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Book Reviews

OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM: A PRACTICAL

INTRODUCTION Ellis R Brotzman

Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books 1998 208pp £7.40 pb ISBN 0-8010 1065 9

The first half of this book is an excellent general introduction to the text of the Old Testament, its history and transmission. There is a brief but fascinating history of writing in the Ancient Near East, which helpfully places Hebrew in its historical context. This is useful apologetically because it improves one's confidence in the ability of the Hebrew language to communicate effectively and simply.

On the transmission of the Hebrew text itself, it is interesting to note that contrary to what was previously thought, 'the picture that we now have of ancient Semitic writing is that word division was the rule, and continuous writing was the exception' (p 41). Several pages are devoted to the activity of the Masoretes, and there are plenty of helpful charts and tables. The overall impression is that the text was reliably and faithfully transmitted over the course of many centuries.

This impression is reinforced by the chapters on the contribution of the ancient versions and the Dead Sea Scrolls, with the use of these texts for OT study clearly shown. Despite the popular notion that the Qumran documents undermine Christianity in some way, this chapter shows quite effectively how they support the fidelity of the Masoretic tradition. Much of this material is of use apologetically with those who have read recent 'popular' books about the Dead Sea Scrolls or seen TV programmes on the subject purporting to be scholarly and learned.

The second section of the book is given over to the use of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). Brotzman provides an extremely valuable overview of the liturgical divisions, the Masorah Parva, Masorah Magna and textual apparatus. There is even an English key to the abbreviated Latin used in BHS, for which many will be grateful! Chapters dealing with scribal errors and the principles and practice of textual criticism are good but, best of all, the last chapter contains a verse-by-verse textual commentary on the Book of Ruth. This is immensely valuable for those who wish to know how to go about the

task. It is encouraging to see the theory put into practice and the implications for exegesis made clear.

The second half of the book is really only for those with at least a year of Hebrew under their belts. For those who wish to delve deeper there are certainly more detailed books covering the material of every chapter. However, Brotzman, with his gift for illustration and simplification, is an excellent place for the intermediate student to begin. Possibly the most stimulating contribution of this volume is a brief (but badly-needed) discussion of the relationship between textual criticism and the question of inerrancy.

LEE GATISS

**FAITHS IN CONFLICT? CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY IN A
MULTICULTURAL WORLD** Vinoth Ramachandra

Leicester: IVP 1999

192pp

£8.99 pb

ISBN 0-85111-650-7

Can we continue to live in a pluralistic environment and make universal truth claims, while respecting the diversity of human cultures and religious beliefs? The author considers this question from several different religious viewpoints.

Ramachandra's starting point is that Huntington's 'Clash of Civilisations' argument is flawed. The idea that in the post-Cold War world, it is cultural distinctions which matter and which determine the course of inter-communal conflict founders on the fact that Islam is not a monolithic unchanging reality, and on the observation that Islamists' programmes for change have more to do with social and political reality than with the logical outworking of scriptural beliefs. That is why the description of Islamists as 'fundamentalist' is so misleading, because they are not *sola scriptura* fundamentalists so much as Muslims of a militant tendency. In order to understand the rise of Islamist beliefs, one needs to look at the problems facing those populations, rather than Qu'ranic texts. Western clichés of Islam, and Muslim clichés of the West, reflect and feed off one another. By portraying the world as one of mutually contradictory and intrinsically hostile cultural communities, Huntington's thesis ironically becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

In its original usage, 'Hindu' was a geographical term, intended to include all living beyond the Indus: but now, although intended to include Buddhists,

Jains and Sikhs within the fold, it excludes Muslims and Christians. Underscoring the ‘foreign-ness’ of Christianity, Islam and secularism is part of the project as pursued by nationalists to make India Hindu. The popular projection of Hinduism as non-violent and tolerant is open to challenge: caste society, resilient as it has proved, depends for its stability on the suppression by violence of all dissent from below. The moral relativism found among many Hindus is nothing like the relativism of the postmodern West, because it goes hand in hand with the denial of any freedom on the part of the individual to choose to which group or part of society they will belong. As for non-violence, a dominant theme of all the myths and epics is that coercion and violence are necessary for the protection of the cosmos and of *dharma*. Religious violence and intolerance are not, therefore, ‘foreign’ to the Hindu religious ethos.

