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Book Reviews

GOD DELIVERS Derek Thomas
Evangelical Press, Darlington 1991 415pp. £8.95 ISBN 0 85234 290 X

The author of this book exercises a preaching ministry in Belfast and for a year or so preached a series of expositions from Isaiah. As a result this commentary has been written and dedicated to the congregation. Few people will question the assumption that the book of the prophet Isaiah towers amongst the prophetical books of the Old Testament, and gives clear Messianic prophecies of hope and encouragement.

While many Christian people are familiar with the more well known parts of this great work, there are some who would appreciate a more simplified commentary which would show the book and its message as a whole. Derek Thomas's commentary is sub-titled 'Isaiah Simply Explained'. While it does not attempt to match the two great commentaries on the book of Isaiah, namely John Calvin and Edward J. Young, the author tells us that those commentaries have been at his side throughout the writing of this work.

The commentary has but a short introduction and does not attempt to deal with some of the textual issues. It is basically a straightforward commentary which deals simply with the text as it goes through the book chapter by chapter. This has both strengths and weaknesses; weaknesses because it is only able to deal in the major themes running through the book, *viz.* the Lord is the source of salvation, or the nature of the prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. There is also an unevenness in the way that some of the material is handled. For instance Isaiah 52 and 53 are dealt with in six pages, while Isaiah Chapter 40 has nearly twenty. Its strengths are that it is very readable and it does cover most topics even if somewhat sketchily. It could well be used as a book for daily devotional Bible reading and study, and it will speak clearly and relevantly to the Christian who wants a basic understanding of what Isaiah is saying. The preacher will be looking for something in addition to what is found here as he prepares the word for the congregation, but he will find many devotional thoughts as he seeks to apply the message to the needs of his people.

Undoubtedly this commentary will fill a gap on many bookshelves, and provide us with the means of obtaining a clearer understanding of the prophet's message for today.

The Rectory, 20a Rectory Lane, London SW17 JOHN HALL

GOD'S THEATRE A Theology of Providence T. J. Gorringe
S.C.M. Press, London 1991 114pp. £8.95 ISBN 0 334 02493 5

There has been a spate of interest in recent years in the subject of Providence, or how God acts in nature and history. The matter is far from closed, and viewpoints range all the way from the (almost) Deism of Maurice Wiles (which is that He does nothing except hold the created order in being) through the much more traditional view of Vernon White to the fully Reformed outlook of the late Donald MacKay, one with which I myself have a great deal of sympathy. In this very able little book Tim Gorringe, who spent seven years in India at the Tamil Nadu Theological

Seminary before becoming Chaplain of St. John's College, Oxford, develops the analogy of a theatre director as a picture of how God influences the course of human activity. He draws heavily on Peter Brook's famous book on directing, *The Empty Space*. His chapter headings are: '*Disposing of False Friends*', in which he attempts to qualify the status in the present discussion of such concepts as the sovereignty of God, predestination, determinism, chance, and creation; '*Can We Do Theology by Doing Science?*', an interesting discussion of natural theology in which he interacts sympathetically with John Polkinghorne among others; and '*Providence and Evil*', where his conclusion is that 'freedom and love, which together constitute "grace", are at the heart of both the possibility of pain, sin and evil, and of the response to this'. His next chapter, '*Knowledge, Power and Providence*', relies rather heavily on a literal interpretation of the phrase 'the weakness of God'; God 'rules from the Cross'. (What has happened, one wonders, to the mighty event of the Resurrection?). '*Divine Direction*' follows, with an emphasis on the action of the divine Theatre Director interpreted as 'attraction', not compulsion. He argues his case with some skill, but he spoils it by caricaturing the opposing view; God conceived of as sovereign would be an 'Almighty Tyrant'. With his weak understanding of Providence, '*For What Can We Pray?*' becomes a problem. However, as in so many of the questions the author raises, his own answers are not always clearly discernible. This seems to be the case here and also in his concluding chapter: '*Postscript – Can God be Defeated?*'. We are left with the feeling that God hopes not, and we must hope in that hope.

I found this book suggestive in many ways, but its overall impression was profoundly unsatisfying. The author's attitude to Scripture is very uneven. He takes it in the common liberal fashion as providing evidence of what a religiously very gifted people believed; biblical ideas are therefore to be treated with respect, but are not to be regarded as revelation. He writes: '. . . the canon remains open, so that what is authoritative and normative remains open to discussion'. Accordingly, the Cross is to be interpreted as one thinks best (*e.g.* 'the atonement is not something that happened only on Calvary'); and Jesus becomes the product of chance evolution in whom finally God's interaction with His created and evolving universe 'can become complete'. One is left with the question of why God's interaction has remained complete and apparently unique only in Jesus? Since 'no natural laws were breached in his psychological or physical composition', and since evolution had reached the stage at which *He* was possible, why have no men or women appeared since then in whom the like capacity to become 'God-bearer' has existed? Thus this book seems to leave more questions unanswered than it succeeds even partially in laying to rest. To name one other obvious one: if the analogy of the Theatre Director is the right one for Providence, who corresponds to the *playwright*? The author makes no reference to this, unless indeed my reading has been very hasty. For the play, in the analogy, is already extant. Presumably he would say that the director makes it up with great skill as he goes along? Needless to say, this would be an idea thoroughly at variance with both Old and New Testaments. It may safeguard 'human autonomy', but it plays havoc with God's sovereignty and foreknowledge. His glory He seems to have given to another.

There are six pages of notes, and an author Index of two. I did not notice any printer's errors.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon. DOUGLAS SPANNER

FAITH AND LIFE B. B. Warfield
Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1990 Reprint 468pp. £8.95
ISBN 0 85151 1

Those who know B. B. Warfield only through his rich theological expositions on The Trinity, The Person and Work of Christ, and his other profound writings, will be grateful to have these practical and personal sermons. The discourses reveal a passionate desire to convey the truths of God, redemption, and the nature of the Christian life to those who first heard them. Apart from three based on Old Testament texts, the forty-one addresses are drawn from almost all New Testament writings in consecutive order. Short in length, textually based, of clear structure and practically applied they deal with such subjects as prayer, grace, faith, and biblical godliness. The sermons on the person and gifts of the Holy Spirit are of much importance. In them the Holy Spirit's convictions, out-pourings, testimony to sonship, sealing, and help in prayer are sensitively expounded. Redemption, sanctification, union with Christ, and the outliving of the hidden life receive clear treatment. Warfield's exposition of 'Childlikeness' as the pattern of a Christian's character is particularly valuable. In it he lays down the principle that Christ's act in blessing babies is a warrant for Infant Baptism and declares that such infants are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, and have all rights to their citizenship.

The sermons are an example of how biblical theology can be expounded verbally in terms that ordinary listeners can understand. A reader will find in them Christian truths in meditative forms that will move the will and warm the heart.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford ARTHUR BENNETT

WOLF IN THE SHEEPFOLD: The Bible as a Problem for Christianity Robert P. Carroll
S.P.C.K., London 1991 159pp. £9.99pb. ISBN 0 281 04525 9

When I first began to read this book I was not sure to whom or to what the 'Wolf' in the title referred: to the author, or to the Bible? Now I have finished it, it is clear that it is to the latter, though I am not so sure that it would not have been more appropriate for the former! Certainly it is not a book to establish faith in anything in particular; its overall effect is to leave the reader in puzzlement and confusion, for it eventually has a powerful tendency to deconstruct, that is, to undermine its own position. The sub-title would indeed give a fairer indication of the contents if 'Liberal' (or even 'post-Liberal') was inserted before 'Christianity', but that would hardly serve the author's purpose.

Dr. Carroll is Reader in Biblical Studies and Dean of the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Glasgow. He is an able writer, and expresses himself with considerable emotional power; indeed, the recommendation on the rear cover describes his case as 'impassioned', and it certainly is. But his passion is so strong that it leads him to say things that are foolish and unhelpful from any point of view.

After a brief *Introduction* there follows a chapter headed '*The Book of Books*', an unrelenting attempt to make opposition look foolish. We often hear of blinding by science; this is blinding by scholarship. It is unconvincing. Then comes '*God the Hidden Problematic*'. This is a sample of its style:

> Creeds and confessions, Bibles and Qu'rans, all appear to be able to specify the

> inside-leg measurements of their god to such a degree of accuracy that they can persecute and prosecute any who differ from them in any detail.

As a book addressed apparently to 'really intelligent people' this is a little off-putting. There is surely no need to suggest disparagingly that the notion of 'hiddenness' is incompatible with that of 'revelation' and 'believing certitude' (p. 36); all are present together quite amicably in such a verse as Deuteronomy 29.29 (see the Revised English Bible). Neither is the notion of hiddenness absent from the New Testament as he asserts (p. 61; *cf.* 1 Timothy 6.16). Indeed, it is implicit in the very idea of revelation itself (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 1 and 2).

The central chapter of the book is entitled '*The Chimera of Biblical Christianity*'. It is indeed a 'brutal attack' (Angela Tilby in *The Church Times*, writing as a liberal) 'on the whole notion of biblical theology'. He talks about the 'infantilism inherent' in this concept (he knows about Karl Barth) in its attempts to 'skip over nearly two thousand years of history in order to bring together two discrete epochs—that of the Bible and that of contemporary society'. I wonder how he views the attempts of the evolutionary cosmologists, biologists, and sociologists to skip over rather longer periods for similar reasons? Is it to be maintained that there are no principles permanently built-in to human life and society comparable to those our scientific culture believes are built into nature? Dr. Carroll would seem to think so! He writes again about biblical Christianity: 'what makes the notion incoherent is its meaninglessness'. It has no *historical* meaning, for Christianity is an evolved and still evolving religion. Very well; but what about Natural Science? Is that concept too, incoherent and meaningless? By the author's tokens it ought to be! Science based on the study of Nature and Theology based on the study of Scripture form a close enough analogy to imply this. The author's comments on Biblical Christianity and sexual ethics are highly tendentious. 'Apart from Paul's paean (*sic*) to the wrath of God in Romans 1 . . . the New Testament has nothing to say about homosexuality'; and then he adds, perplexingly, '(*cf.* 1 Cor.6.9, 1 Tim.1.10)'. I am afraid the logic of this addition beats me. But then so does the logic of his whole outlook.

