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Book Reviews

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

Robert M. Grant and David Tracy

first published in 1948

SCM Press 1984 213 pp. £6.95

ISBN 0 334 01520 0

This book is a reissue of the popular study by R. M. Grant, which first appeared in 1948 and was updated in 1963. The memory, and most of the text, of these earlier editions is preserved, but with the valuable addition of three chapters by David Tracy, a Roman Catholic scholar, who gives us a short summary of the latest hermeneutical debates.

The general approach of the book is broad and wide-ranging, with quotations from suitable sources which back up the points being made in the text. It is a very good introduction to the sweep of the subject, though the student looking for detailed analysis of the contribution of particular writers will be disappointed. Somehow one feels that Calvin and Baur, to give but two examples, deserve more than a single page each, and that Roman Catholic modernism, by contrast, has been given too much space.

At every point in the narrative, the reader cries out for more—a good sign, and a demand which is partially met by the fairly extensive bibliographies at the end. On the other hand, the footnotes in the text are often disappointing, and do not help the reader much.

David Tracy's chapters are different, in that there are no quotations from original sources. His style is also somewhat harder to master, though it must be admitted that no one will find Gadamer easy! On the other hand, he gives more weight to the work of particular individuals, whose teaching and influence he summarizes nicely.

One of the book's difficulties is that it is seldom clear whether the authors are writing a history of exegesis, or a history of hermeneutical theory. Grant, in particular, straddles this divide without coming down firmly on one side or the other; Tracy is more specifically hermeneutical in his approach.

Given the purpose of the book, there is one very curious omission from the bibliography—Stephen Neill's *History of New Testament Interpretation 1861–1961*. Can this be intentional?

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

THEODICY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT edited James L. Crenshaw

Issues in Religion and Theology Volume 4

Fortress Press, USA 1983

SPCK 1983 163 pp. £3.50

ISBN 0 8006 1764 9

ISBN 0 281 04067 2

This book is a collection of essays about the problem of suffering in the OT, written by celebrated scholars over a period of nearly eighty years. They have been selected by the editor, James Crenshaw, because of their importance.

Some indeed appear in English for the first time, being translations of essays originally in German and in one case Hebrew.

W. Eichrodt, 'Faith in Providence and Theodicy in the OT' (1934) traces the evolution of attitudes in the OT. R. J. Williams (1956) compares biblical views of suffering with other ancient oriental ones. K. Koch, 'Is there a Doctrine of Retribution in the OT?' (1955) answers 'no'. G. von Rad has a short but gripping piece on 'The Confessions of Jeremiah' (1936). Other contributions are A. S. Peake, 'Job' (1905), M. Buber, 'Psalm 73' (1950), H. Gese on 'Ecclesiastes' (1962), and Crenshaw, who writes an introduction to the book and an article on 'Sirach' (1975).

There is much valuable material here which will make this book essential for theological libraries. However, despite its theme it is remarkably dry and academic: with the exception of von Rad's piece the authors seem a world removed from the sufferers they are trying to understand. Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs say more to me in their direct fashion than this learned but abstruse volume.

College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham

GORDON WENHAM

THE OLD TESTAMENT PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

Volume I Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments

edited James H. Charlesworth

Darton, Longman & Todd 1983 995 pp. £30.00

ISBN 0 232 51603 0

This stout, closely printed and well-bound volume, the first of two, fills a real need. For as long as seventy years, since 1913, English readers have been mainly dependent on R.H. Charles's two quarto volumes, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, for a critical knowledge of that literature.

The distinction between Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha is not a sharp one, since 'Pseudepigrapha' means works written under false names, which is true of only some of the works usually so called, and is also true of some of the Apocrypha. A better distinction is that the Apocrypha have been widely read in the church as edifying, whereas the Pseudepigrapha have tended to be judged disreputable.

Charles and his collaborators did their work with great ability, but were rather too selective in the texts they included, and depended too much on contemporary ideas about literary criticism and conjectural emendation. There have also, of course, been substantial advances in scholarship in the last seventy years, during which time the Pseudepigrapha have attracted much attention, and especially since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These have provided much earlier manuscripts of some known Pseudepigrapha, texts of other related works previously unknown, and considerable light on the date and circumstances of their origin.

In the new edition, the Apocrypha are largely excluded, but many additional texts find a place, which have not previously been available in a single collection. The additional ones in this first volume are often rather late or fragmentary, however. The texts are freshly translated, and (as in Charles) each is supplied with an introduction and notes. To have another new

translation of 1 Enoch from the Ethiopic, so soon after Knibb's, is a remarkable boon. Once again, the originals have had to be excluded, and the whole work is in English, apart from words and phrases cited in the footnotes. For the originals, one has to go to the separate editions indicated in the bibliographies.

Whether edifying or not (and sometimes, of course, they are), the earlier Pseudepigrapha share with the Apocrypha, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the writings of Philo and Josephus the distinction of throwing valuable light on the background conditions and thinking of the intertestamental and NT periods. They are thus a contribution to the history of the people of God and to our understanding of the NT. Why, in many cases, they adopted false names, and whether they ever pretended to a place in the canon of Scripture, are much disputed questions, which this volume does not go far towards resolving. However, it provides some of the material for resolving those important issues, and all the contributors (including, one is glad to see, some evangelicals) deserve our thanks.

Latimer House, Oxford

ROGER BECKWITH

TOWARD OLD TESTAMENT ETHICS Walter Kaiser Jr

Academie Books, USA 342 pp. £13.95

ISBN 0 310 37110 4

Any book with 'Toward' as the first word of its title is naturally immune to the criticism that it only scratches the surface. In the present case, however, that charge is not likely to be brought anyway; Kaiser's volume is a thorough exploration of a wide-ranging and complex subject. Its faults lie in other directions.

Issues of definition and methodology, the nature of the task, the use of the Bible in establishing ethical norms, and exegetical principles are all discussed in Part I. The tone is strongly conservative. The approach outlined and defended is described as 'a combination approach that includes elements of the synchronic, diachronic, central theme approach along with exegetical studies of summarizing texts' (p.21).

Part II is a study of the 'summarizing texts': the Decalogue, the book of the covenant (Exod. 20:22-23;33), the law of holiness (Lev. 18-20) and the law of Deuteronomy. This is perhaps the weakest section. Kaiser's expositions of some of the Ten Commandments are particularly disappointing and his exegesis at times questionable. Many readers will be surprised to read such statements as: 'The principle of rest and service to God remains the hallmark of the moral man who *wants to enjoy the good life*' (p.110, emphasis mine). What, one wants to ask, does Matthew 16:24-26 tell us about enjoying the good life?

In Part III holiness is taken as the 'central organizing theme' of OT ethics. This section is the real heart of the book. Exegetical treatment of the texts is generally more penetrating than in Part II, though even here the mixture is uneven. While (e.g.) the texts relating to the status of women are analysed at a level which leads to some refreshingly radical statements (pp.154, 204ff.), other issues are treated with a disturbing superficiality. For example, OT texts which prescribe the death penalty appear fleetingly in the midst of a

section on holiness in worship, where we are told that 'capital punishment is not an optional feature in a truly moral and ethically obedient society' (p.148). Many may wish to agree with this assertion, but it is made here on the basis of dubious hermeneutics and with no discussion whatever of the possible implications of such NT passages as John 8:1-11 (though in other connections NT passages are allowed some say). Or again, the 'just war' principle is assumed without any discussion to be valid, and is applied in a mind-boggling fashion to some recent events (p.178).

Part IV, dealing with 'moral difficulties' in the OT, is likewise a mixture—helpful in some places, in others naive and totally unconvincing (can Ps.137:9 really be only a metaphor?). The final part, although headed 'OT Ethics and NT Applications', deals with law and grace within the NT, and does not take up the untidy loose ends left hanging in earlier sections.

Where the book is superficial or naive, the weakness can usually be traced to the area of hermeneutics. At this vital and fundamental level, Kaiser has apparently failed to work out a convincing model, or at least to consistently apply one, and hence the whole project seems frequently to founder.

Trinity College, Bristol

J. J. BIMSON

JOSHUA Trent C. Butler

Word Biblical Commentary Volume 7

Word Books, USA 1983 304 pp. US\$18.95

ISBN 0 8499 0206 1

The Christian layman finds the book of Joshua one of the most exciting and challenging books in the OT: for the scholar, however, few books pose so many critical and historical problems. Trent Butler, in his 'Word' commentary, tackles these problems boldly and thoroughly without losing sight of the inspired message of the book.

The commentary has a relatively short introduction discussing trends in the study of Joshua over the last hundred years, then each section of the book is discussed fairly systematically. Detailed attention is given to textual criticism, for the Greek text of Joshua often differs from the Hebrew. Then the literary composition of the material is reviewed. Butler believes the book has gone through a number of editions, culminating in a definitive composition in the exilic period by a deuteronomic editor.

After the critical discussions, comes exegesis of the passage: sometimes this is quite full, at other times more patchy. Finally there is a shorter 'explanation' in which Butler reflects on the overall theological message of the passage he has just exegeted.

In theory this approach to commenting is excellent. In practice, at least in this volume, it is not completely successful. The scholar will certainly thank Butler for his comprehensive and up-to-date survey of literature (though he did overlook one article on Joshua in a well-known journal by me!). But the preacher and serious Bible student may be less pleased. It is not merely that your conservative evangelical wants to believe that Joshua is based on a more solid historical basis than Butler allows. I think he will also be disappointed at

the disproportionate amount of space devoted to critical issues at the expense of exegesis.

But finally, every reader would wish that the book were more polished than it is. From spelling mistakes to slang or turgid technical jargon, there is much that a strong editor would have corrected to make the book more readable. Despite these failings, though, Butler must be thanked for a very useful addition to commentaries on Joshua.

College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham

GORDON WENHAM

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES H. G. M. Williamson

The New Century Bible Commentary

Eerdmans, USA

Marshall Morgan & Scott 1982 428 pp. £8.95

ISBN 0 8028 1925 7

ISBN 0 551 00932 2

Magisterial—no other description does justice to this great commentary. Hugh Williamson has given us a work that will be definitive for the study of Chronicles well into the twenty-first century. He handles the problems of textual, literary and redaction criticism very surely, wasting no words. Indeed I often wished that he had been allowed more space to develop his points more fully. Besides dealing with the critical issues, he devotes more space to discussing the theology of the Chronicler than has been customary in technical commentaries, which is another very positive feature of the book.

Chronicles has long been a storm-centre of critical debate. Many editorial hands have been detected within it, and there is little consensus about dating the material. In particular, ever since 1806 the historical worth of Chronicles has been disparaged. It is often alleged to be an unhistorical rehash of Samuel-Kings.

On the literary issues, Williamson adopts a very sober approach. He argues firmly that Chronicles is a substantial unity composed in the fourth century. The book was then expanded just a generation later by a priestly reviser. However, on the historical issues Williamson is more sceptical. He allows that Chronicles had access to other sources besides Samuel-Kings, but most of the differences between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings he ascribes to the Chronicler's own rewriting of history. For example, David's arrangements for worship and Hezekiah's passover reflect the way things were done in the Chronicler's day as opposed to earlier custom. The Chronicler was even prepared to rewrite the chronology of Josiah's reign to make theological points.

This last point strikes me as unlikely on critical grounds. But the general approach of Williamson to the historicity of Chronicles makes me a little uneasy. Of course his has been the approach of some of the greatest names in OT study, like de Wette and Wellhausen. Yet questioning the historicity of the gospel narratives always disturbs us; can we be happy to sit more lightly to history in the OT?

College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham

GORDON WENHAM

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT Raymond Collins

SCM Press 1983 449 pp. £9.50

ISBN 0 334 02087 5

Books of this nature are rarely more than useful reference works that are brought out on occasion for consultation on specific issues. This important work, however, is significantly different from the usual 'Introduction', and while it will long serve as a useful reference tool for the student of NT studies, it deserves a thorough reading.

The author is an American Roman Catholic scholar, and much is made of that fact. Indeed, what is refreshing about reading this book is the insistence that all scholars start their studies with a 'particular philosophical and/or theological context, acknowledged or unacknowledged. Indeed the real danger to honest Scripture scholarship is the claim to total objectivity and neutrality. Such a claim usually hides a secret agenda, be it confessional or agnostic' (Introduction, p.xvii). The work reflects this mature philosophical understanding of the processes involved in biblical studies—an understanding often lacking among British biblical scholars, where the concept of 'neutrality' in such studies is still widely accepted.