Islam and Hinduism both fail to meet the basic criteria of tolerance, namely to recognize: (a) that belief or practice to be genuinely different from our own, (b) that we disagree with the belief (or disapprove of the practice), and then (c) not coerce or absorb the other into ourselves, but give social and legal space for the other to flourish (p 121). Similarly, the belief that the more secular a society the less religious it is, cannot be supported by the evidence. Indeed there are some dangerous *secular myths* as well, which serve only to place the state or ‘democratic capitalism’ as the central belief. Citizenship now becomes the primary political identity – difficult for Christians whose citizenship is of another kingdom.

Any *plausible* reconstruction of the ‘real Jesus’ must satisfy: (a) a recognizably Jewish Jesus, (b) explain why he was rejected, and (c) explain why Christians from all backgrounds came to worship him as a risen Lord. What emerges from Ramachandra’s coherent account is that in his self-understanding, Jesus shows a totally unique combination of *other-oriented* lifestyle and *self-directed* claims. The point about Christian claims is not that each religious community makes claims of uniqueness: the point is the *unique nature of the uniqueness*, and this Christian world-view challenges the status quo where it is met.

The influence of missionary endeavour is often underestimated or simply denied. It was Christians who brought about an increased interest in the sacred texts of Hindus and Buddhists. It is ironic that these texts have since formed the basis of nationalist rhetoric against those scholars.

Certainly this is a book which repays repeated reading (the author even indicates a section which can be skipped on the first reading). A lot of ground is covered in these thought-provoking lectures, all of it helpful in beginning to think about the issues of truth, tolerance and cultural pluralism. A seven-page bibliography and 12 pages of notes are included.

ED MOLL

A CONCISE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY

Geoffrey Parrinder

Oxford: Oneworld 1998 278pp £10.99 pb ISBN 1-85168-174-4

This is in no sense a competitor to the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church Revised* as it is a far smaller production and entirely written by Parrinder who was Professor of the Comparative Study of Religions at Kings London. Inevitably within this compass it is severely limited. For example it tells us what a stole is but not what it is intended to signify. 'Infallibility' is defined simply in relation to the Bishop of Rome. 'Reformation' has nothing to say at that point about the doctrine of justification by faith although it does appear elsewhere. Dates are not BC and AD but BCE and CE!

Nevertheless, for some people, it may be a useful source of brief information.

JOHN PEARCE

SCIENCE, LIFE AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF – A Survey and Assessment

Malcolm A Jeeves and R J Berry

Leicester: Apollos 1998 304pp £16.99 pb ISBN 0-85111-459-8

This is a splendid book for an educated person wondering what the place of biblical faith is in the modern world of self-confident, well-publicized and often secularly arrogant science. The two authors are eminent men of science themselves: both are members of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (the first in fact is its current President), and both are experts in fields where the controversy between secular science and biblical faith is a critical one. Professor Jeeves' subject is psychology, and he has now retired to an honorary Research Professorship at St Andrews; Professor Berry holds the chair of Genetics at University College, London and is a keen environmentalist.

It is good to have a book of this calibre written by men of standing in the non-physical sciences, where apologetic matters are perhaps not dealt with so adequately as in the physical and cosmological ones. At the moment propagandists for atheism get a lot of publicity on radio and television, and men like Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Peter Atkins are far from being as courteous, fair-minded and knowledgeable in confrontation on religious matters as they might be. In fact, they are often scoffers, with little real understanding of what the Bible teaches. In contrast, our present authors strike this reader as generous and reasonable in the way they discuss contentious matters; their approach is designed to win rather than to beat down, but it is in no way apologetic (in the commonplace sense of the word).

The earlier chapters deal with science in a more general way: its origin, the laws of nature, the scientific method, the nature of explanation in science, the use of models, God and the physical universe, deism and theism, and so on. This lays a good general foundation for what follows. Then comes biblical teaching on creation and the Fall, evolutionary ethics and the theory of evolution from Lamarck to Darwin; how do the latter relate to the former? From then on the authors turn in more detail to some of the things less commonly dealt with adequately in available books. There is an extended discussion on the biblical portrait of human nature, a subject which needs careful exposition and cannot be lightly glossed over. Then comes a parallel account of the biological picture: genetics and epigenetics, foetal death, reproductive developments such as IVF and so on. The authors turn from this to more psychophysiological matters, and we are (or most of us will be) on less familiar ground. Brain, mind and behaviour, personality traits and brain processes, biophysics and spiritual experiences; some case histories. I found this fascinating. Psychology comes next: the warfare metaphor, human nature and animal nature, social psychology and Christian belief, the search for a constructive partnership. It is then the turn for environmentalism: what does the Bible teach relevant to this? Stewardship, Green Religion, Gaia and Green Science: where does the future lie? Finally, what are the implications of Science in general for our continued existence in the world? What are its limits and its relation to the 'fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom'? Our need to remember that God has a purpose and that he will achieve it.

