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# Book Reviews

## **CHURCHES OF NORTHERN EUROPE IN PROFILE: A THOUSAND YEARS OF ANGLO-NORDIC RELATIONS**

**Lars Osterlin**

Norwich: Canterbury Press 1995 317pp £11.95 ISBN 1-85311-128-7

The recent Porvoo Agreement between the Anglican Churches of the British Isles and the Lutheran Churches of Scandinavia has attracted a certain amount of interest in these churches among Anglicans, and so a book about the history of Anglo-Nordic relations is particularly welcome at the present time. Everyone knows about the Vikings and the Danelaw in England, but not many people here realise that Scandinavian Christianity was essentially English in origin. Anglo-Saxon missionaries spread the Gospel all over Northern Europe, and they are still commemorated as the founders and inspirers of Nordic Christianity.

These contacts, however, tended to diminish after the Norman Conquest of England, and relations have never been very close since. Thus, although it is true that both England and Scandinavia accepted the Reformation, the pattern was rather different in each case, and ended up producing misunderstandings which drove the churches further apart.

Scandinavians were loyal Lutherans, but the English had a more eclectic approach. The Church of England was perceived by the Lutherans as being essentially Calvinist in its doctrine, and this produced a certain hostility towards Anglicans. On the other side, High Church Anglicans fretted about what they claimed was a loss of apostolic succession in the Lutherans' ministry, and it was only with great difficulty that the Church of Sweden managed to persuade them otherwise. Among Low Church people things were very different, of course, and here a practical ecumenism has always reigned. Wesley was very influential in Scandinavia, and more recently Evangelicals from both sides have co-operated in a number of ventures.

Dr Osterlin recognises this, but his sympathies seem to be more with the High Church element. Symptomatic of this is the fact that Norway's best-known theologian in England is the late Dr O Hallesby, whose book on prayer is regarded here as a classic, but Dr Osterlin does not even mention his name! Instead, most of the book concentrates on ritualist concerns which seem rather pointless today, even if they were taken very seriously on both sides in the last century. It seems incredible now that anyone should have worried about (or been impressed by) such things as the wearing of episcopal vestments, but this saga takes up a large part of Dr

Osterlin's narrative, and is a reminder to us of how easy it can be to forget the message of the Gospel.

One of the more interesting features of the book is that it points out that the Scandinavian churches are far more closely tied to the state than any Anglican church is. This became especially clear over the issue of the ordination of women, which in Scandinavia came about when secular governments decided that women should be eligible for civil service posts on the same basis as men. Clergy, you see, are civil servants! It is therefore by no means impossible that one of these countries will soon have a practising homosexual bishop, perhaps even one who is legally married to his/her partner! Anglicans may yet discover that this latest ecumenical venture may turn out to be a good deal more painful than they had thought. On the other hand, it is nice to think that we can now exchange ministries more easily, not least (as Dr Osterlin does not fail to point out) because virtually every Scandinavian priest under the age of 40 is fluent in English. If we had had to wait for a supply of Finnish-speaking Anglicans, one suspects that Church unity would have taken a lot longer to achieve!

Culture and geography combine to ensure that Anglican-Lutheran ecumenism is never likely to amount to much in Europe, though the USA presents a different picture. But it is good to be informed about the background to the Porvoo Agreement, and to realise that not all the prejudice in the past was on one side. Dr Osterlin is to be congratulated for his lucid and generally fair presentation of a subject which few English-speaking Christians know much about, yet which is of considerable importance for Christian unity in the Europe of tomorrow.

GERALD BRAY

**TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN IT USED TO BE** **Biblical Faith in a Postmodern World** Richard Middleton and Brian Walsh  
London: SPCK 1995 250pp £12.99 pb ISBN 0-281-04938-6

Mention 'Postmodernism' in certain circles and a chorus of groans will fill the room, such is the omnipresence of the word. Nevertheless this is a book that should be taken seriously. A concern for evangelism has led Middleton and Walsh to address this subject afresh (having previously tackled related issues in their book *The Transforming Vision*), and their understanding and appreciation of the likes of Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard are evident. The significance of this book lies in its ability not only to explain esoteric concepts to the novice, but also to draw on instances in popular culture where these concepts find their expression (such as the *Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series and *Star Trek*). The challenge of

Postmodernism should not be dismissed or underestimated, for its influence is increasingly common.

There are certainly many things to be gained from that challenge, not least the exposure of the self-authenticating (and therefore unstable) foundations of Modernism. But this dismissal of the 'metanarrative' (a worldview which claims universality) of the Enlightenment threatens all others in one fell swoop, including the so-called pre-modern religions such as Christianity. The charge is that they are all 'inevitably oppressive and violent in their false claims to "totality"' (p 72). It is the author's contention that Christianity is unique in its potential for not being a totalising metanarrative, despite the necessary concession that over its 2000 year history the Church has not lived up to this potential. Middleton and Walsh are surely correct here. Furthermore, they rightly see the cause of the world's problems lying not with the dominance of metanarratives, but 'the violence of the human heart'. This 'requires a remedy considerably more radical than that suggested by Postmodernity' (p 79).

However even if Christianity is able to sustain the accusation of being a metanarrative, problems still remain in the realm of epistemology. Middleton and Walsh are indebted to Tom Wright's *New Testament and the People of God* for a resolution, along the lines of a 'critical realism' which takes into account the obvious fact of all knowledge being 'provisional' (p 170). Scripture stands as supremely authoritative; our interpretations do not. Any efforts to derive a theological framework from Scripture must always be open to challenges, as passages strike us in fresh ways. This seems entirely reasonable. However the problems arise as soon as Middleton and Walsh attempt their project of 'attending to offensive biblical texts in the context of the metanarrative's overall thrust' (p 240 n 36). They see the biblical metanarrative as one of liberation of the oppressed, and so the offensive texts they cite are, for example, Phyllis Trible's 'texts of terror'. (In doing this, of course, they seek to take seriously and rebuff the postmodernist critique of metanarratives being inherently violent.) In these instances the larger story of the Bible 'has gotten stuck' (p 178). The texts must be 'attended' to, which is effectively to see them discarded. But surely it is one thing to find a text 'angular' because it fits uncomfortably into our understanding of the Bible's framework, it is quite another to determine that it has no place within the biblical metanarrative at all? Furthermore, a text can be deemed irrelevant because it does not concur with 'contemporary sensibilities'. How is this supposed to be consonant with an obedience to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (p 240)?

This situation is compounded by the incorporation of Tom Wright's analogy of the unfinished Shakespearean masterpiece for biblical authority. The embryonic Fifth Act (representing the first few decades of the Church)

lacks development and conclusion, and is crying out for an improvised climax. The Sixth Act is of course the Parousia, about which 'there are hints', but 'no clear line leading from the break in Act 5 to the conclusion of the drama' (p 182). Any verbatim repetition of previous text is therefore (following the analogy) inappropriate. We are told that the New Testament presents a model of just such an improvisation in the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, where apparently 'like us, they had no script' (p 193). But surely, this situation was merely one of *apostles* coming to terms with the sufficient script of Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled, rather than improvisation in entirely uncharted waters? It is true to say that application of Scripture can be problematic. However, there is a subtle, but crucial, distinction between application and improvisation. The very authority and sufficiency of Scripture are at stake.

