

Faith and Thought

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**FAITH
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THOUGHT**

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or
THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

FOUNDED 1865

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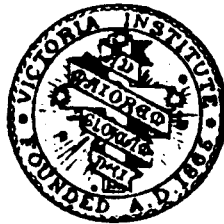
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GENERAL EDITOR: Dr. A. B. Robins



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THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE AND THE WORLD

Edited by D. A. Carson

This is the second volume produced by the Faith and Church Study Unit established by the World Evangelical Fellowship. The first, *Biblical Interpretation of the Church: Text and Context*, attempted to probe some hermeneutical problems relevant to understanding the nature, scope and mission of the church in various cultures. The members of the study unit then decided to put some of that study to use in a second volume intended to formulate some biblically informed hermeneutically sensitive statements on the doctrine of the church.

The symposium begins with a very substantial essay on "The Biblical Theology of the Church" by Edmund P. Clowney. "The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Entity" is discussed by Peter O'Brien of Moore Theological College and the University of Sydney. Russell P. Shedd of the Theological Baptist Faculty of Sao Paulo writes on "Worship in the New Testament Church" and Ronald Y. K. Fung from the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong contributes an extended treatment of "Ministry in the New Testament".

In "Church and Mission", the editor offers some reflections on contextualisation and the third horizon. Sunand Sumithra, Executive Secretary of the Theological Commission of World Evangelical Fellowship examines "Syncretism, Secularisation and Renewal". The volume ends with a study of David H. Adeney, Professor of Christian Mission at New College, Berkeley, California, of "The Church and Persecution".

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Editorial

As the last issue was going to press we heard with great sadness of the death of Donald Mackay. It was too late to include in the issue any appreciation, but the present copy includes such an appreciation by a close friend and associate, Oliver Barclay. Donald had written widely on matters of science and the Christian faith, and had contributed towards this journal on a number of occasions. Almost the last item he wrote was a review of 'The Blind Watchmaker', and so it is fitting that this should be included in the present volume. As we read it, let us remember with gratitude a great man of God, and give thanks for his witness. Dr. Oliver Barclay is at present preparing a volume of Donald's works, with the help of Valerie Mackay, and further information concerning this will be made known as soon as it is available.

Readers will notice in this issue the large number of book reviews. With the journal appearing only twice a year, such reviews are bound to accumulate. We hope that readers find such reviews interesting and helpful. Some are of greater length than others because the reviewer feels the discussion is important. We hope that our readership will agree. The Editor would be happy to receive any comments on this matter.

This year's conference is reported in the present issue and one of the contributions is printed in full. A further paper is due to follow later. The three papers in this issue are on quite different aspects of faith and thought, and it is hoped that they reflect current ideas as Christians struggle to come to terms with making their faith relevant in today's world and to today's world.

Finally, the report of the Annual General Meeting, and in particular the Chairman's report suggests that there may be changes in both the journal and in the Victoria Institute before very long. Nothing has been finally decided along these lines, and readers will be kept up-to-date. We should like to stress once more that the need for more members is still a matter of importance. It would solve many of the present difficulties.

Annual General Meeting 1987

The A.G.M. of the Institute was held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 16 1987 at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, St. Peter's

Church, Vere Street, London W1. The acting Chairman, Terence Mitchell presided. No apologies for absence had been received, and the minutes of the 1986 Annual General Meeting were taken as read. (See *Faith and Thought*, 1986, 112, 103). No questions arose from these minutes.

The President and Vice-President were re-elected, and Mr. Peter Cousins, Mr. Terence Mitchell, and Dr. Michael Collis re-elected to serve on the Council for a further term.

The Hon. Treasurer, David Williams presented the accounts, which he regretted had not yet been audited, owing to transfer of office from the last treasurer. Mr. Williams pointed out that the accounts indicated a 10% deficit over the year, and there would be need to liquidate further assets. Messrs. Benson Catt and Co. were elected as auditors for the forthcoming year.