There are 28 pages of Notes dealing in more technical or academic depth with interesting points, and these are followed by suggestions for further

reading and a valuable Bibliography of 17 pages. A general Index of five pages comes last.

This is a well-written, comprehensive and authoritative book for the intelligent reader. I warmly commend it.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

THE WAY OF THE (MODERN) WORLD – Or Why It's Tempting to Live As If God Doesn't Exist Craig M Gay (foreword by J I Packer)

Carlisle: Paternoster Press 1998 338pp £14.99 pb ISBN 0-85364-890-5

This book, which is published also by Eerdmans and Regent College, Vancouver, stems from the latter as the foreword by Jim Packer suggests. It is an impressive and scholarly work, and its subject is 'Worldliness' – not the worldliness of dancing, theatre-going, drinking and so on, nor even up-to-date developments such as late-night TV watching or Internet pornography. It deals with things which are really much more insidious and deep-seated, and which could be much more far-reaching and lasting in their effects (one is reminded of our Lord's comparative estimate of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah and of those of the religio-political attitude of his day). The influences it is concerned about are of things under whose spell we have inevitably grown up, and which do not advertise themselves as evils. This makes such a study as this, by a dedicated and analytically keen mind, all the more valuable.

In the Introduction the author discusses what constitutes the essence of 'worldliness', and argues that it is not personal immorality and/or social injustice as such (old-fashioned conservatives and liberals have tended to place the emphasis on either one or the other of these), but instead something much more wide-ranging and insidious. Professor Gay argues that worldliness makes 'an *interpretation of reality* that essentially excludes the reality of God from the business of life'. (Hence his chosen subtitle: 'Why it's tempting to live as if God doesn't exist'.) His following chapters enlarge on this thesis and discuss the ways in which 'worldliness' of this temper has infected the main features of our postmodern public life. Chapter One deals with *The Worldliness of Modern Political Aspirations*. Of course such things as political intrigue, scandal, blind ambition, abuse of power for personal gain and so on are meat and drink to commentators and pundits in the mass

media; but far more serious than the unseemly actions of particular figures is 'the *character* of a people that seems to demand ever more [and more!] from the political process', and in effect looks to it rather than to God. Clearly he is right in seeing in this the essence here of contemporary worldliness: *There is no place for God in any of their schemes* is a very apposite scripture (Ps 10:4). This chapter is followed by five others each dealing very perceptively with some related and prominent feature of our modern culture. The titles are: 'The Irrelevance of God in the Technological Society'; 'The Intrinsic Secularity of Modern Economic Life'; 'The Worldly Self at the Heart of Modern Culture'; 'Taking Stock of "The Huge Modern Heresy"'; and 'Towards a Theology of Personhood'. Merely reciting these headings will not give a very adequate idea of the depth and extent of the author's treatment of his subject, but the titles are well-chosen. He is very critical of what has derived from what is often called 'the Protestant Ethic'; pietism and a lack of living by 'the whole counsel of God' are noted. The content of the book is not elementary, and the style requires concentration; but to the specialist who is prepared to give it the author has much to say. He is evidently widely read in his subject, and quotations from current writers of all schools are frequent.

The book is well-produced. There is a Selected Bibliography of 20 pages and a general Index of four.

DOUGLAS C SPANNER

**EVANGELICALS AND TRUTH: A CREATIVE PROPOSAL FOR A
POSTMODERN AGE**

Peter Hicks

Leicester: Apollos 1998

240pp

£12.99 pb

ISBN 0-85111-457-1

These 'postmodern' times create a crisis for epistemology (our understanding of truth). As its subtitle states, this book presents itself as a proposal: it posits a distinctively evangelical epistemology as the way out of the postmodern impasse. Hicks argues for God as the foundation for an epistemology that is broader than that defined by reason but which includes reason in its scope. Thus while agreeing that modernism overstated the ability of reason to determine truth, Hicks rejects postmodernism's relativistic alternative where truth is constructed solely by the viewer.