The model opens up huge and dangerous possibilities, since it actually legitimizes 'not only going beyond the biblical text but sometimes even *against* the text' (p 184 their italics) in order to be faithful to the text. However, one is left wondering how we can ultimately be prevented from succumbing to 'every shifting wind of cultural life that comes our way', despite their optimism to the contrary (p 194).

This book should certainly be read for its incisive and helpful overview of Postmodernism, especially because the latter's threats to the gospel are real. Yet, there must be solutions which do not concede as much as Middleton and Walsh seem prepared to concede.

MARK MEYNELL

**MORE GREAT IDEAS FOR SECONDARY CLASSROOM ASSEMBLIES** Janet King

Crowborough: Monarch 1995 £10.99 pb ISBN 1-85424-292-X

Today we have few secondary schools where the whole school can meet for assembly, yet it is a legal requirement for a 'predominantly Christian' act of worship to take place every day. Therefore the class teacher or guest speaker may be expected to lead a classroom assembly for thirty or so, predominantly unchurched, teenagers from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds.

This book is a real Godsend. Following the '*52 Ideas...*' Janet King provides another 52 assemblies with well worked out choice of themes for the school year. They can be done with a minimum of preparation, which will suit the busy teacher, but some thought and organization will be needed for the playlets and other activities.

Ms King is an ex-RE specialist with practical experience. This is evident in the clearly presented topics and follow-up ideas. She is aware of the need to provide material for different ages and the 'options and ideas' section provides extension tasks. These include discussions, buzz groups, poems to stimulate contemplation and creative work as well as stories, Bible verses and music for the more traditional 'assembly'.

The strength of this collection is for educationalists rather than evangelists as the student is given food for thought rather than answers, but there is a real sense of the relevance of biblical truth to everyday life. Even teachers without a Christian faith will find this book useful, but it is ideal for Christian teachers who want to show that Jesus' ideals are a natural part of human experience in twenty-first century Britain.

For some of us raised on a reading and a prayer in the school hall, this kind of assembly may seem radical; for those who have grown up in a school devoid of Christian teaching, it may seem rather like indoctrination but I believe this book offers an important way forward for Christians in school. The author accepts that the students will come from a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds which need to be respected, but provides an introduction to Christian tradition, biblical stories and, most importantly, to the teaching of Jesus. It is therefore a useful vehicle for building the faith of Christian students while borrowing ideas from other cultures which reflect the same ideals. It also teaches non-church members of the school something of Christian beliefs and traditions without being open to the charge of proselytising. The assemblies also fulfil the demands of the Law by providing an opportunity for broadly Christian worship in the classroom in an interesting and relevant way.

JON JAMES

**THE WORD IN THE DESERT: Anglican and Roman Catholic Reactions to Liturgical Reform** Barry Spurr

Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press 1995 220pp £17.50 hb  
ISBN 0 71888 2921

This book is essential reading for all who are concerned about the debasement of liturgy in the Anglican and Roman communions in the past thirty years. Barry Spurr is a Senior Lecturer in English in the University of Sydney. In *The Word in the Desert* he chronicles and discusses the 'linguistic demolition' of the Anglican liturgy in particular and shows the effects of this concentrated act of literary vandalism. Not least he notices the hypocritical routine acknowledgements by the ecclesiastical hierarchy of *The Book of Common Prayer* as the standard of doctrine and worship, recognised but rarely used.

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There are two chapters devoted to the 'Conservative Reaction', devastating criticisms, quoting the impressive array of people with a feeling for language – writers, academics and clerics – who have been shocked by the banality and triviality of the new forms. Thus the eminent and greatly lamented Australian poet, the late James McAuley, noted 'sentimental and specious togetherness', surpassingly illustrated in the embarrassing, unnecessary and usually meaningless kiss of peace, this 'great modern liturgical shibboleth' as Keith Ward has called it, introverted and yet intrusive, an act of compulsory sociability. Banal language and uncomfortable relationships are then topped off with infantile pop-music setting vacuous words and played on twanging guitars.

Put alongside this the Cranmerian tradition – 'rational and awful sobriety and mature discipline... In doctrine humility in the conviction of sinfulness, comfort in the assurance of redemption and a pervasive theocentricity in the substance of the prayers' (pp 97-8). Of course, the language, we are told, is difficult and archaic. Jim Packer is quoted with the answer for that: 'We don't complain about having to learn the language of computers... We simply learn it. Why then should anyone balk at learning the language one needs in order to worship God?'

The damage, however, is not confined to liturgy, as Spurr makes clear in a perceptive but altogether too brief chapter on 'The Book of Common Prayer and English Literature'. It has undermined our secular culture as well. I know that only too well from the ignorance of some of the students I used to teach myself. No wonder Stevie Smith plaintively enquired:

Why are the clergy of the Church of England

Always altering the words of the prayers – the Prayer Book?

Cranmer's touch was surer than theirs, do they not trust him?

For opposing visions of threat and possibility read Spurr's chapters on 'Feminism and Renewal' and his superb 'The Language of Liturgy'. This latter contains a devastating critique of that arch-reviser, R C D Jasper's defence of the ASB in his *Development of the Anglican Liturgy*. It is no good seeking clarity and relevance (which incidentally the ASB signally fails to achieve) if in the process you lose the fundamentals of mystery and elevation. The Archbishop of Canterbury may be 'willing to give away precious and cherished liturgies to share new life and grow'. I am not, and not least because the so-called 'new life' is not likely to flourish on the feeble nourishment in much modern worship.

ARTHUR POLLARD

**THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES The Biblical Case for Conditional Immortality** Edward William Fudge Revising Ed Peter Cousins  
 Carlisle: Paternoster Press 1994 226pp £9.99 pb ISBN 0-8536-587-6

This is the second edition of a very thoughtful and thorough biblical study first published in the States in 1982, and here 'skilfully revised and slightly abridged by Peter Cousins'. The original had a foreword by F F Bruce, and this has one by the late John Wenham. Professor Bruce's ended cautiously; John Wenham's was wholehearted. Both the forewords are included here. The author, for those who are not yet acquainted with him, is well-qualified as a trained biblical scholar (both theologically and linguistically). He is also a lawyer and a church elder, and lives in Texas. The conclusion he comes to is that the traditionalist doctrine, that the finally impenitent suffer everlasting punishment in hell, owed its acceptance in considerable degree to the Platonic doctrine of the immortality of the soul. But this doctrine is not biblical, for only God has immortality. Biblical teaching, he maintains, is that immortality is granted only to those who obey the Gospel (hence the 'conditional'); the punishment of those who refuse is eternal in the sense of being final and irreversible. The 'fire that consumes' actually puts them out of existence once and for all. How does the author address this whole issue?

