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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Book Reviews

2 CHRONICLES, Word Biblical Commentary 15 Raymond B. Dillard
Word Books, Waco, Texas 1987 323pp. No price ISBN 0 8499 0214 2

The tide of just regard for the Chronicler as a sound and distinctive historian is coming in and Dr. Dillard's book cannot but contribute to its becoming, in due course, a flood tide. For this we rejoice to salute a wholesome and considerable contribution to Chronicler-study.

Barbara Tuchman, with characteristic common sense, noted that 'if such a thing as a "purely objective" historian could exist, his work would be unreadable': neither the Chronicler nor Dillard pursue this chimaera. Dillard's own presuppositions include seeing the Bible in terms of 'an incarnational analogy': the Bible is 'both fully divine and fully human'. As fully divine it shares the attributes of God and is 'without error in all that it teaches'; as fully human, it does not set aside the personalities and cultural frames of its writers. As to this latter point, Dillard notes that the Chronicler must not be judged as though he were a 'modern historian'; he must be allowed the liberties in the presentation of his material 'that his culture allowed', including the fact that 'events are not always narrated in strict chronological sequence' (p. xix). It is a pity that those who write about Bible historians do not consult more with those who actually write history today. Here is Dr. Tuchman again: 'Events do not happen in categories . . . they happen in sequence . . . However, it is not always possible to narrate everything in straight consecutive sequence . . . One has to manipulate reality just a little and carry events through to a natural climax on one scene before moving to the other.'

But Dillard takes the Chronicler's history seriously and his commentary is a model of sound historical enquiry and careful textual explanation. He adds for good measure extended notes on those kings who constitute turning points in the story (Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah). His comparison between the material in Kings and Chronicles is exhaustive. One comes from his book with a sounder, wider and more firmly based knowledge of the kings of Judah and their place in the temporal and eternal scheme of things. But one does not emerge with a clearer or compelling awareness of 2 Chronicles as an abiding Word of God with a message for today. The 'Explanations' which the format of the series requires in each section dwell repeatedly on how the Chronicler used (or did not use) the Kings material whereas what one cries out for is an exposition of what the Chronicler says to our historically relativistic day.

Christ Church Vicarage, Westbourne, Bournemouth

ALEC MOTYER

DANIEL The Communicator's Commentary (Ed. L.J. Ogilvie) Sinclair B. Ferguson

World Books, Waco, Texas 1988 252 pp. No price ISBN 0 8499 0425 0

Inevitably every series is uneven in merit and the generally valuable Communicator's Commentary is no different in this respect, but the publication of the whole series would be justified for this one volume alone. Dr.

Ferguson sticks closely to his task of providing a preacher's aid to the Book of Daniel but would that works designed as commentaries in the more specialist sense opened such windows and were full of such persuasive explanations of the material of Daniel as he has managed to pack into these few hundred gracefully written pages. But I suppose no higher praise can be offered to a communicator's commentary than that it makes the reader itch for an opportunity to 'preach Daniel' with this truly great *vade mecum*.

Ferguson's central view is that the Book of Daniel serves the purpose of teaching us a God-centred view of world-reality. He does not hesitate, where it is suitable, to pin the explanation of Daniel's visions to appropriate tracts of history but it is always with the insistence that prediction is not given in order that we may have a calendar of future events in our hands but in order that we may be persuaded to affirm and trust a sovereign God. Thus, for example, the demanding final chapters of Daniel are (brilliantly and satisfyingly) related to events between Alexander and Antiochus Epiphanes but (Ferguson insists) all is foretold in order that we may see that 'God is working His purpose out for His people in all circumstances' so that they may know that 'through this the Lord will refine them and purge them and make them white until the time of the end'.

Pretty well every page contains some well-put thought that preacher-readers will want to transfer to their notebooks! But above and beyond such gleanings we can come to this book to learn how to expound the Word of God in general, the Old Testament in particular and narratives above all. In many ways this will be the harvest of the book: the enthusing and instruction of expositors, but for those who desire to know it, Ferguson attributes the Book of Daniel to the historic Daniel of the sixth century BC; he constantly affirms the historicity of its record and the prophetic standpoint of the author; he believes that 9:24ff. belongs to 'the coming of Christ, the completion of His sacrificial work, and the destruction of Jerusalem'; and that 11:36ff. introduces the figure of the Antichrist.

No one could do their biblical understanding a better turn than to read this book or their church a more promising tonic than to give it as a present to their minister.

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ALEC MOTYER

TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES: 2 CORINTHIANS.

Colin Cruse

224 pp. £4.25

ISBN 0 85111 877 1

1 PETER Wayne Grudem

I.V.P. Nottingham 1987 239 pp. £3.95

With these two fresh studies, the Tyndale New Testament Series continues its process of replacement and its onward march of helpfulness to New Testament readers. Each of these volumes will alike attract a host of satisfied readers. Dr. Cruse pays a graceful tribute to the late R.V.G. Tasker whose commentary he is replacing and it is a matter of amazement that there is no similar reference to the towering figure of Alan Stibbs whose work on 1 Peter remains a joy to those who possess and use it. This is a sad lapse which one

would have expected the General Editor to note and rectify, for it is we who are diminished when we forget the great ones of the past to whom we look with respect as (to quote Andrew Walls in the original Tyndale on 1 Peter) *servitores verbi*.

The Tyndale format is preserved, of introductory sections followed by more detailed comment. As a general observation Cruse seems to 'have the edge' in the broader introductory work and Grudem in the excellence of his more detailed comment. Each commentary has a really fine general introduction which tackles all the issues with an enviable command of current scholarship. Neither author seems specially skilled in biblical analysis and what is called 'analysis' in each case is no more than a table of contents.

Dr. Cruse takes the view that Paul wrote five letters to the Church at Corinth of which we now have three: early in his Ephesian ministry, he wrote that 'previous' letter and, about 55 AD, towards the end of his time in Ephesus, he followed this with what we call 1 Corinthians; some time later he made his 'painful' visit and after this wrote his 'severe' letter; from Macedonia came the fourth letter which is preserved for us as 2 Corinthians 1-9 and finally, in 56 AD the fifth letter, 2 Corinthians 10-13 followed by his third visit. The case for this *schema* is closely argued and the issues well faced, the least persuasive feature being the case for making a division at the end of ch.9. As to comment, special mention must be made of fine commenting on the 'aroma' passage, 2:15-16, and the contrasting ministries (3:7-18) with good reference to their background in Ex.34. But the comment on 3:17,18 is needlessly obscure and the substitutionary atonement is not pressed with sufficient rigour in 5:15. But the opportunities for complaint are minimal in the light of so much pure gold.

Grudem takes the line that his available space is better used explaining 1 Peter than in quoting lists of authorities and their contrasting views. One can only applaud this decision which is amply justified in the outcome. Yet, at the same time current thought is well summarized and, where necessary, faced. For example, objections to Petrine authorship are sifted through and exposed as unimpressive—and the same applies to the 'baptismal liturgy' view of 1 Peter, though, as a matter of fact Grudem does not himself apply Exodus 24 to the 'sprinkling' theme of 1:2 with sufficient exactness. The general excellence of his detailed comment can be sampled in the sixfold development of the 'word' (2:2) as meaning the written Word of God: this is commenting at its very best—as indeed also is the briefer note on 'honour' in 2:7 and the treatment (pp.110-111) of election and reprobation. The difficult 'spirits in prison' passage is taken to mean that Christ was preaching through Noah when the ark was being built—and this whole passage is the subject of an eighteen page Appendix (pp.203ff.).

It is a pleasure to commend these two fine books.

Christ Church Vicarage, Westbourne, Bournemouth

ALEC MOTYER

CHRISTOLOGY AFTER CHALCEDON: SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH AND SERGIUS THE MONOPHYSITE Iain R. Torrance

Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1988 256 pp. £24.50

ISBN 0 907547 97 4

This is an edition with an introductory commentary, of the correspondence between Severus of Antioch, a leading opponent of the Chalcedonian

Definition of Faith, and the otherwise unknown Sergius, who appears to have been an extreme monophysite. The aim of the book is to further the discussions currently taking place between the eastern Orthodox and the non-Chalcedonian Oriental Orthodox on the question of the reception of the council of Chalcedon. This discussion has been going on for some years now, but is still largely unknown in Western circles, and this introduction to the debate will prove invaluable to many.