'*The People of the Jews*' enlarges on the responsibility of the New Testament for fomenting antisemitism. Of course the terrible tale of the pogroms of the middle ages instigated by a corrupt church is something which will always stand to the everlasting shame of the latter; but the use the author tries to make of this to denigrate the New Testament is absurd. He regards the Gospels as anything but reportage, and spins his own account of what took place in those fateful years. 'What I have written may well be a correct statement of the way the passion narratives were constructed—*there is no way of finding out*—. . . The Jews in the story *may be* ciphers created by Christian communities as the necessary foil to their claims about Jesus' (p. 102, my italics). Yet on the basis of his knowingly precarious guesswork he savages the New Testament in a quite unforgiveable way. What sort of comment is this from a scholar (p. 98)?

> Even the betrayer of Jesus is singled out in a special way. The very name Judas is but a form of the name 'Jew'. Who else but the Jew would betray Jesus . . . ? Of all the different disciples, why should the one with the simple name of Jew/Judas be the betrayer?

Again, the conjunction of the words 'synagogue' and 'Satan' in Revelation 2.9 and 3.9 proves too much for him; vicious antisemitism again! Why did not he

include the comment (added in both places), 'which say they are Jews, *but are not*'? Most readers would regard that as a comment favourable to the Jews; I certainly always have. Is this treatment really fair and objective? He indulges in a diatribe (of about half a page) on Paul's words in 1 Thess. 2.15,16, but dismisses rather contemptuously (in little more than a line) the long and moving passage Romans 9–11 (pp. 105, 98). 'This side of Auschwitz, it may be salutary to read again the New Testament and the long history of Christian antisemitism and to appreciate the problem constituted by the New Testament in the light thrown by the ovens of the Third Reich', he writes—a sentiment he repeats again later at greater length (p. 112). Yet the impression must not be given in this review that the Old Testament fares any better than the New. Dr. Carroll recognizes that the strictures of the Pentateuch and the great prophets on their own people are extremely severe. (My own comment is that by comparison they make the New Testament passages look like chicken-feed.). But the prophets are ranters, full of 'invective, rage, irony and satire'. Their proclamation that the people of Israel risked a curse is (presumably) 'silly beyond words' (p. 112). So there!

The last full chapter is '*Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*'.The wolf is the Bible.

> For me, the real problem of reading the Bible and taking it seriously in relation to one's own life is constituted by the tensions between how one might interpret a specific part of it and all the contextual, situational, existential and historical issues which bear on any such reading. Remembering my remarks on the infantilism inherent in . . . 'biblical Christianity' . . . I am deeply aware of how problematic any application of the Bible to modern life can be.

I suppose very similar considerations apply to what Dr. Carroll himself has written? How can one be sure one has the right hermeneutic to understand *him*? I think he deconstructs himself by his extravagance! Contextually, situationally and existentially I feel far more at home with Matthew 5–7 (the example he quotes disparagingly) than I do with his '*Wolf*', even if Dr. Carroll is my contemporary and Matthew is two thousand years ago. I no doubt fail dismally to live up to the Sermon on the Mount, but I nevertheless feel its intense and direct relevance to my life, and I do not doubt thousands of others do too. To my mind, Dr. Carroll fails in his whole attempt to characterize the Bible satisfactorily precisely because he fails to accept three clear tenets of the biblical Christianity that he despises: the sovereignty of God over history (Eph. 1.11); Christ as the key to the Scriptures (Luke 24.27); and the desperate sickness of the human heart (Jer. 17.9). Given these, everything makes good sense for the common man, but Dr. Carroll's hermeneutic snatches the Bible out of his hands and contrary to a very solemn word of our Lord's (Luke 10.21), confines it to a scholarly élite—and even they find it almost unbearably problematic. The author ends with a final warning quotation: 'The things that you're liable to read in the Bible . . . ain't necessarily so!' This he has already illustrated to his apparent satisfaction by a highly speculative and very idiosyncratic handling of those amazing documents, the Gospels. After 'careful filtering and filleting' (presumably to make them suitable for refined palates and delicate stomachs) these yield a possibly true picture of Jesus (though the author does not seem to be sure of anything except the correctness of the critical method) as a 'wild prophet, rootless, footloose, and profoundly opposed to familial loyalties' and 'given to violent and aggressive outbursts of temper' (pp. 132, 140). Modern hermeneutical skills ensure that this understanding (despite the lapse of two thousand years and a profound change of culture) is much more likely to be near the mark than

say that of Paul, whose earliest letters are almost contemporary by comparison! All this makes one personally surprised that a book of this character, written in the style which pervades it, should have been felt worthy of publication by S.P.C.K.

There are three pages of Bibliographical Notes, a Select Bibliography and two pages each of Indexes of Biblical References, of Names and of Subjects.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon. DOUGLAS SPANNER

CALVIN'S ECCLESIASTICAL ADVICE John Calvin
T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh 1991 173pp. £8.95 ISBN 0 567 29196 0

The work of John Calvin on behalf of the Reformation is truly epoch-making. Thanks to his *Institutes*, his pattern of Church Government, his *Commentaries* and his large volume of correspondence, he moulded the thought and inspired the ideal of the Christians in Europe. As Makinnon says: 'No pope or king of them all could compare with John Calvin because he was in the moral and religious sphere the strongest, the most intense man of his "age".'

Bearing this thought in mind, many Christians will be extremely grateful to have a book that contains that practical advice given by John Calvin with regard to problems and difficulties that Christians were facing in their own lives and in the church at a time of momentous change. This book, as the foreword tells us, 'contains a collection of short articles in which Calvin gives his advice to individuals and to congregations about theology, ethics, worship, politics, economics, as well as church practices.' These short articles, written for particular situations, demonstrate how Calvin applied the theology of the *Institutes* and the biblical exegesis to the concerns of everyday life among individuals as well as congregations. Many of the issues that are dealt with are matters that many Christians could face at the present time.

The book is divided into seven parts and deals with the issues of dogmatics and polemics; on the changes and need for changes in religion; concerning the worship of images; on ecclesiastical discipline; marriage questions; judicial questions; and then miscellanies. Each of the forty-six letters is introduced by an identification of the receiver of the advice, and an explanation of the subject matter itself. For those who are familiar with Calvin's works this book will provide a valuable tool for summarizing Calvin's thinking on practical issues. For those who are not familiar with the works of Calvin they provide a very useful introduction, and will undoubtedly stimulate further interest in knowing more about the writings of this genius of the Reformation, as well as being able to provide us with a sound theological framework for our ministries.

John Calvin has a word for the church today which could be heard with profit if only people would take time to stop and listen. This book will certainly point us in the right direction, as well as providing wisdom and encouragement to those who are concerned with preaching the Gospel in a secular society which has all but lost its way on most moral issues.

The Rectory, 20a Rectory Lane, London SW17 JOHN HALL

WHO'S WHO IN THEOLOGY John Bowden
S.C.M. Press, London 1991 152pp. £5.95 ISBN 0 334 02464 1

This slender book is in a sense wrongly named; it should have included 'and Who *was* Who' in its title! For surely a 'Who's Who' is expected to be a directory of *living* exponents, not of those long departed. Nevertheless this will be a very useful source book for students and busy writers. There are about one thousand entries, and these are all fairly short. They include the dates, nationality, the nature of his (or her) main interest, and some other biographical information. The treatment is factual, not critical; and if the subject left any substantial writings a short selection of these is given. An idea of the coverage can be seen by listing a few names. Besides the great ones of early, mediaeval, Reformation and critical periods one rubs shoulders with others still living: Dennis Nineham is here but not the two Hansons, Carl Henry but not John Stott, David Jenkins but not E. Haenchen, Karl Popper but not Thomas Kuhn, James Barr but not Lesslie Newbigin. Of recent names one finds Martin Buber, C. S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer, William Barclay, Michael Polanyi, and Louis Berkhof; Leslie Weatherhead but not, alas, Martyn Lloyd-Jones. This should be a very useful book to many; but personally I would have liked it to have omitted the great names of the past (which one can always find in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*) and have included many more contemporary, or fairly recent ones.

The book ends with a chronologically-arranged Appendix on the Popes of about twenty pages and an alphabetical Index to their names.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon. DOUGLAS SPANNER

PASTORAL ETHICS IN PRACTICE: In a World of Hard Questions can the Bible help us? David Atkinson
Monarch, Eastbourne 1989 256pp. £7.99 ISBN 1 85424 036 6

'It feels so right that it can't be wrong' the delightful Cunningham youngsters and their friends used to sing in an on-going programme of yesteryear called 'Happy Days'. Since in their case what 'felt right' was pretty harmless and unquestionable their ethical system (illogically) produced a great deal of fun and happiness and in this regard stands at a huge remove from the bleak life many live today as a result demanding their 'right' to live to the limits of technological possibility. Since it is today's people, increasingly depressed by their pursuit of personal fulfilment, with whom we have to do, David Atkinson is the best possible companion. His sensitivity rebukes brash, uncaring solutions; his sheer depth and power of ethical penetration takes us beyond the quick answers that are the standby of a busy life—and in a word—his book is a delightful as well as salutary makeweight for all that our training failed to do for us in the realm of Christian Ethics. Following an introduction (The Place of the Bible in Christian Ethics) the three sections of the book deal in turn with Personal Relationships (Marriage, Re-marriage?, Sexuality, Homosexuals, and the Family), Social Issues (Civil Obedience, the Nuclear Debate, Work, Physical Science), and Questions of Life and Death (Embryo Research, Abortion, Death), with an Epilogue on some distinctives of Christian Ethics and a practical booklist. A flavour running through the whole book can be tasted by noting that Atkinson does not write a chapter on Homosexuality or even on Homosexuals but on 'The Church and Homosexual People'. He is constantly an

'I/Thou' thinker and with a determination to see things as they impinge on or pinch other people. Regarding homosexual people this possibly makes him more aware of the duty of making them welcome within the fellowship than of the ways in which they make welcoming attitudes difficult. In Part One highest marks go to the chapter entitled 'The Future of the Family' and in part Two to 'Christian Faith and Physical Science'. The chapters on Civil Obedience and the Nuclear Debate are less compelling. We need more help than to be told there may be occasions justifying civil disobedience or that the Old Testament accepts the need for war—on a lesser level, we need simple instruction on how to 'stand up and be counted', for anyone who had hurt his head against the wall of the intransigence of the local planning authority may be forgiven if he is in two or three minds how to tell the Inland Revenue not to spend any of his taxes on armaments. Possibly more seriously, the Biblical procedure which equates Revelation 13 with life under Domitian and finds it at variance with Romans 13 and life under Nero (neither of whom are mentioned in either chapter) is a lapse from the high use of the Bible that David Atkinson displays throughout his book. Part Three is totally excellent. It is a rare gift to be able to identify with the baffled and resentful parents of a disabled infant and to share so lovingly with them that this little one too is with us in our distortion of the image of God, our broken personhood and is our needy neighbour to whom we owe a loving service. Here is a book to prize, to read and to re-read.

