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## BOOK REVIEWS

**J. W. Alexander, *Thoughts on Family Worship*. 1847 ed.; repr. Ligonier, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990, 260 pages. ISBN: 1-877611-18-2.**

If one measures a book by its unique contribution, its illuminating effect, its power to stir the heart and deeply impact the life, then this book is surely a classic in its field. After digesting it slowly over several months, I can testify to its power to impact families in their worship times together. Frankly it is hard to know where to begin — should I quote sections that made my eyes well up with tears or should I share those choice sections that made it impossible to go on without dropping to my knees for some confession and renewed consecration? The book is a treasure chest of truth regarding family worship in the home. Few rocks remain unturned, few questions unanswered and an abundance of fresh and insightful thoughts fill chapter upon chapter.

While reading this little masterpiece I often wondered if it could not be updated in language and condensed (to 25 pages or so) so that a greater number of homes could have access to its truths. After a thoughtful reading of this book one has little doubt regarding why society in North America has declined morally to its present condition. Extinguish the light in the home and soon the nation will be plunged into darkness.

Especially moving are those appeals to make use of family worship as a focused time of intercession for the salvation of the children of the home. “Such words, uttered on the knees, though from the plain untutored man, are sometimes as arrows in the heart of unconverted youth. The child is forced to say within himself, ‘How can I offend against the father who daily wrestles with God in my behalf? How can I be careless about the soul for which he is thus concerned?’ ” [p.63].

Of the home where family worship is as regular as the meals within it, it can safely be said that “When the father and mother begin to descend into the autumn of life, they behold their offspring prepared to walk in their steps. There is a church in the house. When death enters, it is to make but a brief separation; and eternity sees the whole family in heaven, without exception or omission” [p.103]. To those who read this review, may I pointedly ask you also — is family

worship a daily habit within your home? I leave you with this stirring appeal to contemplate. May it be true of each of us.

Your families may soon be scattered, and familiar voices may cease to echo within your walls... O see to it, that the God of Bethel goes with them... They may be taken from this earth altogether, and leave you alone. O see to it, that as one after another goes, it may be to their father's house above, and to sing with heavenly voices, and to a heavenly harp, the song which they first learned from you, and which you often sang together — the song of Moses and the lamb, and if you be taken and some of them left, see to it that you leave them the thankful assurance that you are gone to their father and your father, their God and your God" [p.106].

Tim Kerr,  
Takaoka City, Japan.

**George Barna, *User Friendly Churches*. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1991, 192 pages.**

George Barna is the founder and president of Barna Research Group in Glendale, California, a marketing research company which has done work for corporations as well as for Christian organizations and churches. This recent book from his pen is a compendium of insights that have come from research on a number of growing churches in America. His purpose in writing the book is to help us understand what he has identified from his research as principles relevant to church growth. Reflecting on these principles he states:

The book builds on the fruits of these churches' hard-won insights. Why should you engage in the most costly form of research — trial and error — toward reinventing the wheel of church growth? Why should you retrace the steps that these growing churches have already taken? That is neither fulfilling, glorifying to God nor good stewardship. Instead, why not profit from an exposition of some of the most important principles that the user

friendly congregations have developed, tested and proved to be valuable? [p.16]

Moreover, Barna's concern is not to mimic the programmes of growing churches, but rather to apply the principles of growth. This is why he intentionally refuses to name the churches he researched.

His research *per se* is not published in this book, nor are we given any footnotes at all to any of this research. He does use anecdotes to illustrate his points on occasion, but one illustration here and there is certainly not enough to warrant classifying this book as a serious piece of sociological research. We are thus being asked to take at face value that the research was done and that it was effectively interpreted. Frankly, his research would be more credible if he had published it, even if the names of the churches had to be kept anonymous. In fact, there were times in reading the book when I was not sure if he was simply sharing his opinion or making a point from some hard data. Thus, although the book is written in an easy-to-read style, it will lack the punch for a serious researcher probing into church-growth issues.

The redeeming nature of the book is in its easy-reading style and the thought-provoking questions that it raises. The layperson and church leader alike will find it both interesting and challenging reading. If one is at all concerned about church growth then this book fits the "must read" section of the bookshelf. Barna's basic concern comes from the observation that evangelicals in North America are not growing churches or reaching the lost as they could or should be. "The bad news is that the vast majority of Christian Churches in America are either stagnant or declining in size. Relatively few of the nation's 300,000-plus Protestant congregations are increasing the number of people who attend their worship services by at least 10 percent each year" [p.15]. However, in this somewhat grim scenario there are hundreds of churches that *are* growing. It is this dichotomy in the evangelical church scene that has led to Barna researching the growth factors in developing ministries.

He is careful not to simply look at numerical growth alone as a condition for establishing good church-growth principles, since he is concerned with identifying churches that are not only growing numerically but also growing in their personal commitment to Christ. Chapter by chapter he hits at what the church needs to address to become an effective ministry in today's society. For instance, he states that "an organization is most successful not when it seeks to become the biggest or the broadest, but when it strives to be the best

in its own focused area of expertise" [p.50]. And he cogently argues that a "major reason for the success of the churches I studied was their determination to remain sensitive to the people they were seeking to reach and serve" [p.59]. There was rarely a point I would want to argue against. It hits right at the heart of many key issues within our Canadian Church context.

Any serious, thinking Christian who wishes to look honestly at what the church should be within our cultural context will find Barna stimulating and breathing hope for the church as it nears the twenty-first century.

Nicholas Miles,  
Toronto, Ontario.

**Paul S. Basden and David S. Dockery, eds., *The People of God: Essays on the Believers' Church*. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1991, 367 pages.**

Written by key theological thinkers like Dale Moody, Millard J. Erickson, and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., all scholars within the Believers' Church tradition, *The People of God* addresses many of the important issues being discussed in ecclesiology today, issues such as the role of women in ministry, ordination, and Christian renewal. The book is divided into four thematic sections: Theological Foundations, Biblical Images, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Challenges. The first division "lays the theological foundation for understanding the church as one of the most important realities of the Christian faith" [p.18]. In the second section the reader is challenged to take seriously the meanings of the images of the Church presented in Scripture. The interpretation of these images, it is argued, will definitely affect the way we carry out ministry. The next section explores the necessity of having a variety of expressions within the Believers' Church tradition, while at the same time seeking to "embody a common and unified commitment to Jesus Christ" [p.180]. In reflecting on this commitment throughout the history of the Church, the editors note that although "Christian bodies in these different time periods in the history of the church have manifested various traits and emphases and have provided specific heritages for those who have followed, they nevertheless have shared a common adherence to the lordship of Jesus Christ as the head of the church" [p.180]. The final division of concluding

essays seeks to “enable the people of God to speak in an informed fashion to some of the primary challenges facing the contemporary church” [p.266]. Issues covered in this section include the arts, ordination, the role of women, and renewal.

The old adage — “jack of all trades, master of none” — comes to my mind when I reflect upon this present volume. The subject of ecclesiology is so exhaustive that a work such as this can hardly do it justice. Each essay is well written but is, nonetheless, limited in scope and information. Yet, for the person who wishes to have a general introduction or overview of the doctrine of the Church I would recommend it. The book is nicely structured and very readable. The variety of topics and issues covered will make this work a good resource for those wanting to acquaint themselves with a theology of the Church, particularly from the vantage-point of the Believers’ Church tradition. Rightly read, it will compel those within this tradition to wrestle with continuity amidst diversity and hopefully emerge with a unified call to be committed to our Lord Jesus.

Mark Rodgers,  
Waterloo, Ontario.

**Jouette M. Bassler, *God & Mammon: Asking for Money in the New Testament*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991, 144 pages.**

The Church is a body founded upon faith and living by way of God’s provision. However, those who negotiate property mortgages for countless building projects realize that banks usually prefer cash. Since the Church’s inception, there has always been a tension between providential care and ecclesiastical entrepreneurship in the name of Jesus. In fact, one cannot help but notice that on any given Sunday morning religious spokespeople seem to spend an inordinate portion of their time with but one goal, to plead for more funds! Like many of our day, Jouette M. Bassler has observed that “raising money has become an end, not a means, an end that seems to justify any means” [p.9]. With this in mind she seeks to address in this book the problem of “how the Church can engage in the necessary task of asking for money in a way that is faithful to its mission and call” [p.8].

Bassler’s contribution is significant in that she does not simply discuss the issue of stewardship. Nor does she offer a critique of various Evangelical cash appeals, though if one reads her work with

at least one eye open, an indirect evaluation of certain modern practices may be detected. Rather, she chooses the path of addressing the “relatively few New Testament texts that speak directly to the question of asking for money” [p.11]. Because of the relative silence of the New Testament, Bassler has opted against positing a dogmatic resolution to the problem, preferring instead to explore “how some early Christian writers in a world at once like and unlike our own tried to reconcile the need to ask for money with the fundamental tenets of their faith” [p.15].

Particularly appealing is Bassler’s analysis of Paul’s financial arrangements with the Corinthian church. In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul emphasizes his renunciation of remuneration on three occasions. However, Paul also made it perfectly clear that he was an apostle just like the founding members of the Jerusalem church. As an apostle, Paul was entitled to the material benefits that came with the position. As Bassler notes from the text, Paul’s refusal to ask for or accept money was very much a voluntary act prompted by the fear that “asking for or accepting money would generate the appearance of greed (1 Thes 2:5); that it would evoke an inappropriate image of the missionary as a peddler of God’s word (2 Cor 2:19); or that it would impose an intolerable financial burden on the struggling young congregations (1 Thes 2:9; 2 Cor 11:9)” [p.67].

In 2 Corinthians, Paul still maintained his policy of non-support, explaining that his financial needs were being met through his own physical labours and the generosity of other churches. Apparently, Paul’s selfless attitude became a point of contention between himself and the Corinthian congregation. Bassler believes that the arrival of certain other apostles (2 Corinthians 11:4) and their alternative message concerning compensation, led the Corinthian church to view Paul as an inadequate apostle, and that his refusal to accept money consequently became a source of embarrassment [p.70]. Paul’s desire to upstage the “super apostles” ran counter to the wisdom of Paul’s age. In so doing, Paul became an even greater servant of Jesus Christ.

In both of the Corinthian epistles, Paul maintained a policy of non-remuneration. Bassler has astutely observed that although the mandate never changed, the impetus for asking and receiving did. In the first letter,

Paul’s basic point... is the issue of priorities, not principles. He is not on principle opposed to remuneration. Indeed, as an apostle he has acquired the right to receive material support from his

congregations. But as an apostle he has also been charged with the task of preaching the gospel, and when his right to support endangers the successful completion of his charge, the charge to preach the gospel must prevail [p.68].

In the second instance, "Paul's argument concerning finances has changed considerably in the course of his dispute with the Corinthian church. Requesting and not requesting financial support are no longer presented as equally valid options for apostles of Christ, to be chosen on pragmatic grounds. The issue is now couched in terms of true versus false apostles, and the very truth of the Christian message is at stake" [p.73-74].

The conclusion drawn by Bassler from these passages is that there are no hard and fast rules to the question of how Christians are to ask for and receive money. Each instance needs to be examined on the basis of its own merits. "When these circumstances threaten the truth of the Christian message, a pragmatic option hardens into a restrictive principle: 'For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth' (2 Cor 13:8)" [p.74].

As a New Testament scholar, Bassler has employed the tools of her trade with precision as well as perception. As a result, this book is both a challenge and a delight to read. She has thoroughly researched her topic, keeping in mind that her intended audience is far broader than the scholarly elect. At the end of each chapter Bassler has also provided an excellent selection of alternative resources for further study. Included at the end of the book is a chapter by chapter study guide complete with thought-provoking questions. This is a truly superb addition to the entire study of Christian financial accountability.

Heinz G. Dschankilic,  
Cambridge, Ontario.

**Henri Blocher, *Le Mal et la croix: La pensée chrétienne aux prises avec le mal.* Méry-sur-Oise: Sator, 1990, 200 pages.**

Ce livre est une synthèse magistrale sur la pensée chrétienne aux prises avec le mal. Son auteur, Henri Blocher, est doyen à la Faculté de théologie évangélique de Vaux-sur-Seine, où il enseigne la théologie dogmatique. On peut apprécier la pénétration de ses



analyses, la rigueur de sa démarche, le ton empreint d'irénisme de ses interventions et son désir de fidélité aux Écritures.

Le problème du mal est toujours actuel. Pourquoi le Dieu tout-puissant a-t-il permis au péché d'avoir prise sur ses créatures? Comment pouvons-nous faire face à cette «injustifiable réalité»? Henri Blocher invite d'abord à examiner les réponses couramment proposées par les penseurs chrétiens.

La première solution efface la réalité du mal en l'incluant dans l'ordre universel de la création. C'est l'approche de Gottfried Leibnitz, de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, et de Thomas d'Aquin. La deuxième solution efface la seigneurie du Seigneur en désignant la volonté indépendante de la créature comme cause première du désordre. C'est l'approche de Nicolas Berdiaeff, de Wilfred Monod, de Dietrich Bonhoeffer, d'Immanuel Kant, de Søren Kierkegaard et de certains évangéliques comme C. S. Lewis et Francis Schaeffer. La troisième solution efface la bonté sans mélange de Dieu et de sa création en désignant le mal comme présent dès l'origine du monde et comme permettant un progrès positif dans son affrontement avec le bien. C'est l'approche de Jacob Boehme, de Paul Tillich, de Hegel, de Jürgen Moltmann et de Karl Barth. Selon Blocher, le maintien de ces trois thèses bibliques de la réalité du mal, de la seigneurie du Seigneur et de la bonté de Dieu amène à rejeter les solutions précédentes.

Le chrétien ne peut que constater son impuissance à expliquer le problème théorique de l'origine du mal. Reconnaître une solution rationnelle serait reconnaître une intégration du mal dans l'harmonie de Dieu, alors que le mal est le scandale en terme de création. Tout comprendre c'est déjà tout excuser. Or l'Écriture ne permet d'excuser ni le mal ni l'homme pécheur.

