés. Nor can he accept that marriage is a sacrament, as held by the Roman Church. Rather, for him, it is a creative ordinance, not an effective means of grace.

The author offers constructive thoughts whereby the present impasse of modern day sexuality might be remedied. He sees it primarily in a widespread revival of true religion that can change people's outlook, restore respect for personality, and lead to purity of life. The church, too, must play its part in exercising discipline in this realm. Hence, until revival occurs Christian ideals and marital standards throughout the land can be encouraged by 'Marriage Encounter' weekends whereby husbands and wives led by a counselling team may share their feelings, thoughts, and problems exclusively with each other. A similar movement is of 'Marriage Repair' in Bristol led by volunteer Christian counsellors on a telephone rota. When so little marriage education is given in the home, and Western Society is crumbling without the Christian ethic, Phipers calls on Anglican Boards of Social Responsibility to support these movements.

His concern is to set forth facts of the marriage crisis as he evaluates them. He has done this with ripeness of judgment, a clear clinical assessment of the

## Churchman

problem, and an intense desire to see a rediscovery of the Christian marriage ethic. His revelations are alarming, his hopes strong and appealing. For your reviewer the thesis is beyond praise.

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ARTHUR BENNETT

### **SEARCHING FOR LOST COINS Explorations in Christianity and Feminism Ann Loades**

S.P.C.K., London 1987 128pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 281 04321 3

The book sets out to explore whether Christianity is inevitably antagonistic to the aims and ideals of feminism. The work and experience of a variety of figures, including Dorothy Sayers, Helen Waddell, Elizabeth Cody Stanton (editor of *The Woman's Bible*, 1895) and of some leading women theologians now working in America, are used extensively. This would not normally be a book that I would choose to read. My preconceived ideas of what it might be like were confirmed as I read it and I found it quite disturbing in places.

There was very little reference to Scripture but then the book does not come from a 'Biblical' feminist viewpoint—there was reference to several passages of Scripture which those writers quoted found difficult to accept—and it stated that exegesis of Scripture was male-interpreted and needed to be looked at from a female viewpoint. The words 'Christianity' and 'Church' are used in the religious and institutional sense rather than as a living faith in the Lord Jesus and following him and as a body of believers. This is clearly shown at the end of the book where the author writes:

It may well be that women's self-recovery will depend upon their refusal to bother anymore with the Churches and their theology, in the confidence that 'means of grace' will be provided for them in some other way. Many women seem already to have made the decision to rely on themselves and whatever 'means of grace' are available to them, rather than on the institutions of Christianity and how, if ever, these institutions can win their allegiance again in the near future is totally unclear to me (page 99).

This 'means of grace' is not the grace that we know and understand from Scripture. Ephesians 2:8 clearly shows us that there is no other way of obtaining grace: 'For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God'.

London S.W.6

NICKY COOK

### **A SINGING HEART Margaret Clarkson**

Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream Illinois, 1987 203pp. (including 22pp.

introductory and 111 hymn texts with notes) \$9.95 pb. ISBN 0 916642 31 3

Of the half-dozen contemporary writers whose hymn texts have been annotated and published in their lifetime, Margaret Clarkson is one of two evangelicals, the only woman, and (less surprising) the only Canadian among them. Though not the eldest, she started writing long before the other five, and almost uniquely her hymns span six decades of immense change in the

language of worship. If she has not entirely discarded a range of expressions which now sound slightly quaint, the greater marvel is that she has adapted so well to the demands of a generation insisting on 'you' language and intolerant of exclusive masculine vocabulary. While fiercely resisting some trends, she has over the years remoulded, polished and sharpened her writing to make this collection the definitive version.

Many of us learned *We come, O Christ, to thee* from *Christian Praise* (1957); it also featured in the *Anglican Hymn Book* of 1965. *Hymns of Faith* found two more, and *Anglican Praise* another three, but for several reasons Miss Clarkson is poorly represented in British hymnals. This volume, with a warm Foreword from Donald Hustad, crowns a writing career which is far from over, and should do much to set this right.