10, Littlefield, Bishopsteignton, Devon ALEC MOTYER

ETHICS AFTER BABEL The Language of Morals and their Discontents Jeffrey Stout
James Clark and Co., Edinburgh 1990 338pp. £9.95 ISBN 0 227 67914 8

As an evocative image, the Tower of Babel episode is expressive of the situation in which moral philosophers in the west find themselves with regard to the subject of ethics. At one time, largely under the influence of linguistic analysis, the task of the moral philosopher was to criticize, clarify and elucidate the words and concepts used in ethical discourse—when this had been done to the philosopher's satisfaction, his work was completed. But this, of course was to presuppose that there was a clearly defined 'language of morals' which could be studied. No longer is this widely considered to be the case. Instead we are confronted with a variety of moral languages. This has lead some writers, such as Alistair MacIntyre in his highly influential book *After Virtue* to speak of us as 'living amongst the fragments' amidst moral confusion, entering into a new Dark Age. Others, on a more optimistic note have sought some unifying language of morality, what has derisively been called 'Moral Esperanto'. Not surprisingly, such a state of affairs has generated a good deal of discontent, leading some into moral sceptism, nihilism or relativism. But is there some other way forward out of the apparent *impasse*?

Jeffrey Stout thinks there is. In this masterly treatment, Stout leaves no stone unturned, as every major modern thinker in ethics is subject to penetrating analysis, noting both the strength and weaknesses of their writings, and gradually moving, piece by piece, to the formulation of a position of his own.

The book is divided into three parts. In part one, entitled 'The Spectres of Moral Diversity', Stout attempts to show that there is no universal human language for making or defending moral judgments (No to Esperanto!). Nevertheless it is argued that there are moral truths, such as 'slavery is evil'—this has always been the case

and will always be so, regardless of whether people believe it or not (a point comparable, Stout believes, to the earth being round inspite of what flat earthers might claim). Scepticism, nihilism and relativism of the more radical kind are weighed carefully and found seriously to be wanting. However, Stout helpfully sharpens up the debate on relativism by bringing into the discussion a little more precision on what is meant by the term. Instead of using it as a blanket 'boo' word, Stout shows that there are instances when relativism has a legitimate and helpful function. Thus, while the moral proposition 'Slavery is evil' is not relative, the justification of that proposition is: it is relative to one's epistemic circumstance, the reasons and evidences for which are available. It follows from this that questions of blame will to some extent be relative. There is also the notion of 'environmental relativity' such that some practices which are evil under certain socio-historical conditions are not necessarily so under others, for example, polygamy. And so, Stout proposes:

> there exists a spectrum of relativity: Propositions imputing moral blame and propositions describing people, practices, or institutions as evil fall at opposite ends of the spectrum of relativity. The truth-value of the former, like the truth-value of propositions about epistemic justification, is relative to certain features of the circumstances of the people referred to. The truth-value of the latter is not similarly relative. The closer you get to the former end of the spectrum, the more sensitivity to context a wise interpreter's moral judgements will need to show in judging members of other cultures'. (p. 87).

In the second section, 'The Eclipse of Religious Discourse', Stout stresses the importance of rethinking the ethical significance of religious traditions, particularly, Judaeo-Christian ones, from a secular viewpoint. He has some penetrating things to say to some theologians at this point: 'To gain a hearing in our culture, theology has often assumed a voice not its own and found itself merely repeating the bromides of secular intellectuals in transparently figurative speech' (p. 163); and 'It may be that academic theologians have increasingly given the impression of saying nothing atheists don't already know.' (p. 164). There is a particularly helpful chapter on 'moral abominations' which provides a first-rate analysis into why we consider certain acts, such as bestiality or indeed homosexual activity 'abominable'.

The final section entitled 'Moral Discourse in a Pluralistic Society' casts a long critical eye over the arguments of the leaders in the communitarian/liberal debate, as well as the work of MacIntyre mentioned above. The burden of the criticism of MacIntyre is that he overstates his case failing to take into account the widespread moral agreement that *does* exist in a pluralistic society and that we are far from entering a new Dark Age of the sort MacIntyre suggests. Nonetheless, in MacIntyre's method, Stout sees much of value, and taking up these tools, the writer applies them to American society, with health-care being used as a test case. The distinction of MacIntyre's between external goods (extrinsic to the activity being engaged in—such as fame and wealth as a doctor) and internal goods (intrinsic to the activity—care and well being of patient) provide, argues Stout, that which is necessary for stereoscopic social criticism, which avoids the cold reductionism of seeing everything in terms of the pursuit of power, the dominance of economic factors on the one hand; or the romanticizing generous view of human motives, on the other. It also serves to show that there is a good deal of shared values and ideas of what are goods, enabling us to function well. This is not to suggest that Stout thinks that all is well, on the contrary, there is, he believes (and in the reviewer's opinion quite rightly so), the tendency for 'external goods' such as economic benefit, industrial/commercial

efficiency to strangle and corrupt internal goods, especially in the area of health care (one could extend this to other areas such as education)—and this must be halted.

In many ways, Stout offers a corrective to the pessimism of MacIntyre, but if MacIntyre fails in being unduly pessimistic, it may be that Stout is unduly optimistic. One can see how presently there can be understanding, adequate moral discourse between those living in a pluralistic society like ours, but for how long? At some point moral questions do have to be related to metaphysical questions, some unifying factors are necessary going beyond the merely functional (getting on together for the sake of living—not that Stout puts it in these terms).

This is a book which is very rich indeed and which cannot be done adequate justice in a brief review such as this. It is a very important work; it requires careful reading and a good deal of industry to grapple with some of the arguments, but the benefits are well worth the effort.

All Hallows Vicarage, Cheadle, Cheshire MELVIN TINKER

INSIDE OUT Larry Crabb

NavPress, New Malden 1988 223pp. £4.98 ISBN 0 948188 45 6

The author will be familiar to many as the founder and director of the Institute of Biblical Counselling based in Indiana. Crabb's first two books (*Basic Principles of Biblical Counselling*, 1975 and *Effective Biblical Counselling*, 1977) were addressed mainly to specialist counsellors; more recently he has begun to write for a wider Christian readership. This book aims to 'help us better understand what it means to really change so we can become increasingly like our Lord' (p. 12) and it is addressed to all Christians who share this aim. Crabb rejects the superficiality of the type of modern Christianity which promises 'complete satisfaction . . . this side of Heaven' (p. 23); instead he sets out to chart the path of deep and lasting change, often painful, but infinitely worthwhile. The book analyses basic human needs, beginning at the surface with 'casual longings', gradually digging deeper through 'critical longings' and finally striking at the core, or 'crucial longings' (p. 81).

On the way to reaching the root cause of the problem, 'sin in our heart' (p. 183), Crabb deals with issues such as 'dealing with our desires' (p. 65), 'facing the pain of life' (p. 74), 'an awareness of thirst . . . the unavoidable first step toward real change' (p. 91) and the problem of demandingness' (p. 131). His honesty is refreshing and the reader can readily identify with the truth of what he says, especially when he exposes the pretence of outward joy that covers many aching hearts. Crabb encourages neither selfish introspection nor false triumphalism, showing instead how change comes through repentance and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. The book is sprinkled with biblical illustrations, practical examples drawn from the writer's own experience and diagrams which summarize the main stages in his argument. Although Crabb takes a long time to reach the heart of his message, the book is clear and readable and one appreciates the painstaking way in which he undertakes his analysis. The book is particularly useful for Christian leaders who wish to develop their ministry of biblical counselling.

144 Maroon Road, Bridlington, East Yorkshire ANDREW MAUCHAN

HOW TO HAVE A HEALING MINISTRY WITHOUT MAKING YOUR CHURCH SICK C. Peter Wagner
Monarch, Eastbourne 1988 276pp. £6.95 ISBN 1 85424 050 1

The way healing should be prayed for in churches today is a matter of great controversy, and sadly this book will not really help to resolve it. The title may be a bit misleading because in fact this book is an *apologia* for the adoption by conservative evangelical churches of some practices from the charismatic movement. The assimilation of such practices by these churches is what Wagner calls the 'third wave' of God's Holy Spirit this century.

It may be that conservative Evangelicals should do more to affirm their conviction that God is alive in our present age and continues to manifest himself in supernatural ways today. However this book covers familiar ground and does not face the questions that such Evangelicals ask about the signs which the charismatic movement tends to assume are indicative of the Holy Spirit's power and work.

Wagner appears to be impressed by anything which 'works well' and that is why he is convinced evangelism needs to be accompanied by miraculous healing for God to operate powerfully. Here there seems to be little appreciation of the problem that Paul dealt with at Corinth and the apostle's consequent insistence that what appears to be unimpressive, foolish and weak [the preaching of the Cross] is actually how God's power will be demonstrated.