Après le ratissage des données bibliques, l'auteur conclut que Dieu ne répond pas à la question théorique «pourquoi le mal?», mais plutôt à la question pratique «jusqu'à quand le mal triomphera-t-il?». C'est le destin de l'homme que Dieu veut changer par la réponse de la croix, et c'est ce que l'homme a besoin d'entendre.

Mais alors, si l'amour incompréhensible de Dieu manifesté dans la mort de Jésus-Christ a maté le mal injustifiable une fois pour toutes, comment expliquer la présence du mal dans le monde aujourd'hui? Est-ce que la venue du royaume de Dieu comporte vraiment une victoire sur le mal?

Certains parlent d'un ajournement imprévu. Selon Blocher, l'examen des théories d'ajournement permet de maintenir que le règne de Dieu est venu, et de ressortir la contrepartie, non moins scripturaire, du règne encore à venir. C'est le «déjà et pas encore».

Dieu manifeste ainsi sa patience en rétablissant dans le temps présent son royaume par l'amour et par la foi.

André Loverini, dans sa recension [*Le Lien Fraternel* (Juin 1990)], regrette que l'auteur consacre moins de place à la croix qu'au mal et remarque deux difficultés qui demeurent: la liberté est-elle vraiment libre si Dieu détermine tout souverainement, et, si la volonté de Dieu est de quelque manière engagée dans l'existence du mal [p.138], le risque n'est-il pas d'en conclure à sa responsabilité?

Au sujet de la croix, les lecteurs pourront consulter avantageusement le cours de l'auteur *La doctrine du péché et de la rédemption* (Vaux-sur-Seine, fac-étude, 1982-1983). Le premier point sur la liberté de l'homme me semble bien adressé dans le chapitre deux, et il convainc que la liberté n'est pas un critère absolu, défini en-dehors de la souveraineté de Dieu. Par contre, le deuxième point sur la responsabilité de Dieu semble une difficulté laissée en suspens.

Si *Le Mal et la croix* établit clairement le mal comme un irrationnel absolu, il n'élabore pas assez le rôle du diable. Étant donné que l'adversaire est l'instigateur de la corruption de la création, il doit prendre sa place dans le débat sur l'origine du mal. En effet, si l'on déplace le poids de la question uniquement sur l'homme ou sur Dieu, l'on risque de distendre sa raison. Le sujet est abordé dans un autre ouvrage, plus exégétique, de l'auteur, *Révélation des origines* (Lausanne: PBU, 1979).

*Le Mal et la croix* est un ouvrage court (200 pages) mais dense. Si sa lecture n'est pas toujours facile, nul n'en regrettera l'effort.

Sylvain Gagné  
Repentigny, Québec.

**John Calvin, *Calvin's Ecclesiastical Advice*. Translated by Mary Beaty and Benjamin Farley. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991, 184 pages.**

One of the most misunderstood and under-appreciated theologians of the Christian Church is John Calvin. In some circles, the label of being a follower of Calvin is automatically given to anyone who is anti-Arminian. To others, Calvin is the brooding monster whose pessimistic views of human depravity condemned the majority of mankind to eternal damnation. Thus, the historian Will Durant speaks of Calvin's theology in the following unflattering terms: "We

shall always find it hard to love the man who darkened the human soul with the most absurd and blasphemous conception of God in all the long and honored history of nonsense" [*The Story of Civilization: The Reformation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 6:490]. The reality, though, of who Calvin was is quite different, as this collection of forty-six letters well reveals.

It needs to be remembered that as well as being an influential Reformed theologian, Calvin was first and foremost a pastor inundated with the usual demands of such a calling. The portrayal in these epistles is not that of an erudite recluse nor a villainous ogre. Rather, the Calvin that emerges is a man marked by gentleness, sensitivity and compassion.

For instance, in one letter, Calvin is asked for advice concerning a husband who has contracted elephantiasis, a contagious disease which in this case has intensified his sexual appetite. The man and his wife appeared to be contemplating divorce. Calvin pointedly declared that "disease is not a proper cause for divorce, no matter what it is, and one party in a marriage remains bound to the other as long as the marriage remains firm" [p.133]. Calvin recognized that the marriage bed, while important, is not the foundation for a successful marriage. Therefore, although a couple may be forced to restrain themselves from the sex act, the absence of sexual relations does not provide biblical warrant for divorce.

What then was to be done? Calvin went on to argue that the husband may demand his marital rights on the pretext that he "needs his wife" [p.134]. But the husband needed to recognize that his elephantiasis made him a health risk to his wife, his children, and the public at large. If, therefore, he has any sense of humanity, he will refrain from injuring his wife and children, and also take thought for the human race. He is caught in a situation where he cannot perform his duty as a husband or a father, and is even, in a certain way, an enemy of public welfare [p.134]. Calvin thus cautioned the unfortunate man that, as a victim of disease, he must exercise abstinence. Through no fault of his own, he has become repugnant. Unless he is besotted with a brutish sort of stupor, he should realize that he is loathsome to everyone and should hide himself away out of a sense of self-restraint [p.134].

The wife, Calvin recognized, was as much a victim as the husband. In light of today's moral climate, Calvin's advice may seem harsh and unduly restrictive of the husband's right to safe sex. But Calvin did realize that, even in his own day, total abstinence presented a seemingly punitive remedy to an unfortunate

circumstance. However, in good conscience, Calvin could not insist that the wife oblige herself to undergo an act which might damage her physically. "We do not want to be cruel, and we do not venture to obligate the woman to share a home and marriage bed with a husband who is forgetful of all the laws of nature" [p.134].

Nor was such a decision to be made lightly. The matter is one that required, in Calvin's opinion, the intervention of legal authorities to investigate and declare whether or not there was actually a health risk. If the judges ruled in her favour, then she was to live as a widow performing whatever wifely duties do not threaten her safety. "We feel that she must be allowed to live as a widow," Calvin wrote, "after a legal investigation by judges has intervened. Meanwhile, she should continue to attend her husband and perform any duties she can, provided that he does not require of her anything virtually unnatural" [p.134]. Many, no doubt, will disagree with Calvin on his proposal. However, they cannot deny that his counsel took into consideration the emotional trauma of both the husband and the wife. Calvin did not pontificate from the vacuum of an ivory tower.

Students of Calvin will appreciate the broad range of topics this collection covers. As well as marital concerns, issues discussed include the worship of images; inappropriate displays of wealth; usury; Church administration; the nature of sin and redemption; and the Lord's Supper, to name a few. This is a highly useful tool which should benefit anyone interested in understanding John Calvin as a human being and a minister of God's Church.

Heinz G. Dschankilic,  
Cambridge, Ontario.

**D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press/Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1991, 715 pages.**

It has been said by many over the last few decades that probably no New Testament book has received more attention in periodical articles, monographs, special studies, books and commentaries than the Fourth Gospel. Don Carson, professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, has now rounded out his contribution in these areas with a commentary of his own. In so doing he has left us deeply in his debt. Here is an author who has stretched his scholastic muscles to especially accommodate the pastor

and the informed layperson. The commentary stands as a seminal work for "those whose privilege and responsibility it is to minister the Word of God to others, to preach and to lead Bible studies" [p.7].

First, he is neither abstruse nor simplistic in his style. For example, some will be thankful that the footnotes do not become ponderous lexical and grammatical explanations. Others will be relieved to find the transliteration and explanation of Hebrew and Greek words in the body of the work. On the other hand, this serviceability in no way hampers Carson's practice of critical exegesis. The content is neither pedestrian nor reductionistic. Rather than writing for the theological "jet-set" or the mythical "general reader," here is an exegetical and expository commentary which is both readable and ministry-friendly. The average pastor is far too busily engaged in a diversity of responsibilities to sort through, sift and evaluate the plethora of secondary literature on the Gospel of John. But this is precisely where Carson excels in his deft, evenhanded treatment of scholarly literature.

Second, the introduction is quite comprehensive at almost 90 pages. Carson marks out some peculiarities of the Fourth Gospel before addressing its historicity and tracking the current of mainstream Johannine studies. Indeed, throughout the book he ably defends it against those who see this gospel as historically unreliable, larded with anachronisms and the like. Third, under the heading of authenticity, Carson leans heavily on stylistic uniformity (at the level of vocabulary and syntax) to challenge the brittle, source-critical approaches to this gospel (including Raymond E. Brown's five-layer tradition probing). Plus, rather than postulate a later ecclesiastical redactor to explain this "unified authorial stamp," he prefers to see John as a seasoned preacher who has personalized a career of acquired learning (from several sources), compiled his sermonic notes and published them in book form. At the same time, he argues for no direct literary dependence between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics because no collusion can be demonstrated.

After addressing these questions of authorship and date, he probes the purpose of the Gospel of John. Carson dissents from the modern majority who hold to a readership of believers (e.g. Kevin Quast's recent *Reading the Gospel of John: An Introduction*). He retrieves what was the dominant view until this century and argues that John's purpose is evangelistic and particularly so for diaspora Jews and Gentile proselytes to Judaism. Carson then introduces nine leading theological emphases in John which anticipate the body of the commentary. Finally, before commenting on the structure of the

Gospel he offers practical suggestions for preaching from it. For instance, he notes that the burden to tease out the Fourth Gospel's role in redemptive history gets regrettably displaced. As he observes:

[A] certain amount of preaching in rather conservative contexts unwittingly tumbles into the same sort of error as some radical brands of Gospel criticism. Gospel criticism...devotes so much attention to imaginative and detailed reconstructions of the communities of the Evangelists that what the Evangelists say about Jesus or claim he himself said or did receives fairly short shrift. For quite different reasons, many conservative preachers are so busy drawing applications for their congregations that they skip the prior question, 'What does this passage tell us about Jesus?'...By 'what the passage says about Jesus' I do not refer exclusively to Jesus' person and words and deeds (though I do not mean less than that), but to all that can be known of Jesus and his place in the sweep of redemptive history. How does Jesus fit into the Bible's 'story'? Rightly done, preaching from the Gospels enables a congregation to put its Bible together...To hammer away at the urgency of belief without pausing to think through what it is John wants his readers to believe and whom it is he wants them to trust is to betray the Gospel of John. Preaching from the Gospels is above all an exercise in the exposition and application of Christology [p.101, 102].

In this reviewer's mind there are at least three notable features that together serve to distinguish this commentary from other recent works on this gospel. First, Carson is self-consciously committed to alerting his readers to this gospel's theological contribution. When this requires judicious expertise with literary devices and other narrative conundrums he is equal to the task. For example, John's choice to extend double meaning to terms, his penchant for dualisms, his use of the "misunderstanding" and "irony" motifs and other literary subtleties are spotlighted to ultimately nurture the reader in biblical theology.

Second, as one reads the commentary proper and Carson's careful evaluations of current Johannine studies, one cannot help but notice that he has a penchant for flushing out simplistic disjunctive thinking. For instance, his eagle eye is especially focused when he treats those who from time to time set conservative theological commitments against historical reliability due to John's supposed fudging of history in order to theologize. Carson has utter confidence in the historicity of John's Gospel while appreciating the fact that the author's descriptions are significantly affected by his own theological agenda and historical circumstances.

Take, for example, the account of Jesus' anointing (12:1-8). Some moderate critics would see a mixing of details (due to differences in the descriptions of anointing) between the Matthew/Mark account and that of John which results in bald error (e.g. G. R. Beasley-Murray, R. E. Brown *et al.*). Carson defends the Gospel of John's reliability by demonstrating that the anointing event was "comprehensive enough to generate the accounts of both John and Matthew/Mark, including the divergences that initially seem so odd" [p.425, 426]. In this respect, this commentary plays an important touchstone role for future writers.

Third, the broadest source of agreement in modern Johannine studies is the drive to reconstruct the Johannine community. While simple source criticism (*à la* R. Bultmann) is no longer in vogue, brands of redaction criticism are. The major contours shaping the Johannine community are discerned through clever types of "mirror reading." Carson, rightly, remains skeptical about the cogency of reconstructionism, because its approach is highly inferential and its methodology uncontrolled. Given the considerable energy and mass of modern writing put into the reconstruction of the Johannine community, one could argue that there has developed a considerable deficiency of top-notch exegetical and theological studies of the text as it stands. Here is where Carson has served the Church well. Yet, at the same time, without dodging or patronizing the redaction critic he has objectively argued that reductionistic speculations for this gospel are intrinsically incapable of meaningful verification.

Without question, this work has carved out a significant niche for itself. Unlike C. K. Barrett, Carson does not stand needlessly apart from John's historical claims. Yet this is not to say that he has not grappled with every relevant brand of Gospel criticism, including the dehistoricizing rhetorical criticism (sometimes called "new criticism" or "new literary criticism") of R. Alan Culpepper. In this alone, he surpasses the likes of F. F. Bruce (albeit Bruce's commentary is

written in the popular style), who has virtually no written consideration of critical problems at all. While Carson stands over against the sacramentalism of the likes of Raymond E. Brown and R. Schnackenburg, he has advanced somewhat farther than Leon Morris' dated New International commentary (the major conservative commentary on John up until now) in theological thoroughness and in bringing us up to speed in current Johannine studies.

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**Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992, 200 pages. ISBN: 0-8010-2566-4.**

Some sceptics of the Bible point out that one cannot possibly know what the original Word of God actually says, especially where the New Testament is concerned. Their reasoning is based upon the fact that there is no uniform textual agreement among the voluminous mass of extant manuscripts. Christian apologists and textual critics are quick to admit that there are indeed textual variants. However, the mere existence of variants does not negate the belief that the original apostolic words are preserved within an ancient corpus unequalled in size. The job, then, of the textual critic is to wade through all the variants and determine whether a manuscript, passage or even a single word originated with a first-century apostle or was emended at a later date by a well-meaning scribe. Philip Wesley Comfort firmly believes that despite the thousands of variants inundating the critic "it is possible to recover the original text of the Greek New Testament" [p.20]. In pursuing this task, Comfort concentrates almost exclusively upon the relative handful of ancient texts that predate the Diocletian persecution in the first decade of the fourth century. "These early, extant manuscripts are the closest copies we have to the New Testament autographs, and they are the documents from which we can recover the original text of the New Testament" [p.17].