The subject matter is highly selective, and at times the accuracy of the title might well be questioned. The author concerns himself not with the usual 'Introduction' to each book of the NT, but with a reasonably detailed analysis of modern methods of interpretation. In the preface he states that 'this book was born of the conviction that the words of [2 Tim. 3:16–17] ... apply to men and women of God in the twentieth century just as much as they did to the church leader of almost twenty centuries ago' (p.xxvii). But as 'literature' it must be approached as all other literature. The bulk of the work therefore 'introduces' ways of understanding the NT.

Chapter 1 begins with the assumptions: canon and authority. This is an excellent section, with a useful summary of the formation of canon and its authority. There is even an extended discussion of the Scriptures' own understanding of the authority of the written Word of God. It is almost as an afterthought that the chapter concludes with the view that 'in any event, the formation of a closed New Testament canon is unequivocally the decision of the church' (p.37)—a strange conclusion in the light of the preceding discussion.

Chapter 2 introduces the historical-critical approach to NT interpretation, while later chapters introduce lower (textual) criticism, and higher (source, form, redaction) criticism. There is even a chapter on structural analysis. As chapter titles these are enough to put off all but the most ardent students. The content, however, is thoroughly stimulating and provocative. Here is a Roman Catholic scholar carefully coming to terms with his (new-found?) post-Vatican II critical freedom.

It is the compelling style of the writing that will keep students, clergy, and others, eager to read on rather than simply to 'dip', as in a reference work. But it is the thoroughness of the study, the careful interaction with contemporary scholars, and the continual desire to open up the philosophical assumptions of the various critical methods that will make his book so useful for readers of any confessional position.

There are always areas in a book of this nature which are less than satisfactory. In the section on textual criticism many questions are left

unanswered and there is a clear overstress on external evidence to the detriment of 'internal' arguments. This is epitomized in his reference to the 'science of textual criticism' (p.77). He seems almost oblivious to the highly subjective nature of this 'art'.

The relationship between source, form, and redaction criticism is well portrayed—a relationship not always appreciated by students—and Collins warns of the subjective nature of these methods. It is strange, though, that he is far less critical of redaction criticism than he is of earlier methods. No doubt this reflects his own bias concerning the text.

The chapter on structuralism is so weak as to be nearly meaningless. And while a later chapter on 'Inspiration' makes a serious effort to relate this modern study to the dogma of the traditional church, its conclusions are somewhat confused.

The work contains good bibliographies, and interesting exercises using critical methods on the text. The author's final conclusions are on the radical end of traditional Roman Catholic scholarship. The book merits a high recommendation for all interested in modern NT studies.

Oak Hill College, London N14

PAUL GARDNER

THE MESSIANIC SECRET Issues in Religion and Theology Volume 1

edited **Christopher Tuckett**

Fortress Press, USA 1983

SPCK 1983 148 pp. £3.50

ISBN 0 8006 1767 3

ISBN 0 281 04052 4

This useful paperback is one in a new series being published in a joint venture between Fortress Press (USA) and SPCK. The series is entitled 'Issues in Religion and Theology', and intends to cover a variety of fields of biblical and theological subjects.

Following an interesting review of the state of play in modern scholarship on this subject, the editor introduces the contributors' articles, which are drawn from previous publications.

There can be no doubt that this volume is intended for the serious student of theology and biblical studies, for it assumes a fairly detailed knowledge of the debate initiated eighty years ago by the publication of W. Wrede's *The Messianic Secret*. Immediately noticeable in this collection of essays is just how far-reaching Wrede's analysis of Mark has been, for even though modern scholars would not accept his views, it is still his agenda that is dealt with.

The choice of contributors is to be welcomed, offering a wide range of scholarly opinion from Professor J. D.G. Dunn to Professors N. A. Dahl and E. Schweizer. These three, together with the others, offer detailed analyses of various problems and texts dealing with the 'secret'. The careful use of redactional critical methods by several of the authors perhaps is an interesting reflection of the extent to which Wrede himself anticipated this method of criticism. A fascinating book that should be of interest to all involved in gospel studies.

Oak Hill College, London N14

PAUL GARDNER

Churchman

**JESUS AND CHRISTIAN ORIGINS OUTSIDE THE NEW
TESTAMENT F.F. Bruce**

first published in 1974

Hodder & Stoughton 1984 216 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 340 35462 3

The objection is often raised today that Christians have to rely on prejudiced documents for the origins of their faith, as dissenting views from the primitive period are unrepresented. In this revised edition of his fascinating book, first published in 1974, Professor Bruce discusses a wide range of documentary and archaeological sources for Jesus and Christian beginnings, presenting successively the evidence of pagan authors, Josephus and his interpolators, the Rabbis, Messianic expectation at Qumran and elsewhere, the 'unwritten' sayings (Agrapha), apocryphal gospels and other uncanonical writings, the Qur'an and Islamic tradition, and archaeology. The stress throughout is on letting the texts speak for themselves. There are extensive quotations in translation, all with characteristically judicious comment. All the 114 sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas* are reproduced in full in the longest chapter (pp.110-56).

The new edition differs from its predecessor in the updating of bibliography and references and in two longer passages, but without any disruption of the original pagination. There is a helpful new paragraph on the *Gospel of Barnabas*, which has figured in recent Christian-Muslim discussion (p. 109), and a rewriting of the section on the 'secret Gospel of Mark' in the light of Morton Smith's further publication (pp. 164-6). But other controversies of recent years are not treated. The Turin Shroud is not mentioned, and no firm judgement is offered on the Nazareth Decree.

The book does not set out to 'prove' anything, and its conclusions are rightly cautious. The historical value of much of this material is minimal. The uncanonical sayings of Jesus are often secondary or conflated versions of gospel sayings, detached from their interpretative context, but they may be worthy of much higher respect than the fantastic miraculous accretions. This material as a whole throws into the sharper relief the quality of the NT documents themselves, with their distinctive 'note of self-sacrificing love' (p.156). The figure of Jesus attracted a penumbra of tradition and legend. That fact casts no doubt on the credibility of the better sources, but testifies indirectly the more powerfully to the impact he made even beyond his own circle.

Tyndale House, Cambridge

COLIN HEMER

**AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT Derek Tidball**

Paternoster Press 1983 160 pp. £4.20

ISBN 0 85364 301 6

Derek Tidball, of the London Bible College, has produced an admirably clear survey, geared to the needs of the general reader, of sociological study of Jesus and the early church. Contemporary writers like Peter Berger, Bryan Wilson, John Gager and Gerd Theissen are all prominent, but so too are pioneers such as Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch. The first chapter

tackles 'Problems and Perspectives', facing up to the spectre of reductionism and other fears of believers at the intrusion of sociology into the sacred ground of the NT. In reality, historical sociology of primitive Christianity is not as new as its distinctive vocabulary and concepts might suggest. Several parts of this book read like social history: for example, the chapter on 'Roman Social Institutions and the Early Church'. What is the relation between historical sociology and the social history that has for long been an aspect of the study of Christian origins? The question is made more pressing by the use of language. When the author says that God used 'normal sociological channels to accomplish his will', I endorse his point on condition that 'social' is substituted for 'sociological'. Elsewhere in the book, factors, developments and functions are 'sociological' but should surely be simply 'social', like structures. (Compare the way in which the cuckoo of 'methodology' ousts plain 'method' from the linguistic nest.) Even 'social' can be overdone. Theissen identifies four factors enabling the Jesus movement to grow: socio-economic, socio-ecological, socio-political and socio-cultural. It is doubtful whether 'socio-' adds anything, except perhaps in the second case.

All this means that the book will impart most to those unaccustomed to reading the NT *historically*, for it discusses how Jesus and the first Christians related to the society of their day. Thus the household would have comprised a significant social mix not necessarily found in house churches today. In this context, 'friends' of John 15:15 carried a particular nuance, and slavery had, by the beginning of the Christian era, ceased to embody that cruelty which it connotes for us. The early Christian attitude to slavery was 'manipulationist', according to the spectrum of stances towards the world distinguished by Wilson. On wealth, no single attitude prevailed. Christians were variously 'introversionist, revolutionist, manipulationist, conversionist, reformist'. Tidball corrects the myth that the first-century church was solely 'working-class', but then it was not predominantly middle-class either.

Other leading issues covered include whether the Jesus movement was millenarian (in my view an unhelpful label, given the differing ways in which it is applied by students of religion), and institutionalization, but much else is passed in review, with sensible comments corrective of the over-tidy schemas of much work in this field. If sociology, unlike history, must by its very nature discern in a religious movement patterns it shares with others, this introduction refuses to lose sight of those particularities which embody the historical distinctiveness of nascent Christianity.

New College, Edinburgh

DAVID F. WRIGHT

EASTER ENIGMA: Do the Resurrection Stories Contradict One Another?

John Wenham Latimer Monograph
 Paternoster Press 1984 162 pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 85364 368 7

Although written in a popular style, John Wenham's book is intended as a serious contribution to scholarship, and although commissioned as a Latimer Monograph it is obviously relevant to a far wider circle than that of Anglicanism. The author's thesis is that there is no contradiction between the

four resurrection narratives in the gospels. When properly understood against an imaginative reconstruction of Easter week-end, they can be shown to harmonize with one another. Wenham prepares for his case by arguing strongly that Mary of Magdala is to be identified with Mary of Bethany. Mary of Magdala arrived with some of the other women at the tomb but went away in a hurry to tell Peter and John what they had found, and so she was not present when the angel(s) appeared to the other women but she returned later and saw Jesus himself. Wenham insists that not all of his hypothesis, such as the identity of Mary, are essential to the grounding of his main hypothesis.

The questions of method raised by this approach are of great significance. Whereas modern criticism exercises its imagination in reconstructing the history of the tradition, Wenham uses his to reconstruct a putative sequence of historical events. How far is the use of imagination legitimate in either sphere? If 'reasoned conjecture' is permissible in the one sphere, it is surely permissible in the other, and Wenham's approach should not be dismissed out of hand. However, Wenham does carry out his study largely in independence of critical scholarship, and it is a pity that he has not interacted with it. His theory rests in effect on the independence of the four gospel accounts, and he does not consider the possible implications for his theory of, say, the theory of Marcan priority. At times he adopts weakly based minority positions, such as the authenticity of Mark 16:19–20. There is also the problem of what is acceptable harmonization. Wenham claims 'It should be said once and for all that the mention by one evangelist of two angels and by another of one does not constitute a contradiction or discrepancy. If there were two, there was one.' With respect, I do not think that the matter can be solved so simply, especially since Luke (who has two) surely knew the narrative of Mark (who has one). Again, in Matthew 28:5 I do not see how the women to whom the angel spoke can be other than the two women, including Mary of Magdala, named in v.1. Could Matthew's readers have come to any other conclusion? But this does not harmonize with Wenham's reconstruction.

All this raises the question of the kind of harmony to be traced between the biblical narratives and thus opens up wider issues. However, even if one does not find Wenham's approach or conclusions totally persuasive, one point is established: the view that the resurrection narratives are fundamentally contradictory can no longer stand.

University of Aberdeen

I. HOWARD MARSHALL

CHRIST ASCENDED: A Study of the Significance of the Ascension of Jesus Christ in the New Testament **Brian K. Donne**

Paternoster Press 1983 98 pp. £3.80

ISBN 0 85364 336 9

There are not many works that have ever treated the ascension as a subject on its own, both from the textual and the theological perspectives, but this short book attempts that daunting task. It is a readable and lively book, examining firstly the direct Lucan statements of the resurrection, and then continuing with Pauline and other texts that either directly or indirectly

indicate that the ascension was a notable and distinct event within the understanding of the early church.

This textual examination is disappointingly brief: a mere nine pages on the Lucan writings and thirteen on the 'other New Testament writings'. The brevity of the whole treatment of the subject is undoubtedly the book's weakness. If footnotes and bibliography are excluded, then there are only fifty-seven pages of text. The second part examines (in twenty-five pages) the theology of ascension. There are short chapters on the exaltation of Christ, the heavenly intercession, the Holy Spirit, the Christian hope, the final glory.

