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# In Brief

## **NICHOLAS RIDLEY, WORKS**

Focus Christian Ministries Trust, Lewes, 1988 485pp. £7.95 pb.

ISBN 1 870223 09 8

A considerable debt is owed by the Christian world to Focus Christian Ministries Trust for their work of issuing reprints of important Reformation writings. This edition of Ridley's works is a reprint of the Parker Society's volume of the English texts and includes thirty four of his letters. Also here are his 'Godly, learned and comfortable conferences with Hugh Latimer'.

What struck this reviewer as particularly apposite to our present troubles were the Articles of Inquiry issued by Latimer when Bishop of London in 1550. The Diocese of London in 1989 would be well reformed if it had to answer these Articles!

Limehouse Rectory, London E.14

JOHN PEARCE

## **A PRIEST AND THE PARANORMAL Jack Dover Wellman**

Churchman Publishing, Worthing, 1988 238pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 85093 090 2

This second book by a North London Church of England clergyman is published by a firm which has no connexion with this journal. It is a most fascinating account of his work in healing and exorcism over forty years and principally consists of a series of case studies which show that the writer is a deeply loving and spiritual minister. The last and smaller part of the book consists of a number of short essays on various aspects of the subject.

There is no doubt that most people will find this book thought-provoking but readers will also find his language difficult—for example, he speaks often of a person's 'aura' and there is an inaccessibility to his thought caused by his unusual use of terms. Further he does not really accept that paranormal phenomena are usually caused by the action of evil spirits. Indeed, more often, he prefers to follow the line that they are the unpeaceful dead. For myself I cannot see much in the Scriptures to support this view and in my own experience of exorcizing houses I have always assumed that if the phenomena were not caused by malicious human beings or by odd actions by the home owners themselves, then the likelihood is that there is an evil power to be cast out of the home, a power which always responds to the greater power of the Lord Jesus.

Nevertheless this book will remind us of the manifold strange needs of people at a time when the Christian faith is, on the whole, not known and when contact with the occult is all too prevalent. In the power of the Risen Lord we must command the evil one to depart.

Limehouse Rectory, London E.14

JOHN PEARCE

**YOUR CHILD'S CHRISTENING Simon Acland**

Collins, London 1988 32pp. £1.50 pb.

ISBN 0 00 599141 2

This booklet is intended to accompany the video tape of the same name produced by Kensington Church Videos.

The booklet will be a real help to those whose theology is in the Catholic or Liberal wings of the Church of England.

Mr. Acland seems to make infant baptism bear the whole weight of that theology of baptism in the New Testament which saw adult baptism as the norm. For example he states, 'Christian Baptism is birth by water and the Holy Spirit'. Again he says without qualification that 'When people talk about being *born again* they think of birth into our human family as the first birth and Baptism as the second birth'. These things apart, this booklet has some very useful things to say and answers many of the questions which ordinary folk actually ask.

Limehouse Rectory, London E.14

JOHN PEARCE

**UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL Sinclair Ferguson**

Kingsway, Eastbourne 1989 311pp. £6.99

ISBN 0 86065 499 0

This book is the outcome of many years' study in the Gospel of Mark and has, therefore, some very profound observations. Being the result of such study it is of great value as a devotional companion to the Scriptures, though it might have been better to give it a title more closely identified with the Gospel of Mark.

14 Cambridge Road, Stamford, Lincolnshire

JOHN BOURNON

**WALKING IN THE LIGHT Roy Clements**

Kingsway, Eastbourne, 1989 151pp. £5.99

ISBN 0 86065 540 7

Roy Clements is one of the most outstanding expository preachers in our country today. He has a most effective Biblical ministry in the middle of Cambridge at Eden Baptist Church and this book is a collection of sermons preached there on 1 John.

Dr. Clements with tremendous skill and clarity engages, as any preacher ought, both with the biblical text and the contemporary scene, demonstrating that the 'gnosticism' which John is trying to counter is very much alive and kicking in the church today. At a time when so much emphasis is being placed upon experience at the expense of doctrine, this book is a most welcome corrective, as in following the apostle's major themes Dr. Clements shows that the two are to lie at the heart of the Christian life in a state of creative tension.

I must confess that this book opened up a whole new world for me in reading 1 John as it explores such themes as holiness, worldliness, love, assurance and faith in such a refreshing and challenging manner.

Anyone who thinks that doctrine is dull or that expository preaching is on the way out, then they should read this book. But more positively, this is a

Churchman

book of tremendous value and a must for those who wish to understand 1 John and 'walk in the light'.

Keele University

MELVIN TINKER

**CUTHBERT BARDSLEY Donald Coggan**

Collins, London 1989 263pp. £17.50

ISBN 0 00215084 8

Cuthbert Bardsley is a remarkable Bishop who was always, first and foremost an evangelist and an effective one at that. What was the secret of his enormous influence upon countless young men and indeed many older people too? Why was he in such demand all over the country and often overseas as well?