Comfort's statement is neither high handed nor reactionary. He does not discount the significance of the *Textus Receptus* tradition except to note that as a witness to the apostolic era it is at least four centuries removed from the original autographs. He does, however,



assail the “eclectic” approach to textual criticism. The “eclectic” method believes neither in the primacy of the Byzantine tradition, from which the *Textus Receptus* received its impetus, nor in early manuscript primacy. For the eclectic textual critic, the original words of the apostles are contained in both. Originality is based upon which variant best accounts for the other variants. Comfort, like Harry A. Sturz, is critical of the high degree of subjectivity that accompanies this methodology.

Comfort has produced an excellent introduction to the field of textual criticism. Obviously, those who hold to the primacy of the Byzantine text will strongly disagree with Comfort’s preference for the textual witnesses from the Alexandrian tradition, which contains many of the earliest manuscript witnesses that we have of the New Testament. Along with charts and graphs explaining the relationships among the text-types, Comfort also provides an accurate and insightful historical context for the manuscript(s) under discussion. While Comfort is not the final word on the subject, the novice would be well advised to begin with this fine piece of work.

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S. L. Copson, *Association Life of the Particular Baptists of Northern England 1699-1732, English Baptist Records*, No. 3. [London]: Baptist Historical Society, 1991, x + 153 pages. ISBN: 0-903166-15-1.

A central feature of the Baptist experience since its origins in the mid-seventeenth century has been the “association,” where representatives from local, independent Baptist congregations could meet to discuss common concerns and provide practical assistance. In classical Baptist thought, as Copson emphasizes, these associations had no “coercive powers to compel obedience from a congregation” and were in no sense legislative bodies; yet, they were seen as vital to the health of the local church. Just as the individual members of a congregation were expected to manifest care and concern for one another, likewise, in the words of the Abingdon Association, “every church ought to manifest its care over other churches as fellow members of the same body of Christ.” Thus, if an individual congregation ignored the views of the association to which it

belonged, good scriptural reasons would have to be found why such views were not followed [p.3, 7].

Now, in providing this carefully-edited version of the records of an early Baptist association, that of the churches in Northern England between the years 1699 and 1732, Copson has given us a valuable window on the actual associational experience of our Baptist forebears. For in these records we see early Baptist congregations wrestling with important theological issues as well as very practical concerns. And making this record even more valuable are a series of introductory chapters [p.1-79] by Copson which explore such matters as "The History of the Churches of the Northern Association to 1733," the "Association, Church Organisation and Order," and the "Association and Theology."

In 1699, for instance, it was noted that the most pressing theological problem of the day was the denial by some of the fact that Christ has two natures united in his one person [p.84]. This seems to reflect the revival of Arianism in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England which denied the co-eternity and co-equality of Christ with God the Father. If so, it indicates that these Northern churches, though isolated geographically, were not out of touch with the main intellectual currents of the day. There is also a prolonged discussion in these records about the issues raised by antinomianism and, judging from the amount of space devoted to this matter, it was actually a more pressing concern than the problem of Arianism. In this case also the associational debate reflects a broader intellectual context, this time the controversy that had raged in Presbyterian and Congregationalist ranks during the 1690s over the antinomian question. It is noteworthy, as Copson emphasizes, that the Association consistently "rejected any antinomian tendencies and...set out the need for an evangelical and scripturally ethical Calvinism" [p.71]. In our day, when antinomianism is far from being a dead issue, this discussion has obviously great relevance.

Another good illustration of the questions discussed in these records is one that was raised during the early stages of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), when France and Spain tried to unite under a single crown and England allied herself with Holland, Denmark, Austria and Portugal to prevent such a union. What exactly was the churches' responsibility in such a time of war? "We think," the representatives of the churches eventually concluded, that "the Lords People should not stand as unconcerned spectators," but pray for victory and be prepared to "contribute Conscionably what by Law is required of us." Appended to the latter statement is a

reference to Romans 13:5-6, where Christians are told that they are to be subject to the governing authorities [p.90-91]. But, as Copson points out, there is more involved here than literal adherence to this text in Romans. France, in which Roman Catholicism was firmly planted as the state religion, was regarded as an idolatrous state, and thus the war was viewed as one way in which God was seeking to curb the expansion of idolatry [p.73]. Although the Particular Baptists of the eighteenth century were nowhere near as politically active as their seventeenth-century forebears had been — their social situation prevented such activity — they obviously shared their Baptist forebears' avid interest in reading the "signs of the times."

Other issues discussed include the nature of a genuine "Call to the Ministry" [p.99-101], the problem of believers marrying unbelievers [p.83, 120-121; see also Copson's discussion of this issue, p.63-64], and prayer for the conversion of the Jewish people [p.87]. Towards the end of the period covered by these associational records, the churches of the Northern Association began to increasingly evidence a concern for spiritual renewal. In 1728, for example, the question of "the most likely method or measures to recover ye Power of Religion & Godliness in ye Churches" was addressed. A variety of "measures" were mentioned: reading God's Word "daily with seriousness understanding & Care," regular attendance at the Lord's Supper, observing "the duty of Prayer both private and publick" [p.122-123].

Yet, the very asking of this question seems to indicate that the churches in the North were not immune from the low spiritual state affecting many Dissenting causes in the mid-eighteenth century. However, as Copson points out, all was not "an unmitigated tale of woe," for a number of new causes were founded in this period and in the churches that struggled through these difficult years of Calvinistic Baptist history there was evidently a deep desire on the part of many to live the Christian life "in a manner that was obedient to gospel order" [p.76].

There is little doubt that Copson's study will be of immense benefit to future historians specializing in Calvinistic Baptist life and thought in the eighteenth century. Yet, it also has much to teach Baptist churches in general about the importance and dynamics of associational life.

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**Gail Paterson Corrington, *Her Image of Salvation. Female Saviours and Formative Christianity.* Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, 224 pages. ISBN: 0-664-25389-X.**

Gail Paterson Corrington begins by asking the question, "can a male saviour save women?" [p.31]. After wading through two hundred and twenty four pages I am still unsure of her answer. Essentially, this work is an attempt to provide women with an adequate female saviour model that identifies with them and their problems. But Corrington never adequately discusses the reasons why Jesus is inadequate to fulfill such a role nor provides sufficient argumentation to remove him from his rightful place as the historical Redeemer of all humanity.

According to Corrington, the bringing forward of Jesus as a saviour for women is a form of patriarchalism, fabricated by a society in which males dominate. "The portrayal of the agent of God's salvation as embodied in a particular male, Jesus of Nazareth, and the emphasis upon Jesus' gender were not mere historical accidents, but resulted from a culturally limited process of selection that excluded other possible embodiments" [p.202]. This so-called "emphasis upon Jesus gender" is a fabrication of Corrington. Gender as an issue is a late, twentieth-century phenomenon. Corrington would have us believe that the early Christians collaborated in an elaborate attempt to confound later generations. It is both scholarly and historical dishonesty to read into history our own particular biases and prejudices. Corrington does so at the risk of undermining the significance of the Atonement.

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**Michael J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in Its British Context.* New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, xii + 354 pages. ISBN: 0-19-506393-7.**

The goal of this superb monograph is to trace the evolution of the concept of revival in colonial New England between the years 1660 and the First Great Awakening in the 1740s. Drawing on a wide

variety of unpublished manuscript sources as well as numerous secondary studies on the topic, Crawford, whose main area of study and publication up until now has been in naval history, has produced a landmark study of revival and its attendant theology. Rightly recognizing the close interconnections between Anglophone Protestantism on both sides of the Atlantic — New England's "religious culture was a subculture of Great Britain's" [p.3] — Crawford's analysis also embraces the thinking about revival that was prevalent in Britain.

In the first half of the book Crawford cogently demonstrates how revival became an ideal for English-speaking believers in the early eighteenth century because of the apparent failure to bring about a religious reform of their society through the promotion of virtue and a godly lifestyle. Pastors and religious leaders began to draw on the literary heritage of Puritans like John Owen and John Howe who had asserted that "the pouring forth of the Spirit is the only means for bringing about a revival of religion" [p.26].

A good example in this regard was Samuel Danforth (1666-1727), minister at Taunton, Massachusetts, who zealously pursued the moral renewal of his society till the 1710s, when his thinking and preaching noticeably changed. "His principal message came to be that all human efforts towards moral reformation and spiritual renewal were doomed to failure unless God were to bless them" [p.47]. As Crawford notes, the thinking about revival in Anglo-American circles as it developed during this period "was more theological than anthropological. It was less an understanding of how men act than of how God acts" [p.35]. This stands in marked contrast to the thinking that began to emerge with individuals like Charles Finney at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For Finney and others like him, revival ceased to be a "spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit." Instead, there was now "the expectation that a revival would automatically follow the skillful use of the proper means" to promote revival [p.241-242].

As Crawford amply shows, the early eighteenth-century pastors and writers who sought God-given revival did so with means — such as "passionate conversionist" preaching [p.52-80] that was Christocentric in its focus and affective hymns [p.90-97] — but they did not trust in these means, unlike nineteenth-century believers of the ilk of Finney. It should be noted, however, that some of Crawford's observations regarding these means are not always beyond dispute. For instance, Crawford rightly states that a "fundamental agreement distinguished the evangelical persuasion [in

the eighteenth century]: Religion is a matter of the heart.” He then proceeds to state that this entailed the conviction that the “saving operations of the Spirit are an affective, not an intellectual experience” [p.86]. But one would hardly get this impression from the writings of Jonathan Edwards, the leading thinker on revival in the eighteenth century. For Edwards, conversion impacts both head and heart — in his words, there is both light and heat — and he questioned seriously the reality of such a work which does not have an impact in both realms. Crawford’s mistake in this regard is surprising since he spends a significant amount of time analyzing the way that Edwards’ writings established a morphology for eighteenth-century thought about revival [p.124-127, 132-138, 183-190, 226-233].

The second half of the book is largely taken up with examining the eighteenth-century revival as it manifested itself in Great Britain — the Methodists and the “Cam’slang Wark” in Scotland [for the latter, see especially p.197-222] — and in the New England colonies. The importance of George Whitefield, active on both sides of the Atlantic, is especially noted: he was “the principal leader of the movement” and “the great majority of early anti-Methodist tracts were aimed at him” [p.143].

There is also a fascinating discussion of the way in which evangelical Dissenters in England — mostly Congregationalists and Calvinistic Baptists — reacted to the transatlantic revival [p.174-179]. Despite the fact that they were highly supportive of the revival in New England and Scotland, and admired the zeal of preachers such as Whitefield, they basically thought that the revival in England was primarily an “affair of the Church of England,” which in their view definitely needed reviving. But it was not for them. “They preferred to wait for a more acceptable revival,” in which some of the embarrassing aspects of preachers like Whitefield — his occasional imprudent remarks, for example — would be absent. Crawford notes that the Dissenters in general “dreaded the taint of cant and enthusiasm” connected to the Methodists and this discouraged their full support of the revival. In Crawford’s words: “The Dissenters’ consciousness of their minority status (just over 6 percent of the population of England and Wales) inhibited the ministers from countenancing in their own congregations any extraordinary emotional behavior that would have exposed the Dissenters to ridicule and contempt” [p.174]. There was also the fact that the Dissenting denominations could only preach in places of worship that had been licensed with the state; it was illegal for them to preach in

the open air like Whitefield. They thus had only a “small percentage of the populace as an audience” [p.174-175].

Crawford also believes that the revival-like ministry of Richard Davis (1658-1714) in Northamptonshire in the 1690s was another major factor in developing later Dissent’s distrust of revival. Davis was a Congregationalist minister at Rothwell, Northamptonshire, who, between 1689 and 1696, planted thirteen new churches with 2,000 to 3,000 members. Davis, though, had High Calvinist tendencies and was accused of being an antinomian. According to one report, Davis “taught that God had ordained all that comes to pass, even sin.” The resulting controversy over Davis’ views that soon engulfed many sectors of Dissent “inhibited revivalist activity for years. It caused revivalism to be associated firmly with antinomianism and enthusiasm at a time when Dissenters were becoming highly sensitive to those charges.” Thus, rejecting Davis’s revivalist strategy, Dissent turned within itself. It failed to reach out to bring in new members. Rather, it became “tribal,” ministering to those families already within the fold [p.99-101; see also p.175]. Did the Davis affair, however, have such an impact on every sector of Dissent? For instance, was it partly in reaction to Davis that the Calvinistic Baptists found themselves in the position that Crawford so accurately depicts here, or were there other more significant factors?

In the final chapter of the book Crawford looks beyond the eighteenth century to note the ways in which the New England tradition of revival developed. Revival still continued as an ideal to be pursued, but under the pragmatism of Finney and others like him, the theocentric perspective on revival — so central to eighteenth-century thinking on the subject — was largely lost [p.241-242]. Even though there were continuities between the two eras, which are well outlined by Crawford [p.240-250], the loss of such a vital perspective undoubtedly raises the question of whether the nineteenth-century revivalists are indeed the legitimate heirs of Edwards, Whitefield, and those like them. As Crawford observes, another book, tracing the history of the changes in the concept of revival during the nineteenth century, is sorely needed [p.240].

Although Crawford’s book is by no means light reading, it is essential for anyone interested in the foundations of modern evangelicalism and the ideals that gripped the hearts and minds of our eighteenth-century forebears.

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**Eryl Davies, *Condemned For Ever! What the Bible Teaches About Eternal Punishment.* Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1987, 125 pages.**

Evangelical theologians are looking anew at the topic of the afterlife and, to the consternation of many of their fellows, some have opted for annihilationism. Eryl Davies makes no attempt, however, to respond to individuals who have done so, authors such as Clark Pinnock, P. E. Hughes, and more recently, John Stott. Instead, *Condemned For Ever!* acts as a primer on questions like, "Why do we have to die?", "Is there a real hell?" and "Is it fair?" The concluding chapter of the book is entitled "Becoming a Christian," and well reveals the book's evangelistic thrust.