It can be said at once that he is thoroughly loyal to Scripture. He examines it as carefully and as painstakingly as he can; indeed every text which has even a remote bearing on the subject seems to be put under the microscope. A main plank of his case is that the idea of the 'immortal soul' (often stressed in simple evangelistic preaching) comes from Platonic philosophy and not from the Bible. Another plank concerns the double usage of 'eternal'. He devotes a good deal of effort to emphasizing that the Greek *αἰώνιος* has both a quantitative meaning (everlasting) and a qualitative one as well (belonging to the age to come). Sometimes it is used in each of these two senses in very close proximity (Rom 16:25,26). He certainly establishes a case to answer. In a treatment which ranges over *The Philosophers and the Fathers, Sheol and the Old Testament, The Inter-Testamental Period, The Apocrypha, The Pseudepigrapha, The Teaching of Jesus, Golgotha and Gehenna, The Writings of Paul, The Rest of the New Testament, Universalism's New Face and Doubts and How to Resolve them* there is bound to be a certain amount of repetition; but the author argues his convictions without resorting to any obvious special pleading. At one point I felt interested to see if Edersheim had anything to say on Matthew 25:46; he does. In fact he ends his *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* with a fairly long Appendix *On Eternal Punishment, according to the Rabbis and the New Testament*. He discusses the teaching of the rabbis current in our Lord's time. He quotes that of the Schools of Shammai and Hillel who held the field in the time of Christ and the Apostles, and



concludes that the doctrine of eternal punishment was that then publicly held. For this reason the Lord's teaching should be taken 'in the ordinary and obvious sense' and not in that of the 'theory of Conditional Immortality... based on bad philosophy and even worse exegesis'. But in his usual gracious style he goes on to say 'And yet we feel that this line of argument is not quite convincing. For might not our Lord, as in regard to the period of His Second Coming, in this also have intended to leave His hearers in incertitude? And indeed! is it really necessary to be quite sure of this aspect of eternity?' I think I would echo those words myself, and add that the whole conceptual world of *time*, *eternity* and *infinity* is not the artless, simplistic universe of discourse so often imagined; ask any secular philosopher or mathematician! It may be better simply to let our Lord's words (and those of the Bible generally) speak for themselves in this matter.

There is a very full Selective Bibliography of nine pages; an Index of Authors of two; a General Index of two; a small Index of Foreign Words; and an index of Biblical and Extra-Canonical Literature of two.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

## **HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS**

**Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli**

Downers Grove: IVP 1994 and Crowborough: Monarch 1995  
406pp £9.99 pb ISBN 1-85424-306-3

The authors of this substantial book, according to a note on the rear cover, are respectively Professor and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Boston College (which I came to the conclusion as I read must be a Roman Catholic foundation). The authors are both conservative in their theology, and maintain strongly that Christianity is true; that the very best thing they can do for others is to persuade them of that fact; and that honest reasoning can convince any open-minded person of it. Accordingly they set out on a systematic effort to do just that. What can we say of their attempt?

In the first place the approach is distinctly rational and philosophical rather than biblical. It seeks to use reason to argue people into Christian faith rather than to confront them with the Gospel as proclamation. In doing this it employs an Aristotelian type of logic as baptized by Thomas Aquinas – not altogether surprisingly as the second author has the letters SJ after his name! Thus there is a long section (30 pages) dealing with hell. It is given this space not because of its relative importance in the Faith but because it represents a weak point in its defences. So (*inter alia*) there are sections headed *Ten Issues at Stake in the Doctrine of Hell*;

*Fourteen Things Hell Is Not*; and finally *Defending the Doctrine: Thirteen Objections Answered*. All this is dealt with in the main not by reference to Scripture but by appeal to reason. Similarly the section dealing with heaven starts with *Seven Alternative Theories of Life After Death!*, followed by *Ten Refutations of Reincarnation* and later *Twenty-nine Objections to Heaven Answered!* Not surprisingly there is an early chapter *Twenty Arguments for the Existence of God*.

In the second place the treatment has at times quite a strong Roman flavour to it. It introduces in passing concepts like purgatory and limbo as well as the Real Presence and the Assumption of Mary, which first serve to distract from the main argument, and second tend to weaken it, for like a foreign body introduced unconformably into a solid structure they do not really join up. The true centre of Christianity, the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, is pushed in this whole treatment into a subordinate position. Contrasted with the 30 pages on Hell, two chapters on *The Divinity of Christ* and *The Resurrection* occupy a mere 49 out of a grand total of 380. The biblical emphasis on faith in Christ as the unique turning point in the life of the Christian virtually disappears in the book, the battle cry of the Reformation was a tragic mistake, for both Catholics and Protestants really believe the same things relevant to salvation. In fact, just as 'Christians believe everything Jews believe and more', so 'Catholics believe everything orthodox, biblical Protestants believe and more'. So there we see ourselves in our right place!

I think this provides a bird's eye view of what the authors have given us. It is a substantial book, and could be of value to a mature Christian who takes part in debates where rather old-fashioned objections are aired in front of interested but uninstructed listeners. But I would not recommend it for more usual and promising occasions. There is a chapter by chapter Bibliography of useful books at the end, among which those of C S Lewis (very prominent), Thomas Aquinas, F F Bruce, R T France, G K Chesterton, Harry Blamires, Frank Morison, Peter Kreeft himself and others rub shoulders. It surprised me a little that a book such as this should have appeared under the (American) IVP and Monarch imprints, but there are probably pros to this as well as cons. There is a Subject Index of four pages and a Scripture Index of two.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

**JERUSALEM: THE ENDLESS CRUSADE**     **Andrew Sinclair**  
 London: Century 1996    295pp    £17.99 hb     ISBN 0-71-266027-5

This year will see celebrations marking three millennia since the founding of the city of Jerusalem. Many books related to this event will undoubtedly

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appear, for Jerusalem holds a great fascination for many people worldwide.

The author of this volume is particularly attracted by the city's turbulent history and its special significance within three of the world's major religions. He attempts to chronicle the story of Jerusalem from its foundation under King David to the present day. However, his parallel interest in the significance of Jerusalem within Judaism, Christianity and Islam results in a project of rather unwieldy proportions.

Sinclair outlines in great detail the struggles between Christianity and Islam, and indeed the period of the Crusades fills much of the book. There is an entire chapter devoted to both William Blake and Freemasonry before we arrive at the modern period with Zionism and the emergence of the nation of Israel.