For some readers, getting into this book might take some effort. The introductory chapters define terms and briefly survey the history of truth from

'Plato to postmodernism'. A review of 'Evangelicals and truth yesterday and today' follows, occupying half the book's length. This review, focused around key individuals largely from the post-reformation period, has all the strengths and weaknesses of such an overview. A wide philosophical familiarity is rapidly assumed, and there is an occasional tendency to broad blanket statements. Yet for those who work at it, a useful historical survey of evangelical thought about truth unfolds. For those who find it hard work, the 'interlude' at pp 135-9 works quite well (in my view) as an alternative introduction to the book. Hicks' creative proposals then come to the fore in its latter third.

Hicks' evangelical epistemology is founded on God. Truth originates from him. This reversal of the Enlightenment reliance on reason recovers a broader notion of truth but foundation in God also avoids the fragmentation inherent within postmodernity. Whereas modernist truth is inert and passive, and postmodernist truth constructed by ourselves, Hicks proposes God-based truth as something active. As God declares truth, we are drawn to respond to it, whether in acceptance or rejection. Whilst truth can be objective, the modernist criteria for 'knowing' are repudiated as a denial of creaturehood. Likewise, the possibility of the infinite creator being able to communicate into the time-bound finite sphere of creation undermines postmodern hermeneutical doubt. God-based truth, in its complexity and richness, affects the whole person and affirms our creaturehood.

Like many contemporary writers, Hicks works with a notion of *Evangelicalism*. Some readers more than others will recognize themselves as within this theological-cultural object. At times the term jarred, as did its boundaries. For examples, establishing the authority and truth of the Bible as only derivative of God (p 141) is at best ambiguous. Likewise, that an Arminian view of human freedom is held by all Evangelicals 'with the possible exception of some Calvinists' (p 174) is an unfortunate assumption. As an apologetic for an epistemology acceptable within and beyond the Christian sphere, the result is consequently upbeat but unevenly developed. Further interaction with the dynamics of salvation history would test and strengthen Hicks' proposals. Alongside the impact of the Fall, the conclusions at times also require more engagement with Christology, atonement-redemption, and the present eschatological tension. Such engagement will guard against an impersonal, merely conceptual, 'God'.

These qualifications notwithstanding, Hicks does indeed succeed in presenting a creative proposal that deserves consideration within the contemporary epistemological crisis.

MATTHEW SLEEMAN

GOD CRUCIFIED: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament

Richard Bauckham

Carlisle: Paternoster Press 1999 79pp £9.99 pb ISBN 0-85364-944-8

This short book is the revised text of the Didsbury lectures for 1996. These lectures are sponsored by the Nazarene College in Manchester and are now being published by Paternoster Press. On the whole they have maintained a high standard, and Professor Bauckham's contribution is outstanding. His purpose in the lectures is to develop the theme that New Testament Christology is deeply rooted in classical Jewish monotheism, a concept which has been seriously underrated and misunderstood by scholars. Using his wide and profound knowledge of contemporary Jewish literature, Professor Bauckham demonstrates that there is no reason to think that Jewish monotheism was ever less than strict, so that to see New Testament Christology as a development from angelology or something similar is implausible. On the other hand, to regard it merely as a corruption due to Hellenistic influence is also highly unlikely, since in fact it was Hellenism, not Judaism, which proved to be the greater obstacle in the path of the developing Christian orthodoxy.

Professor Bauckham bases his claims on a detailed analysis of Isaiah 40-55 (the so-called 'Deutero-Isaiah') which he believes provides adequate underpinning for subsequent Christian doctrine, and which can hardly be regarded as anything other than classically Jewish. He demonstrates his position with numerous quotations from the Old Testament text, and tells us in the introduction that this is the harbinger of a much longer and more detailed book which he hopes will appear in due course. Readers of this short volume will await that longer tome with eager anticipation. The author's general line of thought is consistently orthodox in the classical Christian sense, but tackles the most recent scholarship with understanding and appreciation for the fundamental questions which it raises. Given that basis, more can only be better.