But even a simple book like this must grapple with theology. Davies, in the opinion of this reviewer, however, does not interact sufficiently enough with the relevant biblical texts. Sometimes he appears to gloss over significant points by simply quoting Scripture or relating an anecdote. *Condemned For Ever!* thus becomes easy reading for the believer, but is unsatisfactory as a serious theological study. It is useful, though, as a study for a new believer, or as an evangelistic tool. In a day when few talk about eternal conscious punishment, *Condemned For Ever!* reminds us that the knowledge of hell belongs in the mind of the unbelieving auto mechanic as well as in the study of theologians.

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**Michael Duggan, *The Consuming Fire: A Christian Introduction to the Old Testament.* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991, xx + 671 pages.**

*The Consuming Fire* is correctly described as a Christian introduction to the Old Testament. Unlike many other introductions to the Old Testament which assume a fairly extensive pre-knowledge on the part of the reader, *The Consuming Fire* presents the text and content of



the Old Testament in a manner which is truly understandable for someone who has no prior exposure to the Old Testament of the Christian Bible. In that the book assumes very little on the part of the reader, it is truly an introduction. Duggan's work is further correctly described as an introduction to the Old Testament which is Christian in outlook. It has become commonplace to admit that the values and attitudes of an author affect the manner in which he or she writes upon a particular subject. In an effort to escape religious bias, many writers of introductions to the Bible or its parts chose to focus upon the history of formation and transmission of the biblical text, or the history of religion as evidenced by the biblical text. Duggan, however, chooses to emphasize the function of the Old Testament as part of the sacred Scriptures of the Christian Church and, as such, places it within the stream of tradition which culminates in the advent of Christ and the witness of the New Testament. Duggan's own design is that "This book is offered to you as a guide to help you find your way in the native soil of your faith" [p.xiii]. It is evident, then, that the concern throughout the book will be placed on assisting the reader to utilize the Old Testament as a source for development in the community of faith.

While both of the above-mentioned characteristics of this book are commendable, each results in forming a limitation to the scope of the book. Since Duggan's concern has been to provide a guide for those with little informed contact with the Old Testament, he is forced to skim over some of the more difficult aspects of Old Testament study. For example, the reader will find little or no detailed discussion of the strange and varied legal codes of Leviticus. Nor will the reader come to a resolution about the ethical conduct of the conquering Israelite armies as they invaded the Promised Land. Just as substantial is the lack of detailed discussion regarding the formation or history of the biblical text. On this issue, Duggan adopts the stance of an Israelite during the Babylonian exile and reads most of the biblical material (notable exceptions being parts of Deuteronomy and, of course, the Wisdom Literature) as a response to specific concerns of the exilic community. Underlying this methodology is the assumption that it was during the exilic period that the texts were composed or edited. This assumption is most significant regarding the Pentateuch. Duggan devotes a chapter to outlining his view of the formation of the first section of the Hebrew Bible. In this chapter, Duggan opts to follow the methodology of what scholars call "tradition criticism." Duggan encourages the reader to consider the traditions which reside behind the Pentateuch

as "the transmission of revelation over a span of time" [p.59]. As such, they witness to the vibrancy of the community of faith in an era before the compilation of the written text. Duggan writes:

To appreciate the vitality of the pentateuchal traditions, we should think of them as streams and tributaries — which smaller brooks have fed — whose waters converge at various points to make up a large river. When we read the Pentateuch, we are drinking from the river itself. Our investigation of its written traditions takes us upstream to trace our way to the headwaters of this life-giving current of divine revelation [p.59].

As members of the community of faith we too stand as benefactors of the life-giving current and channels by which the tradition will flow to generations yet to come.

The second characteristic of this book — an introduction which is Christian — also carries with it potential limitations. At the conclusion of each chapter Duggan adds a section entitled "Toward the New Testament." The purpose of this section is to bridge the particular Old Testament book under discussion to its New Testament application. The endeavour is worthwhile and a necessary feature of an introduction to the Old Testament which is truly Christian. Duggan indicates that the intent of these sections is to "illustrate how the contents of a particular biblical book foreshadow the coming of Christ" [p.xvii]. It is from the New Testament authors that we, in Duggan's words, learn "how to read the Old Testament" [p.xvii]. Certainly, this approach is necessary for a Christian introduction. The weakness evident in this approach, however, is that the Old Testament is prevented from speaking on its own terms. Obadiah, for instance, is not quoted or alluded to by the New Testament writers. Should we be only dependent upon the New Testament authors in learning how to read Obadiah, the book of Obadiah must forever stand mute. This, of course, is unacceptable to Duggan and he does offer suggestions for meditation which, in my opinion, stray from the actual intent of the prophetic word.

Despite these limitations which Duggan's methodology admits, the book is a valuable source of information and help. Duggan also includes at the end of each chapter an outline of the biblical book under discussion and a series of study questions which provide the reader with a device by which to measure his or her understanding of

the chapter. Historical charts, maps and bibliographies for both the Old Testament and the New Testament add to the utility of the book. The Evangelical reader should not be surprised that Duggan's book contains chapters devoted to the Deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament. These books provide a useful bridge to the New Testament and, while not to be considered inspired as the other canonical books, they have been held in high esteem throughout the history of the Church.

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**Brian H. Edwards, *Baptism in the Spirit — What's That?* Bromley, Kent: Day One Publications, 1992, 16 pages.**

Baptism in the Spirit takes place at conversion. Being filled with the Spirit is an entirely different matter, being a continuous empowering by God the Holy Spirit. There is, thus, no "second experience" required for every believer. These are some of the conclusions set forth by English pastor Brian Edwards in a three-way dialogue between a pastor, one of his flock and a charismatic friend. Like other booklets in this series, this one tackles a complex topic head-on, discusses relevant Scripture and provides a strong, clear argument for its point-of-view. Understandably, this short, 16-page booklet can only provide an overview of what is definitely a hot topic these days, but as an overview it is excellent.

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**Brian H. Edwards, *Tongues and All That...* Bromley, Kent: Day One Publications, 1992, 16 pages.**

This is another very useful outline of what is an extremely confusing topic. In a clearly presented, dialogue format, the author takes the position that "tongues" in the New Testament is a supernatural gift of language given for the purpose of evangelism. It is not babbling, but real language; not a permanent gift, but a temporary facility. When we debate "whether tongues" have ceased, we are debating the wrong

question, Edwards contends. It is the gift we should concentrate on, not the timing. This is a truly thought-provoking summary, warmly commended as a great place to start for any examination of this subject.

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**Daniel Furter, *Les Épîtres de Paul aux Colossiens et à Philémon*:  
Vaux-sur-Seine: Édifac, 1987. 271 pages**

Dire que ce commentaire est l'un des plus récents en français masquerait la triste réalité qu'il constitue sans doute l'un des seuls commentaires bibliques évangéliques sérieux à avoir été écrit au cours des vingt dernières années dans cette langue. Il faut donc saluer la parution de ce volume dans l'excellente collection «Commentaire Évangélique de la Bible» qui comble un vide réel dans les milieux évangéliques.

Il faut aussi plaisir de lire un ouvrage écrit originalement en français. Cela nous change de ces innombrables et, trop souvent, innommables «translations» dont le monde chrétien est inondé. De plus, Daniel Furter, pasteur (au moment de la parution du livre) d'une Église évangélique libre à Avignon, manie la langue avec soin, précision et concision. Nous avons donc là un ouvrage consistant qui ne s'adresse pas au plus petit d'entre les chrétiens.

Furter réussit bien à situer son ouvrage dans la voie moyenne entre l'ouvrage d'érudition pour les spécialistes et les présentations vulgarisées mais trop souvent décevantes [p.3]. Il alloue près du tiers de tout l'ouvrage aux questions d'introduction: 60 pages pour Colossiens ; 20 pages pour Philémon. Ces pages valent à elles seules le prix du livre. On y puise une synthèse remarquable, pour Colossiens, des questions d'introduction: authenticité, contenu de l'épître et problèmes qu'il pose à l'exégète, l'hymne christologique, l'hérésie colossienne, liens de Colossiens avec les autres épîtres. Quant à Philémon, l'introduction contient un chef-d'oeuvre de concision sur l'arrière-plan de l'esclavage dans l'Antiquité et sur la question de la fuite et de la conversion d'Onésime [p.224-236].

Le commentaire lui-même ne pèche pas par excès de mots. Mais si la concision a sa valeur, elle devient pourtant faiblesse lorsqu'il s'agit d'aller au fond du texte. Nous avouons être souvent demeuré sur notre faim en parcourant l'ouvrage. Nous sentons le guide nous

presser avancer alors qu'il y a encore tant à voir. Cette faiblesse est inhérente au format obligatoirement limité d'un commentaire: «on ne finirait pas, si l'on voulait faire un grand nombre» d'observations textuelles.

L'auteur fait aussi l'effort, bien pastoral, de suggérer au fil des analyses des applications, des leçons ou principes applicables à la vie chrétienne. Retenons surtout cette perle du commentaire sur Colossiens: «Rappelons la place que l'apôtre fait dans ses lettres... à la reconnaissance, l'eucharistia, critère de la santé spirituelle des croyants et des communautés» [p.131].

Pourtant, l'ouvrage demeure un peu sec. L'auteur aurait pu proposer au lecteur plus de trains de pensées théologiques, pastorales et pratiques en coupant quelque peu sur certains détails moins utiles: par exemple, ces suites d'opinions des divers commentateurs. L'interaction avec les commentaires existants est sans doute essentielle, mais il importe peu au lecteur «moyen» de connaître la pensée de Hugédé, de Lohse, etc., que de découvrir le sens du texte biblique. Le commentaire de Furter tend ainsi à manquer un peu d'originalité et à prendre la forme d'un compendium, ce qui pourra agacer certains lecteurs pressés d'en arriver au sens.

Nous nous étonnons aussi que le commentaire de Peter T. O'Brien, pourtant publié en 1982, ne figure pas dans la bibliographie. O'Brien cite une bonne trentaine de commentaires dans sa bibliographie, sans compter neuf longues pages d'articles, de monographies, etc. La qualité du commentaire de Furter eut sans doute pu être augmentée avec l'accès à ces ressources supplémentaires. Il faut quand même souligner, à la décharge de Furter, que ce dernier cite des ouvrages (en allemand) que O'Brien ne cite pas.

Le lecteur devra parfois utiliser son dictionnaire; on trouve plusieurs mots inusuels: stique, subodorer, obéré, rédimier, mystagogues, apocatastase, pour ne nommer que ceux-là. Enfin, nous avons relevé quelques coquilles: «créatures» pour créatures [p.109], «idendifié» pour identifié [p.132], «qoumrân» pour qumrân [p.93, 94].

Nous recommandons sans réserve cet excellent ouvrage au pasteur et à tout étudiant sérieux de la Bible.

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**Peter A. Elwell, ed., *The Concise Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Abridged by Peter Toon. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991, xx + 569 pages. ISBN: 0-8010-3210-5.**

This work seeks to be a handy, updated, quick-reference guide to the world of theology. Based on *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, there have been some two hundred articles removed from the latter with the rest of the entries considerably pared down in order to “provide tightly-written, down-to-basics definitions of theological terms, descriptions of organizations and movements, summaries of ideas, and biographies of leaders” [p.v]. Peter A. Elwell, and Peter Toon have done a remarkable job in down-sizing. Obviously, none of the entries are exhaustive and should not be regarded as such.

If there is a weakness to this volume, it is that the editors have not gone far enough in updating material. Since 1984, the Evangelical camp has been faced with numerous new challenges and some not so new. True, one will find a discussion of Liberation Theology on page 280, as well as a mention of bioethics on page 66. However, important developments like the Vineyard movement, Christian Reconstructionism and Dominion Theology are not included. Although there is a fairly lengthy section devoted to “Women in the Church,” the relationship of Feminism to the biblical view of womanhood is not really addressed. Of key figures left out, it is surprising to find no mention of Francis Schaeffer. Should there be another revision of this significant work, some of these topics need to be included.

I can warmly recommend this gem for pastors and church libraries. As a reference tool, it can be used as a help in various areas of study. And as a study aid, it is an appropriate memory jogger — as I can personally testify, when I needed to check the meaning of the term “supralapsarianism.”

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**Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992, xvi + 281 pages. ISBN: 0-943575-95-8.**

This is a superb introduction to the ancient writings contemporary with the early Church. Craig Evans feels that it is crucial for the competent exegete to be at least familiar with these sources since they shed a great deal of light on the New Testament. Evans details a number of valid reasons why a cursory fluency is essential. Three stand out in particular. First, the language of many documents are in *koiné* not classical Greek. If one needs to know the particular meaning of a rare word in the New Testament, consultation with a classical lexicon would render an interpretation four centuries removed from its evolved state. Second, historically and culturally they come from relatively the same context. And third, they provide a valuable insight into the framework of the ancient mind.

Each of the chapters in the book is dedicated to one particular document or document group such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. The opening pages of the chapter usually give an historical summary of the source, followed by a brief description of its contents. It needs to be realized that Evans has written this book with the novice in mind and, therefore, it ought not to be criticized for its superficial treatment of this extensive body of ancient literature. Instead, Evans should be applauded for providing a ready research tool that, in the compass of one volume, unveils the milieu of primitive Christianity.

Heinz G. Dschankilic,  
Cambridge, Ontario.

**Terence Fretheim, *Exodus*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991, 321 pages.**

The "Interpretation" series presents itself as a commentary series "for those who interpret the Bible through teaching and preaching in the church." This volume by Fretheim on Exodus has achieved this goal admirably. Since its publication in 1974, Brevard Childs's commentary on Exodus in the "Westminster Old Testament Library" has been the dominant work on Exodus. Fretheim's book now stands as a worthy complement to that of Childs by incorporating Old Testament work of the past two decades and presenting it in a readily accessible fashion. Moreover, whereas Childs's book is sometimes laborious in the process of sermon construction, Fretheim's commentary is designed to assist pulpit ministry.

It is apparent that Fretheim has been influenced by the developments of literary criticism within Old Testament studies. This

influence is expressed in the emphasis which Fretheim places upon the story of Exodus and the art resident in that story construction. This results, in this reviewer's opinion, in a refreshing sense of wholeness which Fretheim is able to maintain as he works his way through detailed sections of the book. Clearly here, the forest is not lost sight in the midst of the trees! The reader is presented with an impression of the theological impact of Exodus as well as an appreciation for the detailed construction of the book. Fretheim's literary sensitivity is also evident in the manner in which he divides the text of Exodus according to its own literary units. These not only allow a suitable flow to the commentary but also suggest units appropriate for development in an exegetical sermon.

