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Book Reviews

AFFAIRS OF STATE (Leadership, Religion and Society)

George Austin

London: Hodder and Stoughton 1995 151pp £5.99 pb

ISBN 0-3406214-0-0

Few books in recent years have called forth such a torrent of abuse. The book was hardly in print before the Archbishop of Canterbury rubbished it. Then there was Richard Holloway's review (*Church Times* 17 February 1995) which, adding little new to George Carey's vitriol, ends 'if George Austin can purge himself of self-pity, he'll enjoy the game more and so will we all', as if anthropological enjoyment was ever intended to be the pivot of Christian discipleship. Does a Scottish bishop now need teaching that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever?

Of course, by now, the Bishop of Edinburgh with his lectures on sexuality may have had a sufficient dose of his own medicine and wish to retrieve his words ... 'my advice to George Austin, and I know he won't thank me for it, is to accept the role he has been thrust into and stop complaining about the pain it brings him'.

My reading of the book sees things quite differently. Far from complaining about the pain, George Austin seems to be one of the few willing to endure it. His thesis is not of personal pain but dismay that the majority of leaders (mainly bishops) avoid such exposure by being silent or sitting on the fence – a point well illustrated after the Holloway affair. If bishops would face the media, archdeacons would not have to.

Affairs of State is an important book, overpriced at £5.99 (far more ordinary laypeople would read it at £3.99 and they need to). It is essential reading for all who wish to be sensitive to where the Church of England is. True, it is partly biographical but this keeps otherwise dry issues flowing, and Austin has the ready pen of writing refreshing, down-to-earth, clear-headed stuff. Best of all he exudes transparent integrity and there is not, apparently, too much of that around in church or state today. There is also a whiff of Sir Thomas More. He too fell foul of the establishment and was beheaded for his integrity. Something similar has happened to the good Archdeacon. It is just that today's beheadings are more subtle and clinical.

John the Baptist too spoke out against adultery in the Royal Household – even condemned it. He lost his head but gained Jesus' commendation ... 'among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist' (Matt 11:11).

Carey and Holloway look for critical explanations in Austin's psyche. They would do better to re-read the prophet Amos in his own conflict with an indulgent establishment (Amos 7:13-15). So let us believe the much-maligned Archdeacon that he is not seeking a bishopric through his outspoken speeches and writings – what a silly way to achieve it! – but 'I write as a priest of the Church of England, who like so many fellow-Anglicans is almost in despair at the condition of the Church we love, at its ready abandonment of so many of its ideals and at the failure of so many of its leaders to defend and support the truths and values committed to their care'.

Those who follow Archdeacon George Austin in the press, on radio and television will recognise much of the material here. These are old and new themes but each is important and deserves the lengthy discussion given to it – sleaze in government, adultery in palace, remarriage in church, ethical redefinition in theology, politics in pulpit, establishment (or not) in the future. Above all, there is Austin's invective against the lack of true bishops in the Church. Only those on the receiving end protest, hence the speedy reply from Lambeth. Humble reflection on Austin's theme would be more fitting for it all adds up to one thing: the Church of England is in serious trouble, perhaps irremediably.

Here the reviewer parts way with the author. Austin is cast down but not cast out! Optimism flourishes, sickness recovers, languor revitalises with a new medicine – a concoction of financial stringency, flying bishops, reorganised Forward in Faith, historical precedents of Wee Frees, realignment with Romanism and Orthodoxy, and a revitalised laity. Recovery takes place in the year 2015.

George Austin's book is brilliant because it is true. It is a stimulating read because he thrives on adrenalin and has a lovely northern way of stating the obvious. This is a must for all anxious Anglicans and you will learn a thing or two about thirty years of ecclesiastical see-sawing. It is biblical too, often more biblical than one would get from an evangelical these days, certainly biblical in a way that the Church of England needs to be if it is to capture the ear of the world without being worldly. It is an excellent analysis yet the medicine proves inadequate in the end.

