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## Book Reviews

**THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION INTO THE 21ST CENTURY:  
Essays in Remembrance of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster  
Assembly, Vol. 1.**

J. Ligon Duncan III (ed.)

Fearn: Christian Focus, 2003 xxii+443pp £22.99pb

ISBN 1-86792-862-8

This collection of fourteen essays is the first of three volumes designed to promote renewed study and consideration of the Westminster Assembly and its work. Ligon Duncan has gathered an impressive team of contributors for the task. Volume One covers various aspects of the Standards' theology and subsequent history. The historical pieces are interesting and varied with, for example, Stewart Gill writing on 'The Battle for the Westminster Confession in Australia', Timothy George assessing their influence over later Baptist confessions, and Michael Horton considering Charles Finney's antipathy to the 'Confession of Faith'.

The theological essays are remarkably uneven. In his chapter on the theology of the Larger Catechism, Morton Smith does little more than summarize the Catechism's teaching. Palmer Robertson's essay on the Holy Spirit in the Westminster Confession offers more depth, with a pastorally applied biblical exposition of the Holy Spirit's work, but there is not much interaction with the Confession itself, which provides little more than a launching pad for the different topics covered. In contrast, Mark Dever on Westminster and assurance and Andrew McGowan on Westminster in relation to earlier Scottish theology are models of historical theology. Scholarly, historically informed, and theologically astute, they hammer two further nails into the coffin of the Calvin versus the later Calvinists theory.

The contributions of Richard Gaffin and David Wright are also highlights. Gaffin examines the Standards' teaching on the Sabbath, before applying the insights of biblical theology to defend Westminster's sabbatarian interpretation of the Fourth Commandment. Wright provides a fascinating account of some of the Assembly's debates on baptism. Towards the end of the essay he provocatively asks whether the desire to defend paedobaptism explains the Reformed shift to doing theology covenantally. However, at a time when adult baptism is often regarded as true baptism, with infant baptisms treated as little

more than wet dedications, Wright is refreshing in calling us back to Westminster's view of paedobaptism, which treats it fully as Christian baptism, and which makes baptism central to Christian identity, education, and nurture.

With only Volume One published, it is too early to offer an assessment of the project as a whole, but if it matches the standards of the best essays in this volume, it looks promising. One can only hope that the production values are higher for Volumes Two and Three; the first is littered with mistakes of spelling and punctuation, and the index is farcical: among a number of infelicities, the great Southern Presbyterian R. L. Dabney appears as 'Dabney (first name?)' and B. B. Warfield gets three entries: 'Warfield', 'Warfield, B.B.', and 'Warfield, Benjamin'.

MATTHEW MASON  
Southgate

**THE RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF GOD** N. T. Wright  
London: SPCK, 2003 817pp £35.00pb ISBN 0 281 05550 5

It is not often that one is privileged to review a masterpiece, but that is precisely what Tom Wright's latest volume in his major theological project, 'Christian origins and the question of God', is. What was originally intended to form the final section of 'Jesus and the Victory of God' has turned into a major study in its own right. Tom Wright presents this work as a 'weed clearing exercise', digging deep to uncover the roots of the smothering weeds which have grown up in the theological garden of academia regarding the resurrection of Jesus. He particularly has in his sights the widely accepted view in New Testament scholarship that the earliest Christians did not think of Jesus as having been raised bodily from the dead, with the tendency to cite Paul as the chief witness for a more 'spiritual' viewpoint.

Like Professor C. Moule had done many years before, Tom Wright argues that from a historical standpoint one cannot adequately explain the rise of Christianity on any grounds other than that Jesus of Nazareth was raised bodily from the dead. This was not a mere resuscitation of an identical body, but a body which was, to use Wright's phrase, 'transphysical'—the same yet different, continuous with what went before and at the same time discontinuous—being able to suddenly appear and disappear for example.

The book is divided into five parts. Part 1 sets the scene by placing beliefs about 'life after death' in their historical context—the relationship between resurrection and questions of history and theology; beliefs about life beyond death in ancient paganism; the Old Testament and post-biblical Judaism. The breadth of material covered is simply breath-taking and the mastery with which the material is handled, magisterial. Wright convincingly shows that: (1) In ancient paganism death was a one way street. As we would say, 'When you are dead, you are dead'—you stay that way. Therefore when the early Christians claimed that Jesus had been raised from the dead they were also claiming something for him which was not true of anyone else; (2) In the Old Testament resurrection language involves the reversal of death itself arising out of the vision of the creator-covenant God, who will not allow relationship with him to be broken; (3) In post-Biblical Judaism, 'resurrection' is not a term which is used to refer to 'life after death' (going to heaven when we die), but 'life after life after death'! It covered two ideas—the restoration of Israel on the one hand and the newly embodied life of all YHWH's people on the other.

In Part 2, Wright considers the idea of resurrection in the writings of Paul as well as the accounts of Paul's encounter with the risen and ascended Jesus on the road to Damascus. He shows that on the spectrum of beliefs surveyed earlier, Paul's thinking is rooted in the Jewish world, not the pagan one, and that within the Jewish spectrum he is to be placed at the Pharisaic end together with the writers of apocalyptic works. He believed in the future bodily resurrection of all the true people of God, but that Jesus' resurrection has already taken place as a foretaste of what is to come. Paul also uses 'resurrection' terminology metaphorically.