The most revealing part of the book is in chapter 5, p.114: 'We today can expect to do the same or greater things than Jesus did because we have been given access to the same power source'. I wonder whether Wagner really appreciates the enormity of what he is saying. It leaves us with a question of extreme importance about the person of Jesus Christ. Was Jesus an amazing Holy Spirit-filled man, or was he God's one and only Son?

48 Harold Court Road, Romford, Essex MARK BURKILL

WHEN THE SPIRIT COMES WITH POWER John White
Hodder and Stoughton, London 1989 251pp. £4.95 ISBN 0 340 50340

Without doubt many of us have greatly benefited over the years from the writings of John White, the Canadian psychiatrist and Christian teacher. Dr. White is well known for his thorough Biblical approach to a wide range of matters with a willingness to be uncompromisingly rigorous in his application. As a conservative Evangelical, John White turns his attention in this book to the question of revival and more specifically to the nature of what is generally referred to as the 'Signs and Wonders' movement associated with John Wimber.

With characteristic clarity, caution and balance, the writer surveys a wide range of material. In the first section White focusses on the work of the Holy Spirit primarily in revivals. Although he begins with recent phenomena of what is claimed to be the workings of the Spirit, it is revivals in the past as well as what may be considered 'revival' manifestations in the Bible that are the main object of investigation. Key questions are considered such as 'Are revivals psychological?' 'Should we fear emotions?'. Different revival experiences are reviewed such as trembling and shaking, the seeing of visions, as well as the problem of Satanic counterfeits. Understandably, much is made of the accounts of the Great

Awakening in Britain and America and Jonathan Edwards is called as a suitable witness on a number of occasions.

The second section concentrates on various case studies provided by the work of the Vineyard fellowship, John White having spent some time there and having conducted interviews with its members, including Wimber, first hand. It has to be admitted that some of the incidents which are related of God working in extraordinary ways are very impressive, and there is no question of White simply accepting things at face value. As far as Wimber himself is concerned, John White speaks of him as 'a man of integrity, of warmth, humility and courage.' In his own mind, John White is quite convinced that what is happening in general through the Vineyard movement is of God. This leads him in his final section to conclude that such signs may be evidences that a major revival is underway.

As is to be expected, there is much in this book which is of value. The assessment of past revivals is fair, exact and stimulating. In reading accounts written by Wesley, Whitefield and Edwards, it leads quite properly for a desire that God in his mercy will visit us again with revival—however messy a process it may be. There are wise words which need to be heard by those who are fascinated with spiritual fireworks, for instance when speaking about those who under God's Spirit have physical sensations he writes:

> You fall and your shaking may be a genuine expression of the power of the Spirit resting on you. But the Spirit may not benefit you in the least if God does not have his way with you, while someone who neither trembles or falls may profit greatly . . . Surely it is the fruit that matters.

Similarly there is good advice for those who would shy away from such things:

> We should tell the Christian public what God has done in past revivals without sentimentalizing the stories. We must point to human failure and sin in the story, to human stupidities and mistakes, as well as the glories and the triumphs. We should teach our churches the errors to watch out for as well as the blessings to anticipate. But while we are doing that we must not so frighten people with the negatives that we scare them away from the glory.

However, while one is indebted for the honesty and integrity with which John White tackles his subject, there are a few large question marks that need to be put firmly in place.

In his treatment of revival phenomena in the past, Dr. White draws immediate parallels with phenomena associated with the Wimber movement. Apart from the questionable assumption that today's phenomena *are* revival phenomena, one needs to ask whether the parallels drawn are true parallels; whether like is being compared with like? For example, can the phenomena referred to as being 'slain in the Spirit' really be compared to the 'falling' seen in the Great Awakening or the experience of John in Revelation 1:17? The latter are clearly associated with a conviction of sin and an awareness of coming into the holy presence of God, whereas the former appears to be associated with nothing of the sort. Similarly, it seems to be quite a jump from the 'joy unspeakable' evidenced by Whitefield and others as people became aware of the Saviour's love to the 'giggling' that White has observed at some of the Wimber gatherings. White appears to be a little too hasty in drawing parallels between the past and the present which are not necessarily there.

Surprisingly, one of the weakest sections of the book is on the matter of whether

revivals are psychological. For many, the question is not whether true revivals are psychological, but whether some of the methods employed by John Wimber and others amount to some form of psychological manipulation. White is aware of this, but this is where the close juxtapositioning of accounts of revivals plus analysis and accounts of Wimber are misleading and unhelpful. Convincingly, White demonstrates that revival experiences cannot be explained away along the lines of 'brainwashing techniques'. It is also implied that Wimber does not use the sort of techniques employed, say, by the Moonies. Fair enough. But this still leaves open the possibility that *some sort* of psychological manipulation is going on, even if it is not of the 'brainwashing' variety. Indeed a few years ago in assessing a meeting in England organized by the Vineyard, five doctors, one of whom was one of the country's leading psychiatrists, concluded that it was 'a very expert performance containing all the textbook characteristics of the induction of hypnosis'. This is a possibility not even considered by White.

The third major weakness lies in the fact that this is a book which concentrates on phenomena associated with revivals and Wimber—the teaching of Wimber is not given much consideration at all. But it is all of a piece and for many it is precisely some of Wimber's doctrines, which, having serious pastoral implications, cause such consternation. For a helpful and critical assessment of this aspect of the 'Signs and Wonders' movement, one is best referred to 'Wimber—Friend or Foe?' published by St. Matthias Press.

Increasingly the developments surrounding John Wimber are going to be the focus of attention and controversy. Outright sceptism as much as open gullibility need to be avoided and we need to 'judge with right judgement'. It is for the reader to decide for himself whether John White has done this.

All Hallows Vicarage, Cheadle, Cheshire MELVIN TINKER

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED Michael Scott Horton
Evangelical Press, Darlington 1990 172pp. £5.95 ISBN 0 85234 277 2

This book is not a blue-print for evangelism, but an analysis of divine sovereignty relative to man's salvation. 'Mission Accomplished' is in the author's view God's act, not man's, whereby from eternity he has pre-determined and elected those who shall be saved. There have been many famous treatises on this subject from Calvin, Owen, Edwards and Toplady. Horton only adds to their number. In it he bares his soul, sometimes too personally. In raising the issue, 'Why are we Christians anyway?' he discounts human decision-making in which the will decides to accept Christ. He posits the dictum that, as every person is a rebel and does not communicate with God, 'The first step to qualify for God's grace is to realize you cannot qualify' (p. 35). Hence, he finds difficulty in supporting mass Crusades. He argues that it is God who effectively calls, not we who bargain with him. The evangelist is one whom God uses to bring in by prevenient grace those who are the results of his planned operation. This means, says Horton, that while Christ's death is sufficient for all it is conditional for the elect for whom God planned a rescue operation. This is nothing less than Calvin's concept that 'God makes the unwilling willing'.

Horton's views are rooted in the literalism of the Bible account of man's fall in the Garden of Eden and Adam's injection of bad blood into every subsequent individual with self-confident autonomy. Not so the redeemed church which he

regards as 'An island of certainty in a sea of despair'. In a fine passage he describes the work of God in the soul as Resurrection (new birth), Predestination, Redemption, Glorification. From this follows Preservation to eternity of those whom God has saved. In the author's view the doctrines of predestination and election are thoroughly Biblical whether of a nation, the church, or the individual. He does not, however, answer certain questions. For example, if God, before creating man knew that he would fall, why did he create him? Horton suggests that God had a secondary plan to form a spiritual humanity from the fallen race. But it does not answer the fact of his foreknowledge.

This is a mind-stretching book on a subject that all Christians should consider. To that end the book closes with a splendid appendix with a comprehensive list of scripture texts and passages declaring these doctrines. They are further traced through the writings of the early church Fathers, mediaeval authors, and Reformation leaders under such sections as Unconditional Election, Definite Atonement, Irresistible grace, Preservation of the Saints, and Credal Statements.

Not every reader would agree with Horton's treatment of the subject. But as a clear expression of Protestant Reformed views it is of inestimable value to the church at large and to Christians in particular.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford ARTHUR BENNETT

A VISION TO PURSUE Beyond the Crisis in Christianity
Keith Ward
S.C.M. Press, London 1991 226pp. £9.95pb. ISBN 0 334 02411 0

Prof. Keith Ward who was recently appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford in succession to Maurice Wiles and who previously occupied the chair of the History and Philosophy of Religion at King's College, London, is the author of a number of works which have introduced him to a public much wider than the academic world of professional theologians. His 'The Living God' (1984) comes to mind; 'Champion of the Faith' (from the *Church Times*) appears on its front cover. To those who have looked at him as an upholder of catholic orthodoxy this new book will come as a great surprise; he seems to have changed his convictions very considerably. Its general tenor can perhaps most easily be conveyed by quoting the summary on the rear cover.

> We have now begun to live in the Third Stage of religious thought and practice. After the First Stage of local and limited religions came the Second Stage, bringing the great scriptural traditions, with their holy texts which claimed final and universal truth. But the rise of the historical consciousness and the findings of science have brought a crisis for those traditions, and beyond the crisis the Third Stage is on its way, transcending the second as the second transcended the first.

What will this Third Stage be like? It will see a convergence of the great religions into a new spirituality, led by a Socratic, questioning, faith. 'Christians will be able to preserve the heart of their tradition while mitigating the offence of its age-old exclusivity'. This book attempts to enlarge and justify this 'exciting' vision. How does it succeed?