Austin makes no allowance for the eschatological apostasy of the Gospels, seems unaware of the place of historic revivals, makes no mention of separation and continuing Anglican churches, and has no place for the view that God might have finished with the Church of England vis-à-vis the seven churches of the Book of Revelation. He certainly deals with the symptoms, much like a Harley Street physician, but his judgment

is marred by inordinate love for the patient – the disease may be so advanced that death is already in sight.

This is why the only final leadership, in church and state, worthy of our energy is Jesus Christ. He is the Head of both, the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls. Disappointed in his church we may be often. Disappointed in ourselves too often to recall. But disappointed in Jesus Christ? Never! And with this, I am sure, the godly Archdeacon would agree.

J B SHUCKSMITH

THE WAY OF THE LORD Joel Marcus

Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1992 240pp £19.95hb ISBN 0 567 09637 8

This is a refreshing study of Mark's Gospel. Joel Marcus gives a clear outline of the plan of his work in the *Introduction*, summary conclusions in each chapter, and an overall and lucid conclusion at the end. Many readers, perhaps unconsciously, think of this Gospel as the poor relation among the Synoptics. But this study puts Mark firmly on the theological map, not just in Christological terms, but in terms of OT prophecy. Of course the author is not the first to do this, and he gives due acknowledgement to the work of others such as A Suhl, H-J Steichle and J Duncan M Derrett; but his work is free from the hidden assumptions of those who see Mark as a 'Christological corrective'. He allows the text to speak for itself.

The chapter that follows the *Introduction* covers Mk 1:2,3 which he calls 'The Gospel According to Isaiah'. The treatment is very detailed. He notices the habit, prevalent in post-biblical literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls, of conflating OT texts, and he provides a chart spelling out the background in Exodus, Malachi and Isaiah. This is sober work, unlike Derrett's somewhat contrived effort to show that the whole Gospel is based on an OT framework from Exodus, Numbers and Joshua. Marcus presents a new slant on Deutero-Isaiah and its apocalyptic eschatology. He is convinced that Mark is writing to a specific community, one which contains at least some members well-steeped in the OT.

His second chapter is another detailed study, this time on Mk 1:9-11 and its Christological title 'The Beloved, Well-pleasing Son'. Again there is a chart giving the Isaianic texts behind the narrative. He looks at trajectories in the interpretation of Psalm 2 which he accepts as Messianic prophecy, backing up his contention from a wide variety of Jewish commentators. He then turns his attention to the Transfiguration and argues that Mark is presenting the 'Prophet who is to come' (Deut 18:15-

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18). He is not frightened of typology and brings that often misused idea into academic respectability, linking it to the biblically-knowledgeable persons in the Markan community.

The 'Suffering Son of Man' and the 'Forerunner' (Mk 9:11-15) form the next subject, and again typological reference is made. He discusses the apparent incompatibility in the two references to Elijah, and again his familiarity with competent Jewish exegetes (N Dahl and Jacob Neusner) comes in useful. He goes on to examine Mk 12:10-11 with a fascinating reference to its temple imagery from Psalm 118; then Mk 12:35-37 on David's Son and David's Lord. But the real excitement comes in his long chapter on Mark 14-16, the Passion narrative. Here, although Mark uses the formula 'it has been written' only once (14:27), his entire Passion story is shot through with OT reference, from Zechariah 9-14, Daniel 7 and the Servant Songs of Isaiah.

Joel Marcus' book is part of the excellent series of *Studies of the New Testament and its World* (ed John Riches); but there are certain reservations for the conservative scholar. Source, form and redaction criticism are seen as the only way to interpret the Gospels. The setting of this Gospel in the Markan community would indicate a late date, which makes it difficult for those who accept the primacy of Mark; the author could accordingly have spent a little more time on the recent interest in the Griesbachian contention that Matthew is the prime source instead. However, Marcus has given us a thought provoking and thorough investigation of the main points of Mark's debt to the OT for his Christology, and I hope that he follows this short study with a further look at Mark's use of the OT. Meanwhile this provides a very good 'taster'.