Part 3 grapples with resurrection beliefs in early Christianity apart from Paul. This covers the gospel traditions outside the Easter narratives, all other New Testament material as well as early Christian writings together with the apocrypha and the Nag Hammadi texts. Very helpfully, Wright draws together the threads of the first three parts of the book by considering the place of the resurrection in the world view of early Christianity. In terms of their praxis, they believed that they were already living in God's new creation. Although tombs of prophets and martyrs were venerated this did not happen with Jesus tomb. There was also the transfer of the Lord's Day from the last day of the week to the first day of the week. In terms of the symbolism used, baptism

and the Lord's supper, they simply breathed 'resurrection'. In terms of the questions posed by world views, those of identity and purpose—the resurrection was absolutely central. Where did all of this come from if not an actual historical event as attested to by the early Christians themselves?

Having cleared away much of the undergrowth that has accumulated in New Testament scholarship over the years, in Part 4 Wright considers the Easter stories themselves, their origin and character. What is particularly striking are the surprises of the resurrection narratives—no embellishments with Old Testament texts (consider how Matthew does this with almost every other event); the failure to link Jesus resurrection with the general resurrection hope of believers; the ambiguous portrayal of Jesus, very 'earthly—he eats and drinks, and yet he can appear and disappear with no attempt to try and explain this (given the influence of Daniel 12 on contemporary Jewish thought that the righteous will shine like stars, why is Jesus' body not portrayed as shining?); and the fact that women are the first eyewitnesses when their evidence would not be considered trustworthy in a court of law. All of these things cry out for a historically plausible explanation. These are not the sort of accounts one would write if they were created retrospectively as a result of some 'faith experience' (*contra* Bultmann and Schillebeeckx), but they are the rough and ready narratives one would expect from an early tradition. There then follows a masterful consideration of each of the Easter narratives which carefully and intriguingly unpacks the theological distinctives of the four evangelists.

In the final part of the book, Tom Wright argues that the empty tomb together with the appearances of Jesus provide both the sufficient and necessary conditions for the rise of early Christian belief. What is more, it is the bodily resurrection of Jesus which provides a sufficient and necessary condition for the empty tomb and the appearances. Rival explanations are shown to be woefully inadequate.

The last chapter links the resurrection to the other aspect of Wright's theological enterprise, the question of God, and how this gave rise to a high Christology very early on. Jesus was not simply 'the Son of God' understood messianically (although that was the case), but 'he is the one in whom the living God, Israel's God, has become personally present in the world, has become one of the human creatures that were made from the beginning in the

image of this same God'. (p. 733). Wright also demonstrates how revolutionary and politically subversive this belief was then, and still is.

As with all of Tom Wright's writings, this book is a joy to read by virtue of the way it is written. Someone once described him as writing, 'wonderfully, accessibly and as smooth as fine chocolate'. That is true. To read Tom Wright is almost an enriching aesthetic experience, as well as a rewardingly spiritual and intellectual one. He writes with great clarity and piercing wit (I found myself laughing out loud on more than one occasion!) and he leaves no stone unturned (pardon the pun).

There is also a wonderful providential irony here. Twenty years ago, the then Bishop of Durham, David Jenkins, was publicly arguing for the very anodyne liberal view the present Bishop of Durham has so effectively demolished. This is a book which is to be highly recommended. It is a model of serious scholarship, rigorous thought, clarity of expression and deep devotion.

MELVIN TINKER

Hull

## THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

David Daniell

London: Yale University Press 900 pp £29.95hb ISBN 0 300 09930 4

The Bible in English is a natural sequel to Professor David Daniell's excellent critical biography of William Tyndale and his modern spelling edition of Tyndale's New Testament which many will already know. Here we have a comprehensive survey of English translations of the Bible from Anglo-Saxon times up to the present day. The widely admired English Standard Version arrived just too late to be included in his survey, but we may readily expect that the author would have welcomed this most recent addition to the sequence of revisions that, starting with Tyndale and Coverdale, continued through the King James, on to the Revised Version, the RSV, and ultimately to the ESV. For Dr. Daniell's on-going thesis is that Tyndale remains the master, setting the standard that others must imitate if they are to fulfil the demands of accuracy with respect not only to the Greek vocabulary but also to its grammatical structures. Other versions are always judged by this criterion and where they match up they are fully commended. For example in speaking of the New English Bible

he refers to the NEB translation of Romans 12:11-15, commenting, 'It is absolutely not KJV, nor RV, nor RSV. It is a fresh English voice, and good for the Greek. This is something that can be seen everywhere in NEB, and be valued.' But Daniell goes on, 'On the other hand, there can also be seen everywhere in NEB places where things went wrong.'

This massive book is much more besides. No stone is left unturned, and the reader is constantly amazed at the sheer number of English translations that have appeared over the centuries. England was later than Germany, France, and Spain in having a vernacular Bible, but rapidly outpaced them. By 1611 there were ten versions, either complete or of the New Testament; in Germany just two. After that date, despite the growing dominance of the KJV, private revisions, translations, and especially paraphrases poured out of England. Once America became significant the steady stream turned into a flood.