The ultimate solution to Jerusalem which most satisfies Sinclair is the current one, in which the Jewish state has sovereignty over the city with Christians and Muslims able to control their own sacred sites. He feels this situation to be the most appropriate in view of the fact that it was the Jewish people who originally founded the city. One suspects however that this solution will be no more permanent than previous arrangements. It is surely a situation that can appear ideal only to the modern pluralist.

Ultimately, *The Endless Crusade* fails to satisfy on several levels. The author has tackled an important subject which certainly deserves a popular treatment. Unfortunately the book belongs to that modern genre in which erudite learning is recycled in popular form and a very loose grasp of the subject is exhibited. Sinclair is a professional writer who has books to his credit on a wide variety of subjects. However his journalistic flair renders the literary style of this particular work rather disappointing. He is proficient on the 'soundbites', but the whole work lacks a sense of direction and coherence. The book also fails to keep a clear focus on the archaeological and historical material of the city itself. Where it seeks to reflect on the place which Jerusalem holds in the major religions it demonstrates a lack of understanding of those faiths. Lastly, and most importantly as far as the Christian faith is concerned, there is no grasp of the heavenly reality that Augustine termed 'the City of God' which so radically undermines attempts by Christians and others to make the earthly Jerusalem a holy place.

MARK BURKILL

**WHY SHOULD ANYONE BELIEVE ANYTHING AT ALL?****James W Sire**Downers Grove and Leicester: IVP 1994 239pp £7.99 pb  
ISBN 0-85111-147-5

Anyone who has read the two previous books of James Sire reviewed in this journal (*The Universe Next Door*, *Churchman* vol 4 1990 p 374, and *Discipleship of the Mind*, *Churchman* vol 3 1993 p 283) will not want to miss this one. The author, who comes from an American faculty of English and is now senior editor of the InterVarsity Press in the States, has what to your reviewer is a very unusual gift of communicating to modern, well-educated, self-opinionated, sceptical and even rather cynical students the arguments for the Christian faith. The present book has been long in making, he says. It began in 1982 when he gave a lecture on *Is Christianity Rational?* to a university audience. This sparked so much discussion that he gave it at another university. At the close a student asked if he could read a two-page document. It proved to be a carefully-prepared opposition paper, and provoked a formal discussion lasting several hours! Evidently it touched a live nerve. Since then the lecture has been delivered more than 150 times in universities in the USA and Canada, and also in five countries of Eastern Europe. The book's title (and also the lecture's) was suggested by Harvard students.

The author's style is eminently fair, moderate, reasonable, and user-friendly. He starts at ground-zero level. As he proceeds he never claims too much, nor does he ever try to escape difficulties by either giving them the slip or by shouting them down. He is amazingly comprehensive in facing every counter-argument he himself or the opposition can raise (he made full use of his student audiences!). Yet his advance towards his objective is quite relentless. The result is that at the end it seems as if the objector must either accept that Christianity is a faith that ought to be embraced, or else reject it with a bad conscience. He first faces the question of why people believe what they do. There are four possibilities he mentions. Students believe for sociological reasons (eg 'my parents, my culture believes'; 'it's all I know about'); for psychological reasons – by far the majority – ('it gives meaning, purpose, and direction to life; it makes me feel good'); for religious reasons ('the Bible or Qur'an says so'; 'I have a deep spiritual experience of God'); for philosophical reasons ('it is reasonable; the order in the Universe cannot be due to chance'). He examines all these sympathetically and at length – a chapter more or less to each – and concludes that none gives absolute certainty (in the philosophical sense) that one is on the right track.

In the second and larger section of the book the author goes on to discuss the reasons why anyone *should* believe Christianity. His first point

is that the Gospels are reliable history. Even if one starts without convictions, the evidence is such that as historical documents go they are entirely worthy to be accepted as at least substantially accurate. He then switches the focus – surely correctly – to Jesus himself as the Reason. How did he regard himself? How has ‘The Quest for the Historical Jesus’ fared? What is the evidence for the Resurrection? Does the Christian faith stand up as rational in the light of every fact (for instance, every scientific or experiential fact) that can be assembled? Many faiths can accommodate *some* of the facts; can the Christian faith accommodate *all*? Two further chapters deal with *The Problem of Evil* and *The Personal Experience of Christians*. Then comes the final one *The Challenge of Belief*, which ends with practical steps to be taken to settle the matter. I was most impressed with this; it struck me, as the whole book had done, with the fairness, the reasonableness, the obvious concern of the writer to leave the reader with no feeling that at any stage he had been persuaded against his better judgment to concede any point. Rather that on the contrary, as the Christian faith (alone) answers the total agenda of the questioning mind, so to be a true Christian requires the total consent honestly given of the whole being. And in that consent, Christianity means JESUS CHRIST.

Get this book and give it to any earnest, intelligent but puzzled thinker, prepared to make an effort. It has 17 pages of Notes at the end and a Bibliography of five.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

**CREATOR AND CREATION Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel** Ronald A Simkins

Peabody Mass: Hendrickson 1994 306pp Unpriced pb  
ISBN 1-56563-042-4

Professor Simkins, from the staff of the Theology Department at Creighton University, has spent six years of research, he says, into ‘the role of the natural world in the religion and culture of ancient Israel’, obviously stimulated by the widespread concern today over ecological matters. Old Testament biblical scholarship until about 1970, he says, concentrated almost entirely ‘on Yahweh as the God of human history’, and this in spite of the fact that the Bible is replete with references to the natural world. He therefore sets out in this study to redress the balance; nature in the Bible is not merely the stage for the drama of salvation, but must be considered as significant in its own right. There is of course truth in this, but somehow one senses a possible danger given the theological temper of our times. However it is an undeniable fact that one of the truths our generation needs to recall is that God is sovereign Creator, over nature as well as over history. How does Professor Simkins approach his task? Taking the

documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch for granted he enters on a discussion of myths, metaphors and models (which your reviewer found a little tedious and repetitive), and then embarks on an illuminating account of the cosmologies and cosmogonies of the ancient Near East cultures; it is useful to have these readily available, even if (as I seem to remember) Kidner remarks that 'they flounder from one degree of theological ineptitude to another'. He then discusses creation in the Bible, drawing parallels between its 'creation myths' and world-view and those he has already discussed. The Bible's 'eschatological myths' come last. Finally there is a brief *Conclusion* and an *Epilogue: the Bible and the Environment*. The impression left is that the author does not regard the Bible as uniquely revelation; rather it follows the general pattern of Middle East myths but at a level of maturer thought. The New Testament is scarcely referred to at all; it would have been refreshing to have seen the reader's attention drawn finally to Paul's great paean in Romans 8:18ff, bringing the two spheres of creation and redemption triumphantly together, and in their right relationship and emphasis.