KAREN PUSEY

MICHAEL RAMSEY AS THEOLOGIAN

Robin Gill and Lorna Kendall edd

London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1995 199pp £8.95pb

ISBN 0 232 52801 X

It is often forgotten that before Michael Ramsey became a much loved and much respected Archbishop of Canterbury he had been, from 1940-1950, the Van Mildert Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham and from 1950-52 the Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. Since Ramsey held two prestigious theological chairs before being consecrated archbishop, his career should remind us that it is possible to be a theologian *and* an archbishop. It is a great pity that his theology, up until now, has received little attention. The avowed intention of Robin Gill and Lorna Kendall is to redress this imbalance and to that

end they have persuaded a galaxy of American and English academics to contribute to this volume. Each of these has selected an aspect of Ramsey's thought for analysis. In all, the ten essays cover Ramsey's understanding of catholicity, orthodoxy, the ecumenical endeavour (he was bitterly disappointed in the failure of the Anglican–Methodist unity scheme), pastoral theology, liturgy, social and biblical theology and an interesting essay by George Carey on Ramsey's response to John Robinson's *Honest to God* as well as a speculative account, by Robin Gill, on the way in which Ramsey might have dealt with the Freeman affair. In this way an attempt is made to bring Ramsey bang up to date and to demonstrate how one of the greatest modern Anglican thinkers might have addressed current problems.

This is, perhaps, one of the book's greatest strengths. Over and over again one has the impression that Ramsey was trying to defend orthodox theology from such radical departures as expressed in theological liberalism. As James Griffiths points out Ramsey's ecumenical passion inevitably led him to lay constant stress on the fundamentals of the Christian faith. At a time when these very fundamentals are under attack from both ends and sides it is refreshing to be reminded of the archbishop's dedication to doctrinal orthodoxy. It is not surprising that Aidan Nichols in his book *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism* is almost able to add him to the pantheon of orthodox traditional scholars whom he recognizes as true, if separated, doctors of the catholic church.

But if Aidan Nichols is not able, in the final analysis, to add Ramsey to this august list due to his perceived abandonment of a classical Christian understanding of the moral life (reflecting, perhaps, on Ramsey's support for homosexual law reform) we are confronted by a critique of Ramsey's theology that is largely absent from the volume under review. To be sure it might be that Gill and Kendall wished only to highlight Ramsey's positive aspects but in so doing they have produced a less well rounded book. From an evangelical point of view, for example, it would have been helpful to have a more sustained investigation into what Ramsey meant by catholicity and apostolicity. As is well known, Ramsey accepted the principle that there could be no abstraction of the gospel from the external structure of the church's life, and therefore regarded episcopacy as of the *esse* of the universal church. But no real endeavour is made to reconcile Ramsey's undoubted commitment to the essentials of the faith, especially evident in his ecumenical discussions, with his high view of episcopacy which, on one occasion, led him to proclaim that 'the orders of Protestant bodies are gravely deficient'. If Ramsey did hold to such views it would have been profitable to have had them discussed for they would have led, *ipso facto*, to a further and deeper questioning of his standing as a

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consistent *Anglican* theologian. For what surely is crystal clear in Hooker, the classical Anglican theologian, is that it is a grave mistake and a serious declension from the best in Anglicanism to regard a form of church government as an external manifestation of the inner reality of the full gospel.

This is not to say that this book should not be purchased. It is both useful and stimulating and a must for all concerned with credal orthodoxy and modern Anglicanism; this would, I suspect, be the majority of *Churchman* readers.

NIGEL ATKINSON

THE PANTHER AND THE HIND Aidan Nichols

Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1993 186pp £9.95pb

ISBN 0-567-29232-0

This is a competent and helpful work which provides a theological history of Anglicanism from the time of the Reformation. It is written by a Roman Catholic who has considerable sympathy for the Church of England, combined with wide reading in its literature. Aidan Nichols' own background naturally inclines him towards the Anglo-Catholic understanding of Anglican history; however he is generally fair and reliable in his treatment of the subject. Since there are good footnotes and references which can be pursued if necessary, the book can be recommended as an introduction to Anglicanism.