As well as giving an exhaustive (and if read as a consecutive exercise, a rather exhausting) study of the English Bible, the author is to be praised for opening out many little facts concerning the century of revision and translation that fell between Tyndale and the KJV. He demonstrates the vital importance of Miles Coverdale who, working from the Latin *Vulgate*, translated those parts of the Old Testament—the Prophets, Proverbs, and Psalms—which Tyndale did not live to complete. Many of the familiar echoes that have come down from the KJV are owed to him—e.g., 'Why do the heathen so furiously rage together?'; 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork' and 'Seek the Lord while he may be found'. Other phrases have not found lasting favour, some perhaps rightly. 'Is there no balm in Gilead?' (KJV) is in Coverdale, 'For there is no more treacle at Galaad (*sic*)' (p. 183). In a similar way Daniell reveals the debt we owe to the Geneva Bible of 1560, and he explains the odd insistence of the KJV revisers on basing their version on the Bishop's Bible of 1568, which Dr. Daniell shows was indeed a very bad model. Happily Tyndale and Coverdale shine through in KJV where, in the New Testament, Tyndale is retained for about eighty per cent of the time.

Inevitably, much space is given to the Revised Version of 1881, the American Standard version of 1901, and the Revised Standard Version of 1952. This latter is examined alongside the popular NIV, which the author is more ready to commend than some other critics. But he quotes a reviewer who comments

that because ‘at times it is so close to RSV, one wonders why all this energy and money should have been spent on another version’.

As well as his critical survey of the wealth of versions that have appeared over the centuries on both sides of the Atlantic the author devotes space to hymns (especially Psalm paraphrases), popular songs, and prose and poetry, where they are influenced by the English Bible. Shakespeare who (elsewhere) has been variously described as an atheist and a crypto-catholic, is shown here to have clear knowledge of the English Bibles of his time.

Nevertheless, this book is so much more than an academic survey. In his introduction Dr. Daniell speaks of ‘Four Glories’. Inevitably for a retired Professor of English he speaks first and principally of ‘the range and power and versatility of the English language...which has, as well as flexibility, an ancient strength which is thrown away at real cost; strength to carry the most difficult theological truths with ease’ (pp. 13-14). Another glory is that ‘in its multiplicity of English versions...it is open to everyone who can read it...what Tyndale opened has never been shut’ (p. 15).

Yet another glory shines through this book. Daniell illustrates with great authority how Tyndale’s Bible and its immediate successors were the powerhouse of the English Reformation that gave us Cranmer’s Prayer Books and the Elizabethan Settlement, which established England once and for all as a nation with a Reformed Church. Although the author rightly avoids all confessional controversy he shows that a translation must, above all, be a source of theology, not for the academic, but for the common man—Tyndale’s ploughboy, indeed. Almost the final words of this masterly and compelling study dwell on the words of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, showing the true meaning of the Greek *dedikaiomenos* as ‘justified’, that is, ‘now in a proper relation with God’. Daniell observes (speaking especially of Tyndale), ‘Paul wrote of the horror of sin, of separation from God, and, in Tyndale’s enduring translation, of now being justified by faith’ (pp. 773-4). This is clearly the author’s faith as well as ours.

This is a book to own and treasure. It is too costly for some purses perhaps, but I would encourage everyone to look out for the paperback which must surely follow.

RICHARD CARTER

Sittingbourne



## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IN THE BIBLE

David Instone-Brewer

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002 355pp ISBN 0-8028-4943-1

Pastors who want to think seriously about the vexed issues of divorce and remarriage will do well to interact with the scholarly work of David Instone-Brewer. This volume is the full scholarly exposition of his thesis. This thesis is groundbreaking. Instone-Brewer's work is strongly dependent on the Greco-Roman background to the 1st Century A.D. divorce debates, against which background he interprets the divorce teachings of Jesus and Paul. He argues that the key issue in Jesus's divorce sayings was the validity or otherwise of particular divorces. If a divorce is invalid (in the sight of God), then any subsequent 'remarriage' by either party will be adultery (in the sight of God). The legality and morality of a remarriage depends upon the validity of the divorce.

So the question is, which divorces if any are valid? At the time of Jesus, as is well-known, the school of the Rabbi Hillel had introduced easy 'any matter' divorces for men (Matthew 19:3 'for any and every reason'); these promoted a culture of quick and religiously respectable divorces (for men). Jesus (shockingly) says these are invalid, unless there was 'indecency' (porneia) involved (by which Instone-Brewer, along with many scholars, understands a broad range of sexual infidelities and indecencies).

More controversially, Instone-Brewer argues that Jesus also implicitly accepted that persistent and deliberate emotional and material neglect of a spouse constituted grounds for valid divorce. He bases this on the rabbinic use of Exodus 21:10f, which argued that if even a slave-wife must be given 'food, clothing and marital rights' then a fortiori this obligation rested on all husbands (and, with certain modifications, on wives). Instone-Brewer admits that to say that Jesus would have accepted these grounds is an argument from silence, but argues that since this was the common assumption of all his contemporaries, Jesus would have had very deliberately to contradict it had he wished to do so. He suggests also that in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, 32-35, Paul implicitly teaches the obligations to provide emotional and material support of a spouse, and thus also (Instone-Brewer suggests) accepts that the deliberate and persistent failure to do so are grounds for valid divorce.

Instone-Brewer's thesis cannot be ignored. If it can be sustained, it has significant implications for church pastoral practice and discipline.