On the whole I found this a disappointing book. But it is good to be able to report that it ends on a more satisfying note. On the last page the author writes: 'The ultimate problem is human nature. The ultimate solution is the redemption of God ... The Bible stands in judgment over all human efforts to recreate the natural world'. Our ideals are worth striving for, but history shows 'that they are not human realities. The biblical texts, however, offer hope beyond our human failures', for God is both the creator and the redeemer of his world. There is a Select Bibliography of no less than 32 pages; an Index of Modern Authors of four; and an Index of Scripture References of four. An Index of Subjects would have been useful.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

**LIFE AFTER PENTECOST** Donald Fortner

Darlington: Evangelical Press 1995 348pp £8.95 pb ISBN 085234-344-2

The sub-title of this book, *A Guide to the Acts of the Apostles*, is an entirely accurate description of its content. *Life after Pentecost* is a series of devotional studies based on the Authorized Version and written in a preaching style. In true reformed fashion the author accepts the Bible as both inspired and inerrant. There are within its pages some real gems which would enrich the reader if it is read as a bedside book, although this may be awkward, as it is full of biblical passages which need to be referred to for any real benefit.

As this book is not a commentary there is no direct reference to any modern interpretation in the discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Being reformed, Fortner follows the line accepted by Warfield and states that signs and wonders ceased at the close of the Canon of Scripture. However, I am sure that readers with a different range of viewpoints could benefit greatly from this book used in the way suggested.

JOHN R BOURNON

**WHO WAS JOHN? A Study of the Five Documents in the  
New Testament Ascribed to Someone called John**  
Geoffrey Ainsworth Williams

London: Minerva Press 1994 193pp £6.99 pb ISBN 1-85863-55-X

The gestation period of this book, writes the author, has been a long one. It began when as a young boy he heard at the John Rylands Library in Manchester the story of a very small piece of ancient paper, the piece which has since become known as the Rylands Papyrus. Later as a student he adopted the then prevailing view, that the Gospel which carried John's name was the last of the four Gospels to have been written; that it came from very late in the first century; and that it was unlikely to be the work of St John the Apostle. He also accepted the opinion that the Apocalypse must have been written by a different person, if a 'John', then perhaps by 'John the Elder'. It was only when he came to read the New Testament in the Greek that he became convinced that whoever wrote the Gospel must have written the Epistles also, a conviction from which he has never wavered. The Apocalypse remained a mystery to him and he avoided it. When however he became a parish priest he found that it exercised so much fascination for his laity that he could no longer do so, and the appearance of Austin Farrer's 1948 Bampton Lectures *The Glass of Vision* and two years later *The Rebirth of Images* excited him increasingly and opened for him a real door of understanding into it. Then came John Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* and *The Priority of John* and he became convinced that both the Gospel and the Apocalypse were written before the Fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. But their styles were widely different, both in subject matter and grammar; how could they both come from the same author, and that author the Apostle John? Nevertheless that was the ultimate conclusion.

The stages by which he reached this conclusion are set out in a fascinating and scholarly study. The Gospel writer, he points out, has clearly in mind the Genesis creation story (eg in 1:1-5). The seven days of the latter are reflected in the seven miraculous 'signs' he chooses to record. But the Gospel is structured as well on the feasts of the temple year. 'With something of a shock that made me almost jump out of my chair, I realized that this was exactly the structuring of the Apocalypse. That book now becomes almost a third Genesis.' I am not sure (on a single reading) that I

found all his arguments convincing, but there is a good deal of historical scholarship here, and he argues his case for the dates of the Johannine writings carefully. In particular he explains the differences in the grammar, literary style and attitude to Rome characteristic of the Apocalypse from those characteristic of the Gospel by a change in the historical situation faced by the Christians in the Empire. He opts for a date for Revelation between June 68 and the summer of 70. Within this period there were no less than four Emperors (Revelation 17:11 fits in here); had it been after it how could a reference to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple have been avoided? He falls back on Robinson's argument to account for the difference between the 'correct, simple but rather flat style of the Gospel' and that of the Apocalypse, its 'pidgin Greek ... not that of a beginner ... who might improve and mature ... but of someone who appears to know exactly what he is about...'.

The author's final conclusion is that the Gospel (written 'before AD 64'), the Apocalypse ('early AD 69') and the Epistles were all by the Apostle John, except for the last chapter of the Gospel which was contributed by an editor who knew John well and added it, he suggests, for eirenical reasons (cf 1 Cor 1:10ff). Perhaps it was added at the time of publication since no ancient documents omit it. All in all, this is a very interesting study, and it is to be hoped it will be widely read. It is well-produced except for poor proof reading (your reviewer counted about ten misprints) and an Index of twelve pages which could be greatly improved and in the review copy had been wrongly assembled for binding. There is a Bibliography of three pages.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

### **GOD, THE BIG BANG AND STEPHEN HAWKING**

**David Wilkinson**

Crowborough: Monarch 1993, 1996 176pp £5.99 pb ISBN 1-85424-342-X

### **THINKING CLEARLY ABOUT GOD AND SCIENCE**

**David Wilkinson and Rob Frost**

Crowborough: Monarch 1996 224pp £5.99 pb ISBN 1-85424-333-0

There is a good deal of public interest today in what might be called 'frontier' scientific research, an interest stirred up by the media but hardly catered for by them at the level on which it touches man's spiritual concerns. This provides opportunities for able Christians to 'get their oar in' by taking advantage of the awakened interest of a frequently more intelligent type of person. Books of the kind being reviewed here are therefore to be welcomed. The first author, David Wilkinson, is now a Methodist minister and chaplain at Liverpool University. He had



previously gained a first-class degree and later a doctorate in theoretical astronomy, and had become a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. He writes therefore with authority, and does so in such a way as to enable any intelligent lay person, sixth form or above, to pick up enough to follow the substance of his argument. Relativity, Quantum Theory, the Anthropic Principle and of course the Big Bang are all dealt with, and their relevance to the question of faith in a Creator thoughtfully set out. He provides a Select Bibliography of nineteen titles, two pages of Notes, and an Index of three pages. A former Astronomer Royal, Sir Arnold Wolfendale, writes a brief Foreword. As a minor criticism your reviewer would suggest that fig 4.1 might be redrawn, and a few of the remarks on the previous page relevant to it reworded to make its significance clearer.

In the second volume Dr Wilkinson has been joined by a friend who (this time) failed his GCE in science but who shows no sign whatsoever of having done so, and who seems even to be an improved communicator as a consequence! He holds in fact a London doctorate in contemporary missiology. The two write alternate chapters, and the result is a very happy partnership. Typical headings are: *Myths or Reality?*; *Isn't Science about Proof while Christianity is about Faith?*; *Does Science do away with God the Creator?*; *Can you believe in Miracles in a Scientific Universe?*; *Can you be a Scientist and a Christian?* The treatment is attractive but by no means superficial, and I can imagine it going down well with a class of intelligent sixth formers. Dr Frost has in fact taken seminars on science and faith at three Spring Harvests, and he has led over fifty missions. Finally, there are three pages of books for Further Reading (most of the titles suggested are quite 'adult'); six pages of References; and an Index of three pages. Sir John Houghton FRS, formerly head of the Meteorological Office, writes a very appreciative Foreword.