There is no use pretending that it is anything other than a book for scholars; neither the Greek nor the Syriac is even transliterated, though occasionally it may be translated! As the texts are now available in their entirety only in Syriac, knowledge of that language is essential to understanding them, but some help for the non-Syriac scholar should surely have been provided. There are, after all, even many specialists who are not competent in it! That being said, the book as a whole will provide material for theologians and ecumenists which is not readily available elsewhere, and which should be understood by those concerned with classical Christology. Dr. Torrance is to be congratulated for his work, and the Canterbury Press must also be commended as one which, in this cost-cutting age, is not afraid to publish material of this kind.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

GERALD BRAY

FOOLISHNESS TO THE GREEKS The Gospel and Western Culture
Lesslie Newbigin

S.P.C.K., London 1986, reprinted 1988 156pp. £4.50

ISBN 0 281 04232 2

Why is the Christian Church growing so rapidly in many areas of the Third World, but in areas dominated by Western culture steadily shrinking? How should we respond to this alarming situation? These are the questions which Lesslie Newbigin sets out to examine in this very perceptive and readable book. His answers will well repay careful attention by all who are concerned about the re-conversion of Europe to the Gospel, and, with a slightly different urgency, North America too. His first chapter is 'Post-Enlightenment Culture as a Missionary Problem'. Here he uses Peter Berger's concept of a 'plausibility structure', a climate of opinion and practice which determines what beliefs are plausible in the society characterized by it, and what correspondingly, must be regarded as personal 'heresies'. Post-Enlightenment culture, Berger says, has no established plausibility structure—all of us are required to be 'heretics' in the original sense of the word, 'doing our own thing' intellectually, it would seem. How do we affirm the Gospel in such a society then? Berger suggests three possible ways: First, select a given tradition and re-affirm it, loudly (Karl Barth, for example); second, take the modern world-view as final and reduce the Gospel to it (Bultmann); third, start with the common ground of all religious experience and by 'sober rational assessment' weigh-up what is on offer (Schleiermacher). Berger himself takes this last way. Bishop Newbigin, while agreeing with much of this analysis, dissents on a vital point. Our society, he says, does possess a plausibility structure, and a very potent and characteristic one it is. It is, he maintains, 'the public world of what our culture calls 'facts', in

distinction from the private world of beliefs, opinions and values'. Within this structure we must make our own 'heretical' choices. I will return to this later.

The second chapter, 'Profile of a Culture', is a fine analysis of those characteristics of our culture which are of interest to the missionary to it. The dominance of the scientific outlook, the right of every man to happiness, the elimination of teleology, and (partly because of the latter) the pull of Eastern religions and the emphasis on religion as a deeply inward and private experience, are all integral elements. Since Schleiermacher, Protestant theology has tended to become a sort of anthropology, yet biblical religion is dominated by the figure of the living God. Has our Western culture in the last two hundred years then been shaped by an illusion? Is it now disintegrating? The discussion becomes gripping!

So Bishop Newbigin moves on to his next chapters: 'The Word in the World', a look at the strange Book we call '*the Book*', and how we are to understand its authority. 'What would it mean if, instead of trying to explain the gospel in terms of our modern scientific culture, we tried to explain our culture in terms of the gospel?' The author is not a fundamentalist, but he has a profound respect for the Bible and takes its witness with great seriousness. The missionary encounter with our culture will involve 'a conversion of the mind—a "paradigm shift" to a new vision of how things are—the development of a new plausibility structure in which the most real of all realities is the living God whose character is "rendered" for us in the pages of Scripture'.

'What can we know? The Dialogue with Science', and 'What is to be Done? The Dialogue with Politics' are the next two chapters; and the book concludes with 'What must we be? The Call to the Church'. I will not attempt to summarize the contents of these. It all makes stimulating and very challenging reading, and I have put this book down on my list for re-study. I close however with two comments. The first is, that if it is true that the plausibility structure of our culture is dominated largely by its demand for 'facts', and that the missionary encounter must lead to a new respect for the Bible and its message, then the playing-down of the 'factuality' of the biblical witness (so very common in liberal circles today) will have to go. The second is that if it is true that the message the church is called to give to our culture will only be credible if the church functions as an ecumenical whole, then we must be sure we all agree on the message first. And there seems no way of ensuring *that* except on the basis of a common allegiance to Scripture.

There is a Select Bibliography of two pages, and a general Index of four.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage

DOUGLAS SPANNER

MIDRASH AND LITERATURE Edd. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick

Yale University Press New Haven and London, 1988 Revised Edition

412pp. £12.95

ISBN 0 300 04198 5

This excellent selection of papers has been revised and published now in Britain, and it is certainly a book to be studied by any serious student of midrash and hermeneutics. As the title indicates, the editors, while focussing on the midrashic method and product within Judaism, by no means restrict

themselves to this. Half of the eighteen contributors are academics who are not established in departments of Bible or Jewish Studies of any sort, but who specialize in the fields of Comparative Literature of Philosophy, and so there are sections in the book on 'Literature and Midrash' and 'Contemporary Midrash'. Some very fine work is done here on the influence of the midrashic method on, and the contribution to the method by, such figures as Milton, Defoe, Kafka and Derrida. An interesting example is the thesis of Harold Fisch that in the novel *Robinson Crusoe*, 'The story of Robinson's many trials on the island may be read as a kind of midrash on Jonah.', a thesis which he defends ably.

However, the chief interest of the readers of the *Churchman* will presumably be the subject matter of the core of the collection, dealing with the specifically religious use of midrash within the developing Jewish traditions from the fifth century AD onward. There are three substantial sections devoted to this, viz. 'Bible and Midrash', 'Midrash and Aggadah' and 'From Midrash to Kabbalah'. Betty Roitman discusses at length the perspective that midrash simply 'abolishes the category of the secondary' in textual studies, and so makes all investigation of the possible meanings of a text both significant and even necessary. Hartman himself acknowledges that the midrashic technique is alien to most Christians, and even still to many Christian scholars, though it is becoming more appreciated and respected. He suggests that midrash is almost inevitably unfamiliar to Christians since the Hebrew Bible itself has never been fully 'domesticated' within Greek-dominated thought forms, and is really considered in the Church as a kind of 'resident alien'. Michael Fishbane pursues carefully the thought that a characteristic of 'ancient Judaism' was the realization that there is no such thing as pure teaching 'apart from its regeneration or clarification through an authoritative type of exegesis', and examines the rôle of midrash within this whole process of commentary.

Also of importance are James Kugel's insistence that in midrash 'the Bible becomes . . . a world unto itself. Midrashic exegesis is the way into that world.', and Joseph Dan's conviction that it is the product of a conflict within the religious community of Judaism 'between the wish and the need to innovate, and the religious maxim which states that all truth is to be found in the scriptures.' The thesis that the midrashic technique is the traditional Jewish response to this paradox is defended one way or another by the various authorities gathered here. Each contributor is disciplined, creative, provocative, and rewarding, and an excellent twenty six page Bibliography is supplied, brought up to date from the 1986 edition.

Let me close by recommending this book very highly to all students of New Testament hermeneutics and Patristic exegesis, as well as to specialists in Jewish studies, and by quoting another appetizing piece from Joseph Dan. He speaks almost pityingly of Christians whose Bibles are translations from the Hebrew original, so that the richness, profundity and ambiguity of the Hebrew is 'flattened out'.

The translated text thus conveys a sense of clarity which is completely missing from the original . . . This is one of the reasons why the Roman Catholic Church could develop a set of dogma. Dogmatic thinking must rely on an unambiguous text.

THE THRESHOLD OF THEOLOGY Ed. Paul Avis

Marshall Pickering, Basingstoke 1988 182pp. No price

ISBN 0 551 01567 5

Prebendary Carlyle, the founder of the Church Army is said to have exclaimed, on seeing the crowded shelves of a theological library, 'Theology! I hate theology almost as much as I hate drink!' Nevertheless, we cannot dispense with theology, it is the supreme science, for as Paul Avis reminds us, it is concerned with our knowledge of God. We have here a book which is intended for beginners in the study of theology. Of the nine essays it is likely that readers will find most help from Geoffrey Wainwright's 'Christian Doctrine and Systematic Theology' and Stuart Hall's 'Theological History and Historical Theology'. The first gives an admirable summary of the teaching of some of the great masters such as Gregory of Nyssa, John of Damascus, Augustine, Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, Melancthon, Calvin and Schleiermacher, and such modern thinkers as Karl Barth, Paul Tillich and Karl Rahner. The second essay deals quickly with the Early Church, the Christian Empire, the Mediaeval West, the Reformation period and the Modern World.