Donald Coggan does not attempt to tell us; he does not intrude an evaluation but simply tells the story and makes it a fascinating as well as a valuable record of part of the life of the Church of England in the first half of the twentieth century. In a way it would have been good to have an assessment but perhaps it is as yet too early for that. What was very clear was the enormous influence that the Oxford Group had on Cuthbert at the time of his university and theological college life. At that time that movement was a deeply Christian work as it sought to bring people to the Cross of Jesus and to a commitment to Him. Bardsley was by nature a dynamic person and that dynamism was combined with an uncompromising dedication to the Lord. Always he was concerned to bring men to God and to a serious discipleship. In that simplicity Cuthbert Bardsley lived his life as Rector of Woolwich, Provost of Southwark, Bishop to the Forces and at last as Bishop of Coventry. This excellent book reminds us of what God can do with a man who is wholly surrendered to him.

Limehouse Rectory, 5 Newell Street, London E.14

JOHN PEARCE

**MOTHER OF NATIONS, VISIONS OF MARY Joan Ashton**

Marshall Pickering, Basingstoke 1989 223pp. £2.99 pb. ISBN 0 551 01772 4

Mrs. Joan Ashton, who is a member of the Church of England, has produced an account of the main appearances of Mary down the centuries. She has visited most of the sites; she has read all the relevant literature and she has produced a book which brings together the evidence for many visions of Mary in different lands and at different periods of history right down to Medjugorje in our own time. She writes objectively and avoids the tententious.

The extraordinary part of the evidence is that Mary apparently never appears to Protestants though she has appeared to High Church Anglicans! How far does this suggest that the visions are conditioned reflexes as a result of a good deal of teaching on the subject in unreformed Christendom? Is it possible that God chooses to allow Mary to appear as a means of drawing people to Himself? Or, perhaps, is it the Devil's work as a way of leading people away from the one true God?

Such are the questions which inevitably come to mind as one reads this well-researched book. Certainly the evidence is now brought together within the covers of one book and we can perhaps make up our minds.

Limehouse Rectory, 5 Newell Street, London E.14

JOHN PEARCE

**A SCHOLAR'S GUIDE TO ACADEMIC JOURNALS IN RELIGION** James Dawsey

American Theological Libraries Association

Series 23, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, New Jersey and London, 1988,

290pp. £29.40

ISBN 0 8108 2135 4

This product of the American Theological Libraries Association offers a detailed introduction to the main theological journals. It is not comprehensive – among those omitted, one would note *Theology* and the *Tyndale Bulletin* in particular. However, it gives a comprehensive, though concise picture of 530 different publications, in a wide range of fields, and this will be of interest to students and librarians alike.

Why has the book been written? The introductory chapters reveal that the author's main purpose is to help research students find somewhere to publish their material! This laudable, if somewhat unusually practical aim will be greatly helped by a guide like this one, and it is to be hoped that it will be widely read and studied by all those interested in publishing their research.

Oak Hill College, London N.14

GERALD BRAY

**BLUE GUIDE – JERUSALEM** Kay Prag

A. & C. Black Edinburgh 1989 329pp. £11.95

ISBN 0 393 30480 9

More than a guide, this is a mini-encyclopaedia! Covering Jerusalem east-and-west, and the environs. Detailed descriptions of all the main sites and a host of other more obscure venues, of interest to the pilgrim, or even to the scholar, extending one's knowledge of the 'City of God'. Lists of Kings of Israel and Judah, Roman Procurators, Seleucid Kings, the Ptolemies, Roman and Byzantine Emperors—all are here—not ignoring the Caliphs right down to the Ottomans! But also where to eat and sleep, and how to behave and what to avoid when visiting Holy Places! Dr. Prag observes strict accuracy in all descriptions of ancient ruins and edifices. So much so that it seems invidious to point out two errors: one on page 228. It was not Moses ben Nachman, of Gerona who was called 'RAMBAM'; that was the acronym for Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon, (Maimonedes), of Cordova. The other on page 269: the 'Garden Tomb' was not identified as the tomb of Christ by General Gordon, though he regarded it as a possibility. He tended to favour rather another tomb nearby, now built over and obliterated by the White Sisters' Convent in the Nablus Road. In any case Charles Gordon disappeared from the scene before the Garden Tomb Association was formed. A highly commendable guide-book; a pity the print is so small and the price is so great—but a good investment for the traveller all the same.

22 Woodland Way, Fairlight, Hastings

OWEN THOMAS

Churchman

**A PLAIN MAN'S GUIDE TO HOLINESS John Wesley**

**Edited by Halcyon C. Backhouse**

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1988 121pp. £2.25 ISBN 0 340 41501 0

Originally published with the title 'A Plain Man's Guide to Christian Perfection', it is now re-issued as part of the celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of John Wesley's conversion. Important if only to understand exactly what Wesley meant by 'Christian perfection' and to learn that he did not teach 'sinless perfection'!