A third and final section of nine pages examines 'The Importance of the Ascension for Contemporary Belief'. This is probably the most interesting part of the book, and leaves the reader wishing all the more that the first sections had been further developed.

The author views the ascension as an historical event without which 'a hiatus exists whereby the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are virtually unrelated to each other' (p.25). He points to the implications of this understanding for Christology and for the contemporary community of faith. 'In the Ascended Christ ... there is to be found the basic answer to our quest for the meaning of life ...' (p.67).

A comment must also be made on the editing of the book, for there are many spelling mistakes (e.g. 'world' for 'word', p.9; reaaon, p.14; sacrifices, p.20; nodbody, p.21; etc.). There are also several transliteration mistakes: for example, two on page 15, others on page 19, 61, etc. An index to Scripture references would also have been very useful.

As a rather basic introduction to a discussion of the ascension texts and the theology of the ascension, this book can be recommended. Certainly its footnotes are reasonably full, and that will help the reader to be able to pursue the subject further. Perhaps one day we may expect an expanded and more complete book on the subject from the author.

Oak Hill College, London N14

PAUL GARDNER

SERMONS ON THE EPISTLES TO TIMOTHY AND TITUS

John Calvin

first published in 1679

Banner of Truth Trust 1983 1248 pp. £17.95

ISBN 0 85151 374 3

This is one of the Banner of Truth's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century facsimile editions. It is a massive book, and the question immediately arises over what readership was envisaged for it. Certainly those who are collectors of Calvin's work would have had little other opportunity to possess this volume if the publisher had not initiated this reprint. Its value lies in the fact that it represents Calvin's preaching style, which is quite different from that in his commentaries. This shows the theologian applying his theology.

Nevertheless it is mainly because it is a transcript of a series of sermons that the style is more discursive. There are times when Calvin strays somewhat from the immediate text on which he is preaching to provide a background for his exposition. The strong attack on popish practices which occurs several times in these sermons, reflects the battles which the

Churchman

Reformers were waging at the time. At the same time there is much sound application of the biblical text, and the modern exponent of the pastoral epistles will find some valuable insights into Paul's meaning.

It is not without some significance that Calvin's contemporary, John Knox, asked for readings from Calvin's sermons when he realized his end was drawing near. There is much to inspire and encourage in Calvin's comments, but there are difficulties for the modern reader in coping with this reprint. The sixteenth-century English typography and style, as well as much of the spelling, make the book that much more difficult to read. The reader has not only to adjust to peculiar spellings, but finds himself confronted with obsolete words. Nevertheless this will not prove too big an obstacle for those who are prepared to put some effort into digging out the treasures of this remarkable man. They will certainly stumble on some vigorous language. Calvin can write of Paul that he 'flatly shouteth out' widows of under threescore years, or can ask the question about the choice of those to serve God, 'fhall wee take them, as if wee should make a King of cloutes, the firft that cometh, the veriest harebraine, or foole?'

London Bible College

DONALD GUTHRIE

HUMANITY IN GOD

Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Jürgen Moltmann

SCM Press 1984 134 pp. £4.50

ISBN 0 334 02055 7

Arising out of joint teaching in the USA, this book falls into three parts. In the first, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel lays down the claim that the history of Christianity, and particularly the history of its earliest and most formative period, has been subject to massive patriarchal distortion. The effect of this has been the diminution or exclusion of women from the official traditions of the church, or their assignment to roles more congenial to the male bearers of official Christianity. The author traces this process through two exemplary figures, Mary Magdalene and Martha. The consequence of this exclusion is that the matriarchal elements of the Christian faith resurface in different modes of expression: in experiential or iconographical traditions, for example, or in heretical movements such as the Cathari. In her concluding reflections the author makes an impassioned plea that this 'subculture must be uncovered and listened to as an alternative to the dominating culture' (p.50).

Jürgen Moltmann's section is less charged, and expounds in more popular form his conviction that the doctrine of the Trinity, understood in strongly social terms, offers a more effective correlation of God and human freedom than the monotheism from which Christianity must constantly guard itself. This theme, worked out more fully in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (ET, SCM, London 1981), is expounded in a manner more suggestive than precise, often by association of ideas and even occasionally by recourse to unanalysed slogans ('the God of the oppressed').

A coda to the book gives the text of a dialogue between the authors on the forms of community life in which patriarchy might be transcended.

The most provocative part of the collection is the first. Certainly it is over-written and overstated, and badly in need of detailed exemplification or

qualification ('Male fantasy and male conflicts shaped Christian tradition and theology', p.11; 'more than anything', Jesus 'associated himself with women in a partnerlike manner', p.37). And above all, it is impaired by a failure to engage with questions of the *norms* of theology: we are given no guidance on how to distinguish the true gospel from its patriarchal distortion, nor on how to discriminate between what is authentic (but repressed) Christian truth and what is simply fantasy or projection. But having said that, there is a *cri de coeur* here: threatened groups rewrite history in order to give themselves the identity and duration which their oppressors refuse them. Is that not food for thought (and even, perhaps, for repentance?) for people like me?

St John's College, Durham

JOHN WEBSTER

THE ATTRACTION OF THE CROSS Gardiner Spring

first published in 1845

Banner of Truth Trust 1983 344 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 85151 387 5

So much in this book warms the heart and makes the spirit sing: examples are the assurance to the fearful that their fears may be allayed by prayer, as were Christ's; advice given to Christians who lack assurance; the exhortation to Christians to judge themselves neither too favourably nor too unfavourably.

Realism is a distinguishing feature. It is true but startling to be told that agonies of fear were extorted from Christ as he looked to the cross. Nowadays we seldom admit that infallible assurance is not the essence of piety and that some good men never enjoy it; and many of us are slow to acknowledge that some non-Christians have a great many more excellent qualities than those who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ.

Clarity marks this work too. It is comprehensive in its scope. Each chapter is headed with a title which is both informative and a clear indication of its contents. A few examples may not be amiss: 'The Narrative of the Cross'; 'The Greatness of Sin no Obstacle to Salvation by the Cross'; 'The Cross the Test of Character'. Each chapter stands as an article in its own right. There are twenty-three of them in all, and together they make a symposium of essays on the cross.

The book was originally published in 1845. Dr Gardiner Spring was a famous American preacher. He graduated from Yale, taught in Bermuda, was admitted to the Bar, went to Andover Theological Seminary and was ordained pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York, where he stayed for sixty-two years. Needless to say, he is biblical, with very many quotations from the AV, and his own writing is tinged with the poetry of that version. The book is undergirded by the principles of strict though unobtrusive Calvinism, which is not surprising in a book published by Banner of Truth. It means, however, that some of the speculative thinking with which he deals is likely to seem irrelevant to many Christians in 1984. A theory of the atonement which represents it as a commercial transaction in which the amount of suffering paid is directly related to the number redeemed, may have needed to be refuted in 1845 but is not a problem which exercises Christian thinkers today. It is perhaps unnecessary to say, and pointless to carp, that the writing is more verbose than would be customary today. Yet it is sad that the style and provenance of the book means it will be

read by those who can adapt to this manner of writing, but not by countless other late century Christians who would greatly benefit from the biblical thinking and application.

A hardback cover, good print, and 344 pages for under £5 make it a bargain by present-day standards.

The epigram at the end of the first chapter could well be a summary for the whole book: 'Nothing will interest you like the Cross. Nothing can do for you what the Cross has done.'

Holy Trinity Vicarage, Redhill, Surrey

CYRIL BRIDGLAND

SMOULDERING FIRE: The Work of the Holy Spirit **Martin Israel**

first published in 1978

Mowbray 1984 190 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 264 67002 7

It must be acknowledged that this is not an easy book to read, but it is one that has real rewards for those who will stay with it to the end. Readers who need their theology to be served to them in familiar phrases and well-tryed formulations will find the book disturbing, to the point perhaps of rejecting it. For example, speaking about 'unredeemed man', he writes: 'The unfathomed psychic residue that darkens the universe has accrued from unresolved, unredeemed demonic activity, by which I mean actions performed by unenlightened beings, whether human or angelic, for selfish motives, to the exclusion of full, universal participation' (p.170).

More difficult for others will be his perception of the work of the Spirit in the lives of the founders of the world's great religions and in the teachings of the Buddha, the Koranic doctrine, the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita. See, e.g., page 99: 'The saints of these traditions ... in the power of the Spirit, blazed new trails of glory for mankind to follow'. In consequence of this broad tolerance, Martin Israel raises questions about 'missionary zeal' and castigates much conviction as 'bigotry', and has a searching chapter on 'Humility and the Spirit'. However, while he does not admit it here, he must realize that persuasive evangelism does not need to major on wrath and fear, but often dwells on the love of God and on the wholeness of life that Jesus Christ offers.

Having admitted the problems that the book will present to some readers, there are three positive points to be made.

First, Martin Israel's readiness to see the Spirit at work in the lives of people of other faiths, and indeed of no faith, does not mean that his own theology is not essentially Trinitarian. It is this fact that keeps rescuing his thinking from being pure speculation. One can go further and say that his understanding of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is such as to challenge and refresh our more conventional and pedestrian formulations.

Second, while the book sets out to be a study in the work of the Holy Spirit, it is the numerous thought-provoking 'asides' that bring the reader to a reflective standstill. A few examples: the Spirit within (p.23), the purifying power of silence (p.37), Adam and Eve (p.147), Israel's mission (p.152), bereavement (p.159), medical science and animal experiments (p.162), Satan (p.165), pacifism (p.176).

Third, in a penultimate chapter on the cross, Martin Israel speaks of the need for an 'all-embracing compassion' (p.174). One cannot escape the feeling that it is this that characterizes the writer of the book. There is an underlying gentle innocence in the book which breathes the atmosphere of the ideals of caring about others that are so dear to the author.

The City Temple, London EC1

BRIAN JOHANSON

THE EUCHARIST IN BIBLE AND LITURGY G. D. Kilpatrick

The Moorhouse Lectures 1975

CUP 1984 115 pp. £15.00

ISBN 0 521 24675 X

This is a highly individual book, containing many interesting ideas, which aims to make the liturgy truer to the thought of the Bible and the ancient Church. It first critically examines the NT material, arguing that Mark and 1 Corinthians are our only independent sources, Matthew and Luke having only Mark to draw on for the Last Supper. Mark has certain authentic features: its Semitic colouring, its failure to mention a command to repeat the action, and its avoidance of the idea of a *new* covenant. The longer text of Luke is not original, and the shorter text is an (inconsistent) attempt to make the Last Supper into a Passover meal. All this is in contrast to the *Book of Common Prayer*, which takes a harmonistic approach, assuming that all the accounts preserve authentic details of the original institution.

The author then proceeds to discuss the primitive idea of sacrifice, acknowledging his debt to W. O. E. Oesterley. He considers the most fundamental notion to be the release of extraordinary life and power for the welfare of all who duly partake, and that this is true of communion-, gift- and atonement-sacrifices. He then argues that the eucharist is a sacrifice in which God does away with sin and gives the food of immortality, eternal life. Jesus himself intended it as the religious meal of his covenant community, and it was to be pre-eminently their act of self-offering.

In the course of the argument, many practices and ideas receive lusty knocks: e.g. the blessing of material objects, the use of individual wafers, the use of the *epiklesis* and prayers of consecration, medieval ideas of sacrifice and sacramental grace. Novel ideas are propounded: e.g. *anamnesis* is said to mean 'proclamation'; 'holiness' is said to be a concept of power. All in all it is a slim book dealing with many big questions.

I am sorry to say that I seldom feel my feet to be firmly on the ground as I read. I am carried on to the next point before I have agreed the first. For instance, the claim that the Last Supper was not a Passover meal, in spite of the plain meaning of the synoptic records, does not convince me. The treatment of sacrifice (which fails to distinguish sharply between the heathen practices against which the biblical writers inveigh, and the God-given rites which they endorse) leaves me dissatisfied with the selection of material used to prove the case. Indeed I feel the greatest weakness of the book to be its failure to grasp the primacy of revelation and the doctrine of God that goes with it. When the biblical doctrine of God loses its sharpness, pagan notions can easily creep into our doctrine of the sacraments.