Both of these books can be warmly commended for serious inquirers.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

**THE FAITH OF THE VATICAN** Herbert M Carson

Durham: Evangelical Press 1996 192pp £5.95 pb ISBN 0-85234-345-0

There are several reasons why Evangelicals might be a little perplexed as they think about Roman Catholicism: the apparent changes introduced with the Second Vatican Council, the new life witnessed in Roman Catholic charismatics and then more recently the debate surrounding *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium* – a document which has Chuck Colson as one of its authors and Os Guinness, Bill Bright and Jim Packer as signatories. Furthermore, those of us within the Church of England are in a denomination which

continues to make overtures to Rome at a number of levels.

In this milieu, and as an ex-Roman Catholic, I warmly welcome Herbert Carson's book. He offers an analysis of Roman Catholicism at several key points including authority, the sacraments and justification. Importantly he does so using the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which is the official catechism revealing the doctrine of post Vatican II Roman Catholicism. Having ploughed through the catechism myself I fully agree with his overall analysis:

It (the Catechism) demonstrates very clearly that Rome has in no way modified the teaching of the Council of Trent. The tone may be friendlier, and the presentation more acceptable to late twentieth-century readers, yet the decrees of Trent are still there. (p 12)

He also has an excellent chapter entitled 'Catholic Pentecostalism' dealing with charismatic renewal within Roman Catholicism. He accurately identifies the tendency for the Catholic charismatics just to increase their devotion to Mary and the Mass and their loyalty to the institution.

Another strength of the book is the tone in which it is written. Carson acknowledges the danger of 'Protestant bigotry ... steeped in vitriol' (p 15) and never descends to this sort of posturing; rather it is graciously written by a man who after a long struggle himself felt compelled to leave his own denomination.

I do have a couple of minor criticisms. The first is the early position of the chapter on history; documenting the appalling behaviour of the worst of the Popes here starts the discussion in the wrong place. The second criticism is that it is not clear for whom the book is intended. If aimed at the average Roman Catholic I am not convinced it would help in the early stages. A book like this may simply stimulate them to think how they might justify and defend a position they probably neither understand nor hold. Perhaps this book will be most useful for those Evangelicals who are confused and wonder what to make of current official Roman Catholic teaching.

GREG STRAIN

### **THE ROUGH PLACES PLAIN**

**The Report of the Anglican Evangelical Assembly (AEA)  
Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC)**

Oxford: Latimer House 1996 128pp £3.50 pb ISBN 0 946307 46 6

On the whole I do not read reports of meetings as they are all too often

lacking in depth unless the papers have been fully prepared in advance. For this reason I came to the AEA report with a heavy heart, only to discover that I was quite wrong in this instance.

It comprises the background papers prepared for the representative assembly of Anglican Evangelicals, papers which required long gestation.

The bulk of the book consists of five 'Tracks' which, in the main, were each prepared by two people. By far the best and most important is that on 'Truth' which is a consideration of the doctrine of Scripture. It is particularly useful because it was written by two Evangelicals taking rather different approaches, Graham Cray and Wallace Benn. There is a clear meeting of minds and this section alone would repay the purchase as, all too often, this and similar matters are discussed only from afar, with no attempt to interact with views other than the writer's own.

Some of the other 'Tracks' are less useful because the writers seem to agree to such an extent that alternative views within the evangelical constituency are not heard.

What is perfectly clear is that inerrancy is a major cause of division between Evangelicals who accept the inspiration and authority of Scripture. If the Bible is not wholly inerrant in what it intends to teach, which parts have authority in faith, ethics and order? It is true that 'it is possible for those on both sides of this argument to hold positions that in practice are not far apart', but that is not quite the issue.

I have never been able to get my mind around the statement in the report that 'for those who do not believe in inerrancy it is central to their conviction that Scripture is trustworthy and to be obeyed'. Again I ask: what is Scripture and how far are cultural considerations to be allowed to eviscerate it of any real authority when it comes to the crunch? What sections are to be obeyed?

There is a useful quotation from John Stott:

Clearly the issue is one of culture... There is also the difference which needs to be defined between cultural transposition (which affirms the essence of the biblical revelation while retaining the liberty to change its cultural expression) and the kind of cultural rejection which claims the liberty to set aside any biblical teaching on the ground that it is culturally antiquated.

Well said indeed, but is it not true that in our day it is the latter procedure which has become determinative on matters such as headship, homosexual

practice and the feminine in the godhead?

I do not myself think that this dialogue has gone far enough and hope that Cray and Benn may write a full-length book teasing out these problems more thoroughly. Nevertheless their chapter is most stimulating and clarifies a number of issues which must be addressed if we are to understand each other within the evangelical constituency.

Gordon Kurht and Gordon Bridger were responsible for the 'Track' on Ministry and it is good to see how they agree in rejecting the false teaching of ARCIC. Clear differences appeared however in a study group which considered whether the ministry was essentially functional or whether it was distinctively different from the ministry of lay people. Wallace Benn and Mark Burkill took part in this dialogue and espoused the former view. Other participants argued strongly for a 'representative God-person' apparently from the Old Testament as far as I can understand a difficult concept, although Saward also argues from the Fathers. What seriously worried me was the statement that 'the tradition though not explicitly required by Scripture, is agreeable, consonant with and a valid development of Scripture'. Here is the nub of all our problems. Is Scripture sufficient or can we really not survive without the Fathers? – a slippery slope! There are also some useful recommendations about ABM.

The 'Church Track' was co-ordinated by John Moore and Mark Birchall and says some pertinent things on centralization within the church and the increasing powers of bishops. One of the most perceptive remarks suggests that while *episcopate* is essential in a biblical church, 'we cannot accept episcopacy *as we have it* as being constitutive or even essential to the Church of God'. They also ask a vital question: 'Why has our growing strength [as Evangelicals in the Church of England] apparently achieved so little?' That is a good question and someone must surely answer it before we simply have more of the same with those in leadership becoming captives to the system and bishops accepting Kirk's 'Apostolic Ministry' hook, line and sinker.

The 'Mission Track' is very good indeed on the concept of the Church influencing its community, as one would expect from Peter Hobson and Chris Sugden. It is less clear on the fact that men and women are dying without the Lord and going to a Christless eternity. I missed the urgency of an earlier generation of Evangelicals. Do we really believe that, if people are not born again, they are going to hell?

The 'Worship Track', co-ordinated by Clare Wells and Margaret Killingray, is again interesting but it does not address the great controversy of our day, whether the movement of 'the service' is from God to man or

from man to God. That issue must be elucidated if we are to write liturgy or even communicate with each other.

The rest of the book consists of an Address by Archbishop Carey, and one by Sir Fred Catherwood.