Paul Avis shows that theology develops inside a community of faith, but at the same time it impinges on many other studies. Some of these are referred to by Brian Hebblethwaite in his 'Philosophy of Religion' and by Julius Lipner in his 'Theology and Religious Studies'. Here again there is a good outline of some of the problems raised by Kant and Hegel but the point of view is, in general, too optimistic. There is not sufficient attention paid to the naturalistic assumptions of contemporary secular culture. The crisis for Christianity is today far more serious than in any previous period of Church history.

The Biblical foundations are dealt with by John Rogerson on the Old Testament and Barnabas Lindars on the New Testament. Students who have had some acquaintance with the New Testament will not be surprised by Lindars's observation that modern critical study casts doubt on the historicity of many passages. They need to know something about the positive contributions which recent research has made to our understanding of the uniqueness of the Biblical revelation. Here Rogerson is more informative than Lindars. The final essay by Paul Avis on Fundamental Theology raises once again the limits of the subject. There are useful references to recent writers, particularly to Thomas F. Torrance whose *Theological Science* brings together comprehensively the aims and methods of Philosophical Theology and the sciences, and at the same time reminds us that we can know God only in Jesus Christ.

Not all the contributions to this symposium could be said to be of equal value, but we can certainly commend it as an excellent introduction to the various aspects of the subject and as likely to arouse enthusiasm for theology. It is unfortunate that there is a sympathetic reference to such aberrations as Liberation Theology and Feminist Theology, which use Christian terminology in the interests of what is, to all intents and purposes, a new religion.

LET US MAKE MAN Linleigh J. Roberts

The Banner of Truth Trust Edinburgh 1988 151pp. £3.95 ISBN 0 85151 525 8

Although written by a Free Churchman from that point of view, this book has much valuable counsel to offer ministers and people of Institutional Churches. The author approaches his subject from the point where all salvific doctrine should begin; the nature of man as a fallen sinful creature, and a violator of God's laws. In this he argues that Christianity is factual, and that the appraisal of it must be by way of understanding and knowledge. In his three main sections he takes the traditional consideration of the theology of God and humanity: As God made Man, as Man was unmade by sin, and as God remakes him to live for him in the home, the Church, and the world, all which doctrines he thoroughly grounds in scripture. He draws these truths from the Westminster Confession which to him appears to be the soundest exposition of spiritual and practical Christianity. Contrariwise to this, he passes severe strictures on current theological thinking with its humanistic, cultural, and social outlook. The author has no difficulty in accepting the Creation story of Genesis 1—3, and from it he builds much of his thought on man's being, sinnership and need of redemption. He posits that Adam's fall has affected man's total character, his mind, morals, manners, and his inability to control them. This leads him to consider God's redemptive-revelation and reconciliation by Christ through the transformation of human reason and will. The book offers a total Redeemer as Prophet, Priest, and King, and the Holy Spirit's work in man's conscience, mind, and will to bring him to Christ. Mr. Roberts, a college tutor, has a communicative faculty that carries the reader along with him, not least in expounding deep truths by apposite similies and analogues. It is almost impossible to fault his biblical thesis. It has within it a spiritual dynamism necessary for churches and believers to embrace. Pondered over thoughtfully and spiritually, it will open vistas of Christian truths to Church leaders and lay people that are sometimes ignored or minimized. It will help all to understand better God's relation to man.

5, Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

FAITH TRIED AND TRIUMPHANT D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Inter Varsity Press Leicester 1987 217pp. No price ISBN 0 85110 7869

In this book the author adopts the rôle of a historian more than that of a preacher. This may be due to the lecture type of teaching in which the addresses were first given. The principles and problems he deals with are wider than those of biblical spirituality. The danger of his methodology is that he tends to make historical processes fit in with a given pattern. The book of the Revelation, for example, is for him a panorama of the Church's future, and all that he says of it subserves his accepted pattern of ideas. It is significant that his Introduction is entitled, 'The Mystery of Historical Processes'.

The book is a study of the prophet Habbakuk and the author of Psalm 73, both of whom wrestled with a philosophy of history. Theological questions, such as, Why does God allow evil to triumph?, What is the essence of divine

judgment?, In what way does God control history?. What can prayer do to help forward God's triumph? are raised. The author admits that man cannot always fathom God's ways, but that history ultimately serves his timed-plan, and the Christian must leave the result to him. To this end the author finds a unity in the Old and New Testaments in teaching that God controls evil powers, and acts in righteousness, both directly and indirectly. Hence, God allows ungodly nations to rise in order to reveal the nature of evil and to punish their sins, so reminding man of the Last Judgment. As Habbakuk and the Psalmist establish the need of faith in God, Lloyd-Jones makes much of the necessity to choose between reason and belief, of turning to prayer when beset with problems of history and experience, to rejoice in trials, and to be convinced that God always sustains his Church. This is a book of encouragement and hope for the believer and for non-Christians. It shows that life without God is nothing, but in life with him there is everything.

5, Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

SCIENCE AND RELIGION: BADEN POWELL AND THE ANGLICAN DEBATE, 1800–1860 Pietro Corsi

Cambridge University Press, 1988 346pp. £32.50 hb.

ISBN 0 521 24245 2

Baden Powell's son is perhaps more widely known in our age as the founder of the Boy Scouts than as the son of a contributor to *Essays and Reviews*, the collection of essays which shocked England in 1860 by openly advocating the methods and presuppositions of German biblical criticism. Baden Powell was a Christian apologist and an advocate for natural science who sought to provide a rational proof for Christianity. His contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, a study of the proofs of Christianity in which he rejected the evidence of miraculous interventions, was written at the end of his life (he died less than three months after the publication) and reflects his theological evolution. He began as a conservative apologist influenced by the Hackney Phalanx and the Oriel Noetics but he became 'the most outspoken representative of liberal theology and the evolutionary approach to natural history'.

Baden Powell started his journey with the conviction that Anglican theologians had to confront the opponents of the church on philosophical and scientific as well as theological grounds and he was convinced that Christianity had nothing to fear from advances in science. In the later 1820s and early 1830s his works attacked those theologians who feared the impact of scientific advance, and, although he emphasized that the Bible was not meant to teach science, he was convinced that there was basic agreement between the new findings in geology and Genesis. During the 1830s he was frustrated by the struggle with the Tractarians and the ultra conservative spirit at Oxford which relied on authority rather than rational proof and in 1838 he attempted to present a Christian apologetic which combined reason and revelation as twin sources for establishing the truth of Christianity. In his *Connexion of Natural and Divine Truth* he argued that natural theology could prove the existence of a personal god and once that belief was secured it could be established that Christianity was the true religion through the evidence of miracles. In the 1840s he devoted himself to contending for

freedom of inquiry in religion as he pleaded for tolerance and doctrinal pluralism maintaining that sincere Christians openly discussing the foundations of their doctrine were bound to arrive at a deeper understanding of revelation. Unfortunately, Baden Powell's appeal to natural theology was in the final analysis not even convincing to him, and by the end of his life he had rejected both premises of his early synthesis and 'the apologetic apparatus elaborated in 1838 was in later years employed to establish opposite conclusions.' By 1855 he no longer believed that natural theology could establish the existence of a personal god and he denied that miracles could be a proof of revelation. Furthermore, he had long abandoned his belief that science was in basic harmony with the Genesis account as he now maintained that the Mosaic Cosmology was 'a mythical composition' and simply the literary device used by the inspired writer to convey a religious message rather than part of revelation.

Professor Corsi's account of Baden Powell's journey is a major contribution to our knowledge of the theological and scientific debates in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although the book is not easy to read, it is well worth the effort as many of the issues which were being debated in Baden Powell's day continue to plague the late twentieth-century church. Baden Powell's story should encourage contemporary Christians, who might find themselves attracted by his approach, to be somewhat more cautious. Although his honesty and courageous spirit of inquiry are admirable, he failed in his effort to construct a convincing Christian apologetic based on reason, and by the end of his life he had drifted far from biblical orthodoxy as in the effort to harmonize modern thought and the teachings of Scripture, it was the latter which were invariably compromised.

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RUDI HEINZE

BIBLICAL HIGHER CRITICISM AND THE DEFENSE OF INFALLIBILISM IN 19TH CENTURY BRITAIN Nigel M. de S. Cameron
Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, 1987 419pp. \$69.95 (cloth)
ISBN 0 88946 821 4

Very rarely does a published thesis deal with a subject in a way which makes it accessible to more than a specialist readership. The title of Dr. Cameron's work may be difficult to grasp, but the thesis itself is remarkably lucid, well-presented and easy even for a non-specialist to follow. Briefly, what he has done is to chronicle and analyze the development of Biblical Criticism in the last century from a Conservative to a Radical consensus, paying particular attention to the career of William Robertson Smith and to the arguments used by those who opposed him and his colleagues.