THE IDENTITY OF CHRISTIANITY: Theologians and the Essence of Christianity from Schleiermacher to Barth **Stephen Sykes**

SPCK 1984 349 pp. hardcover £15.00
paperback £8.50

ISBN 0 281 04088 5
ISBN 0 281 04112 1

This book is a major study in contemporary theological developments by one of the Church of England's most distinguished theologians. Perhaps 'contemporary' is not quite correct, as the author is discussing the theological scene from Schleiermacher to Barth, which he is the first to admit is now in some respects rather dated, but nobody would question the lasting influence of the men and ideas which he discussed.

There are basically two themes which run through it from beginning to end, and which give it its unity. The first is the assertion that conflict is inherent in Christianity, the second that systematic theology is not an autonomous discipline, but must take account of, and be guided by, the living tradition of spirituality and worship which actually exists in the churches.

Having said that, the author is careful to admit that his work has severe limitations, governed in large measure by the fact that he is himself an academic theologian trained in that discipline and addressing himself primarily to his colleagues and peers. The men he has chosen to study were not ignorant of the spiritual dimension which he invokes, but it must be confessed that they treated it in a remarkably academic way. Even Newman and Barth, who in their different ways were perhaps stronger than most on the importance of inner spirituality, can hardly be said to have abandoned intellectual pursuits in favour of the exalted, mystical inspiration which they extolled—at great length, in a highly academic manner!

The book is divided into three parts, of which the second is undoubtedly the strongest. The first part sets out the case which is to be argued, though it is at least questionable whether Professor Sykes has really presented it fairly. Nobody would dispute that there have always been conflicts within Christianity, but to say that they are endemic because it is impossible to formulate the faith in a way which states its fundamental ingredients beyond dispute, is to adopt a modern point of view with which nearly all the protagonists of an earlier age would have heartily disagreed. The belief that worship somehow covers a multitude of theological differences is obviously a product of the mentality which shaped the *ASB*; it has little to do with historical fact, and the author, to his credit, actually admits this in the last part of his study.

The middle part, which is descriptive rather than prescriptive, is for that reason more satisfying and successful. The author draws a number of fascinating parallels between Schleiermacher and Newman, between Har-nack and Loisy, and between Troeltsch and Barth. The first two are particularly fascinating as they cross the Protestant-Catholic divide at a time when the barriers were much higher than they are now, or even than they were at the time of the Reformation. Sykes shows just how alike Protestant and Catholic were, even when they did not generally read each other's works and were in the main contemptuous of the other's point of view. He also shows how one generation influenced another, bringing out links between Newman and Loisy, for example, which may come as something of a surprise to some readers.

This book, if it can be summed up briefly, is a theological essay more than an exposition, and it should be read in that light. It has its own particular point to make, which is that the systematic theologian is dependent on the worshipping life of the church far more than either he or the worshippers are usually prepared to recognize. It also admits, in passing, that worship is on the whole much more conservative than academic theology, taking the ancient 'myths' seriously and working with them as if they really mattered for the high business of living. In view of this orientation, it is disappointing to find that although the author is aware of the existence of conservative theology (both Protestant and Catholic) he makes no real attempt to get to grips with it. Nor has he much to say about the Christian tradition before Schleiermacher, despite some tantalizing references now and again. This is a great pity, since there are times when one might almost think that he is about to say that the theological drift from Schleiermacher to Barth is essentially a false one, creating difficulties and divisions which in the classical tradition did not exist.

Instead, the author refuses so radical a course, and sticks to the conventional wisdom of modern theology. The result is an interesting book, but one which in the final analysis lacks the truly radical challenge which such a reassessment of modern trends would surely have offered.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

THE PROMISE OF NARRATIVE THEOLOGY George W. Stroup

first published in the USA in 1981

SCM Press 1984 288 pp. £7.95

ISBN 0 334 01315 1

This book, by a professor of theology at Austin Theological Seminary in Texas, first appeared in the USA in 1981 (John Knox Press) and has now been issued in a British edition. The American origin of the book is apparent not only in the examples given, but also in the strong emphasis on psychological techniques and what would broadly be called 'counselling', which has not (yet?) been nearly so influential in Britain.

Much of the book is in fact taken up with a discussion of psychology, and whole chapters are devoted to the question of 'identity'. Conversion, for example, is defined as the reshaping of personal identity by the Christian narrative, though it is not immediately clear what either of these terms is supposed to mean. On reflection, it turns out that personal identity really means 'self-perception', which many would assume was something rather different, and 'the Christian narrative' is contained in the Bible, though there is virtually no attempt to define it further. We are told that it is linked to historical events like the crucifixion of Jesus, but history in that sense, though important as evidence for the truth-claims of the narrative, is not really a hermeneutical principle. This is found in the concept of 'story', which the author psychologizes into 'memory', both personal and collective, and 'hope'.

The end result is an understanding of faith which emphasizes awareness of self rather than awareness of God. The author rightly stresses the importance of both justification and sanctification, and says, again rightly, that these doctrines have been obscured and even lost in the modern church. But

Churchman

although he pin-points the problem with some accuracy, it does not really seem that his proposed solution will work. It is too theoretical, too divorced from historical facts, and too concerned with subjective and vague things like memory, to have much real usefulness. The mere fact that in a book of nearly 300 pages only about sixty are actually devoted to the theme of narrative theology as such, gives the reader some idea of what to expect. There is a lot of space devoted to criticism of conservative churches, some of it quite penetrating, but in the end one feels that their message, even if it is sometimes rather crudely put, is more comprehensible and more immediately relevant than what narrative theology has to offer.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

IN SEARCH OF DIGNITY R.C. Sproul

first published by Regal Books, USA 1983

Pickering & Inglis 1984 215 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 7208 0562 7

It is good to see this book being published in this country. R. C. Sproul, or 'RC' as he is known in the States, has long been a leading Christian apologist and theologian—it is time he became known in this country.

'RC' speaks from a wealth of scholarly experience in teaching apologetics and systematic theology at post-graduate level. He is part of the rapidly expanding and dynamic movement in Reformed theology in the USA. His theological commitment is unashamedly in this Reformed tradition. What is so refreshing is to see just how well he is able to apply that theology to the most contemporary of situations and, above all, to do it in a way that communicates with people right where they are in life—*today*.

This book is about *dignity*. How can modern man and women find it? Sproul identifies this as a basic human need: a need for significance, respect, recognition, and love. He deals with dignity in the home, within marriage, sexual dignity, dignity in old age, dignity in the discipline of children, the dignity of the school teacher and of the pupil, dignity in hospital and in prison. A final and most moving chapter examines dignity in the work place.

This is not another book of theory. Here the biblical doctrines of man and creation stand at the head of a most practical and wide-ranging description of the modern person.

The 'holistic' nature of biblical truth shines through in every chapter. Each chapter ends with discussion questions. There is no doubt that this book is important reading for all Christians, and could well be used in small fellowship group situations to provoke thoughtful and practical discussion.

Oak Hill College, London N14

PAUL GARDNER

MEDIEVAL MONASTICISM: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages C.H. Lawrence

Longman 1984 260 pp. hardcover £12.00

paperback £5.95

ISBN 0 582 49185 1

ISBN 0 582 49186 X

This book is a short but nevertheless quite detailed survey of monasticism as it developed in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. It is a highly

readable account, and covers the ground remarkably well. The omissions, freely confessed by the author in his introduction are peripheral, and would not have added much to what is by any standards a highly useful study.

Monasticism is a subject which has been studied in considerable detail in recent years, but the fruits of this study have not been made available to the general public in an easily accessible form. This gap has been filled by Mr Lawrence, who takes us effortlessly through the great age of the monastic communities, beginning with the Desert Fathers. He describes the origins of the Benedictines, and their near monopoly of the religious life in Carolingian Europe. The Irish and Anglo-Saxon missionary monks are given their place, as is the remarkable establishment at Cluny, which at its height governed a monastic empire which stretched across the Continent.

Especially fascinating are the later chapters, in which the author shows how changing social conditions and religious perceptions led to attempts at reform, which eventually resulted in dissolution. The basic tension between establishment and the monastic ideal of poverty became acute in the high Middle Ages, when the wealth of numerous benefactions threatened to kill the evangelical spirit. The rise of various reformers, their attempts to return to the primitive Rules, and their inability to escape the spiritual decadence of institutionalization—all this is catalogued with understanding and detachment.

Women's orders are given a chapter to themselves, as are the military orders which emerged from the Crusades. Great attention is paid to the growth of an individualistic spirituality which manifested itself in the various orders of Friars, and we are brought, almost without noticing the fact, to the threshold of the Reformation.

Perhaps the best quality of the book is that its author treats his subject sympathetically, being careful never to succumb to a one-sided view of any major question, but at the same time is realistic in his approach. He recognizes that monasticism, as it was practised in the Middle Ages, could not survive the social and religious transformations of the sixteenth century, and says that the decline of the great houses would not have been arrested, even if there had not been a Reformation to dissolve them, somewhat hastily and prematurely. This balanced approach to a subject which could so easily fall victim either to a misplaced romanticism or to an unhistorical anti-monastic prejudice, gives the book its charm and its value. For the price, it is a bargain, and would make a valuable addition to any library.

Oak Hill College, London N14

GERALD BRAY

JOHN HOW: Parish Priest, Cambridge Don, Scottish Primus
written and edited **George Tibbatts OGS**

Becket Publications/Mowbray 1983 99 pp. £2.75

ISBN 0 7289 0016 5

John How (1881–1961) was Hebrew lecturer and Anglo-Catholic leader in Cambridge (1906–24); priest in Manchester, Liverpool and Brighton (1924–38); and Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway (1938–52; Primus from 1946). This memoir is 'largely composed from [How's] diaries and other sources collected after his death.'

I always benefit from biographies of those of different religious traditions, and took up this little paperback with special anticipation because of How's episcopate in my native city during momentous wartime years.

Alas, his biographer concentrates inordinately on Cambridge. He has his man there by page 6 and is loath to let him leave for 'larger spheres'. Thus How's four posts thereafter are disposed of in seven pages; his nine years of retirement plus an assessment (by two Cambridge friends) take up a further three pages. Then it's back to Cambridge, with three appendices reverting to things said or written before 1924.

What predominates here is a succession of Anglo-Catholic stalwarts processing across the stage and saying things that Anglo-Catholics do. We have E.G. Wood, H.L. Pass, Milner-White, Figgis, Duncan-Jones, Weekes, Frere, Clayton and many more. A rare good word is said for R.H. Kennett, but Tibbatts errs in saying that Robert Keable joined the Roman Church; rather, he joined the lotus-eaters in Tahiti and wrote novels that scandalized the *Church Times*.

So much space is taken discussing the tight little circle that we never really get to know John How as a person, though Michael Ramsey (How's curate in Liverpool) offers some glowing praise. Only passing mention is made of How's brief Middle-East service in World War I, his declining invitation to be Bishop of Pretoria and Archbishop of Brisbane, and little more is told about his marriage.

Finally, when this book speaks of 'the Scottish Church' or 'Scotland and its Church', no allusion is intended to the Kirk, whose existence is not once recognized. Anglo-Catholics will find a great deal of nostalgia, and nothing at all offensive, in what for Canon Tibbatts has obviously been a labour of love.

St Andrew's, Fife

J. D. DOUGLAS

JOHN CHARLES RYLE 1816-1900 Marcus L. Loane

Hodder & Stoughton 1983 144 pp. £1.75

ISBN 0 340 34251 X

Sir Marcus Loane, former Archbishop of Sydney, has always been a devotee of Bishop Ryle. He has written twice previously on his subject. Since his last work, more information has been made available about Ryle which Sir Marcus incorporates in this present work. The two major sources of new material are Ryle's *Self Portrait* and *John Charles Ryle, Evangelical Bishop*, by Peter Toon and your reviewer. It is flattering to find the latter work quoted thirty-five times by Sir Marcus.

Bishop Ryle was a doughty champion of the evangelical faith through his many tracts and books, his pastoral ministry in country parishes, his episcopacy in urban Liverpool, and his influence throughout the Church of England and further still.