The title is taken from a work by John Dryden after his conversion to Roman Catholicism, in which Canterbury is the 'Panther' and Rome the 'Hind'. It perhaps also reflects the author's concern for the future of the Church of England in the light of its current disarray. Nichols would very much like the best elements in the Church of England to be somehow preserved. That he does see something worth preserving is demonstrated by his evident admiration for Eric Mascall, to whom the book is dedicated.

The nine chapters deal with the subjects one would expect to find in a theological history of Anglicanism (the Reformation, Hooker, Caroline divines etc), but the later chapters on Liberal Catholicism, Anglican Modernism and Contemporary Theological Radicalism are particularly helpful. He amply demonstrates his conviction that, having sought to avoid authoritarianism, the Church of England is now facing the problem of doctrinal anarchy.

This is why Nichols' conclusion looks very much to what can be salvaged from the mess. He appears to favour the creation of a selectively defined Anglican Uniate community. While he admires certain features of evangelical life, it appears that the only item which that movement in the Church of England could contribute would be its missionary spirit. Many evangelicals might be happy to be defined in terms of their activity, but others would feel that their theology must be the means by which they are recognised. Nichols quotes (p112) Mascall's judicious observation that in the battle for Christianity as a religion of God's revelation traditional Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism stand side by side against liberal modernist relativism. However that alliance cannot persist in the long run without fundamental theological questions being addressed. We are thus left wondering whether Anglicanism will have a theological future at all.

MARK BURKILL

THE ART OF BIBLICAL HISTORY (Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation Volume 5) V Philips Long
 Leicester: Apollos 1994 247pp £8.99 pb ISBN 0-85111-505-5

It is always very gratifying to find a book which is excellent value because it manages to pack an enormous amount of important material in a restricted space. This is one such volume and can be highly recommended. It is part of a series which is looking at modern interpretative questions relating to the Bible, under the overall editing of Moises Silva. The issue addressed here in volume five is particularly important, being a modern discussion of the relationship between faith and history. It is a joy to find an evangelical writer who is such a reliable guide to the intricacies of this question.

The title (which has echoes of a book by Robert Alter) signals the interrelationship between the theological, historical and literary researches by biblical scholars which forms the subject matter of this work. Philips Long explores this through a series of fundamental questions: Is the Bible a History Book? (Chapter one) What is History? (Chapter two) Is Historicity Important? (Chapter three). Each covers an enormous amount of ground but is still satisfying in the conclusions reached. I found the discussion in chapter two of the terms 'history' and 'fiction' especially illuminating. Philips Long points out that both are used in a variety of senses. While some scholars use the word fiction quite properly to describe the creativity involved in constructing a narrative work, it can be confusing to do so because fiction is also used of writing which has no external referential constraints. Philips Long therefore prefers to speak of 'artistry' or 'crafting' to describe what a biblical narrative writer might be doing. As an example of such craft the books of Kings and Chronicles are compared.

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Chapter four looks at the question: Why do Scholars Disagree? The author indicates how the models of reality which writers hold lead them to prefer certain approaches (historical-critical, social-scientific, literary for example) to the biblical text. This chapter has a fine section (pp 142-9) on the vexed question of the relationship between archaeology and the Bible, and follows this up with a brief study on the debate about the emergence of Israel in Canaan. I found it helpful to be made aware of how the book of Joshua stresses God's faithfulness in giving his people the land, whereas Judges stresses the people's failure to act faithfully in occupying it.

Chapter five consists of a practical description of how the Bible might be read 'historically' in the light of the preceding discussion. Chapter six concludes the work by looking at an extended example of a biblical text in the emergence of Saul as Israel's king. Again I found this very helpful and thought provoking.

This truly is an excellent book which will benefit any who want to think about the relationship between faith and history in detail. It could be recommended to any theological student confronted with the complexity of this question for the first time. Yet it is also a very handy guide for those who want to understand modern directions in biblical research. The ordinary pastor and preacher needs to know that some of these approaches are especially fruitful when trying to teach from Old Testament passages.