The broad canvas which Dr. Cameron presents is clear enough. Conservative opinions in Biblical scholarship were dominant in Britain until about 1880, after which time they rapidly gave way to a more radical approach. In this respect, Britain was about half a century behind Germany, from which it was remarkably isolated during most of the period in question. Yet as Dr. Cameron shows, the conservatism of the British was fragile and easily susceptible to subversive influences, once these began to make themselves felt in earnest. Some, like Dr. Pusey at Oxford, were too preoccupied with

Tractarianism to devote themselves to a real defence of their conservative beliefs, and when they died or retired, they were replaced by far more radical men. Others, like the trio of Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort at Cambridge, adopted critical principles but used them to reach conservative conclusions, a method which convinced many conservatives that they had nothing to fear from the new techniques and would soon be able to turn them against their opponents.

The main thrust of critical argument centred around the Pentateuch, which formed the basis of the charges laid against Robertson Smith. He was a convinced Evangelical who believed that his advanced critical views could be squared with the Westminster Confession, and he defended this position at his trial in 1881. Though he was deprived of his professorship, Robertson Smith attracted quite a sympathetic following in the country as a whole, and before long his views became the accepted consensus of the by then liberal establishment, which has remained in control of Biblical Studies ever since.

What is especially fascinating about this thesis is the wealth of quotation, which introduces us to many of the prominent figures in the debate—Jowett, Powell, Sayce and so on—whose names have tended to fade from the memory of younger generations. Given the great interest that the subject of Biblical Infallibility has provoked in recent times, it is essential for us to go back to the last century and see how the issues were set out and discussed. This Dr. Cameron does admirably. He shows us how the Conservatives gradually abandoned the more extreme aspects of their position, and how this tactical retreat was claimed as a victory for the radical side. He also shows how the liberals developed a new Christology (kenoticism) to take account of the Conservative objection that the radical view went against Jesus' own understanding of the Scriptures.

The two sides in this debate met at frequent intervals, but they did not coincide. As Dr. Cameron shows, the radicals were strong on history and philology; the Conservatives excelled in doctrine and, to a degree not often appreciated today, in literary criticism. In argument with each other, they tended to pass like ships in the night, so that by 1900 it was possible for radical scholars to dismiss their opponents as 'unscholarly' without giving any real consideration to their arguments. This is the world with which we are familiar, and Dr. Cameron's thesis explains very clearly how and why it came into being, using specific examples from commentaries to illustrate his points.

Students of the subject will need to make themselves familiar with this book and will be glad to know that it can be obtained from Rutherford House, 17 Claremont Park, Edinburgh 6, for £12.50.

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GERALD BRAY

A KARL BARTH READER Edd. Rolf Eriker and Reiner Marquand,
translated Geoffrey Bromiley

T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh 1986 117pp. £4.95

ISBN 0 567 29131 6

Entry into the thought-world of Karl Barth is often difficult. One of the reasons for this is that Barth was inclined on principle to expound his theological themes rather than justify them; and until a reader comes to grasp

his motive convictions his thought can seem rather extra-terrestrial. Another reason is the rhetorical style of his writing, which tends to be less than succinct and threatens to exhaust the patience of an unfamiliar reader. Karl Barth is usually an acquired taste. A third reason for the difficulty of dealing with Barth is the sheer volume of his material (the *Church Dogmatics* run to 8,500 pages in the English edition), which can have a very depressing effect on those of us who like to do things thoroughly. If we cannot expect to complete, why should we bother to begin?

It is the remarkable achievement of this *Karl Barth Reader* that it succeeds in introducing us quite directly to the driving concerns of Barth's thought, and often by routes that give us arresting glimpses of the deeply magnanimous and humane qualities of the man himself. This it does through eighty selections drawn from writings composed in every period of his life and belonging to a variety of genres—homiletic, systematic, occasional, epistolary—and some of which are not readily (if at all) available in English. Few of these selections are more than two pages long, and each one is prefaced by a brief, often pithy, biographical introduction. They are arranged thematically in eight chapters, each of which focusses on 'typical thought-forms in Barth's theology' (p.x). There is also intended to be an element of inner progression, since the editors have sought to 'document [Barth's] increasing focus on Christ as the one and final word' (p.x). But it must be said that the traces of this inner logic are not obvious.

It must also be said that the chapters are not possessed of tight thematic integrity, no doubt because Barth was in the natural habit of expounding several of his favoured themes at any one time. But this inevitable structural weakness pales in significance before the achievement of this book in permitting Barth to speak for himself so powerfully. For in its pages the reader will learn of Barth's unusual and exalted regard for theology ('Of all sciences theology is the most beautiful, the one that moves both heart and mind most richly, the closest to human reality . . .' [p.8]; his acute awareness of the limitations of human being and work—including religion and theology—but his profound conviction of their definite value; his steadfast refusal to permit us to think about human qualities and activities—theology again included—apart from their relationship with the living God; his wonderful vision of a human freedom that manifests itself primarily in the capacity for laughter (a word that recurs with notable frequency in these selections); his unequivocal belief that the life of the Church depends upon the Word of God's grace, and therefore that:

it is called to approach outsiders as fellows ('We Christians, then, differ from others. We do so because, as lost sinners among other lost sinners, we make this beginning [by perceiving and experiencing God's mercy], knowing better than they do that we are not better than they' [p.41]);

his insistence that their calling to serve humanity means that Christians must not ally themselves too firmly to any particular political ideology; his repeated warning that, although what she is called to say is bound to have political significance, the Church must not allow herself to be distracted by politics from her own peculiar business of speaking about God in Christ; and his firm belief that it is the Church's job, not to justify the Word of God to the world but to make it manifest in word and deed, believing in it sufficiently to let it prove itself.

To suppose that this *Karl Barth Reader* is capable only of informing theological students with an interest in Barth would be a sad underestimation. For it is also capable, on many occasions, of moving to grateful wonder anyone who has a lively interest in the Gospel.

Latimer House, Oxford

NIGEL BIGGAR

THE SEARCH FOR THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD

Richard P.C. Hanson

T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1988 931pp. £34.95

ISBN 0 567 09485 5

It was the ambition of the late Bishop Hanson to write a comprehensive and up-to-date history of what laymen like to call 'The Arian Controversy', but which in reality embraced so much more—nothing less than the search for an adequate doctrine of God. This book is the fruit of the labours which that ambition produced, and it is a fitting memorial to its author, who died only weeks after publication. It covers the period from the beginnings of the Arian struggle (conventionally dated to 318) to the First Council of Constantinople in 381. In it he includes findings not only from books and articles in a wide range of publications, but also from a number of unpublished theses. The general gist yields few surprises to those who are well-versed in the period, but the author puts his own characteristic stamp on the material he covers, and does not hesitate to criticize those with whom he disagrees.

The 24 chapters are divided into four parts, dealing respectively with the period up to and including the Council of Nicaea, the period of confusion which followed Nicaea and lasted roughly to the death of Constantius II in 361, the emergence of rival answers to the theological problem and the resolution of the controversy in the works of the Cappadocian Fathers and at the First Council of Constantinople, which they did so much to influence. The figure of Athanasius naturally looms large, but ample attention is paid to other, lesser lights as well. Basil of Ancyra, for example, appears to have been a major influence on the course of events, and the underestimated worth of Hilary of Poitiers and Marius Victorinus is amply corrected. Bishops like Lucifer of Calaris and Eusebius of Emesa are also given their due, which is unusual in a work of this kind.

The end result of all this research is that we are presented with a period which is far harder to define than many earlier textbook treatments have suggested. Arius appears in a more sympathetic light, though the weaknesses of his position are fully acknowledged, as is his relative unimportance in the post-Nicene period. Neo-Arians, Homoian Arians and Eunomians are carefully defined and distinguished from one another, and the book excels in ample quotations from the relevant sources. The general impression is that until the Cappadocian Fathers got to grips with the philosophical issues underlying their quest, the Church was floundering from one inadequate answer to another, and no-one really escapes the taint of heresy (if the Creed of 381 is taken as the standard of orthodoxy). Many of the judgments of J.N.D. Kelly and T.F. Torrance are quietly set aside, though Hanson relies heavily on certain Continental sources, like Grillmeier. He is not afraid to express his own opinions, some of which will no doubt soon be contested, but the greatness of a book of this kind is that it is bound to set the terms of

discussion for some time to come.