The author writes well and manages to bring alive that era of late Victorian Christianity. He follows Ryle from his birth in Macclesfield and education at Eton and Oxford, through his ministry in Exbury, Winchester, Helmingham and Stradbroke. Ryle became Bishop of Liverpool at an age at which most men would be thinking of retirement, and remained there for twenty years.

The ground of Ryle's life now having been covered on a number of occasions, it is a pity that Sir Marcus has not spent a little more space on analysing Ryle's theology. At the back of the book is an appendix dealing with 'the distinctive character of Evangelical testimony', which covers the principles of the authority of Scripture, justification by faith, forgiveness, and the need for new birth. Unfortunately it is a generalized little essay not applying directly to Ryle.

Although short, the book contains a helpful index and a list of Ryle's works. It is a useful contribution to the gradually mounting literature on nineteenth-century evangelicalism.

St Michael's Rectory, Aughton, Lancashire

MICHAEL SMOUT

EVANGELICALS AND CULTURE Doreen Rosman

Croom Helm 1983 262 pp. £14.95

ISBN 0 7099 2253 1

Doreen's Rosman's *Evangelicals and Culture* is very much to be welcomed. It covers a wider field than Elizabeth Jay's *The Religion of the Heart*, which deals with Anglican evangelicism and the nineteenth-century novel. Though Miss Rosman restricts herself to the period between the deaths of Wesley and Wilberforce, she is concerned with evangelicals of all denominations and with every branch of culture. 'It is the argument of this book that evangelicals shared in the tastes and interests of the more cultured of their contemporaries to a far greater extent than is always recognized, but were unable to justify their enjoyment within the terms of their world-denying theology' (p.43). To this point Miss Rosman comes back again and again. The *Christian Observer* had a positive attitude towards cultural matters, the *Record* a negative one. Some evangelicals attended secular concerts, others restricted their enjoyment to sacred music, yet others objected to scriptural words being sung by non-Christians. The theatre was banned by evangelicals and shunned by most of the middle class, though theatricals sometimes invaded the pulpit and the May Meeting platform. She could have added that the *Record* took names of hunting and dancing clergy. As for novels, some clergy only read religious works of fiction, as those by Hannah More, but Wilberforce and John Venn read all Scott's novels as they came out.

Religious art, Miss Rosman maintains, was accepted by evangelicals in non-ecclesiastical contexts. She mentions Edward Edwards' drawings of King's Lynn, John Bacon's sculpture, and Thomas Sheraton's furniture. Sheraton was a Baptist who was ordained later in life. In the next generation, Hugh Stowell wrote verses and drew sketches. In dress, evangelicals conformed to the fashion of their class. They were on the whole exceedingly comfortable in their homes and fed well, but they were generous in their giving. The evangelical home was usually a happy home. 'Tom Macaulay, who adored his home ... lived for the holidays' (p.105).

The book is well documented and well written. It helps considerably towards an understanding of a subject that has been discussed over again in this generation.

Manchester Cathedral

MICHAEL HENNELL

A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND 1945-1980

Paul A. Welsby

OUP 1984 300 pp. £15.00

ISBN 0 19 213231 8

Canon Welsby writes fluently, and he divides his material neatly between the archdioceses of Fisher, Ramsey and Coggan. He sets the story of the Church of England against the background of the English state and society, and is particularly good on the bewildering sixties.

His judgements are mostly kindly. Fisher gets off lightly, in view of his preoccupation with canon law revision and neglect of evangelism. He never really had a policy, as he admitted: 'I have never tried to think out a considered plan of what I ought to follow; I have just gone forward and taken up each task, or group of tasks, as they appeared to demand attention, and no doubt there came to be some kind of pattern forming in my mind into which they fitted.' Ramsey is his favourite of the three, Coggan easily in third place: 'Dr Coggan was able to use such inspiration as he possessed to strengthen morale and to enable the Church to recover its nerve.'

Such inspiration indeed! Dr Coggan had the vision of a church reversing the secular tide, but had too little clerical support around him. Certainly in the diocese of Canterbury his initiatives were largely stifled by the polite but firm resistance of senior clergy.

The book is really a view from the top of the church. The author moves confidently over the various issues that have preoccupied bishops, convocations, Church Assemblies and General Synods: theological colleges, canon law revision, the World Council of Churches, Paul Report and Morely Report, the ecumenical movement. The pace is fast, but at the end the reader has learnt little of the life of the parishes that make up the church. There are some references, but not many, and Desborough, the town of ecumenical experiment in Northamptonshire, is moved to Norfolk. The author is, perhaps, more interested in national than parochial matters, and his touch surer.

Comparison is inevitable with Roger Lloyd's two-volume history covering 1900-39. Indeed Canon Welsby in his epilogue quotes from Lloyd: 'The real history of the Church of England is ... made in its parish churches.' The weakness of this otherwise sound guide to Anglican developments since 1945 is his comparative neglect of the parochial dimension.

Borden Grammar School, Sittingbourne

BRYAN R. SHORT

JOHN WYCLIFFE: The Dawn of the Reformation **David Fountain**

Mayflower Christian Books 1984 132 pp. £3.50

ISBN 0 907821 02 2

WYCLIFFE: Morning Star of the Reformation **Edwin Robertson**

Marshall Morgan & Scott 1984 127 pp. £1.60

ISBN 0 651 01142 4

In the year in which the 600th anniversary of the death of John Wycliffe is commemorated, it is inevitable that Christian publishers would not let the event go unnoticed.

David Fountain's book has been produced, in attractive format, to tell people about John Wycliffe—and it does just that, clearly and simply.

Frequent use is made of Wycliffe's own words, 'because he speaks so well for himself', as the author demonstrates how Wycliffe stood for the very principles for which others fought, later, at the Reformation. Indeed, it was the way in which Wycliffe's teaching and preaching extended to Europe, which gave him his title 'Morning Star of the Reformation', John Huss and subsequently Martin Luther being among those who were influenced by him.

The second book places Wycliffe against a historical background, using Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Langland's *Piers Plowman* to fill in some of the details. Much attention (50 of the 127 pages) has been paid to the spread of Wycliffe's influence both on the continent and as a precursor of the Reformation in England; its political implications; its connection with the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century and the rise of nonconformity, right up to the final chapter 'The Importance of Wycliffe Today'. Although our problems are not identical with his, in this book his approach to social ethics is commended as being appropriate to the twentieth century.

London SE11

HAZEL BIDEWELL

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND OBSERVED Rupert E. Davies

SCM Press 1984 118 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 334 00229 X

From the cover picture (of General Synod obviously taken after lunch) this book looks as if it might be a description of the church somnolent. The author is a prominent Methodist (former principal of Wesley House, Bristol, and president of the Conference) who tackles his subject in the spirit of a lover trying to elucidate why the intended has not fulfilled expectations, but writes out of love for a church in which he has made many friends.

Thus Mr Davies speaks with warmth of the Church of England's sense of continuity, especially in its liturgical emphasis, its intellectual and spiritual resources, its emphasis on the parish (when maintained in the right way), its influence in shaping English culture, its comprehensiveness, and the unifying effect of its bishops. He then challenges some of its weaknesses, which he finds first in the ambivalence of Canon B15A about admitting non-episcopally confirmed Christians to Holy Communion but then requiring the minister to set before them the normal requirements for communicant status if they wish to continue indefinitely. Women, he claims, have a low standing in this church, and the arguments against the ordination of women are examined and challenged. Church people 'have adjusted themselves only slowly to the belated discovery that God created both male and female in his own image and that St Paul's statement that in Christ there is neither male nor female can no longer be explained away' (pp.36-7), but there is no discussion of the Pauline teaching of the headship of the male (1 Cor.11) or of the embargo on female leadership of the local church in 1 Timothy 2:12.

The question of establishment and the Church of England's track record on ecumenism are discussed, and in a chapter on doctrinal pluralism there is a picture of contemporary conservative evangelicalism which readers of *Churchman* may or may not recognize, and a rather dismissive reference to the charismatics. The most helpful point here is the writer's reinforcement of Stephen Sykes's plea (in *The Integrity of Anglicanism*) for 'the renewed and thorough-going study of systematic theology by Anglicans' (p.103), though

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Mr Davies would like to see this done now in the wider ecumenical context in view of the fact, argued elsewhere in this volume, that similar doctrinal divisions are to be found in all the denominations.

Synodical government is criticized for the way it allows minorities to prevent 'progressive' moves being made (pp.28-32), though there are many Methodists who wish that their own Conference structure would enable the voice of minority groups to be more clearly heard. The present system of crown appointments comes under fire on page 33, but it is unfortunate that the writer chooses to highlight the problem he sees by broadcasting what is either gossip or a most regrettable breach of confidence by a member of the Commission concerning a current appointment.

Finally, the last chapter on 'a new pattern for the future' invites the Church of England to 'step down from its pedestal and sit down with the other churches of this country *as equals*' (p.107). This means seeking to rid itself of (the) 'establishment' and the 'establishment attitude': the idea is not fully spelt out, and in spite of current debate on the subject within Church of England circles it is easier to see the disadvantages than the advantages of the first part of that process.

Oak Hill College, London N14

DAVID H. WHEATON

CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA: A Handbook edited Mark A. Noll *et al*
Lion Publishing 1983 494 pp. £12.95 ISBN 0 88648 700 7

This new Lion handbook supplements the earlier publication, *The History of Christianity*, by concentrating specifically on the United States. As the previous volume gave inadequate coverage to American Christianity, this new book is a justifiable and useful addition to the series of Lion handbooks. It is the product of five editors who were responsible for writing the major narrative sections, and sixty-two other contributors who wrote specialized essays within those sections. In most cases the style of writing is clear, and communicates in a fashion that an educated lay person would find interesting and easy to read. Although many of the authors teach at evangelical colleges and seminaries, they have to a large extent avoided an evident bias, either in their selection of topics or in coverage of more controversial issues.

The book reveals the massive influence of Christianity throughout the history of the United States. From the earliest settlements to the present, the actions of the American state and the beliefs of its people are inexplicable unless one understands the impact of the Christian faith. In some cases it resulted in impressive achievements, such as the nineteenth-century abolition movement and the twentieth-century civil rights campaign, but in other circumstances it was perverted to produce some of the more negative features of the American character. Whatever its specific impact, the overall influence of Christianity was critical, and continues even in what is normally regarded as the 'post-Christian era' in the western world. In fact, the authors of the final section point out that a country where 'one-third of the nation's adults claimed to have a "born-again" experience and to believe that the Bible is God's written revelation is hardly one that is in a "post-Christian" era.'

The success of American Christianity at a time when Christian churches throughout the western world have suffered a major decline, suggests that other Christians may find the American example informative and useful. They will also find it valuable to note the pitfalls that resulted from the influence of the culture and civil religion of the faith, which helped to produce some of the worst characteristics of American Christianity.

The book has the attractive format which is a characteristic of Lion handbooks. It is filled with photographs, illustrations, graphs and timelines which serve as a valuable aid to the reader. The most irritating aspect of the format is the constant interruption of the text with many short articles on specific topics, but even this is somewhat less distracting than it was in the earlier volume, because many of the specialized articles are placed at the end of the sections. The work is a credit to the editors and authors, who have shown how high standards of scholarship and objectivity can be combined with a readable style to produce a work that can and should be read by the general public.

Oak Hill College, London N14

RUDOLPH HEINZE

THAT THEY MAY BE ONE Michael Harper

Hodder & Stoughton 1983 121 pp. £1.50

ISBN 0 340 34256 0

This is a timely book, and an eirenic one. The former director of the Fountain Trust writes to challenge those whose desire for, or experience of, renewal is leading them to leave, or consider leaving, the historic churches in order to set up independent fellowships, especially within the so-called House Church movement.

In the opening chapters Michael Harper argues that, historically, God's way of dealing with his people is to be from time to time renewing a remnant among them, whose calling is to remain within that people in order to pass on that experience of renewal. Differences can be handled without leading to divisions, and subsequent chapters show how potential tensions over water baptism, Scripture and tradition, the ministry of women, the ministry of apostles and prophets, and the second coming can be treated creatively. How far this treatment is successful will probably depend on the reader's viewpoint, as some of these questions allow for greater openness than others. On the fourth point, it is argued that neither ministry is intended to be exercised to be apostolic in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the manner of its life and ministry, and the gift of prophecy should continue in the church until the Lord returns.