CHRISTOPHER ASH  
Little Shelford

## LIVING TOGETHER AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

**Adrian Thatcher**

**Cambridge: CUP 2002 302pp £15.95pb ISBN 0-521-00955-3**

If readers of Churchman want to be updated on what liberal western Protestants are arguing about non-marital cohabitation, this book is instructive. The blurb describes it as, 'the first positive, in-depth study of cohabitation outside marriage from a mainstream Christian theological perspective'. Just how 'mainstream' it is, is a moot point.

Thatcher argues that there is a crucial, and neglected, distinction between 'prenuptial cohabitation' (where marriage is intended) and 'non-nuptial cohabitation' (where it is avoided). He focuses on the former, and seeks to reclaim the practice of rites of betrothal as a 'solution' to the problem (for the churches) of pre-marital cohabitation. This seems to mean that the church should offer couples a public betrothal and then not mind too much that they sleep and even live together between that time and the future time when they intend to marry. The expression 'not mind too much' is mine, not Thatcher's, but seeks to put in simple terms his distinction between affirming marriage as the 'norm' for sexual intimacy while not insisting on it as being the 'rule'; so, 'marriage is the norm (but not necessarily the rule) for full sexual expression' (p. 76). The distinction is a nice one, and enables the 'norm' of marriage to extend in some rather elastic way as a kind of ethical umbrella to cover pre-marital cohabitation (presumably whether or not it actually leads to marriage), and also (in the final chapter) the sexual intimacies of adolescents and young singles, of divorcees, and of lesbian and gay people.

The key ingredients in the liberal thinking informing this book are (a) that marriage is not a status that is entered at one time, but rather a gradual interpersonal process (and therefore has no clear point of entry, and no clear point after which sex is moral), (b) that marriage is not defined by public consent,

but by growing inter-personal commitment (a slippery subjective measure). There are the usual other ingredients of contemporary liberal sexual ethics, notably the implicit ideal of inclusivity. For example, Thatcher applauds churches concerned, 'to reach, and to affirm in their congregations, members of sexual minorities who are excluded and alienated by the imposition of the marital norm as the rule'; this language of 'sexual minorities' enables the rhetoric of liberation theology to be applied to sexual ethics.

The sad thing is that very early in the book, in the context of an interesting statistical review, Thatcher comments (p. 12) that trial marriage is unlikely to work because marriage is by definition unconditional love. Quite so. But it seems to me that the rest of the book seeks to smuggle trial marriage in again by the back door under the guise of 'betrothal'.

CHRISTOPHER ASH  
Little Shelford

**EINHEIT BEZEUGEN. Zehn Jahre nach der Meissener Erklärung  
WITNESSING TO UNITY. Ten years after the Meissen Declaration**  
Ingolf U. Dalferth and Paul Oppenheim, ed.  
Frankfurt-am-Main: Lembeck Verlag, 2003 544pp 24pb  
ISBN:3-87476-405-2

'Ten years after the what?' might be the reaction of the average English Anglican to this book, since the Meissen Declaration (unlike the Porvoo Agreement with the Scandinavian churches) has received relatively little publicity within the Church of England. Given that Porvoo established full communion with a number of Lutheran churches, whereas Meissen did not, this is perhaps not surprising, but it would be a pity if this series of conversations were to go unnoticed in Anglican circles simply because of its more limited scope. The links between German Protestantism and the Church of England are too ancient and extensive to need any highlighting here, and we must not forget that the Lutheran churches in Germany are in full communion with their Scandinavian counterparts, whom Anglicans seem to find more acceptable. German Protestants can hardly be left out of the ecumenical developments which have been taking place in recent years between Anglicans on the one hand and Lutherans and Reformed Christians on the other, and the

German ability to accommodate different theological traditions within an overarching church federation is of particular interest to us.

The main difficulty which Anglicans seem to have with the German Protestant churches is that the latter have a more relaxed view of episcopacy than some influential Anglicans do. The Meissen process is therefore mainly about episcopacy, a fact which (as many of these papers reveal) is a sad commentary on the state of current Anglican ecclesiology. One of the best contributions to this book, by Paul Avis, makes it perfectly clear that Anglo-Catholic claims for episcopacy have no historical justification within the Church of England, but that does not stop Dr. Gareth Jones (another contributor to the volume) from trotting them all out again as if every Anglican would subscribe *ex animo* to those theses.

Evangelical Anglicans obviously do not, and it is surprising that they seem to have been completely unrepresented in the Meissen discussions. Perhaps that is just as well, since most of them would probably be on the German side on the question of episcopal oversight and would barely understand what all the fuss caused by certain Anglicans is about. To claim that the German churches are somehow defective because they lack a certain Anglican type of episcopacy is both arrogant and absurd, and we must be grateful that some of the Anglican contributors (including Rowan Williams) recognise this and make attempts to overcome the barriers which have been erected since the days when England and Prussia tried to establish a joint bishopric in Jerusalem (1841). Unfortunately, many of the German contributors to the dialogue have been left with the assumption that there is a single Anglican view of the matter which is substantially different from their own, which is untrue and ought to be corrected. The debate about episcopacy reflected in this book could just as easily have taken place inside the Church of England, without any reference to the German situation, and our German counterparts ought to be made fully aware of that fact.