MARK BURKILL

A SCENIC ROUTE THROUGH THE OLD TESTAMENT

Alec Motyer

Leicester: IVP 1994 151pp £3.99pb

ISBN 0-85111-152-1

This is another book from Alec Motyer which will not disappoint. It deserves a wide circulation and is suitable for any Christian who is keen to understand the Scriptures better. It is a sad fact of modern church life that the OT is little read. Alec Motyer has set out to remedy this deficiency and if this work does not succeed then it is doubtful that any other can.

The book contains six chapters which look at different features of the OT (history, worship, prophecy, wisdom etc). In each chapter we are given a small introduction to the theme, with diagrams where appropriate. However the largest proportion of the book is a four week daily Bible reading plan attached to every chapter. The readings chosen range widely through the OT and are supplemented by half a page of pithy notes for each one.

If you know of anyone who complains that the OT is too difficult to read or understand then this must be the book to steer in their direction. It is pitched at just the right level for today's needs. It is a journey many should undertake.

MARK BURKILL

WILLIAM TYNDALE – A BIOGRAPHY David Daniel

New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1994

384 pp + Appendices and Index £19.99 hb

ISBN 0-300-06132-3

This is a fascinating book and the description which springs most readily to mind is Master Class. The reason for writing the biography arose out of the flurry of historical activity occasioned by the four hundredth anniversary of William Tyndale's birth. That date was judged by scholars to fall in 1994, although as with much else concerning Tyndale the fact is not certain. The year 1994 seems to fit best with those few precise dates which are known about him.

The fact is that the greater part of Tyndale's life is obscure. His birth occurred before parish records were begun. The date and place of his ordination to the Roman priesthood is uncertain. It is not absolutely certain that he was at Cambridge. The idea that he studied at Wittenberg has been put forward on the basis of an acrostic entry in a register. Much of what is known about him comes from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, and when he left England for the great work of translating the Scriptures, his life was necessarily secretive because of the constant threat of betrayal and arrest by the authorities.

There are fascinating cameos of him translating and publishing his various versions of the Scriptures and books concerning live theological and political issues of the time. However, much of what is written about his life has been recounted before, especially by Demaus in the nineteenth century and Mozley in the first half of the twentieth. Unless there were to be some very significant discovery of material concerning him, it is doubtful whether very much fresh light can be thrown upon his life. That may sound rather an unpromising start for a biography! It would be, but the author does not restrict himself simply to eulogising the historical details, as in some Protestant hagiography.

The value of this work lies in the fresh light and insights that the author throws on to his subject in a number of ways. There is much background material in relation to Tyndale's earlier days and when the author examines his skill with the English language and the remarkable

understanding of both New Testament Greek and Hebrew that Tyndale displayed in his work of translation, the biography comes alight with different colours.

The question might be asked whether Tyndale was a literal or a dynamic translator of the Scriptures. The answer is shown to be that he was neither one nor the other, but rather both. His translation was literally dynamic which is what a translation of the Scriptures should be. The proof of this lies in the fact that Tyndale's work has survived into the twentieth century in the unacknowledged borrowing from his work of the King James Version (AV), and has continued and will continue to influence translators whose ambition is to be faithful to the Word of God and at the same time produce a version which can be understood by the ordinary people. (The truth of that assertion can be proved by reading the author's modernisation of the spelling of Tyndale's Old Testament and New Testament, also published by Yale. Tyndale is surprisingly modern but never banal!)

While the author does not engage in eulogy, he is ready to come to the defence of Tyndale in the verbal duel that he fought with Sir Thomas More. Not only has More been canonised by Rome but he has been lionised in *The Man for All Seasons*. The plain fact is that More appears to have become obsessed with the idea of destroying Tyndale and not just defeating his arguments. The author clearly shows the obsessive manner in which More continued to mock Tyndale and, what is more to be regretted, diverted Tyndale from his main work of translation. As the author points out, the conflict between More and Tyndale revealed the chasm between Tyndale's scriptural beliefs and those of Rome. The conflict is sharpened because both More and Tyndale were Renaissance scholars, but Tyndale had been mastered by the New Testament doctrine of the reality of conversion to Christ and the acceptance of his salvation by faith. As Daniel says, 'On the level of scholarship, Tyndale was right about Scripture and More was wrong' (p278).