Overall, this is a book for scholars, and the donnish eccentricities are everywhere in abundance. Names are frequently spelled in two different ways (for example, Trèves alongside Trier, Sardica alongside Serdica) and the two things to which the author draws attention in his acknowledgements—the English style and the Greek accentuation—are both atrocious, in places at least! Sometimes the Greek is transliterated (though long vowels are indifferently indicated) and sometimes not. And quite often, comparisons are drawn with modern phenomena or people in ways which reveal the author's prejudices at least as much as they enlighten the reader as to what was going on the fourth century! Also, it must be pointed out that bibliographical information is often inadequate (the place and date of publication being absent from the list of books at the end of the volume) and the use of 'standard' abbreviations from a 'well-known' international reference work—of which few non-specialists will have heard—does not make things any easier! Nevertheless, it would be churlish to underestimate the value of what has been achieved in this volume, and students of the subject everywhere will long be in Bishop Hanson's debt for his careful and detailed presentation of this most important subject.

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GERALD BRAY

REASONS WHY WE SHOULD CONSIDER CHRISTIANITY

Josh McDowell and Don Stewart

Scripture Press, Amersham 1988 219pp. £2.95 pb.

ISBN 0 946515 52 2

Josh McDowell is a travelling speaker for Campus Crusade for Christ, the most active evangelistic organization in American universities. In these days of mealy-mouthed double-speaking about Christianity his book is a trumpet call reminiscent of the robust era of D.L. Moody and R.A. Torrey. It is a pocket encyclopaedia of apologetics, with the major emphasis on science. The treatment could be dubbed 'superficial' because it is necessarily brief, but an enormous amount of information is packed into these 200 pages. So far as I know, it is the best book of its kind on the market today.

The book is cast in the form of Questions: twelve on the Bible's Inspiration and interpretation, thirty nine on Evolution—everything from Astronomy to Anthropology. Nearly all the Answers are annotated, referring to sources and books for further study. It has to be said that some of these are out of date; better books on creation-science have been written in the past five years. However, to compensate for this there is a list of British creationist books by Andrews, Baker, Bowden, Cameron and White; also Michael Denton's devastating critique, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, which is not quoted by McDowell.

McDowell unequivocally states the whole Bible's claim to verbal inspiration and infallibility, quoting Warfield and Wesley but most of all Scripture itself (ninety nine references to answer the first nine questions). There are no brilliant analogies or devious chains of reasoning, but straightforward exegesis concluding: If a person believes in Jesus Christ he should be consistent and believe that the Old Testament and its accounts are correct. Many want to accept Jesus but also want to reject a large portion of the Old

Testament. This option is not available.

There is also a good section on 'Is everything in the Bible to be taken literally?' Surprisingly, thirty five pages are devoted to 'Which version of the Bible should I use?'—but probably for a newly-converted undergraduate it is an important question. McDowell's assessment of versions is well-balanced, with some raps for the *Good News Bible*, and even the *New International Version* . . . in too many instances is guilty of trying to get across the meaning of the author rather than directly translating what he said'. British readers will also be surprised to find twenty pages on 'Is Noah's Ark still on Mount Ararat?' but the evidence is interesting and may be important in view of the dogmatic denial of a universal Flood in academic circles today.

There are fifteen questions on the Age of the Earth and universe, twenty on organic evolution, and four on the origin of Man. Unlike many Christian writers, McDowell does not try to eat his cake and have it; repudiating conventional biology while accepting conventional geology. He gives good scientific reasons for believing in instant creation *and* a Young Earth. Few quotations are from creationists, the great majority from science journals and evolutionists. In the answer to 'Are there Transitional Forms?' forty eight quotations are adduced, all from standard evolutionary textbooks. His handling of the evidence is cool and objective: no sweeping generalizations or triumphalist claims. The total effect is very convincing; the last chapter is a Gospel appeal.

Finally, the book is excellent value for money: highly recommended for intelligent young Christians. It will assure them that 'God means everything He has said, and will do all that He has promised.'

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DAVID C.C. WATSON

TEN MYTHS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

Michael Green, Gordon Carkner

ISBN 0 7459 1441 1

A NEW DIMENSION Michael Green

Lion Publishing, Tring 1988 Each 80pp. 99p.

ISBN 0 7459 1442 X

These two booklets are semi-apologetic, semi-evangelistic. The format (6 x 4 in.) and photography are attractive. They seem to be aimed at 16–18 year olds who have picked up the usual R.E. misinformation at school. The *Ten Myths* concern the personality and Resurrection of Christ, Science/History and the Bible, the problem of evil, religious pluralism, the alleged 'weakness' and 'irrelevance' of Christianity, and the psychology of conversion. To a large extent the books overlap: The *Ten Myths* is better structured and easier to follow.

Michael Green is an experienced evangelist and no doubt has based these chapters on successful talks to young people. However, I have misgivings about some emphases and omissions. Has he declared the whole counsel of God? Can one confidently sell these booklets on an evangelical bookstall? Let us consider:

1. *Triumphalism* is a keynote throughout. 'There is strong evidence that Christianity worldwide is in a phase of advance, despite its local decline in the

West.' The obvious retort is that the same might be said of Islam, without the modifier! Mass conversion of semi-literates in southern Africa is no more an argument for the truth of Christianity than the triumph of Muslims in North Africa was evidence of its *untruth*. Again, Green concedes that Jesus is 'ignored, except by a small minority . . .', but two pages on we find, ' . . . the claim to bring God Almighty into our world . . . has convinced billions of people all over the world . . .' Overstating one's case, and adding bad arguments to good ones, weakens the whole structure of an 'apologia'.

2. There is a strong undercurrent of trendy *left-wing propaganda*. Green seems to espouse Liberation Theology: his heroes are Solzhenitsyn, Tutu, David Sheppard, Coulson, Martin Luther King. Worthy men, no doubt, but it might be argued that they have 'had their reward' in this life by honour, recognition, and even riches. Little emphasis is placed on the cost of discipleship in terms of ridicule and financial loss. No eminent evangelist is mentioned; no missionary except Mother Teresa, social work seems to be valued higher than preaching the Gospel.

3. *History/Science* These chapters are unconvincing. Green swallows the Big Bang and Darwinism without a murmur and without attempting to relate them to Genesis. He seems unaware of the deadly influence of Evolution in undermining faith in a Creator. We are told that 'men and women enjoyed God's love' in perfection before the Fall, which of course negates the biblical teaching that all sin stems from the disobedience of *one* man and *one* woman. No defence is offered of *any* Old Testament miracle; and vague assertions like 'there is archaeological support for the trustworthiness of Christian statements in the Gospels and Acts', without documentation or detail, only invite scepticism.

4. Perhaps the worst fault of both books is the *scarcity of Bible references*. The *Ten Myths* has a few, *A New Dimension* none. Surely any Introduction to Christianity should be a *study* guide to the unsearchable riches of Christ in the Bible, so that young people base their faith on the actual words of God. But Green, instead of expounding Scripture, likes to invent his own analogies—often mixed and confusing. 'I do not actually believe in Jesus . . . until I leave the security of my own perch and bet my whole life on his faithfulness.' What perch? what bet? Likewise he lays great stress on 'freedom', but the Ten Commandments are not even mentioned, let alone explained. Sex, A.I.D.S., drugs, alcohol? . . . not a word. The Bible's own testimony to its divine inspiration and infallibility is nowhere to be found.

In spite of these defects the booklets do give sound reasons for believing in the Incarnation, Resurrection and uniqueness of Christ. An intelligent reader will find more questions raised than answered: let us hope that a helper will be at hand, as was Philip to the Ethiopian. One final word on the price. When one can buy a Gospel for 20p. and a New Testament with Psalms for 75p. (Trinitarian Bible Society), it does seem rather anomalous to pay a pound for a tract. Is it really necessary to bait the hook so heavily—to catch fish?

THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. STUDIES IN CHRISTOLOGY IN MEMORY OF GEORGE BRADFORD CAIRD

Edd. N.T. Wright and L.D. Hurst

Clarendon, Oxford 1987 xxvii+311pp. £35

ISBN 0 19 826326 0

The untimely death which turned this from a festive offering into a memorial volume has doubtless deprived us of many stimulating contributions in christology. Happily Caird's *magnum opus* on the theology of the New Testament is to be seen through the press by one of the editors of this collection. And meanwhile we have here a tribute to his varied skills from former pupils, colleagues and grateful friends. Rarely can there be a *Festschrift* where the personality of the honorand so clearly shows through.

The twenty one essays are prefaced by an extended memoir from the hand of Henry Chadwick, by no means the least significant part of the book. There are also a *curriculum vitae* and a full bibliography. The essays focus closely on the chosen theme, the majority with very specific reference to the work of Caird himself. They range over the whole New Testament—and beyond, with Maurice Wiles taking the reader into the 330s and the debate between Eusebius and Marcellus over the personal pre-existence of the Son of God. This essay is no less valuable as a study in seeking the actual intentions of a party only represented by his opponent, a problem not unknown in Pauline study.