The book consists of a series of papers delivered in 2001 (the tenth anniversary of Meissen) by a group of Anglican and German ecumenists. Each paper is published in the original language first, and then in translation, with the result that the book appears to be twice as long as it is. Unfortunately, several of the English translations are poorly done, and some readers may find that recourse

to the German is the only way they will know what the speaker was trying to say. This is a pity, especially since it would have been fairly easy to find a native English-speaker, competent in theological translation, to improve the texts to the point of readability. Having said that, many English readers will appreciate the way in which the German contributors sketch in the historical background to their churches, much of which is unfamiliar to most of us.

Everyone involved in these discussions recognises that there are limits as to how far the unity they aspire to is likely to go. The basic fact is that the German churches and the Church of England minister to different constituencies which overlap only to a marginal degree, and that language difficulties make it unlikely that this situation can ever change to any significant extent. The people most affected by Meissen are ordinary church members who find themselves in the other country for one reason or another. They are now fully welcome to participate in worship in the other church or churches, something which for most people, most of the time, is all that is really necessary. To that extent, Meissen can be regarded as a successful ecumenical venture which has achieved most of what can reasonably be expected from it.

What the papers do not touch on, but what may in the end be more significant, is the theological distance which separates the two church worlds. This is not a matter of ecclesiology, but of fundamental Christian doctrine. The German churches, rightly or wrongly, have a reputation for theological liberalism which, although it certainly exists inside the Church of England, is by no means as dominant here. Anglican Evangelicals (in particular) know that their spiritual brethren in Germany suffer discrimination of a kind which would be unthinkable in England, and this knowledge is bound to dampen whatever enthusiasm there may be for closer ties between our churches at the official level. German Evangelicals who visit England can scarcely believe how strong their Anglican counterparts are, with their own theological colleges, a number of respected academics and a network of parishes over which they maintain control. Nothing like this exists in Germany, where an Evangelical is almost certainly not going to get a university post in theology—simply for that reason! There may not be much that the German Protestant churches can do to change this situation, but it is a problem which ought to be faced in any further post-Meissen discussions, since it is of far more real importance to us than the

seemingly interminable discussions about episcopacy.

This book will be important as a landmark in the ongoing process of dialogue between two different Protestant churches, and we must be grateful to the editors for ensuring that it is available in the two languages in which the dialogue has taken place. It may be some time before Anglicans and German Protestants feel genuinely at home in each other's church, but this book provides an indicator of what has been achieved so far and of what remains to be done. Above all, Anglican Evangelicals ought to be properly represented in the next round of discussions, so that their views and concerns can be articulated along the lines suggested above. It certainly time to move from matters of form to issues of substance, and to see whether (and how far) genuine agreement between us is possible.

GERALD BRAY  
Cambridge

**SERVING TWO MASTERS: PARISH PATRONAGE IN THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SINCE 1714** Bernard Palmer  
Lewes: The Book Guild, 2003 223 pp £15.95hb ISBN1-85776-776-4

Parish patronage is one of the strangest idiosyncrasies to survive in the Church of England. Its origins are lost in the mists of time and it has no clear biblical foundation. By quirk of history, patrons ranging from the Crown and the aristocracy through to Oxbridge colleges, theological trusts and private individuals are able to influence the appointment of ministers to thousands of parishes around the country. Bernard Palmer's lively history of the reform of patronage over the last three centuries provides fascinating background to our present arrangements. His narrative is informative and fast-paced, filled with colourful anecdotes and striking quotations, both amusing and shocking.

It cannot be denied that the system of patronage, for all its weaknesses, has served Anglican Evangelicalism well over the years. Evangelical patrons (such as the Simeon Trust, the Martyrs' Memorial Trust and the Church Society Trust) are able to ensure that parishes for which they are responsible receive a gospel ministry, often in the face of strong opposition from diocesan authorities. As Richard Harries himself acknowledges in his foreword,

dispersed patronage 'has saved the Church from the tyranny of bishops' (p. vii). The main weakness of Palmer's book is that he passes too rapidly over the valuable work of these trusts and betrays a certain personal antipathy towards them (he is a former editor of the *Church Times*). Briefly discarding his historical objectivity, Palmer describes these bodies as 'minority doctrinal factions in the Church' and warns against 'the dangers of extremism at both ends of the ecclesiastical spectrum' (p. 147).

Even the most ardent advocate of patronage would not wish that we returned to the unreformed and farcical system of 150 years ago, with its many 'iniquities and absurdities' (p. x). To secure a plum living in the Church of England it was necessary to play the 'Game of Preferment', where wheeling, dealing and toadyism were the ways to get ahead. Patronage was often viewed as a reward for services rendered, or a gift to friends, family and various hangers-on. As Anthony Trollope wrote sarcastically in 1865, 'Nepotism in bishops is allowed—nay, it is expected. A bishop's daughter is supposed to offer one of the fairest steps to promotion which the Church of England affords.' There are countless examples of bishops appointing their sons, sons-in-law, brothers and nephews to the most valuable preferments in the diocese, often held in plurality. For instance, the seven sons of Archbishop Manners Sutton of Canterbury (1805-28) were rewarded by their doting father with no less than sixteen rectories, vicarages and chapelries, besides various cathedral dignities. Nepotism was indeed, as Palmer observes, 'the glue that bound the whole system together' (p. 24).