Unfortunately, the author does not tackle the crucial question of what is to be done if the church propagates teaching that is clearly contrary to Scripture. Consequently the Reformation is regarded as a tragedy (p. 16) and blamed for all subsequent ills, though there is no mention of the earlier schism between East and West. The Reformers would be horrified to be charged, as the author charges them, with giving birth to denominationalism, since the Anglican ones saw themselves as remaining a part of the church catholic, but claiming the right of each national church to 'ordain, change

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and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority', with the two provisos that nothing be ordained against God's Word, and that all things be done to edifying (see Article 34 of the Thirty-nine Articles).

Oak Hill College, London N14

DAVID H. WHEATON

CANDLES IN THE DARK: Six Modern Martyrs **Mary Craig**

Hodder & Stoughton 1984 271 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 340 34254 4

This paperback gives a chapter each to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Maximilian Kolbe, Maria Skobtsova, Janani Luwum, Oscar Romero, and Martin Luther King. The first three were executed by Nazis in Europe, the others died on different continents after speaking out against appalling injustices perpetrated or tolerated by national governments. Mary Craig has perceptively, lucidly and sensitively set all six 'squarely in the historical and cultural background which shaped them and against which their drama played itself out'.

All kinds of fascinating and poignant facts emerge. Neither Luwum nor Romero was particularly distinguished or outspoken until his last three years. Trotsky, whom she had once planned to assassinate, in 1939 paid the coal bill for Maria's unorthodox monastic establishment in Paris—for which, she declared, 'God would forgive Trotsky his crimes.' In 1979, 118 British parliamentarians nominated Romero for the Nobel Peace Prize, to the great chagrin of the Salvadorean government. Bonhoeffer in prison contemplated suicide, and 'worried about the tissue of lies which he had still to tell in order to protect the lives of his colleagues'.

The various religious backgrounds from which the six came, coupled with the almost unbearably moving circumstances leading up to the end, will make the reader think again of all those who down the ages 'perish, stoned and blinded in the desert, that men unborn may see'. A fifteen-page chapter is appended on 'The Unknown Martyrs of the Twentieth Century' who have suffered in the USSR and other Communist lands. Helpful bibliographies are offered for all seven chapters.

St Andrews, Fife

J. D. DOUGLAS

MODERN STAINED GLASS IN BRITISH CHURCHES **Mark Angus**

Mowbray 1984 120 pp. hardcover £18.50

ISBN 0 264 66986 X

paperback £12.50

ISBN 0 264 66964 9

Since the few years of afterglow following the installation of the Coventry Cathedral windows in 1962, changes in the approach to stained-glass design have been widespread and fundamental but largely unchronicled. Countless fine windows have been inserted without fuss into town and country churches, observed only by the parishioners and the occasional stray visitor. The appearance of such a book as this is therefore necessary and welcome. Primarily it combines a fascinating collection of works with an insight into the philosophy of the modern designer in the guise of the author who pursues,

inter alia, a revision of traditional symbolism and visual language more in line with the 'religious awe' given to us by the growth of science and technology. It is important that the reader is reminded that art can 'assist the mystical' and that light itself, suitably coloured, can determine the complete spiritual atmosphere of a building—facts too often insufficiently considered in the mêlée of differing opinions frequently accompanying the commissioning of a window.

Variety there may be between the covers, but the quickest glance will confirm the author's comments regarding the great influence of German designers on the students of the seventies, who form many of the now-established artists represented. Were it not for the current strong movement away from this discipline, this would be a disappointment of the book, for such work, with its precisioned harshness, does not always blend visually or symbolically with the maturity and mellowness of many a parish church, though there are even in this volume notable exceptions. But it would seem we can look forward with optimism to a return to a more sensitive use of native talent and imagination. It is therefore not surprising, though still disturbing, to find among the forty-odd illustrations no more than two or three which can be classified as remotely figurative. Is it inevitable that even in the church the human form must bow out in favour of the insensitive forms of technology and science?

The book is a personal selection and, justified by John Piper's opening foreword, is at times a judgement on the work of others. There are therefore omissions of artists of considerable stature, and in view of this it is a little hard to justify the inclusion of three items of German work, one American, and a liberal dose of the author's own work. Nevertheless, a valuable contribution to the very limited range of books on a neglected subject.

Kings Langley, Herts

ALFRED FISHER

CHRISTIANITY AND PHILOSOPHY Keith E. Yandell

Studies in a Christian World View Volume 2

Eerdmans, USA 1984

IVP 1984 288 pp. £7.50

ISBN 0 8028 1964 8

ISBN 0 85110 726 5

This is the second publication in the IFACS series, 'Studies in a Christian World View', written under the editorial direction of C. F. Henry, which seeks to provide an evangelical orientation and commentary on specific subjects—in this case philosophy. Professor Yandell writes from a post-Wittgensteinian perspective and freely utilizes the tools of logic and linguistic analysis. This, together with the recognized complexity of the subject matter, makes *Christianity and Philosophy* a book for those who are acquainted with modern philosophical discussion; it is not a book for beginners.

For Yandell, the basic question in the philosophy of religion is whether religious claims can be rationally assessed and, if so, to articulate the assessment procedures and apply them to Christian truth claims. In pursuit of an answer to this, Yandell distinguishes between core and context claims: by core claims he intends specifically Christian assertions like 'Christ died for our sins' (1 Cor. 15:3); by context claims he intends more general Christian

claims, e.g. the existence of God, the divine attributes of God, the compatibility of God with the reality of evil—ideas which would also be supported by Jews and Muslims. In common with most philosophers of religion, Yandell focuses upon the latter claims.

We shall briefly review Yandell's findings. He argues that there is experiential confirmation for theism, yet concedes that fuller documentation and discussion than he offers at present is necessary to establish the conclusion. The traditional philosophical arguments for God's existence are assessed and found untenable as proofs, though suggestive of theism's explanatory power. Yandell next considers the charge that both religious and moral claims lack truth value—the non-cognitivist challenge. His reply to this constitutes the most difficult section of the book. His discussion is wide-ranging and includes reference to foundationalism (also recently criticized by Alvin Planting), verificationism, falsificationism, cultural and moral relativism, utilitarianism and formalism. The conclusion is reached that it is possible to overcome the non-cognitivist claim and go on to assess theological and ethical views rationally. After considering the challenge of evil, which Yandell suggests does not provide any necessary reason for thinking that God does not exist, he offers his own positive view of the relationship of ethics to religion. In the final section, entitled 'A Programme for Religious Rationality', he offers twelve criteria whereby religious and irreligious conceptual systems can be assessed (the comparable proposals of Ninian Smart and William C. Christian are less stringent and comprehensive). According to Yandell, theism explains and illuminates the data within its relevance range, has some experiential support, fulfils the proposed criteria, and is thus in a good epistemological position. Each chapter is preceded by an analytical table of contents and is concluded with a good bibliography; both features are useful.

Professor Yandell's work constitutes a refutation of two recent trends in the philosophy of religion. He rejects the claim of logical positivists (A. J. Ayer, H. Feigl), who regard religious and moral utterances as lacking truth-capacity; hence the charge of 'meaninglessness'. He further rejects the claim of some post-Wittgensteinian philosophers (Peter Winch, D. Z. Phillips), who maintain that philosophy cannot relevantly criticize or commend religion; it can only display for us the uses of language in the religious 'form of life' (Willem F. Zuurdeeg).

Within its own terms, *Christianity and Philosophy* is a successful book, in the sense that I found Yandell's arguments cogent and his overall thesis convincing. He offers a rigorous, sophisticated and plausible defence of theistic belief. There are few philosophical treatments of monotheism which I would so readily endorse. Perhaps its only weakness is that it is principally theistic belief which is defended, and not Christian, even though Christianity is a species of theism. It is to be hoped, in the future, that Yandell will compliment his treatment of context claims with a similar study of core claims.

DARKNESS VISIBLE: A Christian Appraisal of Freemasonry

first published in 1962 232 pp. £5.00

ISBN 0 85172 891 X

CHRISTIAN BY DEGREE: The Non-Christian Nature of Masonic Ritual

first published in 1964 216 pp. £5.00

ISBN 0 85172 892 8

Both books by **Walton Hannah** and published by **Augustine Publishing 1984**

Those interested in Masonry, who wish to consider Masonic rituals in the light of Christian faith, are indebted to Augustine Publishing for a good reprint of these two important books, in which Walton Hannah presents the theological objections to Freemasonry in a very readable format, factual and well documented. The author's aim is not to irritate his Masonic friends, but to investigate their basic teachings. Using material published by Masonic sources, he builds up a clear picture of the craft.

In *Darkness Visible*, the first three 'degrees' are fully explained, with signs, grips, mystic words, the secrecy and binding oaths, and the macabre penalties for any infringement. These oaths contain certain moral principles and instruction from an outside source, exclusively for men, apparently innocuous and beneficial, which, Hannah argues, the Christian church has the right, if not the duty, to investigate. Freemasons are entitled to proclaim that British Masonry believes in God, is loyal to the state, runs a fine hospital, is a system of symbolic morality, and thereby gains universal approval. But they do not speak of the death and resurrection rite practised in the Third Degree, nor of the names of pagan deities equated with that of Jehovah in the Royal Arch Degree, which reveals JAH-BUL-ON as the secret name of the true and living God most high.

Masonry frequently declares that it is not a religion, at the same time claiming to be religious. The Mason's hope of immortality lies not in Christ, the Light of the world, but through the example, dramatically re-enacted by the candidate, of Hiram Abiff, principal architect of Solomon's temple, who died rather than betray the secrets of Masonry! How different from the faith that God sent his only Son into the world to reconcile mankind to himself, and to lead those who trust in Christ as Lord and Saviour, by his Holy Spirit, into all truth.

In the second book, *Christian by Degrees*, Hannah traces the religious development of the Craft from the Catholicism of the Middle Ages, through the Deism of the eighteenth century to the 'woolly sentimental syncretism' of the present day. He quotes extensively from the ancient Masonic Constitution, contrasting it with their modern Book of Constitution which, concerning God and religion, requires only that a man believe in 'the glorious architect of heaven and earth ... practise the sacred duties of morality ... and view the errors of mankind with compassion ...' This bald statement of Masonic apostasy is dealt with in the rest of the book.

Chapters on the Hiram Legend, Mark and Ark, the New Covenant (according to Masonry), rituals of the Rose Croix of Heredom, the Knights Templar and the Knights of Malta, plus appendices on the Mystic Shrine, the Fourth Gospel and even up to the Thirty-third Degree, all make fascinating and disturbing reading, but let us remember Archbishop Temple's warning to the church: 'Idolatry, consisting in worshipping God under any other conception of Him than that which is set before us in the Gospels ... is a

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deadly thing.' To those who wish to consider the 'secrets' of this exclusive Society, both these books are recommended.

Disley Vicarage, Stockport

JOHN WOOLDRIDGE

THE RESTITUTION OF MAN: C.S. Lewis and the Case against Scientism

Michael D. Aeschliman

Eerdmans USA 1983 94 pp. £4.00

ISBN 0 8028 1950 8

distributed by Paternoster Press in the UK

This book offers an account of Lewis's philosophical-ethical position against materialistic reductivism. Lewis defends the view that man is not merely a sophisticated object, but that he embodies an ethical reality not reducible in terms of the material alone. Lewis also argues that a purely materialistic account of man undercuts the validity of rationality as well as of morality. A metaphysical reality is demanded by both reason and morality as their sufficient ground. This is the core thesis of Aeschliman's statement of Lewis's thought, and this is surely correct.

Aeschliman is helpful in pointing out that Lewis strove to match his content in his *style* of writing. The simplicity of the language of the *ordinary man* was, for Lewis, the proper way to express the thought of common sense or *sapientia*. This is deliberately 'generalist', and opposes the verbose jargon of myriads of narrow 'specialisms' which are inherently closed and often claim a bogus authority.

The book locates Lewis in the stream of the moral consensus, including Plato and Aquinas, Addison and Swift, Johnson and Chesterton, indeed a great philosophical, theological and literary tradition. Lewis aimed simply to *restate* this metaphysical tradition, the view which William James has called 'common sense's college trained elder sister', in the face of behaviourism and 'scientism'. Aeschliman draws on a great variety of authors in identifying Lewis's family of thought, the *philosophia perennis*.