The author, undeterred by a false ecumenism, tackles Eamon Duffy's revisionist theories of the Reformation (*Stripping of the Altars* - Yale). In a section on 'Printed English Gospels before Tyndale' the author examines the claim that 'the English Church had a tradition of giving the people the Bible for devotional use' (p95). Nicholas Love's work of translating the *Meditationes vitae Christi* is cited as an example of a printed New Testament circulated in English, and if it were true would be a most important contribution in revising the estimate of the spiritual state of the English Church before the Reformation. The author demonstrates that this is not the case. The long note on pp398 and 399 (n36) is a clear and cogent rebuttal.

In many ways this is a fascinating book. It reminds the reviewer of a conducted tour in the Philadelphia Museum. The exhibitions of the different areas, ages and artifacts are all there but the tour comes to life by the way one is conducted around by the guide and the explanations given. Just as the tour seems to be running out of steam one turns the corner and a new vista is seen and new interesting insights are brought to light as in a Master Class. Daniel's biography will not replace Demaus or Mozley's work. It does not need to. It will stand beside them and supplement them. This is an important work for the student as well as for the general reader interested in the persons and events of the Reformation which remain crucial to our own day.

DAVID STREATER

DOCUMENTS OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

Gerald Bray ed

Cambridge: James Clarke 1994 674pp £20pb ISBN 0 2776 7930 X

Students of the English Reformation will thank Gerald Bray most profoundly for this extensive collection of documents running from Tyndale's Preface to the New Testament (1526) to the Act of Settlement (1700), and for good measure adding the earlier Statutes of Praemunire, on which Henry VIII based his claims for royal over papal supremacy, together with the only foreign but essential text, the Augsburg Confession – some fifty-eight pieces in all, and all in full.

The decision not to print any document in part has meant the omission of some important works such as the Bishops' Book (1537) and the King's Book (1543) as well as various sets of Canons and the Homilies, but the reader is directed to volumes in which these may be found. The direct relationship of Lutheran and English theologians, however, justifies the inclusion of the Wittenberg Articles (1536); and these, as with other relevant documents, are conveniently printed with the Latin (or German) and English versions side by side. A similar process is employed also, for example, with the Articles where deletions and additions to 1553 made in 1563 and 1571 are indicated within a combined text by different typefaces and parentheses. The value of the whole collection is further enhanced by succinct and informative historical and theological notes at the head of each entry.

The juxtaposition of history and theology serves to remind us that religion and politics were inextricably intermingled in the Reformation, whilst the extent of documentation here laid out makes it clear that the movement in England had a long development, a complex evolution and

massive recurring repercussions and was therefore neither so sudden, so simple nor so quickly completed as may sometimes be assumed. I was especially struck by the vivid exemplification here provided of the high noon of the Cranmerian era. These documents also make it evident that the Reformation was more than an affair at the top. It is clear that officialdom in both church and state was often reacting to pressure from below. Not least a laity better educated than was once supposed was seeking the basis for informed belief. It all started with the Bible in the vernacular and, although it would subsequently take in liturgy, sacraments and church government, the original impetus underlay all later developments; neither Henry's conservatism nor the Roman attempts to plug the dykes could stem the irresistible onrush.

All this serves to remind us that the Reformation is no mere outdated series of historical events, but a force that continues to influence, inspire and direct our Church today and that those who deny or ignore do so at their peril. That is why Gerald Bray's collection has more than scholarly value, immense though that is. It is not a book to read through at a sitting. That is not its purpose. It is a book that one will come back to again and again for historical information, theological instruction and reassurance of the vital truths that the Reformation secured for the church of its own time and for all who have followed.

There is a useful series of appendices with dates of kings, popes and festivals and comparative tables of the Augsburg Confession alongside the Thirty-nine Articles and the Westminster Confession as well as indexes of names and Scripture references.