22 Woodland Way, Fairlight, Hastings

OWEN THOMAS

**THE PERSON OF CHRIST Andrew Bonar**

Christian Focus Publications 1988 122pp. no price

ISBN 0 906731 83 6

A reprint of the 1858 original by a famous Scottish divine. Not a theological treatise, but an inspiring devotional study with a sound doctrinal infrastructure.

22 Woodland Way, Fairlight, Hastings

OWEN THOMAS

**THE INSTITUTES OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION John Calvin**

**(abridged) Tony Lane and Hilary Osborne**

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1988 271pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 340 39303 3

Many who claim to be 'Calvinists' have never read Calvin except in quotation. Those who would read him are deterred by the formidable size of the original work! Here is the answer for all who would and everyone who should read Calvin for themselves. The abridged edition makes the work readily accessible to the average reader; the selections are judiciously chosen to cover the main aspects of Christian faith and behaviour. The editors have succeeded in rendering Calvin's lucid prose into clear modern English.

22 Woodland Way, Fairlight, Hastings

OWEN THOMAS

**HELP! I'M GROWING UP Roger and Christine Day**

Harvestime Bradford 1980 124pp. £2.95

ISBN 0 947714 18 9

The sub-title: 'A child/parent guide to sex and puberty', warns the reader that the subject here expounded is the one which frequently surfaces these days, whenever the preparation of children for adult-hood is discussed. Roger and Christine Day are parents who have evidently found a clear way of communicating with their children on this delicate subject. Some readers might be shocked by their explicit presentation in very plain language. The diagrams are the type found in anatomy text books, with one that could be described as erotic. All aspects of sexual behaviour are treated, with clear warnings about the abuse and perversion of this wonderful gift God has

placed within the human frame. Relevant Scripture references are quoted and appropriately applied throughout the book. If it is used for 'pre-teen' kids, care must be taken to make sure it is studied by parent and child together. With this caution the book is recommended.

22 Woodland Way, Fairlight, Hastings

OWEN THOMAS

**TEAM SPIRIT – 'People working with people' David Cormack**

MARC Eastbourne 1987 222pp. £5.95

ISBN 0 947697 55 1

Mr. Cormack's professional experience in Training and Organisational Development in the Shell Company has led him to find his niche in Christian service as Director of Management for Marc Europe. With such practical talent harnessed to spiritual motivation, he has produced a very useful handbook for Christian leaders. Full of clearly mapped-out systems for all types of church work, with suitable diagrams and cartoons, one can recommend the book to any minister who is willing to share his pastoral leadership and to delegate other tasks which tend to hinder his spiritual effectiveness.

22 Woodland Way, Fairlight, Hastings

OWEN THOMAS

**THE GOOD CHURCH GUIDE**

Marshall Pickering, Basingstoke 1989 525pp. £9.99 pb. ISBN 0 551012 694

This volume will be a considerable resource for clergy and lay leaders particularly as they commend folk who are moving to other parts of the country. There are 2,000 entries which give details of the church's address, average attendance, the hymn book used, whether it is historically interesting and all kinds of other information such as whether the charismatic gifts are evident and whether confessions are heard. The existence of healing services is noted as are house groups and missionaries supported. This is an invaluable book. If your church is not in it, make sure that it is next year!

Limehouse Rectory, 5 Newell Street, London E.14

JOHN PEARCE

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## Other Books Received

**Collins** Peter Mullen, *Death Be Not Proud*, 1989, £2.99

**Corgi Books** Gordon Thomas, *The Trial: The Life and Inevitable Crucifixion of Jesus*, 1988, £3.99

**Cowley Publications** James R. Adams, *So You Think You're Not Religious?* 1989, \$8.95

**Hodder & Stoughton** William Griffin, *The Fleetwood Correspondence*, 1989, £6.99

**Kingsway Publications** Em Griffin, *Making Friends (and Making Them Count)*, 1988, £4.95

**Lutterworth Press** J. Barrie Shepherd, *A Child is Born*, 1988, £6.95

**Monarch Publications** Brian Whitehead, *God Speaks From A Little Box*, 1989, £2.99

**Mowbray** Michael Seward, *Cracking The God Code*, Revised 1989, £2.95

**Scripture Press** David Seamands, *Healing Grace: Find Real Freedom Now*, 1989, £2.95

**S.P.C.K.** Joyce Landorf Heatherley, *Unworld People*, 1987, £3.25;

George Every, Richard Harries, Kallistos Ware, ed., *Seasons of the Spirit: Readings Through The Christian Year*, Revised 1990, £3.25