Why have so many women hymn-writers been invalids? There must be a connexion, but Margaret Clarkson is hardly a case of languishing on the couch. In spite of lifelong pain and disability, she has several books and a full teaching career behind her and wrote her first hymns while herself at school. Some texts are lyrical and song-like, but controlling the 'singing heart' is a systematic mind which shows from the earliest items onwards, fed on her schooling in the Bible, the Westminster Shorter Catechism, a sound teaching church, and her beloved hymn book.

God's glory, sovereignty, salvation and mission are thus her dominant themes; many different moods are here, but some may find her magnificent assurance rather awe-inspiring. The hymns all have a clear structure, and the great majority are marked by a repeated phrase or thought, even where there is no refrain. Toughness has marked the author's life, faith and writing alike; good hymns, she says, 'move from a bold and arresting attack in the opening line through a definite progression of thought to a clear and decisive climax.' Measured by that bold but straightforward yardstick, how many other volumes of 'worship' would perish! She has little patience, in herself or others, for irrelevant thoughts, poor rhymes, padding, or (worst of all) bad stresses.

Such crafting of a text takes much time; many verses have changed shape and emerged from major redrafting. Her introduction describes this process as hard, arduous and painful; perhaps there is a joy in the doing as well as in the completion which she does not always acknowledge. But it adds up to some meaty hymns for singing; Presbyterians may cope better than others with some long lines and stanzas packed with truth.

The background stories attached to each text are often tantalizingly brief; she is not greatly concerned for such trifles! Many have no dramatic origin, though some were called out by special events—a great missionary assembly, or the passing of Dr. A.W. Tozer—and *So send I you* and *Lord of the universe* merit fuller details.

The 111 items, including one or two 'repeats' in a different version, come in alphabetical order, with topic or Bible text to match, but are not numbered. A chronological arrangement could have been interesting; the mid-sixties were her most fruitful period, but the eighties bid fair to surpass them, with three hymns here from 1987 alone.

Familiar tunes are recommended for many hymns, in sometimes over-generous supply (ten seems the limit for a single item!); sometimes she has written the music, and would-be users must apply elsewhere. Many others still need tunes; the metres vary widely but are always 'regular', and

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composers could seize the opportunity they offer. The indexing is good, and copyright instructions clear.

I have a small quarrel with the idea of 'the mission field' being overseas rather than all the world, and with 'counting not the cost'; that is Loyola, not the gospels! But this is a valuable and outstanding volume which will enrich editors who consult it, hymn-lovers who meditate here, and churches where the hymns are sung. A special bouquet to Margaret for writing 'True hymn-writers have not sought primarily to write hymns, but to know God'.

Limehouse Rectory, London E.14

CHRISTOPHER IDLE

### **STANDING IN THE GAP Ken Gardiner**

Kingsway, Eastbourne 1986 157pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 86065 336 6

This book is an attempt to explore Christian prayer in terms of seeing it as a place where the Christian stands between God and the world. This is a brave attempt to explore an important area and aspect of prayer.

I sense that there is a thin line between seeing the Christian in this critical rôle and actually making our life, our faith and our prayer the controlling factor in the purpose of God.

The danger signals sound! I found the author's dependence on Watchman Nee's three-fold division of man into body, soul and spirit a concept hard to square with scripture. He admits that this division is arbitrary but I sense many problems arising from untaught Christians working on this model. Paul's understanding of man is that he is a unity and this alone enables him to explore the acceptance of man's character, personality and relationships. The description of tongues as something which Christians can choose to use to express worship and to 'pour it out to God' needs more rigorous examination.

Some of the practical hints and tips in the book are very helpful. I was glad to see questions asked about Merlin Carothers' 'Praise for everything' principle. The author argues that God should be praised *in* things rather than *for* all things. I think this needs spelling out carefully and clearly. I am glad to see a wide ranging prayer programme suggested, but at the end of the day I would counsel care in the use of this book.

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TREVOR PARKIN

### **BELIEVING IN BAPTISM G. Kuhrt**

Mowbray, London 1987 186pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 264 67088 4

Canon Kuhrt has tackled an important subject very well. This is not just an academic and biblical treatise, but a book written from a pastoral experience. It is, therefore, a book that can be handed to any thinking Christian, and although its intention is not necessarily to convince Baptists, this could well prove a by-product.