Having said that, there are two areas where one must hope that the longer book

will deal more adequately with the evidence than this small volume does. The first concerns Isaiah, where Professor Bauckham's concentration on 'Deutero-Isaiah' to the exclusion of the book as a whole now has a curiously dated appearance. Recent works by Professor Hugh Williamson of Oxford and a forthcoming commentary by Professor Brevard Childs both demonstrate that Isaiah cannot be so neatly divided, and some engagement with Isaiah in its canonical form would now seem to be necessary. The second, and more serious point, is that although Professor Bauckham tells us that the high Christology associated with credal orthodoxy goes back to the earliest stages of Christianity, he does not deal with the crucial issue, which is whether (or to what extent) it represents the teaching of Jesus about himself. For the Christian, there is all the difference in the world between what Jesus taught his disciples to believe and what Peter, Paul or John may have discovered by 'insight'.

Nevertheless, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that Professor Bauckham has tackled his subject with both great learning and real faith, and that the result is a marvellous blend of both. Those who are looking for guidance in the complex world of New Testament theology could not do better than to begin with this book, and having read it they will surely look forward to the greater work to come.

GERALD BRAY

THE ANGLICAN CANONS 1529-1947

Gerald Bray (ed)

Woodbridge: Boydell Press 1998 cxii+990pp £95 hb ISBN 0-85115-557X

This massive book, published on behalf of the Church of England Record Society in association with the Ecclesiastical Law Society, is a further fruit of the recent revival of interest in English canon law. It begins with the Reformation, and usefully brings back into print the 1603 Canons (both in Latin and English), but it adds to them 13 other bodies of canons, including those from Ireland and Scotland, and 20 supplementary texts. Many of these the readers of the book will probably never have heard of previously. There are also ten appendices. Three of these compare the 1603 Canons with the Irish Canons of 1634 and 1871, and with the revised English Canons at their various stages down to 1969. The book is also fully indexed.

The only text one misses is the Reformers' own intended revision of canon law, the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*. The editor explains that this

has been omitted because of its length, but that he is editing it separately, with a commentary and English translation. All we have of it here is the chapter headings and cross-references to it.

Although there is such a bulk of material, the editing seems to have been done with care. Different recensions are distinguished, and variations between the Latin and English of bilingual texts are noted. There are also general introductions to the 14 main texts, and explanatory notes to all texts. The basic language of much of the material is Latin, but very little is reproduced without an English translation.

The long introduction includes not only prefaces to the 14 main texts reproduced, but also an informative account of the ecclesiastical courts and their history, and a review of the controversial question of the relation of reformed English ecclesiastical law to medieval Roman.

All in all, the book is a remarkable *tour de force*. It is difficult to think that anyone but its editor could have produced it. He makes complicated and forbidding material straightforward and even attractive.

ROGER BECKWITH

THE PERSON OF CHRIST Donald Macleod
Leicester: IVP 1998 303 pp £14.99 pb ISBN 0-85111-896-8

It has been a salutary exercise to have read this volume in the IVP 'Contours of Christian Theology' series alongside Hank Hanegraaf's *Christianity in Crisis* (Eugene: Harvest House 1993). The latter is a trenchant critique of the 'health and wealth – name it and claim it' brand of teaching which is infecting some American Evangelicalism and spreading to sections of the charismatic movement in this country. In that critique the author demonstrates that such thinking is totally incompatible with the New Testament evidence for the person and work of Christ, and Donald Macleod's book reinforces the fact that with so many perversions and distortions of the gospel being peddled around today, it is vital that contemporary Christians should have a clear and biblical understanding of the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The ten chapters are divided into two parts: five chapters tracing the development of christological thought (and heresies!) to the council of

Nicaea, while the rest of the volume takes us through the Chalcedonian definition to the present day and grapples with such modern features as *The Myth of God Incarnate* and its sequels. Students of church history will find an examination of familiar names such as Apollinarianism, Docetism and Nestorianism *et al* and it will probably come as no surprise to discover Macleod demonstrating how modern theologians have either fallen into the same errors or sought to resist them. In connection with the former group, it would have been helpful if he had enlarged his treatment of the subject to consider the ways in which cults such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Scientists and others have had to amend the Bible's teaching on the Person of Christ to suit their own theories.

The book is no easy reading, but an important one for every thinking Christian to digest. There is little doubt that Evangelicals who are going through reader training or continuing ministerial education will be taught by those who have been influenced by the Anglican Unitarians (Macleod's term for the group including John A T Robinson, Geoffrey Lampe, Don Cupitt, John Knox, Norman Pittenger, Denis Nineham and Maurice Wiles – pp 241 ff). It is in assessing these modern trends in Christology that the author excels himself, both in stating the views expressed by the reductionists, and responding to their objections to traditional Christian belief.