ARTHUR POLLARD

THE MESSAGE OF ROMANS – God's Good News for the World
J R W Stott

Leicester: IVP 1994 432pp £9.99 pb ISBN 0 85111 143 2

This volume in *The Bible Speaks Today* series is a very welcome addition to the flood of commentaries on Romans. Dr Stott has given us a treatment which is designedly 'user-friendly' and which the user will soon find becomes compulsive reading! But as one would expect, the author is nevertheless committed to a serious study of the text in its own integrity; a presuppositionless approach is impossible. He takes us through the great theological issues which the gospel raises and confronts, from the universality of human sin and guilt before God to the way in which the grace of God has met this in love and self-consistent righteousness. He provides a thrilling account; Romans 8:28-39 and 11:33-36 are particularly

fine examples of his method of exegesis and exposition. There is no lack of practical application either on how the great truths expressed here should motivate godly living today, a consideration which underlies also the exposition of Romans 14:1-15:13 in an age of tragically worldly standards in the church itself.

Dr Stott does not avoid the more difficult issues raised by Paul, such as election and predestination. Not everyone will agree with all his interpretations, but this is inevitable in the circumstances of the apostle's profound discourse. Thus, some will question his comment on Romans 7 that Paul is impersonating a 'half-saved person'; does this give proper attention to the change to the present tense from verse 7 onwards? they may object. But this is a quibble; everywhere the author's treatment is rewarding.

A helpful Study Guide by David Stone is included; this could be used to great advantage in group discussions. A book such as this which the fortunate possessor will be constantly reaching for could well be given a hard cover.

JOHN B HALL

GET INTO THE BIBLE John Richardson

London: NPA Books 46pp £1.99

ISBN 1 87 3166 08 07

GOD, SEX AND MARRIAGE John Richardson

London: NPA Books 72pp £3.50

ISBN 0 952 4894 1 4

John Richardson trained at St John's College, Nottingham, although he is a post-graduate of Moore College, Sydney, Australia. He is currently the Anglican Chaplain to the University of East London. His first two booklets are well written, attractively presented, biblically-centred and immensely relevant in today's confused world.

Get into the Bible is an attempt to take a salvation-historical approach to Scripture. Article VII of the 39 Articles of Religion has for centuries claimed that 'the Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man'. Today, few Anglicans know, let alone appreciate, this truth. So much contemporary Christianity thrives on passages taken out of context, often with disjointed themes and a 'promise-box' selectivity. Richardson's excellent book will perhaps correct this lack and provide a valuable introduction for those who have neither time, energy or ability to master Geerhardos Vos' *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*.

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The book is in two parts – (1) An Overview of the Bible; (2) Methods of Bible Study. The former lays the foundation for the latter, developing a three-dimensional view which embraces not only the words in the passage, but the passage in the Bible and both within salvation history as a whole. Part Two, in suggesting fresh approaches to Bible study, could save many a weary or frustrated believer from the desert-experience of unfruitful study. It is stronger still in addressing the contemporary clichés, so prevalent today, that ‘Christianity is caught not taught’, and ‘accepted not applied’. This is outstanding stuff and proves to be ‘a gallon in a pint pot’. Buy half a dozen copies and give them to your young charismatic friends!

The second book *God, Sex and Marriage* maintains an equally high standard. Paul’s discussion in 1 Corinthians 7 is, like that in Romans 8, almost an entity in itself. But whereas Romans 8 comprehends the Christian life as a whole, 1 Corinthians 7 provides an almost complete theology of sex and marriage. Again, the author squeezes a tremendous amount into a brief space – sex and marriage, the gift of singleness, marriage and death, divorce and separation, mixed marriages, desertion, seeking a wife etc etc.

I can see the booklet forming a very useful basis for a series of Christian discussion groups. It could be improved by additional chapters on co-habitation and same-sex relationships. The added cartoons by Taffy Davies, although they do nothing for me personally, will rightly have wide appeal to the younger generation.