Those on the episcopal bench were by no means the only culprits. Patronage was regarded merely as a piece of property rather than a trust. Advowsons (the right of presentation to a living) were bought and sold on the open market, being seen as a way to make a quick buck or secure a useful asset. J. C. Ryle, for one, lamented this 'market in souls', which he likened to the sale of flocks of sheep or droves of pigs. Despite the sense of national scandal, reforms proceeded at a snail's pace, fought every inch of the way by those with vested interests. No fewer than twenty-five Bills were introduced in Parliament between 1870 and 1898, dealing with various aspects of the problem, but most failed to reach the statute book. Successive Archbishops of Canterbury led the reforming campaign with no success, until the 1898 Benefices Act finally struck at the worst abuses of the system.

Over the last century, the reform of patronage has been no less contentious. In 1964 the unashamedly radical Paul Report recommended the system's complete abolition. Yet, as Palmer observes, 'The Church of England is notoriously a Church where compromise is king' (p. 178). Paul had his teeth drawn and our present Patronage (Benefices) Measure, put into effect from 1989, gives satisfaction to neither side. Although there are still many private patrons, their rights and privileges are only a shadow of what they once were. Bishops have become all powerful (though, in their view, not yet powerful enough). Parish mergers now yoke evangelical and non-evangelical congregations together, and the patronage has to be shared. Tales of patrons being sidelined and bullied by the diocesan authorities are too numerous to ignore. If a patron will not play ball, the bishop need only claim 'pastoral re-organization' and suspend the living indefinitely. Palmer charts these choppy waters with fairness and his stimulating book allows us to see our present tensions within their broader context.

ANDREW ATHERSTONE  
Abingdon

## FROM PAUL TO VALENTINUS

**Christians at Rome in the first two centuries** **Peter Lampe**  
**London: Continuum/T. & T. Clark and Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003**  
**525pp. £35/\$42hb ISBN: 0-567-08050-1**

No question in the history of the early church is more important than the nature of the Christian communities at Rome during the first two centuries. As the capital and (by far) the largest city of the world empire in which Christianity first took root, it was inevitable that Rome would play a part in its growth and dissemination. It was the only city which the Apostle Paul wrote to even before he visited it, and it is probably no accident that Romans is the longest and theologically most developed of his epistles. Even though most Christians in New Testament times were located in the eastern part of the Mediterranean world and used Greek as their common language, Rome secured a place in apostolic tradition which has not ceased to be an element of continuity with the early church, and it is the only place mentioned in the Bible which has been continuously under Christian control since the legalization of the church in the fourth century.



Today, the importance of Rome's early history is ecumenical in scope, since it is clear that there can be no reunion of Christendom without coming to terms with the claims made by the Roman pontiff and accepted by the majority of those who call themselves Christians around the world. Protestants, and to a lesser extent the Eastern Orthodox as well, dispute these claims which remain the greatest single stumbling block to Christian unity. It is therefore of the greatest interest for everyone to know as much as possible about the origins of the Roman church, and Professor Peter Lampe of Heidelberg has met this need with outstanding success. His book has already been through two German editions, and is now appearing in English for the first time. The translation was made from the second German edition, but Professor Lampe has updated it further, so it is now the most current text on the subject.

Professor Lampe's approach is broadly sociological. He wants to show what social classes made up the early Roman church, how they were distributed across the city, how they related to the Jews and to each other, and how they evolved into the tight-knit community with a single bishop with which we are so familiar nowadays. His ability to handle archaeological and epigraphical evidence is outstanding, as is his feel for legendary source material. He rejects ideological solutions to complex problems, and prefers a pragmatic approach, taking into account all the available evidence and evaluating it with respect. This gives his work a decidedly conservative flavour, particularly when dealing with the earliest period. He rejects the suggestion that Romans 16 does not belong to the rest of the epistle, and makes excellent use of the list of names which that chapter contains.

Readers will be glad to note that although he accepts the female Junia (as opposed to the male Junias), he says nothing about the absurd notion that she was an 'apostle' on a par with Paul and the Eleven. Professor Lampe shows how most of those whom Paul greeted were probably slaves or freedmen of eastern origin, and demonstrates that this tells us how the Roman church probably originated. It was not apostolic preaching so much as casual immigration which brought the first Christians to the city, and they established themselves in several different locations almost from the start. By sifting the evidence available, Professor Lampe is able to locate seven or eight house churches at Rome less than a decade after the famous expulsion of the Jews by Claudius, which he takes to have been the point at which the Christians separated from the synagogue (A.D. 49). By the middle of the second century there were perhaps twenty such churches which were usually

known by the names of the people in whose houses they met. Later on, these hosts were either recognised as saints or their names were replaced by others who were so regarded, and the so-called 'titular' churches of modern Rome preserve their memory to this day. The different house churches were in fellowship with each other, and they tolerated a wide range of liturgical practices. They were even prepared to accept unorthodox theological opinions, though they drew the line at Marcion and various kinds of Judaizers. Even so, Professor Lampe points out that the churches were well aware of the concept of orthodoxy, which always dominated in the majority of the house churches, and in this respect his findings contrast sharply with those of Walter Bauer, whose thesis that the early church was pluralistic has been too uncritically accepted in recent years.