The symposium begins with three 'Background' contributions. James Barr does for 'love' what he has already done for 'time', giving the vocabulary a long hard look (in both cases the stimulus coming from Caird). He concludes that 'the tendency of the [LXX] translation to use constant equivalents' is a significant factor in its development of the semantic field of $\sqrt{\alpha\gamma\alpha\mu}$: there is continuity with the background at 'the nodal points where the choice of terms is made' (p.7). W.D. Davies reflects on the status of the Canon in Early Judaism and its influence on New Testament christology. The very conception of a 'canon' is unusual in the ancient world, he argues, and in the light of this he returns to, and elaborates on, his suggestion that Christ functions as a 'New Torah' for Paul. W.J. Houston then reflects on the validity of the fulfilment-motif with particular reference to the use of Isaiah 61 in Luke 4. The very extravagance of the language of the prophecy, he suggests, indicates that a proper fulfilment must be outside the present context; 'the only possible interpretation of the 'messianic' texts is Messianic' (p.45). Thus the fulfilment-word by Jesus is appropriate. Even here, however it is true only by redefinition; and one may ask why, if that is permissible here, it should not be adequately so in the original context.

The nine central essays are labelled 'Exegetical Studies', though they are not all quite that. J. Muddiman argues that Mark 10.37 is a covert reference to the crucifixion, with a consequent redefinition of $\delta\delta\epsilon\chi\alpha$. M.D. Hooker and A.A. Trites both explore aspects of the transfiguration, the former focussing on Mark and the latter on Luke. The subtitles of their respective approaches are teased out for us. Three essays tackle John. M. Hengel looks at John 2.1–11 and provides a detailed discussion of grape, vine, wine and dionysiac traditions in the Asian Near East and in Palestine. He suggests a messianic link though Gen.49. F. Watson presents a spirited defence of a 'semi-Cerinthianism' in John: since the epistles only combat half of

Cerinthus' system (that the Christ departed from Jesus before the cross) he deduces that the other half was acceptable: that the Christ only descended at the baptism. The docetism is firmly rejected, but the adoptionism is implicitly endorsed. G. Johnston explores irony in the Gospel.

N.T. Wright looks at 2 Cor.3.18 and suggests that the (implied) mirror of Paul's metaphor is the fellow-Christian in which the glory of the Lord is reflected. In the first two offerings on Hebrews, L.D. Hurst suggests that the language of chapter 1 is royal rather than divine; and that this idea is then extended in chapter 2 to all mankind. In the second, S. Frost compares the list of heroes in Chapter 11 with that of Sirach 44-50.

A collection of 'Methods and Themes' concludes the offering. D. Evans looks at the language of spiritual experience—oddly, without reference to Caird's *Language and Imagery*. R. Morgan reflects on the status of the Jesus of history in contemporary approaches to New Testament Theology. M. Borg challenges the consensus view of Jesus' eschatology: apart from a few 'Son of man' sayings (these not generally accepted as authentic by those who adhere to the consensus view) there is no trace of *imminence* in it. Urgency and a sense of crisis, yes, for he proclaims the 'nearness of the other world'—but not at the cost of the cosmic destruction of this one in the immediate future.

C.F.D. Moule offers sensitive reflections on 'triumphalist' themes in the New Testament as they impinge on our growing awareness that 'success' is a poor measure of the reality of love. He suggests not that we use the language in aetiolated form as a vaccine, but rather the converse. *Pecca fortiter!*—but always remembering both the limitations of our language and the importance of the other side of the coin.

C. Gunton discusses the category of sacrifice as applied to the death of Christ, though alas he too quickly redefines his terms (coming in my judgment close to what Caird called a 'tactical definition') and spends too little time looking at the *diversity* of sacrificial conceptions. For all his protestations, the same is true of the following essay by A.E. Harvey on Christ as Agent. J.D.G. Dunn assesses the contribution of S. Kim to our understanding of Paul, while C.E.B. Cranfield pays Dunn's own *Christology in the Making* the same compliment. The contribution by Wiles to which reference has been made concludes the volume.

It is clearly impossible to give a detailed assessment of such variety of subjects and writers. There is much here that is stimulating, if not always persuasive. Ironically, one comment which could be made of the volume as a whole is that it too often ignores what may turn out to be the major lasting result of Caird's own approach to theology. Time and again insufficient account is taken of the *linguistic function* of the material under investigation, one leading concern of *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. It is thus that (*inter alia*) Watson can conceive John as an adoptionist; Hurst can ignore the more-than-human traits in Hebrews 1-2; Frost misplaces the criterion of selection for the heroes of Hebrews 11 (and is so scathing of 'apocalyptic'); and D. Evans wades in linguistic muddle. However, with this caveat, the book remains a fitting tribute to one whose theological method was so exemplary.

**THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
1850–1930 Brian Heeney**

Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988 144pp. £19.50

This uncompleted book is a testament to the scholarship of the late Brian Heeney, a Canadian Anglican priest who had made the study of modern Church history his own. The purpose of the book, which was prepared for publication by friends after his death, is to detail the rise of feminism and of women's movements generally in the Church of England. Most people have a vague idea that Deaconesses came into being in the last century, and would probably think of the Mother's Union as a Victorian institution, but few know just to what extent the women's movement in the Church is the product of forces at work in late Victorian society.

According to this book, it was about 1880 that churchmen began to realize that the majority of their congregations were female, and at a time when it was still unusual for women to go out to work, they represented a vastly underused potential. Far-sighted people, including women who were fighting for a greater say for their sex in society as a whole, seized on this fact and began to develop a vast network of women's organizations. The movement seems to have peaked about 1914 or shortly thereafter; by 1930 it was in obvious decline and was not revived until the 1970s.

What comes across from this study is that there were basically two types of women involved. There were those (the majority) who accepted that they must always be subject to men, and especially to the parish priest, but who sought to do useful social and evangelistic work within that context. Voluntary parish workers of this kind are now a thing of the past, but it is interesting and instructive to read of the wide range of activities which were open to them at that time, in spite of a general prejudice against women in the Church.

Then there was the crusading woman, closely aligned to the suffragette movement. Churchpeople gave a surprising amount of support to that cause, and when Church Assembly was established in 1919, women received full voting rights for the first time. Indeed, there were forty women members of the first Assembly—not at all bad going for the time.

The question of ordination naturally also raised its head, but it was regarded as a distant prospect by most people. Nevertheless, it is fascinating to learn that the debate of the 1970s and 1980s is in many respects a rerun of the arguments which were put forward from about 1900 to 1920, with no result.

This book will be essential reading for anyone interested in the history of women in the Church, and although it lacks the polish which its author would no doubt have given it had he lived, it is a good and an instructive read.

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GERALD BRAY

COME DOWN, LORD! Roger Ellsworth

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1988 56pp. £1.25pb.

ISBN 0 85151 539 8

Praise God for Roger Ellsworth and the Banner of Truth Trust! This is a gem of a volume. I sincerely hope that this inexpensive, yet invaluable, book will be very widely read. It speaks directly, yet succinctly, to both the Christian and Church of today. It highlights our urgent need of revival as well as pin-pointing

areas for action.

In seven clear, compact and concise chapters the author introduces us, in a masterly way, to this much misunderstood subject. His starting point is the prayer of Isaiah 63.15–64.12. In due season, he asserts, God's people will come, as Isaiah predicted so long ago, to see that they miss and need God. This is the subject matter of chapters one and two. In chapters three and four Ellsworth shows that those who seriously wish to meet with God will meet with and wait for him in the way that he desires. Moreover, as he states in chapters five and six, God's people will turn to him afresh admitting both their sins and that they belong to him. In the final chapter we are reminded of the nature of true prayer.

This book can easily be used for group study. The more who are introduced to its contents the better. Both I and the members of my church have found it both a fillip as well as a source of great blessing. As it says on the back cover, '*Come Down, Lord!* will also stimulate repentance, prayer and fresh faith in the promised mercy of God.' That is our need today.