A whole chapter is devoted to tackling the question of *kenosis* and the various theories surrounding that term, and, after setting out the arguments of the critics and various responses to them, Macleod gives us a moving and perceptive exposition of just what that self-emptying did involve for the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, in considering the part played by Liberation Theology in shaping the modern understanding of the person of Christ he is keen not just to expose the false picture that it can produce, but also to applaud its positive contribution to Christian thinking in the bias to the poor and desire to draw attention to the political attitudes of Jesus. He commends John Sobrino and Leonardo Boff as master theologians, but does not hesitate to expose the weaknesses of their theology (pp 255-8) and then continue with a biblical understanding of liberation.

It is important that such a treatment should give careful consideration to the uniqueness of Christ, and here again our author does not fail us. While touching on the implications of this doctrine in relation to other faiths,

Macleod challenges the teaching of those who would claim to stand within the Christian tradition and yet maintain a universalist position, summarizing with the *bon mot*, 'it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a worshipper of the Enlightenment to enter the kingdom of God' (p 241). Indeed, it is with such succinct sentences that the author brings home the deep truths he is inviting us to consider, as again, on the previous page: '... when it comes to questions of *fact*, Christianity and ... other faiths are in open collision. The central fact, of course, is Christ. If Jews and Muslims are correct in their estimate of him, Christianity collapses. If Christians are correct, then Christian exclusivism is fully justified.'

The copious notes appended to each chapter demonstrate the author's breadth of reading, and there are helpful indexes of biblical references, names and subjects which are a valuable asset in such a wide-ranging volume. Sassenachs will be left wondering whether the reference to Pittenger and his ilk being 'thirled to the idea of physical uniformity and regularity' (p 250) is a Scottish phrase, or a misprint for 'thrilled'. For those who knew the late Geoffrey Lampe it is irritating to find his initials repeatedly given as GKW instead of GWH, but these are minor details in what is an excellent production. Most ministers and informed laypeople will have a book on the work of Christ on their shelves, but it is much rarer to see anything covering this subject, and so Donald Macleod and IVP are to be congratulated on meeting such a serious need.

DAVID WHEATON

PREACHING CHRIST FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT: A CONTEMPORARY HERMENEUTICAL METHOD

Sidney Greidanus

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999 373pp £12.99 pb ISBN 0-8028-4449-9

This book is to be welcomed for the faithful and confident way in which it seeks its title's aim. Aimed clearly at preachers, it ends with worked-through examples of Greidanus' method, and with exercise texts for readers to try for themselves. Along the way, Greidanus makes several important contributions to his subject and its practitioners. The text is very approachable, with each point explained and well illustrated. At times there is a tendency to argue from citations, but some fascinating material is gathered together, not least Wellhausen's confessional comments about theological training (p 17).

The opening chapters very much begin from the beginning, outlining ‘the necessity of preaching Christ’ and ‘the necessity of preaching from the OT’. While for some this might be familiar ground, it lays an important foundation for what follows. Nearly a third of the book then surveys historically the ways in which Christ has been taught from the OT. From patristic times, the account passes through the medieval period and the Reformation to a selective reflection on the modern era. At every turn, having explored key individuals’ assumptions and methods, Greidanus draws out the strengths and weaknesses of each position. Although selective in scope, this historical narrative draws out different hermeneutical methods and provides succinct assessments of them. It also prepares for the second half of the book, where the author’s priorities are most clearly and usefully developed.

Having outlined NT presuppositions for interpreting the OT, Greidanus then delineates seven ‘ways’ or ‘roads’ that lead from the OT to Christ. Here is a fine repertoire of approaches to prevent predictable preaching, each approach being carefully explained and illustrated. By mentioning just one approach, typology, this book’s strengths are seen. Greidanus defines typology and distinguishes it from other approaches, both legitimate and illegitimate, and then suggests rules governing its use. Thus typology is rehabilitated from guilt by association with allegory. Typology, and the other ‘roads’, are carefully sharpened for expository preaching. The seven approaches together inform a ‘Christocentric method’ for OT sermon preparation. This is then illustrated in reference to Genesis 22.

The book’s practical feel communicates well the author’s desire that Christ be preached from the OT. I found it very beneficial and encouraging in this regard, bridging as it does the gap between biblical theology and expository preaching. Some disagreements do remain: while propounding the expository method, Greidanus suggests congregational needs should guide selection of a preacher’s text – there is no encouragement to preach consecutive passages and thus enter the larger flow of Scripture. Likewise, the risk of a false dichotomy between apostolic faith and doctrine and apostolic exegetical practices is not clearly addressed (pp 189ff). These comments notwithstanding, I highly recommend this book.