The Roman churches were governed by presbyters, of whom there were probably two or three in each community. These presbyters remained in close contact with one another and occasionally they acted as a single body. This was especially the case when it came to dealing with churches in other places, and there soon developed a special officer who had particular responsibility for such contacts. It was this person who eventually came to hold a special position at Rome, and who provided the model for the emergence of a monarchical episcopate in the late second century. Sometime about A.D. 180 a list was drawn up of those who had exercised this function, and they came to be recognised as the first popes. The list itself is schematic, containing twelve names (one for each of the apostles), of which the sixth is appropriately named Sextus!

Most interestingly, the first name on the list is not that of Peter but rather that of his supposed successor Linus. Peter makes no appearance at all, apart from a few references to his tomb on the Vatican hill, which had a monument over it from some time in the mid-second century. Professor Lampe does not discuss whether the tomb is likely to have been the real Peter's, but it is quite clear from what he does not say that there is no room for the Roman catholic doctrine of 'Petrine ministry' (as it is now called) in the early Roman church. Whatever else we may say about Rome, it is certain that Peter was not its founding bishop, and even more certain that he did not pass on his apostolic commission to Linus or to anyone else. In short, the claims of the modern papacy have no basis in historical fact, and in this respect Professor Lampe's work must be regarded as a major contribution to current ecumenical discussions, even if that was not his intention and he never mentions it.

The details of Professor Lampe's study will doubtless be modified and extended by further research, but the solidity and depth of his presentation are such that it is bound to remain a classical point of reference for all future investigation. It is good to see it appear in translation, though it must be said that the English is substandard in many places and makes for awkward reading. Quite apart from the silly concessions to political correctness (e.g., 'businesspersons' and C. E. dating) and the occasional use of unknown words like 'fractionation', the style is frequently opaque to the point of being unreadable. For example, on p. 137 we find: 'Similar to our own day, the artistic occupations, viewed in their entirety, evade decisive sociological grasp.' Presumably this should be something like: 'As is still the case today, artistic occupations, taken as a whole, escape precise sociological definition.' This kind of thing can be found throughout the volume and makes reading it much harder going than it ought to be. Still, the contents are so valuable that it is worth making the effort to decipher the translation, and it must be hoped that a future edition will make sure that this aspect of an extremely valuable work is brought up to the standard required by the depth of the research it contains.

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## CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE IN THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

David Peterson

Leicester: IVP, 2003 158 pp £7.99pb ISBN 0-85111-689-2

Many of the best commentaries offer only hints at the Christian exposition and application of Old Testament texts. On the other hand there are books that explore more theoretically the issue of preaching Christian sermons from the Old Testament. These model expositions from Isaiah 6–12 aim to demonstrate how the gap can be bridged.

Peterson begins by outlining the theoretical work of Greidanus and Goldsworthy on preaching the Old Testament. The former recognises that many different approaches have been used during the church's history and concludes with seven preferred options. These are, respectively, the ways of redemptive–historical progression, of promise–fulfilment, of typology, of analogy, of longitudinal themes, of New Testament references, and of contrast.

There is overlap and these may be used in combination. Goldsworthy's approach to preaching the whole Bible as Christian Scripture is explicitly Christocentric. He argues that since the whole Old Testament bears witness to Christ, interpretation and application of Old Testament texts must lead through Christ—specifically through what the passage teaches about Christ himself. Although Peterson himself inclines towards this gospel-driven approach, he makes use of both Greidanus and Goldsworthy as he turns his attention to the text of Isaiah 6–12.

There are two apparent reasons for selecting these chapters: their frequent citation in the New Testament strongly suggests they are critical to understanding the Old Testament's witness concerning God's people and their King. Second, Peterson has deliberately chosen consecutive passages in order to model the discipline and benefits of expounding the whole texts of Scripture in context.

In the eight expositions that follow, the reader is shown more than a glimpse of the author's 'working' in four areas. Peterson's study of the text is illustrated by extracts from (mainly conservative) commentaries. These in turn assist the analysis of the text's structure in the light of the literary markers and content. Third, a structure is given with a view to preaching—exposition rather than commentary—exposition, and finally there are frequent sections devoted to application of these texts to Christian living. By his own admission, the author does not take the application as far as he might—that is not the point. The book's particular value comes in the brief discussions at each point of how the author moved from Isaiah's day to our own, and specifically how to do this in a reliable and biblical way. The Greidanus and Goldsworthy approaches are called into play in a deliberately instructive manner, so that the reader may learn from the method used and not just the fruit borne in hearing these chapters speak. While the final product given here may not be preachable in every setting, this work represents a very valuable working model to equip the pastor teacher to preach with greater confidence from Isaiah 6–12 and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Despite many important recent initiatives in biblical–theological education, our churches and their teachers still need strengthening in this task. This book is a contribution to that process.

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**ANGLICANISM**                      **The Answer to Modernity**  
 Edited by Duncan Dormor, Jack McDonald and Jeremy Caddick  
 London: Continuum, 2003 205pp £14.99pb ISBN 0-8264-6699-0

What happens when eight Cambridge deans get together and the sherry starts flowing? They decide to write a book—not an ordinary book, of course, but a book which will challenge the church and set the tone for its intellectual life for the foreseeable future. *Essays and Reviews* in the nineteenth century and *Soundings* in the mid-twentieth serve as inspiration, and soon it seems as though anything is possible. Eschewing any unseemly denominationalism, the deans in question do not hesitate to recommend Anglicanism as the answer to ‘modernity’, by which they apparently mean that the Church of England is ideally placed to minister to the rootless and secularized, but nevertheless persistently idealistic, younger generation going through Cambridge today.