BARRY SHUCKSMITH

CHRISTIANITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Robert Wuthnow

New York: OUP 1995 251pp £8.99pb

ISBN 0 19 509 6517

The title of this book is an arresting one, but somewhat misleading for all that. In the first place, the adjective ‘American’ is certainly needed to qualify ‘Christianity’, for its concerns, presuppositions and examples are almost exclusively those of the religious situation in the United States; in fact the author is the Director of the Centre for the Study of American Religion at Princeton. The ‘21st Century’ tag is more an indicator that general questions are being posed about the future than any serious claim to predict the nature of that future; but then, as Wuthnow himself says in his introduction, ‘The real reason we reflect on the future . . . is . . . to give ourselves room in the present to think about what we are doing’. This is a book about current social trends, and their implications for Christian and church life, broadly conceived.

Breadth, indeed, may be the book's strength; all groups – catholics, liberals and evangelicals – are embraced by Wuthnow's analysis. Personally, I found this approach somewhat irritating in the end. It is in the nature of the sociologist, of course, to look at religious activities at the phenomenological level, pointing out their social and functional significance rather than taking sides with one set of religious beliefs over against another. Nevertheless, even making allowances for this, the constant and studied use of neutral and bet-hedging terminology can be frustrating, and left me feeling I had been reading my way through cotton wool.

Other readers may well take a kindlier view. Indeed, this being a paperback edition of the original (1993) hardback, it is clear that many do. Certainly Wuthnow's ability to discuss 'fundamentalism' – a term that has become a mindless, and therefore meaningless, term of abuse in modern journalese – in dispassionate fashion is both refreshing and helpful. Still, his tendency to stay with the general on the one hand and the micro-particular (Miriam Waters helps her neighbours) on the other can be less than satisfying. Almost the only statistics are of the kind that tell you that 'Those who had experienced a [personal] crisis . . . were 12 percentage points more likely than those who had not had a crisis experience to agree strongly with the statement "By helping others, you discover things about yourself that allow you to be a better helper in the future"'. I will try to remember that. In my view, a comparison of the growth patterns of the Southern Baptists over the last twenty-five years with those of the Episcopalians would have done far more to put me in the picture. But for those who like this kind of book, this is the kind of book they will like.

MEIC PEARSE

METHODISTS AND PAPISTS David Butler

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David Butler, who is a Methodist minister and a lecturer at Queen's College, Birmingham, has given us here a forthright account of the inter-relations between Methodists and Roman Catholics in eighteenth century England. He begins by indicating the position of the Catholic church in the early years of the eighteenth century. His central focus is an extended examination of John Wesley's attitude to the Papists and the responses made to his writings particularly by his contemporary Richard Challoner, a London priest and later bishop and Vicar-Apostolic of the London district. He finally considers the reaction of some of Wesley's followers to Roman Catholics.

Churchman

The author has delved deeply into the primary sources and has produced a book which is not only scholarly but also very readable. He is deeply committed to British Roman Catholic and Methodist dialogue, and draws out some interesting parallels between Wesley and Challoner. These include their high regard for the single life and some of their ideas about confession, the communion of saints and the presence of Christ in the eucharist. Butler also pinpoints Wesley's enlightened attitude of tolerance towards Papists. He shows how Wesley and other Methodists made use of Roman Catholic works of spirituality, notably the writings of Thomas à Kempis, Brother Lawrence and Pascal (the latter hardly typical).

For all this Butler is under no illusions about Wesley's attitude to the Papists. He is a Protestant above all things who takes his stand on the canonical Scriptures alone. He is vehement in his attacks against Catholic practices including anathemas, the inquisition and their use of confession. 'Catholics', Wesley declared, 'are perishing by the thousand for lack of knowledge' (p 163). 'Their errors include: the doctrine of the seven sacraments; transubstantiation; communion in one kind only; purgatory and prayers for the dead therein; veneration of relics; and indulgences granted by the Pope . . . praying to the saints and to Mary, and worshipping images.' Butler's conclusion is that the eirenic Wesley is more often displaced by the polemical Wesley.

NIGEL SCOTLAND

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