ESCHATOLOGY AND THE SHAPE OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF**Robert C Doyle**

Carlisle: Paternoster Press 1999 342 pp £14.99 pb ISBN 0-85364-818-2

This excellent book is about eschatology and much, much more. Doyle serves as a faithful and wide-ranging guide without losing sight of his subject, aiming to present the Bible's 'big picture' of eschatology whilst illustrating its individual, corporate and universal aspects and its relationship with the rest of Christian thought. Although self-consciously pitched in its preface as an 'advanced textbook', the feel of the book is always friendly. Footnotes provide immediate points of reference, and most chapters end with an annotated bibliography of primary sources. Each chapter also concludes with 'questions over coffee', making the solitary reader once more thirsty for the interaction of college life and preventing theology from becoming an isolated or individualist pursuit.

The two opening chapters set the scene for the book. 'Why eschatology' outlines Doyle's aims, and then a biblical-theological framework is established for the more historical chapters that follow. Already Doyle displays a keen ability to outline a variety of theological positions and then critique them sensitively in the light of his own position. The overall effect is to be led by Doyle without being directed blindly. The lecturer never feels far away, reflecting these chapters' origins and development through teaching. Asides are never diversions, but add to the overall picture being built up.

Subsequent chapters adopt a historical framework, working through chronological periods in eschatological thinking. These range from the patristic period to the twentieth century, but are sustained by the opening chapters, thus allowing the desired 'big picture' to emerge through a variety of historical contexts. At each stage, Doyle continues to explain theological positions, teasing out the insights they offer to the big picture he is establishing, and then critiquing their limitations and errors. Along the way one is treated to brief but insightful asides concerning the Trinity, ecclesiology and other aspects of systematic theology which impinge upon, or are shaped by, eschatology.

The final chapter seeks to outline 'Hope and the shape of the Christian life'. If I had any criticism, then it would be that this chapter might expound more

fully a positive ethic for individual and communal Christian living on earth. Whilst Doyle has gone a long way to provoke that kind of day-to-day reckoning in his readers, some further exposition would have directed this reflection more closely to daily Christian living.

At the end of this book I felt as though I had been taught theology, and shown how to do theology. My appetite for more was whetted, not least to develop a more systematic theological critique. A Scripture index would have been helpful for tracing the uses of key passages by different theologians, but this is a minor point. Overall, I would heartily recommend this book, not least to those who have been through theological training but still feel there are holes in their theological knowledge, method or systematic filing system. Doyle's book will go far to help bridge such gaps.

MATTHEW SLEEMAN

CHURCHES BEWARE! J C Ryle

Darlington: Evangelical Press 1998 175 pp no price hb ISBN 0 85234 419 8

It is encouraging when any of the writings of Bishop Ryle are reprinted, and the Evangelical Press are to be congratulated on this welcome publication. It is a new edition of a selection first published by the Banner of Truth in 1967 under the title *Warnings to the Churches*, and contains three sermons by the first Bishop of Liverpool, together with five chapters from one of his publications, *Knots Untied*.

The publication is timely, as Ryle was a prophet of his day, and saw the dangers into which his beloved Church of England was drifting. That drift has sadly not been stemmed, and the dangers are not confined to the established church. As the editor has intended the volume to be of value to a wider circle of Christian people than Anglicans, there has been a sensitive adaptation of those references to purely Anglican affairs, while at the same time the applications Ryle made to his fellow-churchmen have been left for the modern reader.

Of the eight chapters in the book, the last five are taken from *Knots Untied*, and there is also a brief but helpful biographical introduction to Ryle together with a preface setting out the editor's aims. This compares with the 17 chapters in *Knots Untied*, and those which have not been included in this

reprint are ones of more domestic concern to Anglicans – dealing with subjects such as the Thirty-Nine Articles, priesthood, baptism and regeneration, and the Lord’s Supper and the real presence.

With the continuing growth of liberalism and even ritualism in so many of the mainline churches it is salutary to read once again such trenchant warnings against these trends as Ryle experienced them in his day. Yet the value of these essays is not simply that they expose errors, but that in penning them he always has plenty of practical advice on the positive side to encourage his readers in maintaining the truth of the gospel. Ryle’s motivation in writing these chapters is always to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, and to point out the dangers stemming from doctrines that diminish his person and work, and practices that sidetrack the Christian from focusing his or her discipleship entirely on him.