It may be said at once that the author comes across as a courteous and sincere proponent of his viewpoint; he undoubtedly believes in it. Only once or twice did I

feel that he was less than open in his remarks, as when he conjures up (it is almost *de rigueur* nowadays) the spectre of 'fundamentalism'. Why does he do that instead of answering the challenges of conservative scholarship, of which there are plenty? To oppose 'fundamentalism' of course enlists powerful prejudice in one's own favour, and I would hesitate to say that that is the author's intention. But in this sort of discussion it is less than helpful; there are more serious opponents to be faced, and the author's work thus lacks a vital element necessary to produce conviction. This whole matter arises preeminently in connexion with the question of how one is to regard the Gospels. To cut a long story short, Prof. Ward assigns these (it seems fair to say) to the genre of the *Stories of King Arthur and his Knights* (I almost said *Cinderella*, but that would be going too far). There is undoubtedly some historical basis to the Gospels, he grants, but it is very uncertain and is for ever irrecoverable. 'The obvious conclusion to draw is that we should not try to get back to such objective historical truth, since the quest is impossible'. Revelation cannot be based 'on historical truths. It must instead be found in the diverse, fallible and context-influenced interpretations of early followers of the Jesus tradition'. These sentiments are expressed again and again. 'So we must see the events surrounding the historical Jesus, which remain unknown to us as they actually happened, as the causes of beliefs found in the New Testament'. As a critic said of Bultmann (whose influence seems very apparent here) it seems really quite unnecessary for human salvation that a person called Jesus actually lived and walked this earth, so long as these stories have somehow got into circulation. This prompts a serious reflection *à propos* of the author's vision: there would seem to be scope here for a skilful and imaginative novelist to think up an even finer and more ultimate story than that of Jesus. It would be written in history-like terms, of course. With modern media techniques it should be possible to disseminate it to a new generation of children with who knows what beneficial results? It need not take too long to realize these; the New Testament documents seem to have acquired the reputation of being factual reports within quite a few generations, and socially beneficial results were soon apparent. Surely the World Council of Churches should work on this as a high priority? Around a new well-crafted Character (female, perhaps? the film industry could supply a suitably emotive and endearing name) a gifted writer could creatively re-work the best incidents from the Gospels and the *Mahabharata* (with some imaginative fresh ones from our best playwrights; there is plenty of talent available) and with goodwill from the leaders of the major religions (the *Koran* would have to be tapped as well) and modern high-powered publicity it should not be impossible to realize Prof. Ward's Vision in a reasonable time. Of course, there would be the 'fundamentalists', who would obstinately complain that the new paradigm was all mythical and not 'true'; but Prof. Ward has his answer. The basis of faith does not need to be 'true' in your sense, he would say. 'The reason why I have mentioned Krishna', he writes, 'is to point out that faith can flourish in the absence of that almost obsessively European post-Enlightenment question, 'Did it really happen?'. Krishna through the *Bhagavad Gita* has inspired worship, devotion and nobler living, but 'most believers know and accept that . . . the stories told about him are almost wholly mythological'. Historical factuality does not worry Hindu worshippers much. So why should it worry Christians, and others of good will?

Of course, all this almost inevitably implies a profound change of significance for the Cross and the Resurrection. If these events (as recorded in the Gospels) have no certain historical objectivity, they can hardly have accomplished anything

in the theologically objective sense; they cannot have influenced God's relationship with men, as the New Testament everywhere asserts they have. More fundamentally still, the doctrine of our Lord's Person is radically changed. His humanity may remain intact; but the Incarnation (in which Prof. Ward insists he believes) becomes merely *inspirational*, not *ontological*. Jesus Christ is no longer the Second Person of the Trinity— only an inspired man, holding many false beliefs and teaching many fallible doctrines. He cannot be our 'final arbiter of truth'.

> Jesus must take his place along with other great spiritual matrices of religious traditions, as one icon of eternity among others, with a special story to tell. Jesus and Gautama, Moses and Sankara, Mohammed and Guru Nanak, are great spiritual teachers . . . It is wholly unprofitable to ask who is the greatest.

How does Prof. Ward attempt to justify his extremely radical and negative attitude to the New Testament witness then? In a number of ways, all of them highly questionable. Take the question of the Virgin Birth 'as a very good example'. (The author once defended this.) 'The only evidence' he says, 'is in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke'. This is surely a hasty and ill-considered judgment. He must know that first-class scholars have found it (in a form independent of the other Gospels) both in Mark, for example, C. E. B. Cranfield) and in John (William Temple). Again, Paul goes as far as any reasonable man could expect him to do (Galatians 4.4) seeing his letters were quite early, possibly within Mary's lifetime. Can anyone really maintain that he would have publicised the matter explicitly if he had known of it? Of course not! What extra evidence then would Prof. Ward require before he was satisfied? I doubt whether he could *even specify any* which might reasonably have been expected to be available had the miracle been an actuality. In other words, his rejection is really I guess, *a priori*, and not at all on grounds of lack of evidence. I wonder how he feels about the six-fold record of the crowd-feeding miracles? Lack of evidence? Hardly! The author confesses that he thinks still (as he has always done), 'that there is a strong *a priori* reason for accepting that the Gospels are the inerrant Word of God'. Alas, the reason is spoilt for him by the fact that 'thousands of religious Jews and Muslims also believe, by *precisely the same argument*' (my italics) that they have an inerrant revelation from God which contradicts the Christian Bible. This plea is astonishing! For to refer to the only two examples he gives of such contradiction, what canonical Jewish scriptures deny that Jesus was raised from death? And how can the Koran (which denies that Jesus died on the cross) profit from the same *a priori* type of argument? Would God have delayed for six hundred years and used only a single witness to correct such a misleading error 'about the most important fact of all history'? I do not think Prof. Ward is being perverse here; my guess is that he would love to think the Gospels were historically reliable, but he is a afraid of wishful thinking—for him, that would be too good to be true! But to adapt a sentence of his own, one might say that 'the *a priori* path to scepticism is filled with false disbeliefs. It is never good enough to disbelieve something because we think it ought not to be true.

On the whole, I find this a sad book. The author recognizes that the divide that separates his view of Christianity from the traditional one is wider even than that which separates traditional Christians from Hindus and Buddhists. He has become 'a stranger in his own religious country'. He does not hesitate now 'to pray for the end of certainty in religion, and the admission that we are at best seekers of truth blundering on the edges of infinity'. Strange that he should say this about certainty,

when he is dead certain of some things which have dictated his whole stance: 'biblical scholars *know* that certain quite major beliefs in the New Testament are false' (his italics!). The one belief to which he refers, and which seems quite enough to topple his faith in even the limited accuracy of the New Testament as history, is indicated in the 'simple yet explosive sentence in Matthew 24.34'. 'Jesus was mistaken about his own future, had many false beliefs . . . and about him very little is known anyway'. I cannot help feeling that there is more than a little bit of self-deconstruction going on in the argument here.

Prof. Ward's last chapter is entitled *Christian Vedanta.* If one may assume that the noun has precedence of the adjective in this, it would seem to mean that the vision he pursues is fundamentally Vedanta enriched with Christian ideas, not *vice-versa.* Be that as it may, he wrote in a letter to the *Church Times* (11 Oct. 1991) that he had just 'publicly assented to the faith set forth in the catholic creeds'. He believes Jesus to be one 'human form of the Logos, the eternal expression of the ordering wisdom of God'. But there are others too. Two things strike me in this. For a scholar who repeatedly claims (like all of a liberal persuasion) a high regard for honesty and intellectual integrity, I am surprised that he should feel content publicly to recite a form of words when he must know it misleads the great majority of those who witness him doing so. The other is that it seems a strange view that the *Logos*, the principle of wisdom and rationality, should have been manifested in ways which contain the element of mutual contradiction. The *Logos* seems to have botched things a bit.

Liberal theology takes as its fundamental principle of procedure the scientific method—the rational examination of evidence, What counts as evidence is what is 'in principle, accessible at will to man as man'. This rules out what has been traditionally called Revelation (that is *propositional* revelation), in the sense of Deuteronomy 29.29. Any appeal to this is to the liberal an appeal to the 'God of the gaps'. The liberal theologian works at his scheme; and if a modern Napoleon should ask him, 'Where is the place for God in your work?', he would be entitled to reply 'Sire, I have no need of hypothesis'. In this sense Prof. Ward's religious quest has no more need of God than has the secular scientist's. God is not (as the Bible everywhere regards Him) the Sovereign Lord of history, active in judgment and mercy; He is never (as the Bible always insists) the Revealer who speaks clearly in words to men and women, instructing and warning them. He just seems to sit there doing little, except to 'promote human minds' to use their critical and other faculties to think their fallible and 'blundering' way through a mass of conflicting clues (pp. 10, 121). This of course puts a heavy premium on intellectual and other gifts; the plain man or woman lacking these special talents is at a great disadvantage when it comes the knowledge of God! To the liberal theologian, men must be always seekers, never finders. What a wearisome business it all is! I wonder what Prof. Ward would say of Luke 10.21? Not a genuine dominical saying? Or if it is, a mistaken one?

I hope I have not been unjust to the distinguished author in all this. He comes across as a man in a fluid state of mind, but without the arrogance and self-assuredness which characterizes too many theologians of all persuasions. I hope I have escaped them myself.

There is a general Index of three pages.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon. DOUGLAS SPANNER

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE Malcolm Egner
Scripture Union and British Youth for Christ, London 1990 191pp. £3.95
ISBN 0 86201 554 5

As the 'Decade In Evangelism' progresses the danger is that it may peter out in quiet talk and not action, or in amateur efforts that are ineffective in reaching the outsider. Malcolm Egner's book is an attempt to help Ministers and lay people to recognize the need of planned evangelism, and to suggest methods whereby evangelism becomes a permanent feature of the local church's life. Its three major sections of Pre-Requisites, Preparation, and Practicalities are sub-divided into units of key subjects concluding in Notes, Summary, and Action Sheets. The latter are particularly valuable in providing exercises and questions for group discussions.

Accepting that the Holy Spirit can alone give success, Egner emphasizes extraordinary private and communal prayer as a prelude to continuous revival. He firmly believes that there is a need to assess the church as well as the area it serves and to plan evangelistic effort to a given end by clear aims and objectives. To him the formulation of an out-reach programme is vital, and to it he gives particular attention. He is unsympathetic to 'events' evangelism as being short-term efforts of few permanent results. He considers personal contacts and church evangelism to be more effective. Unfortunately, while Egner makes much of the divine commission to disciple others little attention is given to the constraint of Jesus' love as the prime motive and compelling force in evangelism. Nevertheless, his book should stimulate churches to press forward in attempts and methods to reach the outsider. It may also help theological students to visualize evangelism as a prime element in their future ministry.