Linguistic studies are kept to a minimum within this commentary. While this does make the commentary more attractive to those without a working knowledge of Hebrew, it limits the extent to which Fretheim can "unpack" the content and nuances of the Hebrew text. At times this seems an unwarranted hindrance in developing the theology of the text, as, for instance, in the section entitled "What's in a Name?" [Exodus 3:13-32].

Fretheim's contribution to the "Interpretation" series follows the pattern of the other books in this series by including only a limited bibliography and eliminating any footnote references. While this is certainly understandable given the specific goal of the series, a more detailed bibliography to assist in further investigation would be welcome. In fine, this commentary on Exodus makes a positive contribution to the exposition of the Word within the Christian community.

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Gannon University,  
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**Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *Lord of the Saved: Getting to the Heart of the Lordship Debate*. Phillipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1992, xii + 104 pages. ISBN: 0-87552-265-3.**

This brief monograph will ably serve to acquaint any reader with the main issues and several of the respective advocates of both sides of the "Lordship Debate." The matter in question is whether salvation can be secured by the acceptance of Christ as Savior without a



corresponding acceptance of him as Lord. "Non-lordship" proponents say "yes," and "Lordship" proponents affirm the opposite. The book is a recasting of Gentry's earlier article, "The Great Option: A Study of the Lordship Controversy" in the *Baptist Reformation Review*, 5 (Spring 1976). But Gentry has updated this article in the preface, where he offers a valuable, bibliographic history of the debate in recent years. Gentry's purpose in the book is to report on the debate, and more importantly, to affirm and defend the "Lordship" position.

The discussion is organized into six chapters. Chapter one presents a basic statement of each position. The four succeeding chapters constitute the burden of the argument in favor of the "Lordship" position, dealing in order with "faith," "repentance," the "Lordship of Christ," and "discipleship." Gentry's approach is primarily to offer word studies of the appropriate Greek words, and in the case of "faith," a study of the prepositions that are used with them. He builds heavily upon the specific ways that these words and concepts are used in their biblical contexts. He also includes exegesis of relevant passages, often in comparison with the interpretations of these texts by "non-lordship" proponents. The final chapter is a call for a commitment to the preaching of an uncompromised gospel as the "Lordship" position defines it.

One feels that this is a debate of systematic rather than practical theology. Quotes from "nonlordship" writers indeed arouse concern about that position, but the safe route will be to observe these quotes in the broader context from which they are taken. Gentry argues that there is no middle ground; it must be one way or the other. Every pastor will wrestle with this judgment. Those who know and preach the worthiness of their Lord to receive joyful submission from all his own, will yet be burdened by the ones who seem that they will be saved "yet so as by fire."

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**John H. Gerstner, *The Rational Biblical Theology of Jonathan Edwards. Volume One.* Powhatan, Virginia: Berea Publications/Orlando, Florida: Ligonier Ministries, 1991, 682 pages.**

Every street in London, England, used to have two vital services: a milkman and a dustman. The milkman kept us fed; the dustman kept us clean. In similar fashion, the busy pastor's reading requires both expositions, sermons, commentaries, on the one hand — and systematic theology on the other. One will give us substance, the other sanity in thinking, preaching and living. But how to keep a firm grip on doctrine and doctrinal thinking in a busy pastor's life is as much a challenge as keeping his Hebrew and Greek alive. It's so easy to get on without it.

One way, which immediately helps the congregation, is to preach doctrine. I do not mean, air out your second-year lectures in Systematic Theology at Prayer Meeting! I do mean, teach our most holy faith as a rounded, topical whole, whatever your bias or bent. For that, getting your people through the subjects of a good Catechism or one of the Creeds or even your local church's Statement of Faith can be excellent. Mind, I said, the subjects, for not every congregation takes kindly to formularies like these as such. But in classes for enquiries, evangelistic series, and Christian-life series, all the great doctrines can be and must be handled. If nothing else, it can give you a great excuse to keep in your theology books every week.

Another way, which helps the preacher in the long run, is to live with a great theologian, that is, with his writings. Like that daily jog around the block, it has the cumulative effect of enlarging your perceptions and keeping the mental muscles supple. And like all other exercise, steady persistence, not haphazard panic, pays off. For those of us whose minds have gone paunchy, Dr. Gerstner has provided a veritable "Weight-Watchers" programme that can gradually put us back in trim. And he has done so through his lifetime of studying and teaching one of the most brilliant intellects of Christian and Western history, Jonathan Edwards. First with his Mini-Theology, then with his audio-tape Edwards symposium, and finally, with the work before us, *The Rational Biblical Theology*. It must be said that the reader of this work had best make his way into it via the lower levels. Wending your way through Gerstner's apologetic pre-occupations in the opening chapters without such paedagogical preparation might just get you into traction!

But even this weighty tome, graced thankfully by the good Doctor's lucid lecturing style, has much useful material for those who, like hummingbirds, love to hover and "dip into" the thoughts of the great. Its masterful essays on the doctrine of Scripture, its catenana-like "commentary" on Hebrews, and its searching discussion of

Edwards as a preacher can be divided and conquered one by such a one with much profit.

In a word: do not start here, if you want to get the grey-matter into shape; but then, do not stop here either. The whole project is intended as an "introduction" to the reading of Edwards himself. Further, it is a wonderful example of what any preacher can gain by patiently, purposely excerpting a great author's works. A. H. Strong, Alexander Whyte, and A. W. Pink cultivated their minds by "reading with a pencil," as has Dr. Gerstner. We are all grateful for it. "Go and do thou likewise." The sinner and saint alike need our brains as much as our hearts.

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Alexander Haldane, *The Lives of Robert and James Haldane*. 1852 ed.; repr. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1990, xvi + 701 pages.

Read this book! It is lengthy. It is verbose at times. But it is meat for the soul. The son of James Haldane records in great detail the lives of his father and uncle, two great men of God. He describes their family background and early days, their conversions, and their subsequent dedication to the service of their God. I recommend it highly.

There are many reasons why one should read this book. Here we see examples of the mighty working of our Sovereign God. We read history to see God in it. We ought never to read history in a cold, disinterested way. Our reading of the history of the Church must ultimately always be doxological. It should always move us to praise God, whose great and eternal purposes constitute the very essence of the history of his people. And here we see God. "A heartwarming book it is," writes Principal John MacLeod, "for those that are interested in the great movements of the gospel in the church of God." And indeed we see great works of God in and through these brothers as they laboured in Scotland, Geneva, and France. What God accomplished through these men! How marvelously the light of his gospel shone in the midst of the darkness of Moderatism, Socinianism, and pure ignorance! How God brought multitudes to himself through the preaching of James and the multifarious ministry of Robert!

Then, here we see examples of great godliness. The author asserts that the book is not intended as a panegyric. At times we might wonder, as the brothers are presented in such glowing terms. Did these men have no faults? But we can excuse the understandable enthusiasm with which the author approaches his subjects, for, whatever one might say, these men were spiritual giants. One of the more remarkable aspects of the godly character of these men is the fact that there seemed to be a complete absence of any desire to promote themselves. For example, Robert was quite content to be in a supportive role at the Tabernacle where his brother was the pastor. How rare this is! We see also in James Haldane a man in whom there was no guile. "He was a man who never acted a part or seemed to be what he was not. His character, both in public and private, was earnest and truthful." In fact, as I read this book I made a list of lessons I could learn in this area. The list is fairly lengthy. Our generation could learn much from these godly men.

Third, read this book, for here we are given examples of great zeal. The Haldanes knew nothing of what J. I. Packer has called "hot-tub religion." These were men of great zeal, men who knew what it meant to sacrifice, to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ. James Haldane's "summer holidays" were preaching tours, during which he would often preach three times a day. One Lord's day found him preaching in the open fields during a heavy downpour. Indefatigable zeal marked his preaching and pastoral ministry. The same was true of his brother whose work in Scotland, England, and on the Continent bore testimony to a spirit consumed with zeal for the house of God. Would that such a zeal inflame the hearts of God's people today!

Then, read this book, for here we find examples of God bringing revival. The accounts stir the soul with desire to see such things in our own day. During afore-mentioned downpour of rain, one observer testified: "It rained very heavily, and although very wet and miry where the congregation stood, no one, I think, moved to go away until the sermon was over. I felt very unwell, but was rivetted to the place, and sorry I was when he was finished his subject." What a rebuke to a generation of evangelicals increasingly addicted to fifteen-minute homilies in comfortable surroundings! Revival power was also evident in the ministry of Robert Haldane. Though not a preacher, his time in Geneva found him teaching theological students who were woefully ignorant of the true gospel. One of those students, Merle d'Aubigné, would, in later years, point to the very apartments

where Haldane held these Bible studies as “the birthplace of the second reformation in Geneva.”

Finally, read this book, for here are examples of men who revered and were devoted to the Word. It was Robert Haldane who, as John MacLeod writes, “secured to all intents and purposes that the Apocrypha was ousted from our English Bible” contrary to the practice of the British and Foreign Bible Society in their work on the continent at that time. It was of Robert Haldane that Frederic Monod testified: “But, what astonished me, and made me reflect more than anything else, was his ready knowledge of the Word of God and implicit faith in its Divine authority... He was, in the full sense of the word, a living concordance.” To Christians whose actions are so often dictated more by passion than precept, Robert Haldane’s devotion to the Word, his thorough acquaintance with it, and his absolute submission to it, speaks volumes.

So let me commend this book to you. It is a biography that will stir your soul. It is well worth wading through its 701 pages. The Banner of Truth has lived up to its usual standards and once again provided much needed nourishment for hungry souls.

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**Carl F. H. Henry, *The Identity of Jesus of Nazareth*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992, 150 pages. ISBN: 0-8054-1546-7.**

Who is Jesus of Nazareth? In the past one hundred years no single question has sparked more controversy than this one, and Carl F. H. Henry has here done the Christian community a tremendous service by outlining the state of the question. Henry fully maintains the orthodox position that Jesus is God incarnate and argues cogently in defense of this cardinal doctrine. This work should be part of every seminarian’s library.

Heinz G. Dschankilic,  
Cambridge, Ontario.

**Carl F. H. Henry, *Gods of this Age or... God of the Ages*. Ed. R. Albert Mohler, Jr. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994, xii + 323 pages; ISBN: 0-8054-1548-3.**

While centred around a common theme — the confrontation between biblical Christianity and the forces of modernity and post-modernity — this latest book from the pen of veteran Evangelical scholar Carl Henry is actually comprised of twenty-four addresses and essays delivered or written on different occasions between 1980 and 1990. Given to a wide variety of audiences ranging from the Baptist Union of Romania to what is now Tokyo Christian University, they elucidate in a highly incisive manner the challenges facing Christianity, especially in the West, and how these challenges should be met. The first six essays, collected together under the title “The Struggle for the Soul of a Nation,” mince no words when it comes to describing the modern West: it is held fast in the grip of “new and powerful paganisms” [p.28], characterized especially by “the disinclination for disciplined thought” [p.5]. After reading Henry’s powerful outline of the impact of these pagan perspectives on the key areas of Western life and thought — the universities, the media, and the political realm — he can certainly not be accused of indulging in apocalyptic fantasies when he describes these pagan perspectives as “the foregleams of a new Dark Ages, inhumane and merciless” [p.5]. And the only bastion against this new barbarism is the Church [p.6].

In the second and third parts of the book, containing eight essays that grapple with moving “Toward an Education that Matters” and “Maintaining Evangelical Integrity,” Henry focuses largely on the important sphere of education. Education must be in the forefront of evangelical concern, Henry argues, since “universities are the intellectually incisive and critical centers of society” [p.165].

Understandably the current state of evangelical education is especially addressed by some of these essays. Henry is rightly disturbed when he finds evangelical colleges failing to stimulate critical thinking and thus emulating one of the main characteristics of the surrounding culture [the main burden of the chapter entitled “The Shrouded Peaks of Learning,” p.103-129, one of the best essays in the book]. Christian students, he emphasizes, must be taught to wrestle with classics of western thought and culture — which should include such works as Calvin’s *Institutes* and Luther’s *Freedom of the Christian* and *The Bondage of the Will* [p.118] — and so learn to think through the key issues of truth, goodness, and freedom.

Equally disturbing to Henry is the way in which the teachers on some evangelical campuses are buying into the presuppositions of the modern world. Henry has no time for a cloistered evangelical existence away from the challenges of modernity [p.166-167], but he

rightly emphasizes that the way to meet these challenges is not by mimicking and echoing the surrounding culture. Rather, evangelicals must hold fast to the "witness of western history, which shows that values lack permanence apart from supernatural norms, and that a loss of absolutes presages a loss also of human meaning and worth" [p.184].

The fourth set of essays, five in total, deal with "Contemporary Theology and the Battle of the Gods." Two of these essays are particularly focused: one is a response to the thought of the sociologist Peter Berger ["Reformed Theology in the Post-Christian Age," p.209-227] and the other a critique of narrative theology as espoused by thinkers like the late Hans Frei ["Narrative Theology: An Evangelical Appraisal," p.257-276]. In setting forth his own theological perspective, Henry unashamedly aligns himself with what he calls "Reformed Theology," which Henry sees as rooted in the "the great priorities of the Protestant Reformation": the Scriptures as God's authoritatively revealed Word and God's justification of sinners "through faith alone in Christ's saving work" [p.230]. It is interesting to find Henry critical of an "amorphous evangelicalism," where the term "evangelical" is applied so widely and so inclusively as to dilute its "cognitive force" [p.230-231].