The best chapters are those where the co-ordinators disagree in part. The less adequate sections are those where the organisers did not fully seek to represent the whole breadth of evangelical understanding. This is a really important book because it raises a wide range of issues which we, as Evangelicals, must address. It is to be hoped that these dialogues will be continued.

JOHN PEARCE

**DOWN TO EARTH** Donald Reeves

London: Mowbray 1996 117pp £14.99 hb ISBN 0-264-67371-9

The purpose of *Down to Earth*, says Donald Reeves, 'is to show how the churches can contribute modestly, positively and imaginatively to doing something about the colossal environmental and ecological problems which we have created for ourselves'. After an autobiographical introduction, he begins to describe the ways in which we can prepare ourselves for just such a contribution. Crucial to the whole process is our imagination and experience. The key to the book is 'the imagination' and the axiom that 'faith in God begins with our reflection on our experience'. Naturally we are told how to sharpen that experience (by listening to 'voices from the margins' eg liberation theology; adopting the Jewish technique of *chutzpah*; and then by recognizing our real relation to nature). With this foundation laid, we are told of the need to reclaim a sense of 'the public' (demonstrated particularly in hospitality to the stranger), of the need not to deny our inner consciousness (especially important for our leaders), and the importance of establishing harmony between our intellect, emotions and body through 'good ritual'. We are told of the usefulness of the Bible in this 'journey' when it is allowed to fuel our imaginations, and the need to reject all forms of patriarchy. The book ends with a call to establish alternative Christian communities, which will engage in creating new rituals, developing the imagination and offering hospitality.

It is difficult to know where to begin to evaluate this book. Apart from a multitude of specific comments that could be levelled against it, four general comments must suffice. Firstly, although the flyleaf makes much of the phrase 'true Christianity', it is difficult to find any Christian content in the book. The author uses some 'Christian' language but it remains simply

connotation words. There is no 'gospel' which we would recognise from the Historic Creeds or the 39 Articles (in which I assume the author has declared his belief as an Anglican minister), no concept of sin (except in an ecological sense) and no notion whatsoever of spiritual rebirth enabling us to change to be more Christ-like. Instead the book is closer to a 'salvation by works' theology where change comes through an education of emotion, sensibility and feeling.

Secondly, the foundation of experience, as Liberalism is currently discovering, provides remarkably shaky ground on which to erect a theological system. Although we may think of it as a 'universal', it never extends beyond the particularity of the individual.

Thirdly, and presumably because of the experiential foundation, the solutions seem wholly arbitrary. Little justification is given as to why the author provides the 'solutions' that he does. Moreover as the 'new vision' lacks justification, so many statements lack evidence and support.

Finally, and more particularly, the chapter on 'the Bible and sermon', with its plea for the use of the imagination, is a good example of postmodernity's 'turn to the subject'. It is in this way though that the book may actually be of some value, as we are presented with clear examples of contemporary approaches to Christianity which stand in stark contrast to evangelical theological method.

MIKE KENDALL

**1 CHRONICLES: AN INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY**  
**Martin J Selman**

Leicester: IVP 1994      263pp      £8.50 pb      ISBN 0-85111-847-X

**2 CHRONICLES: A COMMENTARY** **Martin J Selman**

Leicester: IVP 1994      288pp      £9.50 pb      ISBN 0-85111-848-8

1 and 2 Chronicles, which really form a single literary unit, have often been neglected in the church, maybe due to an understanding of the work as reflected in the Greek title *Paraleipomena*, 'the things omitted'. Yet more recently it has been realised that far from merely supplementing the account given in Samuel and Kings, the Chronicler has a distinctive theological contribution to make which is worthy of serious study. To undertake such study of 1 and 2 Chronicles, one could do worse than take Selman's commentaries as a guide.

The introduction is largely devoted to a detailed discussion of the Chronicler's concern (identified as primarily theological exegesis not only

of Samuel-Kings, but more or less of the whole Bible as he knew it) and message (identified as centred on the Davidic covenant); Selman also provides an adequate treatment of questions of authorship (not identical with that of Ezra-Nehemiah) and date (probably 400 BC or somewhat later). The focus of the commentary, in keeping with the aim of the series of *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, is on exegesis.

The text is dealt with section-by-section according to an analysis at the end of the introduction. At the beginning of most sections Selman offers a short quotation from the biblical text discussed which captures the thought of the passage. Then follows a list of biblical references parallel to the passage in question. In Selman's view, these references also provide the material with which the Chronicler expected his original readers to be familiar. A summary of the main argument of the passage precedes the more detailed exegetical treatment in smaller sections. These summaries should prove especially useful for the busy preacher who might be put off by the amount of material provided in the commentary. The exegesis is solid and well informed, even though discussion of differing opinions had to be kept to a minimum in view of the general readership for which the series is designed. Background historical information is provided where necessary, but the focus remains throughout on the text rather than the events behind the text. After having asked what the value could have been for the Chronicler's first audience, the author frequently points out parallels to the New Testament, and underlines the theological value of the passages for Christians.

This set is a worthy contribution to a good series of commentaries which combines scholarship with respect for the text. It should prove stimulating both for further research in Chronicles and for the proclamation of the 'the good news according to the Chronicler'.

THOMAS RENZ

**EARLY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice Paul Bradshaw**

London: SPCK 1996 96pp £7.99 pb ISBN 0 281 04930 0

This slim volume, designed as a student text-book, is rather a disappointment. Four years ago Bradshaw published a substantial volume criticizing the way that the early history of Christian worship was usually approached, and emphasizing the discontinuity, historical and geographical, in the surviving evidence, and the amount of uncertainty that remains. He said there that he had hoped to write a book to replace Jungmann's rather dated work *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory*

*the Great*, but now realised that it could not be done.

The present volume apparently represents what he thinks can still be done. It is divided into three sections, 'Christian Initiation', 'Eucharist' and 'Liturgical Time'. The emphasis is once more upon discontinuity (especially in the first section, where each geographical area is treated separately), and upon uncertainty, and sometimes it reads like a catalogue of disconnected entries. One wishes that a little more scope had been given to probability, for what is not strictly certain may still be very likely, and what is not actually linked may still be sufficiently close to *suggest* a link.

This being so, it is surprising that on occasion the author gives rein to strong expressions of opinion. He clearly does not believe that infant baptism is primitive, but, since he must know that this is a very controversial opinion, one would expect him to set out the evidence in a more balanced way. Moreover, in his section 'The trend towards infant baptism as the norm' (p 33f) he does not even mention the conversion of the Roman Empire as a factor. Prior to that event, however common infant baptisms might be, baptisms of converted adults were bound to be common as well, but not long after that event there were virtually no heathen adults left in the Empire to baptize.

In the third section, the pages on Easter and Christmas (pp 80-90) suffer from too great a dependence on the unreliable book by T J Talley.