In your reviewer's opinion this book is one of the most important on the subject.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford ARTHUR BENNETT

ENTERING THE DARKNESS: Christianity and its Modern Substitutes Edward Norman
S.P.C.K., London 1991 106pp. £6.99 ISBN 0 281 04537 2

Edward Norman's most recent book is, as one would expect, an incisive critique of trends in the Church which are leading the people of God away from their primary concerns and responsibilities. He points out how deep secularization has been, and how readily Christians have accepted the morality and priorities of the world. The traditional picture of a heaven for the few and a hell for the many who have refused to renounce worldly passions and desires has given way to a sanctified hedonism which privatizes heaven, and allows everyone to imagine that he will go there regardless.

The modern Church is a body without a conscious awareness of the importance of its doctrine, and without any clearly formulated teaching which would apply this doctrine to the concerns of today. Intellectually we have fallen behind, and do little more than grace institutions of government and higher learning with a respectable, but largely pastoral, presence. Spiritual formation has become a matter for individual choice, and variety has been exalted as the way forward to true liberation. The fact that it has also produced the effective dissolution of a coherent Christian community is glossed over in silence.

There are many who will find the tone of this book 'negative', and therefore unacceptable, but Dr. Norman has put his finger on matters which deserve the most serious concern of everyone who loves the Gospel and who longs to see it preached in power today. His vision of a closed aristocracy of the mind, impervious to spiritual truths and values, is dangerously close to realization, and the Churches are ill-equipped to handle it. Certainly the recent spread of charismatic and New Age spiritualities does nothing to tackle the underlying problem; at best, they provide an escape for those who feel trapped by the system and unable to get out of it. Like an Old Testament prophet, Dr. Norman has called us to repent of our ways and return to the fundamentals of our faith before it is too late. His book is likely to be dismissed by the present generation, but future ages may look back to it as a lone voice of truth in a voluble but essentially barren era.

Oak Hill College, London N14 GERALD BRAY

REASON AND REALITY The Relationship between Science and Theology John Polkinghorne

S.P.C.K., London 1991 119pp. £6.95 ISBN 0 281 04487 2

Those who have read Prof. Polkinghorne's four previous books on the general subject of science and Christian faith will need no recommendation of the present one. As a former Cambridge Professor of Mathematical Physics who since his ordination to the Anglican ministry has become President of Queens' College, he has already established himself as a first-class expositor in this realm. I could wish that contemporary professional *theologians* would write with the clarity, conciseness and luminous quality which one here encounters. It must have been a great privilege to have attended his lectures when he was dealing with the intricacies of Quantum Theory.

After a brief *Introduction* the author turns to the subject of *Rational Inquiry* where he has many important things to say. He is a 'critical realist', believing that both science and theology are rational inquiries 'into what our experience leads us to believe is actually the case'. Even in science this claim has been hotly disputed (a fact many do not realize). Polkinghorne strongly, and I think successfully, defends the 'critical realist' position, insisting that the inquiry in both cases must have an empirical basis. In the case of theology this comes in connexion with 'worship' and with 'right conduct' (perhaps these would be more adequately expressed as 'reverence' or 'the fear of the Lord', and 'obedience'). Next comes a discussion of *Rational Discourse*. This is a lucid analysis of such key ideas as 'model', 'theory', 'complementarity', 'metaphor', 'sign' and 'symbol'. He clears the ground marvellously, though I am a little unhappy at some of his characterizations. 'The centre of Christianity lies in the *realized myth* of the incarnation'; I would have preferred to say 'the Cross', and to have avoided the loaded word 'myth'.

The next chapter is more technical; it is on *The Nature of Physical Reality*, and has some extremely interesting things to say. It touches on such topics as the fairly new and very significant development in classical physics itself, Chaos Theory ('not altogether appropriately named'). In common with Quantum Theory this affords scientific grounds for believing that the future is open, that is, undetermined, contrary to the well-known dictum of the famous mathematician Laplace. It is a highly interesting story, expertly told; but it is apparently too early to say that the matter (from the standpoint of science), is finally settled. One interesting

conviction of the author is that fundamental ontological reality can be attributed no more justly to ultimate particles (as so many secularists take for granted) than to macroscopic objects like bacteria, or even to ourselves. *Reason and Revelation* is a chapter I found moving but less satisfying. The author takes a liberal view of the Bible, and a low one of propositional revelation. 'The true divine self-expression, the Word of God, is not a proposition but a person', he writes. Granted; but to say this is to enunciate a proposition, and such a proposition as is often found in the Bible, for example, John 1.18. To articulate such a verse is clearly to issue 'an invitation to personal encounter'; but that in no way denies that the proposition itself has issued from the mouth of God, that is, is *propositional revelation.* The value of the Bible as revelation is that it is *publicly* accessible, and informs us authoritatively what we may *publicly* declare, and what will stand up to *public* scrutiny; the personal encounter, while it is the great end of revelation, is in essence private. 'God is not . . . to be delineated by any formula'. No; but God can *Himself* give us a 'formula' which points the way to our finding Him. That is all that the reasonable conservative means by propositional revelation. I cannot see that the author makes his point here.

There are two other chapters towards the end full of exciting material: '*Cross-Traffic*' discusses the instances in which possibly science and theology can throw a light which may be helpful to the other, and '*Quantum Questions*' has some very interesting things to say about the way things are, and about 'universe-assisted logic'. In the last chapter '*The Fall*' Prof. Polkinghorne discusses the Christian doctrine which he confesses he finds hardest to reconcile with scientific thought. It is a moving chapter in which, incidentally, he indicates his belief in the theological importance of the Empty Tomb and of the re-creation of all things in relation to Christ. This brings me back to an earlier chapter which I found far less satisfying than the others, '*The Use of Scripture*'. Prof. Polkinghorne seems to be rather too much influenced by John Barton here. There are two comments I wish to make on the author's attitude to the Bible. The first stems from his insistence on the fact that Quantum Theory has demonstrated beyond doubt that reality (at the level of elementary particles) conforms to a pattern which is *quite counterintuitive.* It confounds our intuitive logic. 'In classical logic if 'A' is at 'X' or 'Y', then either 'A' is at 'X' or 'A' is at 'Y'. *That is not so if 'A' is an electron*' (my italics). 'Quantum mechanics has brought about an extension of the limits of what is conceivable.' Again, he writes (his italics) '*Quantum theory permits the mixing together of what was classically immiscible*'. If this is so about elementary particles like the electron (which is at our beck and call), how can one feel impressed when intuitive logic is confidently applied with seeming light-heartedness to the infinite Creator Himself? I am thinking of the common liberal reaction to such unequivocal biblical teaching as that the wrath of God is a personal response to sin no less than the love of God is such to the sinner; or that God is behind the great movements of history for which He yet justly holds men responsible, Those principles surely form the basis of such a 'counterintuitive' oracle as Habakkuk's (see especially 1.5; but these matters are *passim* in Scripture). Quantum experience has thus introduced science to 'universe-assisted' logic; Prof. Polkinghorne suggests that our theology correspondingly needs 'liturgy-assisted' logic. My own suggestion would be that it needs (rather more symmetrically, surely) a 'revelation-assisted' logic.

My second comment stems from a quotation from Austin Farrer, 'who once asked himself what was God's will in the Lisbon earthquake. His answer, hard but

true, was that the elements of the Earth's crust should act in accordance with their nature', God thus allowing tragedies to happen in a world 'to which he has granted freedom to be itself'. Prof. Polkinghorn's theodicy thus adds what he calls the 'free-process' defence to the classical 'free-will' defence. But this seems to me to affect disastrously our understanding of those matchless sentences of our Lord:

> God makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust; If God so clothes the grass of the field, . . . will He not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?; Consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap . . . and yet God feeds them.

We had always thought that our Lord was telling us that God acts (the tenses significantly are presents, not aorists) personally and in the particularities of our lives, not merely through the generalities of the unchanging natural order He established in the beginning (as Farrer surely implies). What help is left to us in the exigencies with which our Lord is dealing in being reassured that God 'respects the freedom of His creation to be itself', and 'to act in accordance with its nature'? Admittedly, there are difficulties in the conservative view (birds die in hard winters, and droughts cause widespread famines); but it does not evacuate our Lord's words (as Farrer's seems to) of their clearly intended meaning, to reassure. My own view is that the whole liberal notion of Providence needs to undergo a tremendous 'paradigm shift', and to become once again truly biblical. God is the sovereign Lord of nature and history, the Bible proclaims; and that surely is the solid ground of our hope.

In spite of these criticisms, this is a fine book and one I shall certainly read again. There are eight pages of Notes, three of Bibliography, and general Index of two. There is a mathematical misprint on p. 17.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon. DOUGLAS SPANNER

CHRISTIANS IN A NEW EUROPE David L. Edwards
Collins, London 1990 257pp. £4.99pb. ISBN 0 00 627491 9

The dramatic events of 1989 in Eastern Europe, and the coming of the single market within the European Economic Community at the end of 1992 have focussed the attention of millions on the new shape of Europe. For Christians, the question inevitably arises: what has this to do with us? For those who see the European Community in narrowly economic terms, it might seem obvious that the churches can carry on as before, more or less ignoring these new developments. But for those who think in terms of a United States of Europe, however loosely that may be conceived, the question of shared values becomes much more acute.

There is no doubt, as David Edwards points out in his book, that Christians and their faith have done much more to shape the destiny of Europe, and even to give the term a meaning which goes beyond the strictly geographical. The Christian Churches were among the most active opponents of Communism in Eastern Europe, and in so far as religion remains a vital force on the continent, it takes a Christian form. At the same time, it must also be admitted that religious divisions have contributed to the fragmentation of Europe in the past, and are still capable of producing conflict, as in Northern Ireland, for example. Is there any way in which these ancient quarrels can be patched up for the future?