The final set of five essays, grouped together under the title "Looking Forward, Looking Back," are more popular in style than any of the other essays in the book. Two of them ["Faith in God and Seven Graces," p.293-301, and "Imperatives for the Long Journey," p.315-323] are primarily meditations on scriptural texts, while one of them is an extended recitation of key happenings in American evangelical history since Henry's conversion in 1933. While these five pieces are certainly not up to the quality of the earlier essays in the book, they have obviously been included because they also emphasize the important place that Christians hold at this juncture in history: in an increasingly dark age, believers must make sure that "the flaming light" that has been passed on to them does not slip from their grasp [p.284]; like Timothy, every believer must ponder afresh his responsibility to be "an effective torchbearer" [p.316]. And the light they must pass on? The light of the gospel that has made the culture and heritage of the West such a rich repository in the past.

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**John Howe, *The Works of the Reverend John Howe (1630-1705). Volume III.* Ligonier, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1990, 634 pages.**

Born on May 17, 1630 at Loughborough, Leicester, the irenic Puritan John Howe studied at Cambridge and Oxford, prior to his being ordained in 1652 at Winwick, Lancashire. Two years later he was given the "perpetual curacy" of Great Torrington, Devon, where he laboured to unite Presbyterians and Independents. His first involvement in this parish, however, ended in 1657, when the ruler of England, Oliver Cromwell, called him to court as a chaplain. There too he tried to heal divisions among believers. After briefly serving Richard Cromwell, who succeeded his father in 1658, he returned to Torrington. There, during the 1660s, he endured eight years of harassment under the Clarendon Code, which was enacted with the return of the monarchy in that decade and which sought to remove from ministry all those not in the Church of England. Eventually, in 1670, he moved to Ireland, and for six years served as chaplain to Lord Massareene in Antrim Castle and was engaged in various schemes to educate Presbyterian clergy. In 1676 he returned to London as co-pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Haberdasher's Hall. After the Toleration Act of 1689, he once again laboured to unite the Presbyterians and Independents, but the union he helped to forge was short lived.

An important, but somewhat neglected, Puritan theologian, a six-volume edition of his works was published in 1862-63. This volume is a reprint of the third volume in that set, and consists of sermons, letters, and other fragments, such as passages in his study of the Bible. About one-half of the sermons are funeral sermons, and roughly half of the letters deal with nonconformity and dissenters. It also includes a funeral sermon given for Howe by a certain John Spademan.

Howe's overwhelming burden was the union of the Protestant cause and that Protestants cease their divisions. To this end, he preached a sermon from Colossians 2:2 called "Union among Protestants," a discourse that seeks to answer the question, "What may most hopefully be attempted to allay animosities among Protestants, that our divisions may not be our ruin?" He suggests that "Christians unite, within as narrow a compass as possible, neither multiplying articles of faith, nor rites of worship," while showing concern that all believers affirm the essentials of Christianity. This, he says, would contribute greatly to the vigour of the Christian life, knit believers together in love, and quench the "unhallowed fire of our anger and wrath towards one another."



Howe's funeral sermons, and the letters which accompany them, show keen pastoral insight and sensitivity. For instance, Howe writes to one widower: "I am sensible your own affliction is great, in the loss you now sustain; the relief will be great, and suitable, which the forethoughts of that state will afford, where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

The sermon given at his funeral by Spademan well reveals Howe's character as a preacher: "He did not entertain you with doubtful disputations, or debates concerning external forms and modes of religion. His great soul could not descend to these little things... God is witness, and you with many others also, that his public ministrations were wholly taken up in opening and applying the principles of the oracles of God... and in describing and pressing the unquestionable duties of men and Christians."

John Howe obviously laboured tirelessly to promote true Christian unity. This has great relevance for today, as an answer to both the misguided ecumenism of liberalism and the narrow separatism of fundamentalism. Unfortunately, his dreams in this area were never realized. This volume, nevertheless, has great value for not only lovers of church history, but also for all those who have a desire that the essentials of the faith be the foundation of a true biblical unity.

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**Gordon J. Keddie, *Looking for the Good Life. The Search for Fulfillment in the Light of Ecclesiastes*. Philipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1991, x + 174 pages.**

Gordon Keddie, a Presbyterian pastor in State College, Pennsylvania, has written a fast-paced, popular commentary on Ecclesiastes from an evangelical Christian perspective. He adopts the view that the book is written as pre-evangelistic literature in order to point out the flaws in a world-view which leaves no room for God ("under-the-sun secularism"). Therefore, the author of Ecclesiastes intentionally begins with the secular view to prove its bankruptcy, thus preparing the way for faith. This is a slight variation of a common theme in Ecclesiastes studies among conservative commentators.

Keddie organizes his book into 13 chapters with questions at the end of each to stimulate thought and guide discussion in group study.

He believes that the 12 chapters of Ecclesiastes are arranged in 4 major divisions: 1. The basic consideration of the meaninglessness of secular life (chapters 1-3); 2. Problems that secular thinkers need to face (chapters 4-6); 3. Answers (chapters 7-10); 4. A final call, in the light of the argument, to decide in favour of faith (chapters 11-12).

Keddie writes with panache, grace and conviction. He makes no claim to being a detached, historico-critical exegete concerned to present simply raw data from the past. Rather, from the first paragraph, where he describes the suicide of a bored movie star, to the last pages which narrate the life-changing influence Ecclesiastes has had on his own life, Keddie maintains the reader's interest. This is one of the main strengths of the book.

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**Craig S. Keener, ...*And Marries Another. Divorce and Remarriage in the Teaching of the New Testament.* Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publ., 1991, xii + 256 pages.**

Every Sunday morning, women and men in all walks of life within our civilization spill onto the benches and into the pulpits of Christian churches. Although the combined millions of the "faithful" do not form the majority in their culture, they do enjoy a certain prestige: they are a safe haven against the tide of drugs, murder, prostitution, AIDS and organised crime flooding the decadent West. And their secret is revealed every Sunday morning: the closer one lives to the Bible, the safer and healthier one's life will be. As a result, conservative Christians, in the area of domestic life and ethics, are a cut above the rest and virtually "clean of immorality."

Virtually? Yes, but for one area: sexuality. If the devil has found the trapdoor to western Evangelicalism, then the trapdoor could be called by such names as: adultery, divorce, homosexuality, pornography, or pre-marital sex. If members and leaders could fall in any area it is by means of this infamous trapdoor. Why, look no further than the rise and fall of televangelists.

The alarm and frustration amongst conservative Christians is understandable. It must stop! If Evangelicalism cannot halt divorce and sexual misconduct amongst even her own members, who can? Surely the Bible is not impotent! Surely the solution is to return to

the biblical principles of marriage. We must say “no,” as Jesus did, to adultery, lust, and divorce, and say “no” again, as Paul did, to homosexuality and divorced men in leadership. Surely, argue some Evangelicals, such is the pathway to healing and renewal in this area.

Our policies have been long enough in place to warrant an honest evaluation of these arguments.: Are they working? Are less people falling into sin? Are we able to defend ourselves capably from Scripture? Craig Keener’s book will trouble us if we think we are. Keener freely admits that his work was written to counteract the current misuse of Jesus’ and Paul’s words on marriage and divorce. Keener challenges us to look again and dare to ask the question: would the first-century listeners have drawn the same conclusions from Jesus’ and Paul’s words as we have?

What qualifies Keener to speak is his expertise in the origins of the New Testament. Craig brings the voice of Jesus’ and Paul’s culture alive. His book is remarkable in this regard: over 60% of the book is endnotes, bibliography, index of ancient sources, appendices and abbreviations. He uses 110 pages to state his convictions and 146 pages to substantiate it. This book has us listening to and thinking the thoughts of the first-century Jews, Greeks and Romans. Keener’s conclusion is the following: our late twentieth-century conclusions are not their first-century conclusions, therefore, we lack biblical support for our current “no marriage and divorce” policies.

But Keener is more than an academic scholar evaluating current marriage and divorce policies, he is also a man deeply troubled by how these same policies have been forced upon certain “innocent” parties within the Evangelical fold, including some of his friends and colleagues. This book, therefore, is written in the heat of his own emotions. Those who have been awaiting a defense of the “innocent” party will welcome his passion and ardour. Yet, his emotions colour his otherwise academic work. Keener has failed to treat his opponents in this debate as equally intelligent scholars. He clearly does not aim to win over his opponents with “I beseech thee brethren” diplomacy. He leaves the rather distasteful impression that denominational officials of “no divorce” churches are merely Pharisees. I wonder how many of his opponents will read his work to the end.

Keener argues convincingly that Christ’s words in Matthew 5 on divorce must be read in the context of his previous words on anger and lust. How you interpret the “anger” and “lust” passages in Matthew 5 is how you must interpret the “divorce” passage that then follows. Since Jesus does not switch genres, then neither must we

switch our methods of interpretation. At stake are Christ's radical demands. All 3 passages (on anger, lust and divorce) contain radical, startling absolute claims, otherwise called hyperbole. Yet, Keener correctly chides us for explaining away the hyperbolic language of the first two passages (which indeed we do), but clinging dogmatically to the similarly radical words of divorce as a final, universal law barring no exceptions. He furthermore denies us the hope that perhaps Jesus would have wanted us to be dogmatic by demonstrating that the original hearers would not react thus. Conclusion? Be consistent in your interpretation: Do not show anger in general, but realize that there is a time for anger. Do not sexually covet a woman in general, but by all means desire your own wife in particular. Do not divorce your spouse, but realize that there is a time for divorce.

Next Keener treats the "exception clause" of Matthew 19. His first argument rests on how the strict and liberal rabbinic schools would have understood Jesus. Both schools, Keener argues, permitted remarriage if the divorce was valid. Keener then argues, less convincingly, that alternative interpretations of the exception clause are logically awkward. Here, one would expect Keener to explain clearly the meaning of "immorality" (*πορνεία*). But he does not. Given that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Greek to Greek-speaking Jews, we are wise to focus on what the word meant to the Greeks: "immorality" in all its sinful aberrations.

In preparation for the 1 Corinthians 7 passage, Keener unfolds the Graeco-Roman mind on divorce, marriage, remarriage and celibacy. Aside from all the virtue heaped on virtuous wives, babies and the like, the Romans and Greeks were very lustful creatures, but Keener finds no grounds for supposing that remarriage after divorce was especially shocking to them; on the contrary, it was expected. Next, Keener explains that Paul's treatise on marriage, divorce and remarriage is an application of Christ's marriage and divorce principles in a non-Jewish context. No, Christians may not break up marriages with non-Christians, but yes, they may remarry if they are abandoned by non-Christian spouses.

Finally, Keener treats the "husband of one wife" passage in 1 Timothy 3:2. He senses (correctly, in my opinion) that the requirement is not a marriage count or a wife count, but rather a character quality of "faithfulness in the marriage." He tries to use extra-biblical sources to arrive at this, but his attempt in this regard is unconvincing. Keener seems to be unaware that the strongest argument proving the "faithful spouse" interpretation is an intrinsic

argument of the Timothy and Titus passages. By way of application, Keener feels that the phrase is illegitimately used against candidates for the pastorate and for the mission field who happen to be divorced. I agree, but his appeal may not change many denominational opinions.

This book will take its place as perhaps the most authoritative work on the cultural context behind the New Testament's teaching on marriage and divorce. Those struggling with this issue will profit deeply from Keener's analysis. But it is not easy reading. Tony Campolo, in reviewing this work, recommends it to committed lay-people as a very easily understood book. I would venture to disagree. This work seems too academic to be bedside reading. Nevertheless, I would most certainly recommend it to anyone who has been touched or hurt by divorce or the divorce debate. In particular, those in pastoral leadership will be well served by a close study of this excellent work.

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**R. H. Lea, *Heaven is a Journey Not a Destination*. Burlington, Ontario: Welch Publishing Co., 1991, 132 pages.**

On December 14, 1985 R. H. Lea faced the inevitable fate of all married couples, namely, the tragic and sudden death of a beloved life-long companion. The product of that tragedy was this book, *Heaven is a Journey Not a Destination*. Lea's work is first and foremost a testimonial to the strength that the Christian faith provides during times of extreme physical, emotional, and spiritual upheaval. Second, it is a fitting legacy to his wife, Margie Lou Lea, who passed away because of a massive brain aneurism.

One would expect that the church and the local minister would have played a prominent role in the moment of crisis, especially to someone like Lea, who professes to be a Christian. But, except for a passing moment after Lea's wife was admitted to the I.C.U. at McMaster Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario, there is virtually no mention of the Church's involvement in Lea's life. His greatest source of spiritual strength, humanly speaking, came from none other than the California televangelist Robert Schuller. Prayer, meditation upon God's Word, worship, and fellowship seem to have been

replaced by a steady diet of television evangelism. In Lea's own words, "I usually watch Schuller every Sunday, no matter where I am" [p.10]. Lea even describes himself via one of Schuller's categories as a person who runs on a "seven day Spiritual tank" that gets refilled once every Sunday through Schuller's sermons [p.10-11].

This book does not claim to be a theological treatise on death and grief. Nor should it be regarded as such. Rather, it is the story of how one man, when confronted with the ultimate question, found the hand of God in various ways. Though suspect in some areas, this book is of some value as an example of how one man survived the devastating loss of a spouse.

Heinz G. Dschankilic,  
Cambridge, Ontario.

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Heart of the Gospel*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991, 192 pages.**

*The Heart of the Gospel* is the Doctor doing what he did best, preaching the Gospel. In a series of fourteen messages preached in the winter evenings of 1948-1949, Lloyd-Jones, in his typically masterful way, expounds the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. Starting with John the Baptist's inquiry from prison as to Jesus' identity and going right through to the Saviour's great invitation, he thrills you and grips you with the marvellous Good News.

Lloyd-Jones' sermons are not predictable. He is an excellent Bible student and uses powerful reasoning to drive home the truth and force the reader again and again back to Jesus. He has an amazing ability to anticipate questions and to work them through to biblical conclusions. A great evangelist, he does not sentimentalize, nor minimize, nor manipulate through emotion. Yet through the truth of the particular text, reinforced by relevant supporting passages, and coupled with powerful reasoning and passionate zeal, Lloyd-Jones moves you to see the heart of the Gospel.