One must add that the plan of the book seems strangely unbalanced. Did early Christian worship really consist of little more than the two dominical sacraments and the calendar? The ministry of the word, which then filled so great a part of Christian services, is here the subject of just four passing references.

ROGER BECKWITH

**WORSHIP IN TRANSITION The Twentieth Century Liturgical Movement** John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks

Edinburgh: T & T Clark 1995 202pp £9.95 pb ISBN 0 567 29279 7

John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks are scholars who have both done useful work on the history of patristic liturgy. They are therefore in their element here writing an account of the Liturgical Movement, which has been, above all else, an attempt to reproduce patristic liturgy in the conditions of the twentieth century.

Their book is very readable and contains an extraordinary range of information. It is broken up into nineteen conveniently short chapters on



different aspects and stages of the Movement, and the past and present activities of the Church of England Liturgical Commission are among the topics well covered. Compared with Srawley's little book on the Liturgical Movement, published in 1954, this work is much fuller, as well as covering a further forty years.

For all its information, the book is short on interpretation. This is mainly confined to chapter 2, 'Characteristics of the Liturgical Movement', which is a useful general summary, but needs applying. The book is also short on criticism. The authors are, of course, enthusiasts for the Movement, but they give an objective account of 'Opposition and Reaction' in chapter 16, and a rather less objective account of Anglican criticism on pp 76-7; so it is a pity that they seem unable to add any criticisms of their own.

Among the criticisms that might legitimately be made of the Movement are the following:

(i) The Movement began in the Church of Rome, and has been dominated from the outset by the needs and methods of the Church of Rome. When the Movement began, Rome was still tied to the Middle Ages, and worshipped in Latin, without a vernacular Bible even, using a very elaborate and obscure ceremonial, to say nothing of its mediaeval doctrine. The situation in the Churches of the Reformation was very different, except to some degree among Anglo-Catholics, who had long imitated the practices of continental Roman Catholicism. To take the patristic age as a model was for Rome a real advance, but for the Churches of the Reformation, whose worship was modelled on the New Testament, it was a retrograde step, except perhaps for those Anglo-Catholic parishes who first introduced the Movement to the Church of England.

(ii) To take patristic liturgy for a direct model involved a change of policy in liturgical revision from that which Anglicans had followed ever since the reign of Queen Elizabeth. This had been to begin from the existing Book of Common Prayer, and only to modify it in detail, where there seemed to be real need (see the principles of revision laid down in the 1662 Preface). Instead, one had to begin completely afresh from models in ancient languages, and try to express them afresh in the conditions and vernacular of today. Dix had pioneered this new policy in his famous book, published the very year the War ended, and the reason he gave was that the Prayer Book was not a Catholic book but was incurably Protestant, so Catholics should set it on one side, and look elsewhere. In saying this, he was really renouncing any claim to be Anglican. Nevertheless, when the Church of England Liturgical Commission was appointed, two disciples of Dix, E C Ratcliff and A H Couratin, were its leading lights, and determined the direction which revision would take.

Couratin later wrote that Ratcliff was never in sympathy with the Church of England, and at the time of his death was preparing to go over to the Eastern Orthodox.

(iii) An unhappy coincidence confirmed this direction in liturgical revision. The newly formed Church of South India did not want its liturgy to look like an Anglican take-over bid. It therefore decided not to produce a revision of the Prayer Book, and, looking round for alternatives, adopted Dix's suggestion of following patristic liturgy, though not, of course, for Dix's reasons. The Book of Common Worship which resulted was a very able production, and was further recommended by the current expectation (so completely disappointed in the event) that united churches like that of South India would soon come into existence all over the world, and so would need similar liturgical provisions. With the famous book of Dix and the practice of the CSI on its side, the Church of England Liturgical Commission had no hesitation in producing a report in 1957 recommending its new policy, and this was distributed to the bishops attending the Lambeth Conference the following year, and was endorsed in the Conference report, thus gaining world-wide influence.

(iv) Since the Church of Rome had not hitherto practised vernacular liturgy, it was inevitable that, in introducing the vernacular, it used contemporary language. Anglicans, on the other hand, had a tradition of vernacular liturgy, and had hitherto used traditional language, just modernizing a few obsolete words and phrases when revision took place, on the principles of the 1662 Preface. Cranmer's wonderfully expressive English was deeply engrained in people's devotional habits. However, if quite different texts derived from models in ancient languages were to be adopted, a new start was involved, and it was impossible to continue this invisible mending of Cranmer any longer. As a result, despite their long history of vernacular liturgy, Anglicans were put in a position no better than that of Roman Catholics. Either they had to engage in a laborious imitation of Cranmer's English, or settle for merely contemporary English. After some hesitation, the Liturgical Commission decided on the latter course.

(v) Nor was language the only problem which this new policy entailed. Even more serious was the problem of doctrine. In the Church of Rome, although the Liturgical Movement promoted the use of the vernacular Bible, it aimed to remain faithful to traditional Roman doctrine. Among Anglicans, on the other hand, Liberalism was increasingly calling the tune, and one of the things which secured biblical doctrine in the church was that it had been so sedulously written into the text of the Prayer Book by Cranmer. Now, however, the text of the Prayer Book was to be removed at a stroke, and what doctrine (if any) was written into the new texts was

## Churchman

entirely at the discretion of the liturgical revisers. How the Liturgical Commission would use this discretion became clear when they announced that they would aim at 'studied ambiguity' about eucharistic doctrine, and this is a policy which they have never renounced, in regard to the eucharist or to any other subject, and which they give every appearance of still practising.

Altogether, these developments made for a revolution in Anglican worship. The laity could see no justification for this, and they still cannot see it, for there is none.

So much for the down-side of the Liturgical Movement. There is, of course, another side, on which the book concentrates. To return to the book itself, it contains a remarkable number of petty errors. Colin Buchanan has given a list of these in *News of Liturgy*, but there are others too. Thus, Batiffol appears on p 19 as 'Battifol' and Sansbury on p 72 as 'Sainsbury'. These misspellings are repeated in the Index.

ROGER BECKWITH

**DICTIONARY OF ECCLESIASTICAL LATIN** Leo F Steltin  
Peabody Mass: Hendrickson 1995 330pp np hb ISBN 1 56563 131 5

To read Latin is such an uncommon accomplishment today, except among those of the older generation who were taught it at school, that this useful book will probably find far fewer buyers than it would once have done. It is not intended as a substitute for a dictionary of classical Latin, but as a supplement, and it is primarily intended for Roman Catholics, though it should be useful to theologians, lawyers and historians of any denomination. The author writes that 'an attempt has been made to prepare as inclusive a listing as possible of words from Sacred Scripture (ie the Latin Vulgate), from the Code of Canon Law, from the liturgy, and from the documents of Vatican II. A limited number of other words that have philosophical or theological connections have been included'. Compared with its few predecessors, this dictionary is at once convenient and comprehensive, and should replace all but the most austere academic.

ROGER BECKWITH

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