David Edwards tackles these questions by presenting first, a detailed analysis of what the new Europe will look like, in so far as that can be determined from present trends, and then by giving both a potted history and a contemporary assessment of the state of the churches. He tackles the latter in terms of broad theological tradition—Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox, along with a recognition that one must add 'Conservative' and 'Liberal' as tendencies which cut across all three of these classical divisions. He goes on to point out that none of these groups is self-sufficient; each one needs the others if it is to flourish and develop in the right way. Whether it will ever be possible to fuse them into one Dr. Edwards rightly doubts, but he is convinced that theological 'cross-border trade' is esssential if Christianity as a whole is to make any impact on the future shape of Europe.

In some areas of course, this 'cross-border trade' is already well developed. Dr. Edwards does not give enough credit to theological education, which is now almost totally inter-denominational, or to pressures from the laity, who are much less bothered by Church divisions than the clergy are. Mutual recognition of ministries will undoubtedly be the last thing that the Churches will achieve, but with the rapid decline of clericalism (witnessed by a collapse in vocations all over the continent), this will probably come to be much less important than it has been in the past. Doctrinal differences are liable to remain, because they represent far more than merely cultural phenomena; a Protestant can only hope, as Dr. Edwards hints, that Catholics and Orthodox will eventually catch up with his view of the Faith. (Dr. Edwards is not afraid to point out that in many ways, Catholics have tacitly accepted Protestant ideas like the separation of religion and politics, often without acknowledgement.)

This is a stimulating book for any Christian interested in the growth of the European idea. Many of its conclusions are inevitably tentative, but they are nonetheless stimulating and suggestive of various possible ways forward. Now that Britain is finally emerging from the isolationism of the Thatcher era, the time has come to make a realistic assessment of where we stand and where we are likely to be headed. Dr. Edwards has made a brave start, and we would do well to consider his points carefully as we face the coming days.

Oak Hill College, London N14 GERALD BRAY

CHURCH AND RELIGION IN ENGLAND D. Davies and others
T. &. T. Clark, Edinburgh 1991 338pp. £12.50 ISBN 0 567 29201

In recent years much attention has been given to the country village, its Incumbent, church, and parishioners. This interest has culminated in an outstanding study by six rural specialists drawn from Cirencester Royal Agriculture College, Nottingham University, and rural researchers. They attempt to analyze the current situation of church and religion in five dioceses from Truro to Durham as normative of Anglical church life and practice. Their sources of information have been opinions expressed by clergy recipients of a detailed questionnaire, interviews with parishioners and copious quotations from previous authors' books. A wealth of statistics and maps helps to clarify and support statements made by the researchers. As none of them identifies the nine chapters by names it must be assumed that the book is the consensus of all the writers.

Their intention is to provide knowledge of the rural church and arouse

discussion. In this they have succeeded admirably. Every aspect of village church life is covered, the type of Incumbents that serve it, and the parishioners they serve. In a wider sphere attention is given to the attitude of church people to the General Synod which is judged unrepresentative of church people, too remote from them, and weakens the authority of a Bishop. Likewise, the Diocesan Synod is seen to be unrelated to the parish and the local churches' ministry. The Deanery Synod receives strong appreciation as providing mutual fellowship and support to clergy and laity.

In the sphere of Church worship, evangelical churches are shown to have greater support than catholic or liberal churches, and that the Book of Common Prayer liturgy is highly valued. There is, however, an increased use of the *Alternative Service Book 1980* in rural churches largely due to the Incumbent's desire than the wishes of parishioners.

A chapter entitled 'The Vicar' makes clear that the elevation of the laity has led to the denigration of the clergy. Here, the rural Incumbent's life, hours of work, job-satisfaction, and leisure are closely dealt with. Elsewhere, sympathy is expressed for the clergyman who has a multi-church parish, who is seen to be a friend to his people where he resides, and only an acquaintance to his other parishioners.

The researchers' Field-Work uncovers a great variety of religious views in rural parishes including belief in ghosts, calendar superstitions, and reincarnation. A chapter on 'Theological Reflections' claims that humankind has always been religious. It classifies rural church attenders as those who accept a Creation Theology, seeing God in depth in human relationships; those who stress Biblical Salvation; and those they style 'Intensity Salvation', being that of worshippers who make religious rites the essence of religious belief and action.

This book calls for close study by the Church's policy makers, clergy, and the church at large. Its clear interpretation of rural life and religion demands sustained reading and reflection. It reaches such a high standard of literary excellence, depth of thought, and clarity of evidence that rural clergy should give it close attention, of whom the authors claim that a quarter have had no experience of country life. As much of their findings apply to urban parishes, the Incumbents of such would profit from reading the book.

Copies of it should be in the hands of theological college tutors who could profitably lecture on it, having in mind that some of their students would eventually find themselves ministers of rural parishes.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford ARTHUR BENNETT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANGLICAN LITURGY 1662-1980
R. C. D. Jasper
S.P.C.K., London 1989 384pp. £19.95pb. ISBN 0 281 04441 4

This is the last and largest work of the former dean of York and long-time chairman of the Liturgical Commission. Since its publication he has died.

His book is a clear and detailed account of a long period of Anglican liturgical history. For the first half of the book, approximately, he is going over ground which has already been traversed by others, or (in the case of the chapter on the Nineteenth Century) by himself, in earlier works. But the chapters on the period between the defeat of the 1928 Prayer Book and the formation of the Liturgical

Commission in 1955 have a greater degree of novelty, and the seven chapters on the work of the Liturgical Commission from 1955 until the appearance of the *Alternative Service Book 1980* could have been written by no-one but himself.

He was a member of the Commission through the whole of that twenty-five years, and its chairman for much of the period, and he tells us with pardonable pride how many liturgical activities he initiated, and that he only missed one meeting of the Commission while a member, 'and that because I had an accident while actually on my way to it'. Moreover, he evidently kept detailed notebooks and scrapbooks throughout the period, on which he has now been able to base an extraordinarily full and precise account.

In any narrative told by a participant, the major lack is likely to be critical detachment. Jasper's work can certainly be faulted on this score. He sees events as a fair-minded Liberal Catholic, without much doctrinal penetration, could be expected to see them, but that is all. His account of some controversial events (such as the petition to the General Synod in 1979 and the back-door legalization of reservation) is extraordinarily bland. He tells the inside story, so to speak, but without any details savouring of scandal. He mentions Ratcliff's laudatory review of the Church of South India ordinal, without revealing that Ratcliff drafted it himself. He records his sadness at Couratin's resignation from the Commission, without adding that Couratin (rightly or wrongly) felt that he had betrayed him. He frequently refers to the Commission's indebtedness to Ratcliff, without mentioning that the latter was out of sympathy with the Church of England and was at the time of his death preparing to leave it.

How important the events, of which we now have this unique account, will be judged by history, only time can tell. It may be that a course of liturgical revision which followed a deliberate policy of severing links with Anglican liturgy hitherto, and of dealing with doctrinal problems by studied ambiguity, will be judged a misguided deviation up a blind alley. That this is what has been happening, when many in the church have imagined a simple process of modernization to be in progress, is undeniable. Does it matter? History may judge that it matters very much indeed. In that case, Jasper's narrative will be seen as simply a warning of what in future we must avoid.

Latimer House, 131 Banbury Road, Oxford ROGER BECKWITH

TOWARDS LITURGY 2000: Preparing for the Revision of the Alternative Service Book Ed. M. Perham

S.P.C.K./Alcuin, London 1989 102pp. £4.95pb. ISBN 0 281 04419 8

This is a very revealing book. There are nine contributors, four of them members of the Liturgical Commission, and a fifth the chairman of the Joint Liturgical Group, a related (though semi-ecumenical) body. The Liturgical Commission has undergone an extensive change of membership since the completion of the *Alternative Service Book 1980*. It is very interesting to see how the new members are thinking.

In chapter 2, one of them insists that in the year 2000 the *A.S.B.* must be 'thoroughly revised'. In chapters 4–8, three of them (with two other contributors) tell us that they want to see radical changes to the Initiation services, the Daily Offices, the Lectionary, the Eucharistic Prayer and the Funeral service. Only in the case of Initiation is a closer approach to the *Book of Common Prayer* sought,

and in the case of the Daily Offices and the Funeral service it is desired that such resemblances to the Prayer Book as still survive should be removed. On the other hand, chapters 10 and 11 (by the same author, the critic of the Funeral service) call for some traditional-language texts to be introduced as alternatives, and warn against the problems of the 'inclusive language' campaign. There is also an interesting chapter on 'Ambience' (chapter 9), which stands somewhat apart from the rest. The final chapter, by the chairman of the Joint Liturgical Group, complains that the *A.S.B.* still bears traces of 'Prayer Book revision', and is pleased that the contributors generally want to cut all links with their Anglican past, an attitude which he attributes to liturgical scholarship, ecumenical contacts and evangelistic zeal.

Only passing references are made to the Liturgical Commission's forthcoming report *Patterns for Worship* (now published) in which every congregation is invited to make up its own services for every occasion. Significantly perhaps, the chief authors of that report are not contributors to this book. Yet they only present a more extreme example of this phenomenon that we see here, which is every individual liturgiologist wanting to indulge his own bright ideas, and to shape the liturgy of the church accordingly. *Patterns of Worship* goes the one stage further of inviting every churchman to be his own liturgiologist.

The *A.S.B.* introduced the principle of cutting our links with our Anglican past. It was a fundamentally anti-liturgical principle, for liturgy is a stable form of prayer, extending over space and time. Perhaps it did not seem anti-liturgical at the time, but we now see what that principle leads to. In the eyes of the authors of this book, the compilers of the *A.S.B.* are yesterday's men. If we can break our links once, we can break them in every generation, they consider. And the authors of *Patterns for Worship* do not want to stop there: they want to be free to abandon liturgy altogether.

Was not 'Doing your own thing' the slogan of the 1960s? Here at the end of the 1980s are people who still think it the way forward for the church. The way forward into what, one wonders? Into a no man's land of individualism it appears, which is arbitrarily supposed to have something to do with ecumenism and evangelism.