Putting Baptism into its biblical context, he points out that the apostolic understanding of baptism has two features—its ethical consequences and its Old Testament covenant context. Both are explored very thoroughly, though

it is the latter which calls for greater attention. This he does in his third chapter, and traces its application through from Abraham to its consummation in heaven. It is against this setting in the context of faith, that he reviews John's baptism as well as that of Jesus. These two chapters I found very helpful in the preparation of a sermon on John the Baptist.

Having dealt with the theological aspects, the author goes on to deal with the pastoral problems of discrimination and 're-baptism' in a very practical way. The closing chapters deal with preaching and united practice. All of what is said would certainly help any laity who are involved in helping the clergy in baptismal preparation.

14 Cambridge Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire

JOHN BOURNON

**THE FUTURE OF LITURGICAL REFORM J.B.M. Frederick**

Churchman Publishing, Worthing 1987 82pp. £3.95

ISBN 1 85093 055 4

Although this is a very short book, it is far from being an insubstantial one. It is, in effect, a theological essay on modern liturgical reform. There is a brief introduction giving an outline of what has happened in both Roman and Anglican Communion in recent years, which is followed by a theological exposition and critique. This is the meat of the volume, and it repays careful study.

The author gives a remarkable exposition of Covenant Theology and the rôle which it has played in the modern Liturgical Movement. He demonstrates clearly how the emphasis has shifted from a species—(i.e. elements) centred understanding of the sacraments to an understanding based on the liturgical actions, which is supposed to reflect the action of God, both in history and in the life of the believer. He defends the particularity of the covenant, as being directed towards individuals as well as societies and cultures, but without lapsing into an extreme of personal piety.

What the book does not do is discuss at any length what the title suggests ought to be its theme. Hints are dropped which give us the strong impression that all is not well with liturgical revision, that it has not fulfilled the promises which its promoters originally envisaged for it, and that a more conservative and balanced revision may be desirable at some future date. But this is not expounded in any detail. On the other hand, what is here is well worth the effort it takes to master the content, and this book should be read by anyone interested in the liturgical thinking which has gone into the development of our current revised liturgies.

Oak Hill College, London N. 14

GERALD BRAY

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## Other Books Received

**Christian Focus Publications** James Beaton, *The Life of Moses*, 1986, £2.45

**Cowley Publications** Louis Weil, *Gathered To Pray: Understanding Liturgical Prayer*, 1986, \$6.95; Barbara Hall, *Joining The Conversation: Jesus Matthew Luke & Us*, 1985, \$6.95

**Marc Europe** Paul Burbridge, ed., *Playing With Fire: Five Stageplays from Riding Lights Theatre*, 1987, £3.95; Eddie Gibbs, *Followed Or Pushed? Understanding and Leading Your Church*, 1987, £4.95

**A.R. Mowbray & Co.** John Baker, *Evidence For The Resurrection*, 1986, 50p.; William Purcell, *Evidence For The Holy Spirit*, 1986, 50p.; Richard Swinburne, *Evidence For God*, 1986, 50p.; Michael Baughen, *Evidence For Christ*, 1986, 50p.; Brian Hebblethwaite, *Preaching Through The Christian Year: Sermons From Queens' College, Cambridge*, 1985, £4.95; George Newlands, *Making Christian Decisions*, 1985, £4.50

**Oxford University Press** David Sheppard, (Selector and Introducer) *The Daily Bible*, 1986, £3.95

**Paternoster Press** R.E.O. White, *A Christian Handbook To The Psalms*, 1984, £6.95

**S.C.M. Press** Kenneth Slack, *The Seven Deadly Sins: A Contemporary View*, 1985, £2.95

**S.P.C.K.** Robert Van de Weyer, *Wickwyn: A Vision Of The Future*, 1986, £3.95

**Triangle/S.P.C.K.** Valeria Boldoni (compiler), *Praying with Saint Augustine*, 1987, £2.50; Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, (translators) *Praying with Saint Francis*, 1987, £2.25

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