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GEORGE CURRY

THE ONLY WISE GOD: THE COMPATIBILITY OF DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN FREEDOM William Lane Craig

Baker Book House, Michigan 1987 157pp. \$7.95

ISBN 0 8010 2519 2

Dr. Craig taught the philosophy of religion at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for seven years before going to Westmont in 1986. This is his seventh book. The sub-title sufficiently indicates its subject matter. Much of the treatment, while aiming at the popular level, is nevertheless quite philosophical—'Reducibility of Theological to Logical Fatalism' is a fairly typical paragraph heading. Working through the book is accordingly a good mental exercise for which one can be grateful, but it takes a good deal of application. It is a pity that Dr. Craig does not explain more fully what he understands by 'human freedom'. He writes from a frankly Arminian position and regards the Reformers' teaching as downright 'theological fatalism'. He interprets the great affirmations of Rom. 8.29,30 in terms of the Jesuit concept of 'middle knowledge', of which he is an 'enthusiastic supporter'. God's possession of 'middle knowledge' means that 'He knew [at the appropriate moment before the world began] how every possible person in any conceivable circumstance would freely respond to his grace and the drawing of his Spirit'. 'Accordingly, the very act of selecting [out of all possible worlds] a world to be created is a sort of predestination'. God chooses the particular world He wants and creates it. Those who in its particular circumstances respond positively to the Gospel are saved; but God did not choose that world and its particular circumstances with them particularly in view (although He had 'middle knowledge' of their future positive response). Their predestination would therefore seem to be accidental, not particular or purposeful on God's part. This approach seems to offer an escape from the doctrine of reprobation; but no doubt many conservatives would prefer to live with the latter as an unresolved problem than whittle-down the doctrine of predestination to this degree.

This book is well produced and has an author and subject Index.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage

DOUGLAS SPANNER

SIGNS, WONDERS AND HEALING Ed. J. Goldingay

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1988 192pp. £5.50

ISBN 0 85110 796 6

This book is another in the I.V.P. series 'When Christians Disagree!' In it seven prominent Christians debate today's issues. The book begins with an introduction and some starting points by John Goldingay. This is followed by three parts, each consisting of two debates, one for and one against and each debate being followed by a response from the other contributor. The book finishes with a conclusion written by John Goldingay.

In the personal introduction on page 11, John Goldingay suggests that John Wimber and his 'Power Evangelism' is the reason for the need of a book like this. In the next section we are given some starting points. This is divided into three areas: 1. Health, suffering and healing with twelve points and seven questions; 2. Healing and miracle with twelve points and five questions; and 3. Healing in church life with five points and eight questions.

The opening debate is written by Peter May who is a doctor and a member of the Church of England's General Synod. He has entitled his contribution 'Focusing on the Eternal'. He writes about different types of health. Spiritual, Social, Psychological, Physical and Environmental. In the section dealing with Spiritual Health he gives us a good description of what that actually is. He goes on to argue that as Christians we should expect the same medical problems that a non-Christian would suffer from, with the exception of illnesses caused by the nature of a worldly life style. He then moves on to the subject of healing. On page 37 he makes the point that in the New Testament, after the Book of Acts, there is hardly a mention of physical health and healing. He stresses that on the Cross, Jesus died for our sins and not for our physical health. He then deals with the following two texts of John 20.21 and John 14:12, used by some to expect healing signs for today. On page 42 he argues from Mark's Gospel. I quote from page 42. 'It would be a distraction and obstacle to the work of evangelism'. He goes on to write about our response to suffering and finishes his contribution with his conclusion on page 44. I quote his first sentence of his conclusion. 'Neither Scripture or medical experience encourage belief that miraculous signs and wonders should be expected as a normative phenomenon in the church of any age'.

Then follows a response from Tony Dale. He, too, is a doctor and is head of the Caring Professions Concern. He responds by quoting part of the Lord's Prayer—Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. He states that the Christian walk is not passive and that we have to take part in prayer warfare. He cites an example of healing concerning his wife. On page 49 he makes the point that our life style as Christians will protect us from some diseases. As Christians we should have less stress-related illnesses in our lives. On page 52 he lists three reasons why believers are not availing themselves of health and healing: 1. Lies of Satan. 2. The kingdom not yet fully realized. 3. Low level of faith and expectation in the churches.

Tony Dale then shares his view in 'Seeing God at Work in the Physical'. He begins by sharing his testimony of healing from hepatitis as a child. From the early chapters of Genesis he suggests that sickness comes from Satan and on page 57 he says, 'The whole nature and character of God militates against

his being involved in making people sick'. Through Jesus' ministry of healing we see in each case the heart of God in action. He says that God is the author of life. On page 60 he describes the state of Moses' health at the time of his death and that Jesus was not so much as killed by men but rather gave up his own life. He suggests that these are examples of a possible desire for God to want wholeness in our lives today. He then goes on to talk about God's use of suffering. He cites incidents in the life of David du Plessis at the time of an international ecumenical charismatic conference (page 61) and Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho from Korea in how his church was begun. I would have preferred examples from people not known for their charismatic excesses. On page 63 he talks about Satan's strategies and gives two examples of demonic possession. He then moves into the area of the healing of unbelievers. He quite rightly states that seeing a miracle does not lead a person into becoming a believer. I wonder how many of those whom Jesus healed became believers. Regarding Matthew's quoting of Isaiah 53 he writes on page 68, 'Our healing as believers flows from the atoning work of Christ'. He then applies this Scripture to the crowds coming to Jesus. Again from page 68 he says,

The application of this Scripture to the crowds coming to Jesus seems to show that potentially Christ's salvation, as including our physical needs, could reach out to all mankind, even as his coming to save us from our sins is a gift that God makes freely available to all.

His next section is entitled 'The Unseen World' and again he looks to Mr. Yonggi Cho and then quotes C.S. Lewis, which is probably the most quoted quote ever. He then looks at healing and on page 71 he looks to Oral Roberts describing him as 'a remarkable American healing evangelist'. I wonder if he wrote this before the appeal for money to save this 'remarkable American's' life? I thought even most charismatics were suspicious of Mr. Roberts. In this section he tries to bring both the physical and spiritual forms of healing together. He uses James 5:13 to 16 and rightly says that churches that disobey clear scriptural commands are wrong. He finishes his piece with this last paragraph on pages 73 and 74:

The wonder of the redemption bought for us at Calvary is that Christ offers us himself. Not only does Scripture teach that he is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, but also that he is our life. In a wonderful way beyond anything that we can adequately understand or explain, when Jesus died on the cross, he not only carried the full weight of our sin, but also of our suffering, pain and sickness.

Then we come to the response from Peter May and he brings out three issues. First, the definition of a miracle. He states that the miracles of Christ are unique and totally different from what happens today. Secondly, the teaching of the New Testament. Here he takes issue with Tony Dale's view of the atonement in that it includes physical healing. Thirdly, the medical evidence. He documents a number of 'miraculous healings' which in reality did not take place. On page 79 he says this, 'Many of the claims made (and I include the claims made by Tony Dale) do not lend themselves to objective assessment'. His comments on the fuss made over Uri Geller and his fork bending would pale into insignificance if these miracles were valid, I am sure.

Part Two is called Healing and Miracle. The debate is opened by the late Roger Cowley who was on the staff of Oak Hill Theological College. His contribution is entitled 'An Invitation to Expectancy'. He begins by saying how difficult the word miracle is to define and would prefer to use signs and wonders. He goes on to assert that they happen today and gives an example on page 89 of a deaf man who received his hearing. He then discusses the relationship between medicine and prayer. I was pleased to read the following on page 90, 'Medicine rightly practised is one of God's gifts and Christians are told to pray for the sick'. In the section on authority he quotes from the Book of Common Prayer for the authority to pronounce God's forgiveness of sins but asks why ministers are reluctant to use authority in chasing away evil spirits. To substantiate this he refers us to Matthew 9:1 to 8 and John Wimber's comments in Power Healing. In the next section he deals with signs and wonders done by non-Christians and the problems that can occur there. He states that we do not stop preaching because of false or liberal preaching, and applies this same view to the exercise of spiritual gifts. Then comes his exposition of John 14:12. I quote from his last paragraph on page 95:

I believe that John 14:12 means that Jesus commissioned his followers to continue the things which he did during his earthly ministry, which he instructed his first disciples to do, and of which we read in the Book of Acts.

He gives nine points to which he believes Biblically minded Christians would agree. This is followed by an autobiographical sketch which centres on his conversion to the charismatic fold. He then gives a personal testimony how his Christian life has changed. I was concerned to read in the list of books that had encouraged him titles by Agnes Sandford and Francis MacNutt. In this section he lists some encouragements and some discouragements. In his conclusion on page 104 he writes,

I conclude by saying that I believe that God acted through Jesus Christ to bring healing and that he gives power and authority to his disciples today to heal; such healing may be termed 'miraculous' in the sense of being a wonderful sign of God's activity.