I found Aeschliman used quotation too much and sometimes superficially. More importantly he did not argue Lewis's case in Lewis's authentic manner—by true debate. In other words the materialist case was not developed and did not answer back! Therefore the book is certainly no substitute for reading, and rereading, Lewis himself, in particular *Abolition of Man*, which should be compulsory reading in this age of the frozen embryo and eugenics looming over the horizon.

It is worth adding that William Hasker's new book, *Metaphysics* (IVP 1984) provides a useful complement to Aeschliman's book.

Trinity College, Bristol

TIM BRADSHAW

ISRAEL BECOMES A NATION C.M. Amos

96 pp. £2.75

ISBN 0 7175 1160 X

THE PROGRESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE Mary J. Evans

96 pp. £2.75

ISBN 0 7175 1161 8

Both in the 'Discovering the Bible' Series Hulton Educational Publications 1984

Clare Amos's book is the first of the 'Discovering the Bible' series (though not the first to make its appearance), and tells the story, for O level and CSE pupils, of Israel's rise to nationhood between the years 2000–922 BC. This is set against a background of geography, history and culture of the various people with whom they came into contact, since no one aspect can be seen in isolation. Another feature of this book is the constant linking of the past with present-day Jewish life and customs. OT situations prompt some penetrating twentieth-century questions, and the assignments, set at the end, not only make interesting reading, but must surely ensure the pupils' lively attention as they are helped to think through Israel's progress—and what they can still learn from it today.

How refreshing to read in the introduction to the second named book (there are now four titles in this excellent series) that '... it is taken for granted that the message ... is as important as the historical background'. In tracing the history of God's people (of Israel) the message of the OT prophets is shown to be still relevant today.

London SE11

HAZEL BIDEWELL

THE MORAL MAZE: A Way of Exploring Christian Ethics David Cook

SPCK 1983 177pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 281 04038 9

David Cook's lively teaching style shines through the pages of this introduction to Christian ethics. Like a good series of lectures, this book introduces the discussion of moral problems in a lucid, informative, and simple fashion, so that those without much background in ethical theory can see the issues at stake in modern debates. The use of diagrams and apt verbal illustration all help to make this a very digestible presentation of the subject.

The first chapter, 'The World in which We Live', brings out some of the influences that have contributed to making the attitudes of people around us. Pluralism, relativism, secularization and individualism have all tended to destroy the community of common values inherited from our Christian past, so that in a sense each modern man is an island. Thus norms of right and wrong, indeed many aspects of religious experience, have been privatized: everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

The second chapter surveys the main philosophical approaches to morality. Chapter 3, 'Christian Values', points out that most Christians are schizophrenic: their minds are confused by an incompatible mixture of secular and Christian principles of behaviour. Cook pleads for a return to a biblically based systems of ethics. However, simply to resurrect the old proof texts is quite inadequate: the writers of the whole of Scripture, the evidence of Christian tradition down the ages, and all the relevant modern factors must be taken into account in formulating a modern Christian ethic.

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The last three chapters demonstrate how this approach can work in practice, with detailed discussions of abortion and euthanasia. Here Cook does full justice to the complexity of the issues involved, so that anyone looking for a pre-packaged answer to those problems may be disappointed. Clearly David Cook is opposed to both euthanasia and abortion (though I think he underplays the biblical case against the latter), but his purpose in this book is not to offer answers but to teach his readers how to think about ethics from a biblical perspective. In this task he has succeeded admirably.

College of St Paul and St Mary, Cheltenham

GORDON WENHAM

LIBERATING GOD: Private Care and Public Struggle Peter Selby
SPCK 1983 106 pp. £3.95 ISBN 0 281 04066 4

Peter Selby's contribution to this series (the New Library of Pastoral Care) is a challenging and radical attempt to demonstrate that private individual care and public corporate responsibility are indivisible. Of late, there has been a resurgence of interest in the search both for inner personal spirituality and for individual counselling to heal our inner wounds. The author examines both of these and shows that the inner landscape of ourselves and others has been largely shaped by the dominant forces in society. Therefore spiritual and pastoral care cannot be separated from commitment to the superhuman struggle with the forces that threaten human meaning' (e.g. by starvation or by creating a milieu which mitigates against the stability of family life to which we pay lip service). If we fail to participate in stemming some of the most baleful influences in our public life, we connive at making Christian faith ever more marginal to the major issues of our lives.

Peter Selby faces the uncomfortable tensions and the need for courage as we take active responsibility for the world in which we live as we ourselves come of age. He strips away our would-be coverings about inequality and injustice being part of the natural order.

He has produced a carefully researched book and presented his argument persuasively. He has made it all into a combination of uncomfortable challenge from the Christian point of view, and excellent reading.

Chorleywood, Herts

MYRA CHAVE-JONES

RESPECT FOR LIFE: A Symposium
Christian Medical Fellowship 1984 48 pp. £1.25 ISBN 0 906747 12 0

The most immediately relevant article in this booklet deals with IVF and ET. This is not quite a Christian perspective on science fiction, but a brief exploration of the ethical aspects of in vitro fertilization (IVF) and embryo transfer (ET). Publication of the Warnock Report has highlighted the problems created by the imaginative medical scientist who develops techniques which both help the childless couple and make possible the study of the developing embryo. When does human life begin? What rights do embryos have? What controls should be imposed for experimentation in this biologically and ethically delicate area? It is not quite science fiction, 'not just

ivory-tower theoretical concerns', but a fact of increasing relevance to everyday worries (will we be able to have a baby, and will it be normal?)

Two other articles, also by doctors, deal with related moral minefields: abortion and the management of severely handicapped babies. While these have been more lengthily debated, they continue to arouse diverse thoughts and feelings. It seems unlikely that there will be a fixed Christian view of such subjects, though there will continue to be attempts to find a firm basis for wise action. The ethical limits to medical practice make the headlines, and the personal encounters with these problems raise all sorts of questions. The theological contribution to such problems has moved on from the papal edicts of a few centuries ago, which pronounced that the soul entered a male foetus at forty days, but entered the female foetus at eighty days. The first article, by the late Bishop Ramsay, is a valuable perspective on a range of medical-moral problems, arguing both that the individual patient cannot be considered in social isolation, but also that the physician cannot function in professional isolation.

The four articles together form an excellent introduction to some daunting questions.

Hitchin, Herts

MICHAEL CLARKE

MAKE OR BREAK: An Introduction to Marriage Counselling

Jack Dominion New Library of Pastoral Care

SPCK 1984 180 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 281 04075 3

Dr Jack Dominion is senior consultant psychiatrist at the Central Middlesex Hospital. He is director of the Marriage Research Centre, which he established in 1941, and has written a number of books on marriage. Other titles include *Marital Pathology*, *Marriage, Faith and Love* and *Marital Breakdown*. While his own approach to marriage is specifically Christian, he aims also at offering help to both counsellors and couples who do not share his faith. Dr Dominion finds that 'There is ... a paradox in the current situation. An approach of deeper commitment to love is associated with a rapid and widespread increase in divorce' (p.27). It is this tension between the higher contemporary expectations of marriage and the easier access to divorce that creates both the need and the opportunity for effective marriage counselling. He makes much of the statistical fact that most marital breakdowns begin within the first five or six years of marriage, coupled with the fact that it is marriages in this phase that are most amenable to constructive help. He finds less hope for the other peak period of divorce, after twenty years, when the family have grown up and left home.

The specific intention of this book is to help ministers to understand the nature of marital difficulties in the light of contemporary changes in marriage. It is not 'to produce the complete marriage counsellor'. The major changes in contemporary marriage arise from the changing role of women and the egalitarian approach to marriage, as a relationship of companionship, that has resulted. 'The ideal of contemporary marriage is indeed lofty. Its consummation needs an equivalent degree of insight and perseverance' (p.57).

The book is divided into four parts: first, an analysis of the factors in marital breakdown; second, an approach to counselling; third, a series of specific problems, such as infidelity, jealousy, sexual variations, alcoholism, violence and depression; fourth, some suggestions for the prevention of breakdown and the support for marriage. Part Two is of particular value in the way it divides marriage into three fairly distinct phases and then identifies and discusses the problems specific to each phase. There is an unfortunate slip on page 91, where the writer says 'some 30–40% of marriages end effectively in these first five years'. What he means (cf. p.88) is that 30–40 per cent of all *marital breakdown* occurs during these years.

This is not a book to be read and put aside. It can be a valuable tool in the busy pastor's workshop and can be consulted confidently and frequently. Dr Dominian's underlying principles are solid and his guidance wise and sensitive.

The City Temple, London EC1

BRIAN JOHANSON

THE REFORMED PASTOR: A Pattern for Personal Growth and Ministry

Richard Baxter edited **James M. Houston**

first published in 1656

Multnomah Press, USA 1983

Pickering & Inglis 1983 158 pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 7208 0831 7

This is a beautifully bound edition of Baxter's classic statement of the pastor's life and ministry. It is one of a series, emanating from the USA, designed to be components of a preacher's library.

The feature of this series is that each work is abridged and edited for twentieth-century readers. The editor claims to seek out the kernel and leave the husk. Since what is contained is less than half Baxter's original, the editing is certainly radical.

Baxter is introduced to the reader by Dr Richard C. Halverson, who is chaplain to the US Senate. He claims to have applied Baxter's principles to his own ministry with success. He certainly sets the background against which this book should be read, and makes some timely observations on present-day trends. *The Reformed Pastor* is set out in three main sections: 1) 'An Examination of our Personal Lives', 2) 'Looking Out for the Flock', and 3) 'Some Directions for Preservation of the Fellowship'. There are three appendices, the most interesting being the basis of the Worcestershire Agreement, published in 1653, setting out the concerns of the Association of Evangelical Clergy in that county. Scripture and subject indices are included.

The problem with abridged editions is the inevitable subjectivity of the editors. It is they who decide which parts are relevant, and which are not. In this case, where the editing is so severe, what is gained in simplicity and clarity is often lost in losing the original's passion and warmth. Despite the wide margins, and clear chapter and paragraph headings, I found the style turgid.

However, none of this prevents the immense piety and maturity of Richard Baxter to stand out. For any who have only negative attitudes to those once called Puritan, they will discover here one who possessed a depth of

scholarship, maturity of judgement, and compassion for men's standing with God, that will shake their preconceptions. The church today lives in a totally different culture from Baxter, but his appreciation of NT spirituality will always be relevant. In an age so largely secular, what is needed is clergy who have bowed in the presence of God, and who are able in life, preaching, and personal counsel to represent him before men. This is the witness of Baxter, and no amount of modern technology will ever replace this as a source of ministerial fruitfulness.

If this volume of 158 pages serves to promote such quality of ministry, it will be well worthwhile. If it commends the quality of the Puritans as some of God's ablest men in their day, so much the better. One suspects, however, that Baxter is best encountered kernel and husk together. For those who find Puritan wordiness too much, this may be your answer.

St James's Vicarage, Carlisle

JAMES D. RUSHTON

BY HEART: A Lifetime Companion edited John Bowden
SCM Press 1984 120 pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 334 00142 0

The editor and managing director of SCM Press has produced a collection of prose, poetry, psalms, collects, prayers and hymns ranging from the OT to the present day, the remarkable feature being that almost every item is *very* well known whilst having a stature which compels attention.

John Bowden makes it clear that this is something which he never expected to do. What has brought it about is an increasing awareness of the superficiality and transience of much modern liturgy and books of contemporary prayers. This is reflected in the very few items stemming from the last twenty years or so. Not that he dismisses modern compositions as worthless, but finds the sheer volume of material a great disadvantage.

'The new words have not grown with us ... there has been such a flood of them, so often undistinguished ... They are disposable'. In contrast, we learn poetry, and perhaps prose, because it remains the same and grows on us. 'It becomes part of us'. He has another thought: 'We may be good at putting personal penitence into words ... we are not naturally good at praise and adoration ... we need a better vocabulary than most of us can muster—and that means going back into the long Christian tradition.'

All the items are readily available in a number of different places. Nonetheless this book, acquired and placed within easy reach, will be a considerable resource to many.