Latimer House, 131 Banbury Road, Oxford ROGER BECKWITH

LITURGY FOR A NEW CENTURY: Further Essays in Preparation for the Revision of the Alternative Service Book Ed. M. Perham
S.P.C.K./Alcuin, London 1991 111pp. £6.50pb. ISBN 0 281 04499 6

This is a sequel to *Towards Liturgy 2000*, with the same editor, and again with nine contributors, not exactly the same nine as before but including once again four members of the Liturgical Commission and the chairman of the Joint Liturgical Group. As in the earlier volume, we do not hear from those members of the Liturgical Commission most committed to its report *Patterns for Worship* (1989), and thus to the effective abandonment of luturgical worship. Neither do we hear from those members most committed to doctrinal seriousness and to respect for the 1662 Prayer Book, though it is evident from the Commission's latest report *The Worship of the Church as it approaches the Third Millennium* (1991) that such members must exist. Rather, we hear again from those members who want to devise a new servicebook, but to be free to break every link with our Anglican

past, including our recent *Alternative Service Book 1980* past, though the editor consoles its devotees by saying that not much change will be needed in the Eucharist (pp. xi–xii)!

The Commission is clearly a deeply divided body, and it is disquieting to think how great a responsibility it has for our liturgical future, having such misguided elements within it.

To the various services for which radical change was proposed in *Towards Liturgy 2000* is now added Marriage and Confirmation. The separation of confirmation from admission to communion and the reversal of their order is treated in chapter eight as self-evidently desirable, a view which has since been wisely rejected by the General Synod. Radical change in the Calendar is also recommended, on the lines of the Liturgical Commission's report *The Promise of his Glory* (1990). The ardent advocacy of this report in chapter two does nothing to diminish its inherent irrationality, confusing as it does the three concurrent sequences of the Christian year—Advent to Trinity, Annunciation to Presentation, and commemorations of saints. The first of these sequences is the most basic, but the report tries to put All Saints' Day from the third sequence, and the Presentation ('Candlemas') from the second sequence, on a level with it as turning points in the Christian year.

The dreary spectacle of liturgiologists who have never learned the lessons of the Reformation is here constantly evident. Liturgy should not be educative (p. 27), edification and evangelism are, at most, indirect goals of liturgy (pp. 101–2), the handing of the Bible to the newly ordained is pointless (p. 86), intellectual or spiritual maturity is irrelevant to confirmation (pp. 77–8), penitential prayer is a Reformation fad (p. 32). Conversely, respectful reference is repeatedly made to the unprincipled American Prayer Book of 1979 (pp. 39, 52–6, 78, 84, 87, 94).

Of course, the book is not wholly without good features. Martin Dudley once again contributes an able chapter (though on a peripheral subject), and the Bishop of Birmingham's opening essay is refreshingly devout. The Postscript by Bryan Spinks, acknowledging that liturgy is among Anglicans a Cinderella subject cultivated by amateurs, is also commendably modest. Whether the proposals for radical change which such amateurs today wish upon the church are equally modest may reasonably be doubted.

Latimer House, 131 Banbury Road, Oxford ROGER BECKWITH

ALTERNATIVE PRAYER BOOK OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN SOUTH AFRICA 1992

Kohler Carton, Natal, 1992

The Church of England in South Africa is to be commended for its latest publication in the form of a modernized 1662 Prayerbook. This will go a long way to regulate the congregational life and worship of a growing and effective Church, alas, still unrecognized by Canterbury.

In 1985 the Prayer Book Commission, appointed by Synod of the Church of England in South Africa published experimental church services for trial use called 'Worship 85'. In 1990 Synod authorized the publication of the revised Worship 85, together with other revised services. The revisions were not in any way to change or alter the doctrine of the Church or the character of its services but to make them more congregational and contemporary. The stated aim of the 1992 Prayer Book of

C.E.S.A. is unambiguously declared: 'to follow in Archbishop Cranmer's footsteps; to worship God biblically, to grow in the knowledge of his word and to seek his help in time of need'.

The new Prayer Book has many attractions. There are three forms of Morning and Evening Prayer and two forms for the Lord's Supper. Most other services/liturgies, from 1662, are included and the occasional offices are a great improvement on the more questionable unsound theology of the *Alternative Service Book 1980*, notably the Funeral Service. Deeply significant is the contrast with the *A.S.B.* on doctrinal importance and C.E.S.A. has not fallen into the trap of relying entirely on the inclusion of the 39 Articles in the old Prayer Book. The compilers of this new work have included the restatement of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion by the late Rev. Professor Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, one time Editor of *Churchman*. The good ship has a trusty rudder by which to steer!

One wishes that we could have had something more like this when the *A.S.B.* was introduced. With liturgical revision due at the end of the century there will be significant changes, yet again, in the U.K. Would-be aspirers to *A.S.B.*-update should read C.E.S.A.'s work! *Churchman* readers could benefit from its use in private devotions and, where Canon allows, it could have a wider use. Certainly, those who wish to influence liturgical change should not omit scrutiny of this South African form. I, for one, am greatly enthused and the compilers are to be commended for a compact service book, thoroughly Scriptural and Reformed, easy to handle, and suitable to put into the hands, not only of the veteran worshipper, but also of the new convert.

The Rectory, Broughton, Lincolnshire BARRY SHUCKSMITH

LIVING IN SIN Edward Pratt
St. Simon's Church, Southsea 1992 £2.50pb.

A popular song of the sixties suggested that love and marriage, 'go together like a horse and carriage'. The rhyming is terrible but the thought is right. However, as Ted Pratt points out in his booklet, *Living in Sin*, the trends in our nation suggest that cohabitation and trial marriage in the nineties is now the norm with a disastrous effect upon the life and morality of our nation. Certainly, in the countryside as an incumbent one suspected that, even though it was not being openly admitted, as in the cities and towns, the majority of couples were living together. The problem in that case is to prove it without prying.

The aim of the booklet is simple. It seeks to reverse the trend of a ready acceptance of this state of affairs as if it were the norm. The subject is profound. Christian marriage and therefore Biblical sex ethics are dealt with in the chapter on the Bible on Marrying and Sex. The author's conclusion is that, 'Holy Scripture knows of two states—Single Life and Marriage. There is no grey area . . .' This needs to be taught from our pulpits, loudly and clearly.

In the chapter dealing with the question of why people live together, there are some useful suggestions and this is tied in to the Scriptures. Our only criticism at this point is that this sinful phenomenon should be seen in the context of the revolt of our neo-pagan society from the God-given restraints in every area of life. It is a sin problem which has the need of a Gospel solution.

There is a section dealing with some of the problems of legislation of which in spite of the Government's claim to support family life, the main thrust has been to

militate against the marriage state and the family. In the same chapter, Pratt questions the rightness of the General Synod's decision to maintain the status quo of the incumbent's legal duty to marry all and sundry in the parish, subject to the laws of affinity which he does not mention, and divorced persons during the lifetime of their partners which he does. And even this is a grey area.

The author deals very sensitively with the dilemma that parents find themselves in, neither wishing to condone what is wrong, nor wanting to condemn in such a way that the tenuous link between the parental home and the young people is broken. As far as clergy response is concerned, it appears that the majority do not really know how to handle the situation. Pratt gives some very useful guides to this. However, the real problem is that there is no common policy or lead, as far as the writer is aware, from either Synod or the Bishops. This needs serious and urgent attention.

There are further short chapters on the Person in the Pew and some valuable testimonies. There are five appendices dealing with specific situations such as addresses of Marriage organizations and different wordings for services. The conclusion is that it is time to face up to this problem of immorality and to restore the concept of chastity. How right Pratt is!

There is an underlying problem here for the Church of England and that is how to relate our status of the Established Church with the clear demands of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is not a cry for disestablishment which is the easy way out of the dilemma, but a plea for clear Biblical thinking, especially in the area of love and marriage where Church and State meet. This booklet is warmly commended to all, especially parish clergy who find themselves caught in difficult ethical decisions. Ted Pratt has done the Church a service in writing this booklet.

Dean Wace House, 16 Rosslyn Road, Watford, Hertfordshire
DAVID STREATER

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Other Books Received

Abingdon Press **B. K. Bauknight**, *Gracious Imperatives: Discipleship Toward the 21st Century*, **1992, $7.95**; **R. C. Morgan**, *Who's Coming To Dinner? Jesus Made Known in the Breaking of Bread*, **1992, $9.95**; **N. L. Orr**, *The Church Music Handbook for Pastors and Musicians*, **1992, $11.95**

Burns & Oates, **G. Moroni**, *My Hands Held Out To You: The Use of Body and Hands in Prayer*, **1992, £4.95**

T. & T. Clark, **C. Gillon**, *Words to Trust, Sermons on Christianity for Today and Tomorrow*, **1992, £9.95**

Cowley Publications, **I. Anders**, *The Faces of Friendship*, **1992, $9.95**; **A. Jones**, *Journey into Christ*, **1992, $9.95**; **B. Libby**, *The Forgiveness Book*, **1992, $9.95**

Evangelical Press, **A. Dallimore**, *Susanna, the Mother of John and Charles Wesley*, **1992, £4.95**

Kingsway Publications, **J. Robinson**, *Winning the Real War: Tearing Down Strongholds in Your Life*, **1992, £3.99**

Macmillan, **J. R. Hinnells, ed.**, *Who's Who of World Religions*, **1992, £39.50**;
J. Bridges, *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love*, **1991, £4.50**;
M. I. Bubeck, *The Satanic Revival: How to Identify and Conquer the Invasion of Evil*, **1991, £4.99**;
H. Robinson, *Decision Making by the Book*, **1992, £3.99**;
W. W. Wiersbe, *Be Patient* (Job), **1991, £3.99**; *Be Obedient* (Obadiah), **1991, £3.99**

S.P.C.K., **M. Perham, K. Stevenson**, *Welcoming the Light of Christ: A Commentary on The Promise of His Glory*, **1991, £5.99**

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Church Society also publishes cassette recordings. The catalogue is available on request with s.a.e. to Compass Cassettes, Station House, Bridge Street, Wye, Ashford, Kent, TN25 5EB.