Those who know the Cambridge (or Oxford) scene on the inside know that the colleges are far from being irreligious places. Most of them have active groups of Christians who are keen to share their faith with their peers and who will most likely be a powerful and innovative force in the churches once they have gone out into the ‘real world’. Such people also know, however, that these Christians generally have a distant, and sometimes even a hostile, relationship with the kind of people who have written this book. Though the two groups rub shoulders daily in college, they inhabit different spiritual universes, which only occasionally intersect.

To be blunt, the deans are generally very nice, personable individuals, who have wide interests and diverse talents which make them ideally suited to the kind of low-key spiritual maintenance operation which they are called to perform, but which leave most committed Christians wondering whether they really know what they are supposed to believe or do. It has to be said that in their book, the deans themselves occasionally betray a certain sense of insecurity about their role, and several of the pieces come across as attempts to justify it. Perhaps not surprisingly, the papers on the establishment of the national church are among the best in the book, if only because the authors are clearly on home territory. Having said that, Jeremy Caddick has contributed a thoughtful article on medical ethics and Duncan Dormor has done the same for marriage and cohabitation. Jack McDonald has also pulled out the stops for

his examination of theodicy, though perhaps he has pitched it at a level which is slightly too high for a book of this kind.

Having picked out the best, it becomes clear that these are the articles written by the editors, and the suspicion inevitably grows that it was they who decided to write the book and then roped in the others, whose vision for its possibilities was less clear. Whatever the truth of the matter, there is no doubt that when we turn to the other contributions, the intellectual level declines noticeably. The papers on biblical hermeneutics, for example, are impressionistic rather than scientific in their treatment, and they are liable to lose anyone who is not committed to postmodernism. To sum up, the book has some very interesting pieces, alongside some of less value, but the overall effect leaves the reader wondering quite what it all has to do with Anglicanism. The central theme of the book gets lost along the way, and the reader has to make a concerted effort to keep it in view. But above all, what is missing is the passion, the sense of urgency which lay behind a book like *Soundings* (however much one might deplore that volume in other ways.) It seems safe to say therefore, that it will not be the harbinger of a new dawn in Anglican thought, but will quickly sink without trace. That may be a pity in some ways, but if Anglicanism is ever to be a real answer to modernity, it will have to major on the commitment to Christ and his Gospel which is so noticeable among large numbers of Cambridge students, and leave to one side the polite common-room niceness which is so characteristic of the chapel world in the ancient universities.

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## ANGLICAN DIFFICULTIES: A NEW SYLLABUS OF ERRORS

Edward Norman

London: Morehouse (Continuum), 2004 152pp £14.99pb  
ISBN 0 8192 8100 X

The fact that leaders of the Church of England are unlikely to read this significant book is a symptom of the very sickness which Edward Norman diagnoses with such skill. It is remarkable that in such a short work he can cover the key areas of our denomination's life today with such percipient analysis.

He starts with the failure of the Church's leadership. He attributes this to the habit of making 'safe' appointments and to the inclination to avoid principled debate. Within this he notes particularly how evangelical leadership is acquiring the arts of the Anglican compromisers. He has no hesitation in saying that while heresy is an outmoded concept it is a reality. In the next chapter on worship he says that the chief problem with the new prayer book, *Common Worship*, is that it has effectively abandoned the teaching of Christian truth though liturgy.

Norman has two chapters on ambiguous ethical teaching, in one of which he bravely addresses what he calls (p. 50) the 'incoherent mess' on the issue of human sexuality. He points out how the result down the years of carefully devised ambiguities is an institution which exists to preserve itself rather than to promote truth. A chapter on the issue of Establishment then follows in which some uncomfortable home truths are stated about the reality which pertains today. The next chapter on 'indifferentism' reveals the origins of this book's title. Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* in 1864 condemned this error of believing that one religion is as good as any other. Norman fears that parish churches will end up practising Ba'hai worship and still call it Anglicanism.

The final chapters look at the Church's crisis of authority and its future. Again they do not make comfortable reading. It is here that evangelicals part company with Dr. Norman. He is, of course, right that the true cause of the desperate sickness of the Church of England today is to be found in examining the issue of authority. However he is unwilling to see Scripture alone as the necessary authority for the people of God. It is no surprise then to learn that the author plans to become a Roman Catholic.

Thus the value of this work lies not so much in its prescription as its frank diagnosis of the condition of the Church of England. Even beyond the telling points Norman makes above, the book is scattered with gems which puncture many confident assumptions made within the Church today. He reminds us that the term 'Anglican' only came into common parlance in the mid-nineteenth century and that the reinvention of the Church as anything other than a thoroughly Protestant body belongs to a similar era. He recalls too how synodical government was initially opposed by evangelicals, for very cogent reasons. Most evangelicals will be astonished to hear this. At several points he insists that the

cherished parish system is wholly inadequate to meet modern social needs.

This book is expensive to purchase. However I would urge readers to take that step. As an analysis of the current ills of the Church of England there is nothing to match it.

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