London SE11

LANCE BIDEWELL

THE LORD'S SUPPER: An Introduction David Beckett

16 pp. 50p

ISBN 0 905312 36 8

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE Tom Torrance

16 pp. 80p

ISBN 0 905312 40 6

HEALING AND THE CHURCH John Wilkinson

16 pp. 50p

ISBN 0 905312 42 2

Handsel Booklets all published by The Handsel Press 1984

These three come in a series of 'Booklets in Basic Studies' published from a Church of Scotland viewpoint. It would be interesting to know their purpose, as David Beckett's booklet on the Lord's Supper is written like a catechism in the form of twenty questions and answers—ten on belief and ten on practice. The simple explanations thus given would make the manual of use with confirmation classes, and much of the teaching contained would be of equal relevance for Anglican confirmands, though references to communion cards and glasses and the (in-)frequency of communion are clearly geared to the Scottish scene.

By contrast, Tom Torrance's booklet is not one that could often be placed in the hands of a couple preparing for marriage. Both style and content presuppose a degree of theological literacy, and expand the three basic propositions that 1) Christian marriage is a creative act of God; 2) Christian marriage takes place within the context of the reconciling and atoning work of God in Jesus Christ; 3) the Christian family is the basic unit of the church, the body of Christ. As one would expect from Professor Torrance, the emphasis is on the fact that 'marriage by its very nature is ordained to be permanent and ... divorce is not to be permitted' (p.14). In extreme cases it is suggested that a couple wishing to be divorced should be brought into the church so that God, who joined them in marriage, may be asked to separate them.

Although on page 5 the author stresses that 'unmarried people ... are not to be regarded as in any sense second-class citizens', it is hard not to draw that conclusion from the argument on the previous page that 'the basic unit of creation is not the individual human being, male or female, but man and woman joined together as one.'

John Wilkinson's booklet contains three chapters: healing as ministry, in theology and in practice. Again this is a very elementary introduction to the subject, and does not go much beyond offering definitions and giving a brief summary on the subject.

In Brief

AUTHORITY D.M. Lloyd-Jones

Banner of Truth Trust 1984 94 pp. £1.50

ISBN 0 85151 386 7

First published in 1958, and now in its twelfth printing, this is classic Lloyd-Jones—no hint of uncertainty about Scripture is to be found here. Whilst the authority of Christ is paramount, how can we know the Lord except through Scripture? Thus the authority of Scripture is fundamental.

GENESIS 3: A Devotional and Expository Study Edward J. Young

Banner of Truth Trust 1984 165 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 85151 148 1

In an orthodox interpretation of Genesis 3, the author comments on some of the attempts which have been made to relate it to extra-biblical literature, but his primary purpose is to study the content. Unhappily the style is dated and therefore the readership will be limited. At the present time we should not easily put aside any book which is prepared to accept the early chapters of the Bible as history, but it would be good if we had more modern writers of similar viewpoint who were prepared to bring these chapters to life for the 1980s.

INTRODUCING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH A.M. Hunter

SCM Press 1984 87 pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 334 02084 0

A book by Professor Hunter is always a pleasure to read. His gifts of clarity, vitality and ability to express profound thoughts at a popular level are all too rare. Here he covers a wide range of basic doctrine in a manner which simply encourages you to read on. If you do so, you will profit from it.

IN CHRIST ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine

Jock Stein and Howard Taylor

Collins, Fount Paperbacks 1984 171 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 00 626768 8

Another introduction to Christian doctrine! This is an attempt to present the maximum amount in the briefest compass. It does well, though it needs a certain determination to press through it. Intended for enquirer and committed Christian, the former might find it hard going and would be likely to see Hunter as more helpful. The material is good and thought-provoking, although one would have to express some reservation about the chapter on 'How to Understand the Bible'.

Churchman

WHO WILL DELIVER US? Paul Zahl

Seabury Press, USA 1983

Collins/Fount 1983 85 pp. £1.50

ISBN 0 00 626628 2

'Christ died for our sins' is at the heart of this book. The author stays firmly on this fact as he shows how it can relate to our experiences in life. There is no attempt to provide simplistic answers to the tragedies of our world, yet we see how the atonement brings meaning. Of value is his description of the difference between views of 'infused' and 'imputed' righteousness, leading to a brief but clear definition of 'sanctification'.

PRECIOUS REMEDIES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVICES Thomas Brooks

first published in 1652

Banner of Truth Trust 1984 253 pp. £2.45

ISBN 0 85151 002 7

A reprint of a literary work which does stand the test of time, well endowed with quotable quotes for the present. More than that, a much needed exhortation to take the devil and his kingdom seriously, and yet to understand that the kingdom of the Lord has the victory.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: An Experimental and Practical View

Octavius Winslow

first published in 1840

Banner of Truth Trust 1984 223 pp. £2.45

ISBN 0 85151 162 X

At a time when we are constantly asked to believe that this new 'insight' into Scripture, or that new ecclesiastical activity, is the work of the Holy Spirit, this reprinting of a thoroughly biblical study is clearly of value. Unfortunately, those who would benefit most are the least likely to read it, and its dated style will not help.

CRISIS EXPERIENCES Erroll Halse

Carey Publications 1984 140 pp. £2.50

ISBN 0 85479 0756

The word 'crisis' is used to describe an emotionally, spiritually, or radically significant event in the Christian life. The author does not disparage 'experiences', providing they have scriptural foundations. He seeks to demonstrate that no post-conversion experience is demanded in the NT epistles, and then looks at the four occasions in Acts when the Holy Spirit baptized groups of people. Crisis experiences are then interpreted under ten headings, with the following chapter comparing the work of the Holy Spirit in the OT to that in the New. There is a final chapter on revival, completing a worthwhile contribution to the ongoing debate.

THE LION CONCISE BOOK OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT Tony Lane

Lion Publishing 1984 239 pp. £5.95
 Albatross Books, Australia 1984 Aust.\$11.95

ISBN 0 85648 505 2
 ISBN 0 86760 497 2

From the Apostolic Fathers to the Lausanne Congress—so ranges this very useful little reference book. It condenses the history of Christian thought, introducing key thinkers and summarizing twenty-five creeds, councils and confessions. Included are quotations from individual writers and corporate documents. A shade pricy, but the package of information is well worth the cost. The selection of thinkers is personal to the author of the book, but one judges that he has chosen well.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANS IN MEDICINE edited J.T. Aitken,

H.W.C. Fuller, D. Johnson

Christian Medical Fellowship 1984 200 pp. £3.95

ISBN 0 906747 11 2

This brief historical record seeks to show how much the tradition and progress of western medicine, and its development world-wide, owe to Christianity and individual Christians. Concentration on orthodox medicine has excluded any consideration of faith healing, whilst, on grounds of space, there is no reference to more recent work in psychological medicine.

RELIGION AND THEOLOGY 1984 compiled Editorial Department of SCM Press

SCM Press 1984 112 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 334 02315 7

This annual book guide is in sombre mood when it points out that its increasing number of titles is in large measure due to increasing imports—mainly from the USA. It finds that few good theological books are being written in this country, and suspects that most theology in Britain is now written by people on the fringe of the churches, or even off it!

London SE11

LANCE BIDEWELL

USER'S GUIDE TO THE BIBLE Chris Wright

Lion Publishing 1984 128 pp. £2.50
 Albatross Books, Australia 1984

ISBN 0 85648 409 1

A book 'for people who want to get started' on using the Bible. The diagrams, photos and format all combine to make this an entirely contemporary publication. It looks stimulating—and is! There is even a *Work Book* (75p), designed by Angela Reith, to go with it.

COMMUNICATING CONVICTION Peter Brooks

Epworth Press 1983 147 pp. £5.50

ISBN 0 7162 0393 6

Don't be put off by the cover—which hardly communicates a thing! The author, on the other hand, describes, very well, how to practice the varied art of communication, from his wide experiences as minister/radio and TV

Churchman

producer/lecturer. Perceptively, he writes '... to understand better how our faith is communicated, is to understand better what our faith is.'

THE TYRANNY OF TIME Robert Banks

Paternoster Press 1983 267 pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 85364 227 4

Lancer Books, Australia 1983

And which of us is not under this tyranny? The first part of this book is readable, and uncomfortably spot-on! But all is not lost—there are solutions. The second half tackles the problem historically and biblically, pointing to a developing sense of personal and social rhythms, a new quality of family life and fellowship, a renewed shape for Christian organizations (!) and a more relaxed attitude to work and leisure.

London SE11

HAZEL BIDEWELL

FEAR NO EVIL: A Personal Struggle with Cancer David Watson

Hodder & Stoughton 1984 172 pp. £1.50

ISBN 0 340 34641 8

This is a book which can be given to anyone who is suffering, or has a friend who is. It is personal chronicle of the closing months of a great man's life. Nothing is hidden. The agony and concern of all involved is clearly described.

Although wholly faithful to Scripture, it is not an academic treatise on suffering. It is realistic and balanced in its approach and is not overtly 'charismatic'. It balances a biblical approach with common-sense reactions. Many of the chapters can be read in their own right as David draws on his wide experience of the present situation, both philosophically and devotionally. In all, one feels that one is walking on sacred ground, which is not a bad thing for anyone.

Christ Church Vicarage, Ware, Herts

JOHN BOURNON

JESUS AND THE FOUR GOSPELS: The Real Evidence John Drane

first published in 1979

Lion Publishing 1984 184 pp. £1.95

ISBN 0 85648 847 X

This is a mass circulation paperback version of a book which has already had wide reviews and has sold some sixty thousand copies.

It was rushed out in this cheap format to offer the 'other side' to the Channel 4 television series *Jesus: The Evidence*. A red label on the front cover announces: 'The Real Evidence'. Popular paperback it may be, but the contents are deep, demonstrating careful research, and providing a scholarly analysis of the current state of play in the study of the gospels.

A new introduction deals specifically with the *avant-garde* views of Professor Morton Smith. The rest of the book offers a surprisingly detailed discussion of subjects ranging from 'Jesus in His Own World' to 'Who Was Jesus?' and 'Jesus' Teaching About God'. The synoptic problem is also sensibly addressed. Ideal for use by pastors, church education courses, or

individuals interested in learning more about the gospels, this book is highly to be recommended.

Oak Hill College, London N14

PAUL GARDNER

THE CHURCH IN THE MARKET PLACE George Carey

Kingsway 1984 154 pp. £1.75

ISBN 0 86065 250 5

Here is the remarkable story of how a city-centre church transformed itself, being renewed in buildings and in congregation. The principal of Trinity College, Bristol tells the story from his own point of view when vicar of St Nicholas, Durham. He reveals much of his own agonies as the congregation went through the pain of losing many of its old members and attracting new ones in large number. It is an extraordinary account of a remarkable achievement in only seven years. Probably it could not have been achieved but for the preceding twenty-six years' ministry of George Marchant. It is a book to read to stimulate faith; it is also an encouragement to those going through difficult periods in their lives and ministry.

St Barnabas Vicarage, London E9

JOHN PEARCE

Other Books Received

CIO J. Green, *Best Bible Bits*, 1984, £4.95

IVP D. Posterski, *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You I'm a Christian?*, 1984, £1.50

Kingsway R. Wurmbrand, *Sermons in Solitary Confinement*, 1984 (2nd edition), £1.95; G. Kendrick, *Worship*, 1984, £1.95; *Songs of Fellowship*, 1983, 65p

Lion Publishing J. Wallis, *The New Radical*, 1983, £1.95; J. Green, *God's Rules OK*, 1984, £1.50

Marc Europe R. Foster, *Meditative Prayer*, 1984, 50p

Marshall Morgan & Scott J. Bigelow, *Love as Jesus Loved*, 1984, £1.95; L. Isaacs, *Dreadlocks*, 1984, £1.75

Methuen M. Roberts, *The Wild Girl*, 1984, £8.50

Mowbray R. Lloyd, *The Legend of the Fourth Wise Man*, 1984, £2.50; M. Thurian, *The Mystery of the Eucharist*, 1983, £3.25

Pickering Paperbacks H. Bell, *Pierced to the Heart*, 1984, £1.60

SPCK K. Spink, *A Chain of Love: Mother Teresa and her Suffering Disciples*, 1984, £1.50; J. Woolmer, *Growing Up to Salvation*, 1983, £1.75

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