While this publication is to be warmly welcomed, it is no substitute for a full reprint of *Knots Untied*. With so many contemporary churchmen, both laity and clergy, uninformed or unconcerned about the issues which caused Bishop Ryle such distress in his day, it is to be hoped that sooner rather than later a publisher may be found who is willing to undertake that task.

DAVID WHEATON

A PASSIONATE HUMILITY: FREDERICK OAKELEY AND THE OXFORD MOVEMENT Peter Galloway

Leominster: Gracewing 1999 316 pp £17.99 hb ISBN 0 85244 506 7

Here is yet another account of the pilgrimage of a Church of England clergyman to Rome but this excellently written biography is much overdue. Oakeley was one of the most significant leaders of the ritualist section of the Tractarian Movement (although his ritual practices are now common among many Evangelicals today). A fellow of Balliol, he became the Minister of the Margaret Street Chapel in London (later to be rebuilt as All Saints by Butterfield). He was clearly an argumentative kind of man who more or less persuaded the Bishop of London to ask for the surrender of his licence to minister. He was not a theologian but he was an expert in liturgical matters and in church music, writing the hymn ‘O come all ye faithful’. He was an intimate of the leaders of the Oxford Movement and especially of the unwise and combative Ward. He believed that virtually the whole of Roman doctrine

was truly consistent with the Thirty-nine Articles and he published many articles showing this to be true.

What is the interest of this book to readers of *Churchman*?

Those interested in the history of the Church of England will find this a fascinating and carefully documented study. Those who seek to know how the Church of England was changed so drastically in outward form by the Tractarian Movement will discover the answer here. Those who are interested in a good man's pilgrimage will find this volume edifying even where they do not sympathize with his views.

One could have wished for a great deal more about Oakeley during his 30 years service as parish priest of St John's Roman Catholic church in Duncan Terrace, Islington, but the documentation is lacking. A man, who had lived in a blaze of publicity, settled down to be a most effective parish priest amongst the Irish working classes of North London.

JOHN PEARCE

DON'T CALL ME SISTER! Marion Field

Godalming: Highland Books 1998 221 pp £6.99 pb ISBN 1-897913-45-1

There can be few Anglican churches which have not found themselves in the last 40 years welcoming into their fellowship those who have left one or other of the branches of the Christian Brethren. This second edition of a well-written and at times moving autobiography, first published in 1993, tells the story of one such spiritual pilgrim and her journey.

In spite of all the pressures and rejection Marion Field experienced from the Brethren leadership, there is no hint of bitterness or vindictiveness in relating the events, and in fact in her foreword the authoress pays tribute, as do many others who have made the same journey, to the solid grounding she received in the Word of God. Her prayer in writing is that her book will provoke a desire to know the Lord Jesus in the hearts and minds of those readers who as yet do not have that experience.

To those who are not familiar with the ways of the Brethren, this will be something of an eye-opener. A teenager who loves playing tennis is denied

admission to the Lord's Supper because she is playing on 'the world's tennis courts', and the struggle she goes through over the wearing of make-up must be hard for today's Christian young woman to understand.

Teacher-training and initial experience in an English school take place during a period when it emerges that Marion belonged to the branch of Brethren dominated by 'Big' Jim Taylor, whose teachings and behaviour became more and more eccentric during the 1960s. In consequence, Marion's parents leave 'the meeting', and the leaders face her with the challenge to withdraw from eating her meals with them. With a touch of Pharisaical casuistry it is suggested that she might have her food on a tray at their table, so that she would not be guilty of associating with them:

Some of this could appear quite laughable, were it not so tragic. After further teaching posts in Canada and Uganda in an effort to be free of the oppressive background of the Brethren, Marion finally joins her parents in their new-found freedom in the local parish church. Yet even here she is not freed from the problems of a rigid approach and dictatorial leadership. Having become PCC Secretary, Marion finds herself at an Annual Parochial Church Meeting with a vicar who wishes to impose his own views and vision upon the church and challenges those of his PCC who do not agree with him to resign. Fortunately, it is the vicar who does the resigning, but it is a salutary warning that the same 'heavy shepherding' can be experienced in an Anglican context.

The book ends on a happier note – but that is something for readers to discover for themselves!

DAVID WHEATON

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