There is a historical context to the preaching of these sermons, namely post-Second World War Britain. And obviously some of the questions and concerns the Doctor deals with are not burning issues in Canada forty-five years later. Nonetheless, the sermons are incredibly relevant and up to date. Indeed, *The Heart of the Gospel* is

vintage Lloyd-Jones. In the "Foreword" J. I. Packer observes that the sermons impress him "as among the ripest fruit of the greatest period of a great man's ministry." With this sentiment I would warmly concur.

This book is especially must reading for pastors. It gives the old gospel a freshness and newness that makes you want to love the Saviour more devotedly and to share him more zealously. It's what our age — both inside and outside of the Church — needs to do and that is to get to the Heart of the Gospel.

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**Alister E. McGrath, *A Life of John Calvin. A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture.* 1990 ed.; repr. Oxford/Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1993, xvi + 332 pages. ISBN: 0-631-18947-5.**

In *Habits of the Heart*, that intriguing study of contemporary American mores and attitudes that was published in the mid-eighties, Robert Bellah and his colleagues noted that as they conducted interviews with more than two hundred individuals they found themselves "listening not only to voices present, but also to voices past. In the words of those we talked to, we heard John Calvin," among others. This may have come as a surprise to many who read this section of *Habits of the Heart*, but it certainly did not surprise Alister McGrath, currently a Research Lecturer in the University of Oxford. As McGrath ably demonstrates in this newly-released paperback version of his 1990 biography of the sixteenth-century French author, Calvin and the system of thought that he helped to forge, Calvinism, has exerted an immense influence over the western world. Even though comparatively few read Calvin's works today, his views and ideas are subtly woven into the texture of twentieth-century society.

A lucid, absorbing account of Calvin's life and thought occupies the first two-thirds of the book. Along the way McGrath rubbishes some myths that have long passed for history. For instance, Calvin has often been cast in the role of a theocratic tyrant who exercised an iron-fisted rule over Geneva, where he lived as an exile for roughly the last half of his life. In fact, this portrayal of Calvin is based upon

a woefully inadequate understanding of Geneva's power structures and decision-making procedures. Any authority Calvin had in civic matters was entirely personal and moral in force. Nor was Calvin an obscurantist when it came to matters of science. Contrary to the way that historians of science have slavishly depicted him, Calvin did not oppose Copernicus' heliocentric theory of the solar system. He commended the study of nature, in particular, astronomy and medicine, and refused to regard the Bible as a scientific textbook. This attitude towards the Bible actually helped to liberate it from the literalistic restrictions forced upon it by mediaeval theologians.

In the final third of the book McGrath turns to the ways in which Calvin and his followers have influenced the western world, and it makes for quite a list. In the sphere of economics Calvin's views were capitalism-friendly and deeply anti-feudal. They thus gave encouragement to the development of a market economy and the strenuous work-ethic that has long dominated North America. Nor is it fortuitous that today Geneva is dominated by banking and other financial establishments.

In politics, McGrath rightly sees reverberations of Calvinism in American civil religion. America's view of itself as a special nation, a perspective prominent up until recently and still strongly held in certain quarters, is clearly shown to be a secularized form of the Calvinist idea of election, i.e. some being chosen by God for salvation. Brought to America by the Calvinistic Puritans, it long survived after their demise.

Even in the realm of language, Calvin has exercised a tremendous influence. Prior to the Reformation, the French language was basically an unsuitable medium for detailed intellectual and logical argumentation. Where these were required, as in politics, law, or theology, the favoured language of the French intelligentsia was Latin. By the mid-sixteenth century, though, this situation was changing and French was increasingly being used for theoretical argumentation. Calvin played an important role in this development. His writings in French were "a model of clarity and precision," and as a major contributor to French literature from his haven in Geneva, he helped to extend "the potential of the French language as a vehicle for abstract argument" [p.135]. McGrath, therefore, does not exaggerate when he concludes this masterful study with the observation that "to study Calvin is not merely to study the past — it is also to gain a deeper understanding of the present" [p.261].



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**George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1991, vii + 208 pages. ISBN: 0-8028-0539-6.**

George Marsden's book *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* is a compilation of previously published articles on these related religious movements. The first section of the book is a historical overview of material that Marsden has covered in fuller fashion in two previous books: *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) and *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1987). The second section covers the interplay between these two religious movements and American political and intellectual life, along with an essay on the academic dean of American Fundamentalism, J. Gresham Machen.

As with any collection of previously published essays, the book has an uneven and slightly disjointed quality. A valiant attempt has been made by Marsden to tie the essays together in a cohesive fashion but the attempt, as is to be expected, is somewhat less than satisfactory. In spite of this limitation, however, the book is well worth the reading, for the simple fact that George Marsden is an incisive and sympathetic analyst of North American (and in this case, American) conservative religious life. He writes in an engaging, readable fashion with a breadth of knowledge and a historical accuracy that is remarkable considering his subject matter.

The rather simplistic caricatures by early scholars such as Furniss and Cole have led many to assume that Fundamentalism is a transparent and easily understandable movement. Such is not the case. As Marsden delights in pointing out, the paradoxes within Fundamentalism are legion. They give it both its creative energy and its confusing nature.

Indeed, it is one of these paradoxes that resulted in the neo-Fundamentalist split led by Carl Henry, Harold Ockenga and Billy Graham. The warm, irenic, evangelistic spirit that the Fundamentalists inherited coexisted in uneasy tension with culture-despairing dispensational premillennialism which came to characterize the movement. It was this dispensationalist flavour

which, Marsden claims, legitimized the Fundamentalist movement away from social involvement. It was this same dispensationalism that undergirded the stress of separatism which, in time, became the litmus test of true Fundamentalism.

This relationship between the evangelistic background that cradled Fundamentalism and the later split that resulted in neo-Evangelicalism is one area that could stand further definition by Marsden. His claim that Fundamentalism is a subtype of Evangelicalism is both true and false. The Evangelicalism of pre-Civil War America was of a radically different type than the Fundamentalism that arose after the First World War. The theological innovations of Fundamentalism, as well as the shift from an emphasis on the person of Christ to that on the Bible, are significant changes that Marsden has chosen deliberately to underplay. Moreover, Marsden's claim that Fundamentalism stands within the Augustinian tradition [p.72] is simply untrue in any direct sense. Certain themes within Fundamentalism are pre-figured in the theology of Augustine, but to claim any substantive connection is unwarranted. What may be the case, though, is that the neo-Evangelical movement in its recent theological growth has recovered the Augustinian themes that so captivated Martin Luther.

Of interest is Marsden's refutation of the anti-intellectualism that Fundamentalism has been accused of supporting. In many senses Fundamentalism is a supremely rationalistic faith which overemphasizes the role of reason rather than the reverse. In my studies in the thought of the Canadian Fundamentalist, T. T. Shields, I have certainly found this to be true. Shields used the philosophical system of Scottish Realism to charge Modernism with being subjective and opposed to reason.

Another point that is well made is that Fundamentalists were not nearly as enchanted with privatistic ethics as scholars such as Martin Marty have so often claimed. Certainly supporters of Fundamentalism as well as those of neo-Evangelicalism had little sympathy with Modernist attempts to transform the individual by transforming the society. Nonetheless, Fundamentalism and neo-Evangelicalism were both deeply involved in seeking to influence American political life.

Of disappointment to the Canadian reader is the lack of reference to the Canadian situation. Fortunately, this can be rectified quite easily by perusal of *The Canadian Protestant Experience*, edited by George Rawlyk of Queen's University, a book that takes seriously the evangelical impulse within Canadian religious life. However, much

still needs to be done in this area. The writings of George Marsden can provide helpful insight into the American reality, as well as a model of how a professing Evangelical can analyze his or her own tradition in a sympathetic yet scholarly manner. It is to be hoped that Canadian Evangelicals will take up the challenge.

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**Jill Masters, *Lessons For Life*. London: Wakeman Trust, 1991, 207 pages.**

The author is the wife of Dr. Peter Masters, pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London. In the early 1960s she assisted her husband in the founding of a Sunday School in a "New Town" in England and this book is the essence of the notes she provided as a guide to the teachers. Her instructions have since been used in the enlargement of the Tabernacle Sunday School from 30 when Peter Masters accepted the call to its pastorate to an organization that today has an attendance of between 300 and 400.

The first section contains five lessons on Mark's Gospel, and proceeds to a section on the opening chapters of Genesis, followed by another on Mark, then one on Acts, a further one on Genesis and the final section on the Gospel of John. Though a child might come from a home in which the Scriptures are unknown, while sitting under this teaching he or she will be presented with an overall picture of Bible truth and with the Gospel of salvation.

Jill Masters was trained as a school teacher and her experience is evident on every page. Each lesson is plainly outlined and is presented in simple language. Her work is largely unique. It sets forth truth in both a simplified and a scholarly manner, but also in one that is completely sound in the faith.

Arnold Dallimore,  
Leamington, Ontario.

**Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1992, xvi + 576 pages. ISBN: 0-8028-0651-1.**

Following in the tradition of Robert T. Handy's *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, Mark Noll has produced a volume that provides its reader with a comprehensive survey of the North American religious experience. For the uninitiated, Noll's work provides an excellent starting point for understanding the movements and themes that have shaped North American Christianity over the last four centuries. For the more advanced student and scholar, this new volume will be appreciated for its completeness and utility. Noll's survey functions well as both a ready reference source and course textbook.

While Noll is to be commended for including Canada, his treatment of Canadian topics is superficial when compared with his handling of the American context. Clearly, Noll is an American historian. Still, his sensitivity to our religious history and his appreciation of some of the major differences between the American and Canadian religious experiences surpasses anything else of a cross-cultural nature produced to date.

While Noll shows some appreciation for how North American religion functioned within its various contexts, his focus is primarily fixed on intellectual developments. While this approach is both understandable and perhaps desirable in a volume of this type, the impact of social, economic and cultural changes on religion remain largely unexplored. This is unfortunate. A reader may be unintentionally led to the conclusion that external intellectual challenges were the only threats to Christian faith and practice. In fact, a good case can be made that internal decay caused by social, economic and cultural change posed a more powerful threat to North American Christianity. While Noll obviously cannot be expected to cover everything, his assumption that intellectual changes and challenges are the only threats is misguided.

Despite its flaws, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* is a masterful work. Careful scholarship, probing analysis and logical organization are all evident in its pages. In addition, the inclusion of numerous pictures and illustrations bring, what might otherwise be less exciting subjects, to life. Mark Noll has given us a splendid example of evangelical scholarship at its finest. His efforts will not go unrewarded. His work will remain an

important source for the study of North American Christianity for years to come.

Paul R. Wilson,  
London, Ontario.

**Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992, xx + 564 pages. ISBN: 0-567-09614-9.**

There is little doubt that this new history of the British Baptist Missionary Society will become an indispensable guide for students of this Society for many years to come. Stanley, lecturer in Church History at Trinity College, Bristol, has mastered a monumental quantity of names, dates, and events, given them shape and order, shown their significance, and unobtrusively pointed out the lessons they contain for mission-minded Christians on the verge of a new millennium. With lucidity and close attention to the primary sources, Stanley takes the reader from the early days of the Society in the 1790s through the nineteenth-century expansion into such fields as India, the West Indies, China, and the Congo to the tumult of the twentieth-century, when the very concept of western missions has come under fire for being a tool of western imperialism.

While Stanley has an obvious enthusiasm for his subject, he does not shy away from revealing the "warts and blemishes" of those involved in the work of the Society. For instance, the sad rupture between the Society and the Serampore Mission in India, headed up at the time by William Carey and Joshua Marshman, from 1827 to 1837 is explained with a detail rarely found in biographical studies of Carey [p.57-67]. In fact, most studies of Carey gloss over this period of the missionary's life, a period about which Carey said in 1830: "Nothing has filled my last years with so much distress as the division in the mission..." [p.65].

The work of the Society in the Caribbean during the nineteenth century also comes in for some criticism. Stanley points out that here was a field where there was great expansion during this century [e.g. see the statistics on p.83, 99], but where there was also a "poverty both of economic resources and of spiritual leadership" [p.105]. The situation called for a substantial commitment of missionary resources. But the leadership of the Society adhered to "the delusion

that withdrawal [from the West Indies] would propel the weaker Caribbean churches to a magical and rapid maturity." By and large such maturity did not transpire, and that because of the wrong-headed determination of the Society to impose "autonomy on churches which had never received the financial and spiritual resources to make maturity possible" [p.105].

Alongside such accounts of human weakness and error, however, there are also stirring records of the advance of gospel. There is, for example, the detailed account of the key role that Baptist missionaries in Jamaica, men and women such as William Knibb, played in the destruction of slavery in the British Empire [p.70-82]. As Stanley notes: "Baptist missionaries in the West Indies exercised a more decisive influence on the course of secular history than they did in any other part of the world" [p.68].

The planting of the gospel in Mizoram in North-East India on the border of Burma in the late 1890s and 1900s is another thrilling story. The pioneer missionaries in this case were J. H. Lorrain and F. W. Savidge, who came to work with the Mizo, animistic nomads, in 1894. The two men began by preaching "a traditional evangelical message of salvation from the penalty of sin," but soon discovered that the Mizos had "no sense of sin and felt no need for... a Saviour" from sin. When they changed the emphasis of their preaching to Christ the victor over the devil and his demonic powers, they "found a radically different response" [p.272]. Whole villages began to turn to Christ and by the 1920s Mizoram had become "the most spectacular example of church growth in any BMS field in the twentieth century" [p. 273, 275].

Yet another period which it is a delight to read about is the formative years of the Society: the vision and "plodding" of Carey, the important role played by Fuller in these years as the secretary of the Society — "the most learned and most widely influential secretary ever to serve the Society," with the possible exception of E. B. Underhill [p.217] — the wisdom and insight shown by the Serampore Trio — Carey, Marshman, and William Ward — on the field in India. To cite an example of the latter: the missionaries were quick to realize that India would never be evangelized if "native preachers" were not raised up. "Europeans are too few," they wrote in 1805, "and their subsistence costs too much, for us ever to hope that they can possibly be the instruments of the universal diffusion of the word amongst so many millions of souls. If the practice of confining the ministry of the word to a single individual in a church be once established amongst us, we despair of the gospel's ever

making much progress in India by our means" [p.48-49]. They thus poured their energies into the translation of the Scriptures — "Carey's six complete and twenty-nine partial translations of the Bible remain perhaps the most remarkable individual achievement in the history of Bible translation" [p.49] — and the development of educational institutions such as Serampore College. This was designed to be a missionary school of higher learning, where Indian believers would be trained to be evangelists among their own people. Teaching was in Bengali and central to the curriculum was the study of Sanskrit, which the Trio rightly "held to be the key to understanding Hindu culture and learning Indian languages" [p.51-52].