The response to Roger Cowley's contribution is given by Bill Lees. He is a doctor and was once a missionary in East Malaysia. He brings to our attention the danger of emphasizing experience over the truth of Scripture. On page 106 we find this wise sentence:

Revival and signs and wonders must be seen in the total context of God's gracious interventions and not as a recently discovered missing key to effective Christian work or church growth.

This is followed by Bill Lees's contribution to the debate and he has called it 'Hesitations about expectancy'. He begins by saying God can and does perform miracles. He looks at examples in the Bible where God intervened and argues along the line of man's partnership with God. For example, the production of bread. God provided manna once and could do so again, but in the normal process we sow seed, cultivate, harvest and bake bread and we give thanks to God for His provision. He draws a parallel between this example and that of healing and medicine. He shows that the miracles shown to Pharaoh did not lead to lasting repentance. How many of the 5,000 miraculously fed at the opening of John 6 by Jesus, deserted him at the end of

the chapter? Peter declared that Jesus was the Son of God, not from his seeing of the miracles, but through revelation by my Father in heaven. He shares from his experiences in Sabah, amongst animist people and how God intervened there, and from another missionary situation where a miracle did not take place. On page 118 he says,

We must all, the former animist and those from the sophisticated West, learn to live by faith, even if sometimes that means trusting him through trials or in enduring sickness.

We are given a lovely example of an ill person led into a ministry of prayer for her church. On page 120 he gives us a moving personal example of disability and spiritual usefulness. He turns to healing in God's will and again refers to his personal involvement in dynamic growing churches before there was a charismatic movement in the West. He rightly condemns the prosperity Gospel and brings us back to the priority of the church. On page 124 he says, 'We are the people of God, witnesses to Christ, committed to world evangelism'. In the section on dying he shares with us a very moving personal testimony. A section on Healing in God's Will in the U.K. is followed by his exposition of John 14:12. Lastly comes his conclusion and I quote the last paragraph of it:

The grace of God is shown at least as clearly as he enables his people to cope with illness and suffering as in removing the sickness or suffering. We look forward to the revealing of our full salvation in his presence—totally healed and freed from all sin, sickness and suffering. (page 129).

We then come to the response to Bill Lees by Roger Cowley. He affirms much of what has been said but takes issue in three areas and closes his response with a plea to the church and to Christians to rediscover what the New Testament teaches about God's power.

The third debate in the book is headed 'Healing in the Church'. The first contributor is David Huggett who is a vicar in Nottingham and his contribution is headed 'A Ministry to be Encouraged'. He begins by giving us four different levels of church commitment to healing and moves on to major on church life that is moving or has moved to the fourth level. He charts a potted biography concerning his own healing ministry and proceeds to answer the questions M to T, asked by John Goldingay on page 22. In the response to question M we have his exposition of John 14:12. On page 140 he says the following:

Graciously God has brought us back to an awareness of the centrality of evangelism and mission, so also now to the importance and centrality of healing and miracles.

Sadly the energy spent in seeking signs and wonders, often means less energy put into sharing the gospel with the lost. In many of his answers he refers to his own church, St. Nicholas, Nottingham. He believes that there is a place for the healing ministry in the life of the church. He expects that the full proclamation of the gospel will include power signs. Do these power signs occur regularly in his church? On page 143, the following question is asked. 'Is it our business to attempt to discern when God might wish to do some signs by healing someone? If so, how do we do so?' He gives three questions to be answered. These are wise questions but they could also be used as a get-out clause. On page 144 he discusses inner healing. Much of what is said

seems to have more in common with psychology, which is unregenerate man's invention to unregenerate man's problems. To find a parallel of inner healing in Jesus' restoration of Peter, I find incredible. Peter had denied the Lord but was restored within a few weeks at most. On page 149, he describes the history of the ministry of prayer for healing in his church and describes how this ministry occurs in the church services. On page 152, in a theological approach he lists seven points. The first one is, 'That the healing ministry is the healing of Jesus, one of the fruits of his death on the cross (Isaiah 53) and something which we, his followers, are commissioned to do'. He finishes his contribution with a six-part future approach. Number one was interesting because it includes the following, '... provide more training for those involved in the prayer ministry whose only qualification for people-helping is that they have attended a John Wimber conference'.

We then move to the response to David Huggett and this is given by Philip Hacking. He too is a vicar and his church is in Sheffield. He begins by agreeing with a lot that was said but goes on to list some differences and concerns. One of these was the stress on inner healing and the consequent diagnosis which are not scriptural. He is not convinced by the exposition of John 14:12 and does not think we are to expect healing and health at all times.

Philip Hacking's contribution to the debate is headed 'A Ministry easily over-emphasized'. He begins with the recent death of one of his Church Wardens and how this was a victory rather than a defeat. He traces the healing ministry (or lack of) in the New Testament writings and says on page 163:

This follows from the clear New Testament pattern that evangelism must be the priority: the gospel of eternal life is needed by all, whereas healing in its narrowest physical sense is not that universal a need.

He gives us an exposition of James 5:13 to 16 and discusses the question of the continuance of the gifts in the church today. He shares his reservations about church healing groups and the dangers of healing services, especially at the Communion Service. He rightly warns against the prosperity gospel and urges that our priority should be the eternal salvation of men and women. On page 169 he highlights the danger of inner healing. On page 170 he says this, 'To do all this is dangerous and it denies the efficacy of the message of the cross'. He warns of over-stressing the work of demons and says that our victory over Satan comes primarily through prayer and study and daily discipline. He stresses the importance of praying for sick people and warns of the danger of a negative reaction to the healing ministry because of the excesses of some of the healing movements today.

David Huggett disagrees with Philip Hacking's views and believes that the answer to abuse is not disuse but right use. In the last paragraph he says the following:

In this area, as in many others, we need to take a fresh close look at Scripture, that we may learn how to be fully equipped to minister in the 1990s.

I am sure that every Bible believing Christian would agree with that statement.

Part four is the conclusion of the book, analysing the issues and is written by John Goldingay. He analyses seven areas of disagreement.

I found the book interesting to read. All the contributions were well presented but at the end I found my own view unchanged. It was in fact reinforced by the arguments and statements made on both sides of the debate. Surely, the most important task of the church is to preach the Gospel to the lost, in season and out of season. We must never forget that the healthiest sinner goes to hell, but the sickliest saint goes to heaven.

London S.W.6

ROGER COOK

INDEX OF REVIEWS

AVIS, ed., <i>The Threshold of Theology</i> (E. Dowse)	172
CAMERON, <i>Biblical Higher Criticism and the Defense of Infallibilism in 19th Century Britain</i> (G.L. Bray)	175
CORSI, <i>Science and Religion Baden-Powell and the Anglican Debate 1800-1860</i> (R. Heinze)	174
CRAIG, <i>The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom</i> (D.C. Spanner)	185
CRUSE, <i>2 Corinthians: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries</i> (J.A. Motyer)	167
DILLARD, <i>2 Chronicles: Word Biblical Commentary 15</i> (J.A. Motyer)	166
ELLSWORTH, <i>Come Down, Lord</i> (G.R. Curry)	184
ERLER, MARQUAND, ed., <i>A Karl Barth Reader</i> (N. Biggar)	176
FERGUSON, <i>Daniel: The Communicator's Commentary</i> (J.A. Motyer)	166
GOLDINGAY, <i>Signs, Wonders and Healing</i> (R. Cook)	186
GREEN, <i>A New Dimension</i> (D.C.C. Watson)	180
GREEN, CARKNER, <i>Ten Myths about Christianity</i> (D.C.C. Watson)	180
HANSON, <i>The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God</i> (G.L. Bray)	178
HARTMAN, BUDICK, ed., <i>Midrash and Literature</i> (W. Riggans)	170
HEENEY, <i>The Women's Movement in the Church of England 1850-1930</i> (G.L. Bray)	184
McDOWELL, STEWART, <i>Reasons Why We Should Consider Christianity</i> (D.C.C. Watson)	179
NEWBIGIN, <i>Foolishness to the Greeks</i> (D.C. Spanner)	169
ROBERTS, <i>Let Us Make Man</i> (A. Bennett)	173
TORRANCE, <i>Christology after Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite</i> (G.L. Bray)	168
WRIGHT, HURST, ed., <i>The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird</i> (D.R. de Lacey)	182

Other Books Received

- Darton, Longman & Todd** R. Gardner, *Healing Miracles: A Doctor Investigates*, 1986, £4.95
- Arthur James** L.D. Weatherhead, *Salute to a Sufferer*, 1986, (Reprinted) £2.95
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- Scripture Press** J. McDowell, *The Resurrection: Proven Beyond Doubt*, 1988, £3.95
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