Enhancing the text are pictures of the key individuals of the Society during its history, as well as helpful maps of the fields in which the Society has laboured. Errors are next to non-existent, amazing in light of the immense amount of detail covered in the book. The two that I noticed are really quite minor.

Thomas Chater, who was influential in persuading Carey to throw in his lot among the Dissenters outside of the Church of England, is described as "the Independent minister of Olney" [p.7]. Chater's family had had a long association with the Independents (i.e. Congregationalists) in Olney, though Thomas himself was unable to settle down among them. He was definitely not the Independent minister at this point in time, though, according to the Anglican evangelical William Cowper, Chater did hope to start his own chapel in Olney in the early 1780s, but his plans came to nought.

Then, William Carey's first co-worker, John Thomas, is said to be, prior to his acceptance as a missionary by the Society, as "a friend of [John] Sutcliff's" [p.16]. Thomas, known to the London Baptists Abraham Booth and Samuel Stennett, was actually unknown to any of the founders of the Society prior to Fuller's meeting with him in late 1792. As Stanley notes, Thomas was invited to meet with the rest of the Society at Kettering on January 9, 1793. Fuller actually wrote to Sutcliff a week before this meeting to let him know the date, as well as to caution him against expecting too much from Thomas as a speaker. "Though he seems well adapted to reason and talk with the Hindoos," Fuller commented, "he is not capable, I am told, of preaching a set discourse to an English audience to advantage" [Letter to John Sutcliff, 2 January 1793]. Odd words indeed to tell Sutcliff if the latter was already Thomas' friend. But these are very minute blemishes indeed in a book that is both a scholarly *tour de*

force as well as a marvellous testimony to the grace and power of God.

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**C. Samuel Storms, *Healing & Holiness. A Biblical Response To The Faith-Healing Phenomenon.* Phillipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1990, 179 pages.**

This very readable study of the faith-healing phenomenon, which is so influential amongst evangelical Christians, lives up to its title. Storms interacts in a gracious manner with the theological premises of this movement and some of its leading figures to provide a thorough biblical critique.

There are fourteen chapters with three appendices and four additional addendums. In a wide ranging evaluation of the faith-healing movement Storms tackles the proposed biblical support for faith-healing; Jesus' purpose and manner of healing; healing accounts found in the rest of the New Testament; Paul's thorn in the flesh; the relationship of suffering to God's providence and purpose(s); the relationship between Satan, sin and suffering; and even the question of whether Jesus was ever sick (likely) [p.146].

Storms believes that divine healing does occur today. It is also miraculous. However, God's sovereignty determines the when and how of healing. By definition it is rare, and not the rule [p.9]. He correctly notes that in evaluating any type of subjective experience we must acknowledge the Bible to be the objective standard for such an evaluation [p.4]. Several examples of suffering saints, who were not healed of their afflictions, such as Joni Eareckson Tada, David Watson and John Calvin, provide stimulating testimonies of God's mysterious purposes for his people as well as his sufficient grace to such individuals. The book is replete with challenging and memorable statements such as this one on p.130: "Let us never forget that the most grievous disease is not bodily affliction, but the loss of spiritual intimacy with God."

This book is essential reading for all who wrestle with the question of healing. The book is characterized by a sane, balanced



and,above all, biblical evaluation of faith-healing. Highly recommended.

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**James F. White, *Documents of Christian Worship. Descriptive and Interpretive Sources.* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, xiv + 257 pages. ISBN: 0-664-25399-7.**

This collection of sources about worship by the Professor of Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, is a timely contribution to the resurgence of interest in the nature of Christian worship. It provides historical texts — as well as photographs in the case of Christian architecture — that give the reader an excellent sense of the shape that Christian worship has taken in the past. Drawing on a variety of Christian traditions, ranging from Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic to Anabaptist and Quaker, White certainly achieves his aim of providing a resource tool for the teaching of Christian worship. As he rightly emphasizes, a central part of the making of Christian disciples involves teaching about worship [p.2], though this reviewer is not as sanguine about the helpfulness of every form of worship [p.4]. The texts are conveniently arranged in chapters that deal with the Christian year, the nature of Christian architecture, daily prayer, the “Service of the Word,” the sacraments in general, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and “Occasional Services” such as marriages and funerals.

It is noteworthy how quickly the freedom found in the worship of the New Testament is hemmed in with rules and regulations. For instance, by the third century, we find an influential author like Hippolytus of Rome specifying that Christians should pray seven times a day — in the morning when one awakes from sleep, at nine o’clock, at midday, at three o’clock, upon going to sleep, at midnight, and at daybreak [p.79-81]. Other writers do not appear to be as rigid. Cyprian, the North African Christian who was martyred in 258, mentions only nine o’clock, noon, and three o’clock [p.82]. In the following century, John Chrysostom is particularly insistent that prayers uttered in the middle of the night are especially important, for God “is more moved by prayers in the night, when thou makest the time for rest a time for mourning” [p.82] — an interesting, though dubious, reason!

In the chapter on baptism it is surprising to find no Baptist texts cited, though there are a couple of Anabaptist documents [p.168-170]. The chapter dealing with the Lord's Supper is especially helpful for tracing the way in which thought about this means of grace has developed through the ages. Classic statements about the Supper from the Church Fathers are cited, followed by the landmark documents from the Middle Ages on transubstantiation and key texts from the Reformation debate on the Supper. The chapter ends with more recent texts, such as a number of eucharistic hymns of Charles Wesley and a section of the World Council of Churches' *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* statement [p.180-213]. An earlier chapter on church architecture, with pictures of the exteriors and interiors of thirty or so churches [p.41-74], is a helpful reminder that our worship is shaped by the space in which it is conducted.

Each chapter could easily serve as the basis of a series of lectures on the particular topic covered in the chapter. Bibliographical lists at the end of every chapter and an eight-page glossary further enhance the usefulness of the book.

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**Octavius Winslow, *No Condemnation in Christ Jesus*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1991, 396 pages.**

The 396 pages of this book, originally published in 1853, may seem somewhat overwhelming, but the book itself is quite compact in size, measuring a mere 4 3/4 by 7 inches. Moreover, the subject that it deals with well deserves such a lengthy treatment. It is the eighth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans. There are thirty-five chapters in the book, almost one chapter for each of the thirty-nine verses of the chapter. Winslow sees the apostle Paul's thoughts as a spiritual journey, "commencing with his elevated position of NO CONDEMNATION FROM GOD, it conducts him along a path where flowers bloom, honey drips, fragrance breathes, music floats, and light and shade blend in beautiful and exquisite harmony to the radiant point of NO SEPARATION FROM CHRIST" [p.vi].

This book has not been reissued because it provides us with new insights into Pauline theology. It is certainly not in the same

scholarly league as the recent crop of commentaries that have been made available on Romans (e.g., those of Leon Morris, J. D. G. Dunn and D. Moo). However, that is not the central focus of this book. Many of the theological knots that take up great amounts of space in these commentaries are expeditiously dealt with in this book. Winslow is primarily seeking to engage our hearts — in a word, to be experiential. His purpose is to inform the Christian reader how he should be experiencing the gospel elements raised by Paul in this text. He frequently poses and then answers the very questions readers ask themselves when they read these verses. Consider his discourse on Romans 8:28 on effectual calling: “The question has often been asked by the trembling lip, ‘How may I be assured of an interest in the eternal purpose and everlasting love of God? By what evidence may I conclude that I am one whom he predestinated?’ ” The book is also very evangelistic in nature. Winslow frequently probes our hearts, asking if we have experienced the things on which he writes. “Reader, are you in Christ Jesus? Is this your condition?” [p.11].

One area where Winslow would be at odds with many current commentaries is in his treatment of Romans 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath set me free from the law of sin and death.” His interpretation of this verse is that the law of the Spirit of life describes the Gospel of Christ and this has emancipated the Christian from the law of sin and death, which is nothing less than the entire Mosaic law [p.23]. “As a covenant he is freed from it” [p.24].

For pastors and teachers who seek not only to understand Paul’s thoughts, but also to describe to other believers how we ought to be experiencing what Paul lays out in the eighth chapter of Romans, this book will be a welcome addition to their libraries.

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**Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending A Complete Body of Divinity*. Trans. William Crookshank. 1822 ed.; repr. Escondido, California: The den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990, vol. I: xxii + 468 pages; vol. II: iv + 464 pages. ISBN: 0-87552-870-8. Distributed Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company.**

While seventeenth-century Puritan theologians have not lacked for students of their thought in the past twenty-five years or so and a significant number of their works have been reprinted in this same period, their Reformed and Lutheran contemporaries in continental Europe remain almost completely unknown figures. Recent studies by a few scholars like Richard Muller and Joel Beeke have been seeking to redress this situation, but primary sources in English from these Calvinistic and Lutheran divines are still next to non-existent. The den Dulk Christian Foundation is therefore to be commended warmly for reprinting this early nineteenth-century translation of an important work by a leading Dutch Calvinist theologian of the seventeenth century. J. I. Packer, who has written an introduction on covenant theology for the two volumes, rightly compares Herman Witsius (1636-1708) to his British Puritan contemporary, John Owen (1616-1683), who was known in his day as the Calvin of England. Witsius, in Packer's words, was "a masterful Dutch Reformed theologian, learned, wise, mighty in the Scriptures, practical and 'experimental' (to use the Puritan label for that which furthers heart-religion)." Reading through these two volumes certainly confirms Packer's assessment.

Witsius is clearly conversant with the work of both the leading theologians of earlier eras and those of his own, whom he often cites in the course of these two volumes, either for confirmation and elaboration of his argumentation or for purposes of refutation. For instance, Jakob Hermanszoon (1560-1609), a.k.a Arminius, a major figure on the theological landscape of seventeenth-century Europe, frequently appears in these pages. Witsius generally outlines Arminius' theological perspective, citing the very texts in which this perspective is developed, and then seeks to refute it [see, for example, his discussion of Arminius' view of the efficacy of Christ's death (I, 238-244)].

Witsius was not only well acquainted with Christian theology since the patristic era, but his extensive knowledge of the Word of God is evident on nearly every page of the two volumes [see, for instance, his defence of the doctrine of particular redemption (I, 255-271)]. And unlike a good number of systematic theologies of our day, these volumes seek to bring theology to bear on the life of the spirit. For example, Witsius has a chapter on "Spiritual Peace" [I, 428-441], in which he not only treats this theme from the perspective of how God brings men and women to peace with himself, but also what course the believer is to take in order to renew this peace when it has been interrupted by sin.

Nevertheless, there are certain areas of these two volumes with which this reviewer has problems. For instance, despite the fact that Witsius admits that the “native signification” of the Greek term βαπτίζειν is to “plunge or dip” and therefore best translated “to immerse” and that John the Baptist and “the disciples of Christ ordinarily used dipping,” he still does not believe “immersion is so necessary to baptism” that baptism cannot be done by aspersion or affusion [II, 426-427].

He also admits that “there is no express and special command of God, or of Christ, concerning infant-baptism,” yet he defends the baptism of the infants of believing parents [II, 439-443]. Among the arguments that he gives in this defence is an unpersuasive one based on the statement of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:14 that the children of a believing parent are “holy.” In Witsius’ reading of the text, this statement can only mean that “the children of believers have received the Holy Spirit” [II, 441; cf. also his remarks at I, 366-368 regarding “elect and regenerate infants,” though Witsius is aware that not all “the Elect are... favoured with regenerating grace in their infancy” (I, 368)]. It should be noted that while some later Dutch Reformed theologians, like Abraham Kuyper in the nineteenth-century, would fully accept Witsius’ arguments in this regard, others, such as those associated with the Christian Reformed Church, which originated in the secession of 1834, argued that the baptism of an infant imparts no internal holiness to the child.

At the beginning of the first volume it is interesting to find a recommendatory preface which dates evidently from the eighteenth century, containing as it does the names of two renowned Calvinistic Baptist theologians of that era, John Gill and John Brine. They did not hesitate to recommend this work to “serious Christians of all denominations, and especially to ministers and candidates for that sacred office,” even though they would have shared fully the disquiet which this reviewer has with regard to Witsius’ baptismal theology. However, any hesitation they might have had was overcome by what they described as Witsius’ “great talents,... particularly solid judgment” and “deep, powerful, and evangelical spirituality” [I, v]. And it is for the same reasons that this reviewer would also recommend these volumes to serious Christians of this day.

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*Quel est le but principal de la vie de l'homme? Les Textes de Westminster.* Trans. under the direction of Paul Wells. Aix-en-Provence: Editions Kerygma, 1988, iv + 116 pages. ISBN: 2-905464-11-9. Available from: Editions Kerygma, 33 av. Jules Ferry, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, France.

This recent translation of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, *The Shorter Catechism*, and *The Catechism for Young Children* by Paul Wells provides Francophone believers around the world with a modern rendition of some of the landmark documents of the Reformed heritage. A brief introduction by Pierre Courthial, a French Reformed scholar who has done significant work on the *Confession of La Rochelle*, outlines the historical context in which these documents were originally drawn up and emphasizes that they have played an important role in "the universal diffusion of the Reformed faith." With "their rigour and precision" they constitute an important didactic tool which "pastors, elders and believers ought to know and study with their Bibles in their hands" [p.i-ii].

Courthial recognizes that in the light of God's Word there are a few statements of the *Westminster Confession* which need to be rephrased. He points, for instance, to the affirmation in chapter 23.3 that the state has the power to secure peace in the church and root out heresy. Does the New Testament accord to the state such powers? Nevertheless, Courthial is convinced that on the whole these documents can provide modern Christians, both young and old, with doctrinal ballast and a firm grounding in biblical spirituality. That such is true the writer can affirm from his own experience.

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