The chairman referred to the retirement of Gordon Barnes from the chairmanship of the Council, which was ratified by the Council in September 1986. Mr. Mitchell spoke of the active and effective leadership which Gordon had given to the Council and the Victoria Institute over many years. He then presented his report.

Chairman's Report

Terence Mitchell referred to the last Annual General Meeting, at which Gordon Barnes had spelled out the difficulties which the Institute was facing (*Faith and Thought*, 1986, 112 104). When the situation was discussed at the last conference in May, 1986, various suggestions were made by members. Do we present an old-fashioned image? Do we still fulfill a need? Other organizations such as the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity overlap with much of what we do. To make our income meet our costs, we need to double our membership.

The present chairman repeated that since 1986, nothing had changed. Membership had declined, and we were running at a loss of about £1000 per year. The cost of producing the journal was about £9 per member, and this was not covered by the subscriptions. In view of this, various proposals had been put forward. A questionnaire had been sent out, with a good response, for which the chairman was grateful. The replies were still being analysed, but two things were apparent. Firstly, our readership was predominantly amongst scientists, and secondly, no responder had raised any objection to the possible change in the journal. This change was in the direction of a joint publication between the Victoria Institute and the Research

Scientists' Christian Fellowship. While the new journal would devote much space to science, papers on other matters such as archaeology, history and philosophy of science, medicine and psychology would be included. Since discussions along these lines were still proceeding, no details could be given at the moment, since nothing had been finally agreed. The chairman went on to point out that if such a joint journal were to be agreed upon, the future role of the Victoria Institute might have to change. As already mentioned, other organizations have emerged which overlap with the Victoria Institute in some areas, and may well have taken some potential readers. The annual Conference had suffered from a decline in attendance over recent years. It may well be that the best future for the Institute would be to put all its effort into a 'new' journal, the need for which had never been in doubt.

Meanwhile, the Council of the Institute would remain in existence and members would be kept informed of any changes proposed. There would be no plans for a Conference in 1988, but the Annual General Meeting would be held on Friday, May 13, probably in the evening.

Report on the Annual Conference, 1987

The conference followed immediately after the Annual General Meeting, and was devoted to a symposium entitled 'Creation Reconsidered'. The chairman of the Council, Terence Mitchell presented a paper with the title 'Interpreting Genesis'. Mr. Mitchell is the Keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities of the British Museum, and in his talk he looked at the question of the original language of Genesis, and went on to consider the degree of certainty possible in the interpretation of the text.

Writing had only been invented around 3000 B.C. in Mesopotamia and Egypt, long after the events narrated in early Genesis, so some period of oral transmission is probable. Abraham came from southern Mesopotamia where the current language was Babylonian, and it must be assumed that the Hebrew language, which is in fact referred to as 'the lip of Canaan' (Is. 19:18), was newly adopted by the Israelites in Syria-Palestine. They could well have brought Genesis 1-11 with them, written in Babylonian cuneiform on clay. Hebrew was originally simply a dialect of the larger Canaanite language group, and the first Israelite speakers adopted not only the vocabulary, grammar and syntax, but also many of the idioms of Canaanite. Without full contemporary knowledge, these idioms are often baffling to the modern interpreter. Other uncertainties arise from the fact that

Hebrew was written largely without vowels, those recorded in modern Hebrew Bibles dating only from the Christian era, so various interpretations are sometimes possible. The first word in Genesis, for instance, can be rendered either 'in the beginning' or 'in beginning' without changing the consonants, but with a consideration of the evidences of poetic form in Genesis 1. His main point was that in the present state of knowledge, dogmatism in the interpretation of Genesis is unwise.

The second speaker, Dr. Arthur Fraser from the Geology Department of Hull University, entitled his paper 'Earth History—Time and Time again'. The lecture was notable for the extensive collection of slides by means of which he took his listeners through the principles of geology. He showed that by examination of rock layers today we can extrapolate back to make conclusions about the forces which were involved in the folding of strata, and the time scales. Just as historical documents and artefacts tell us about civilizations so can rock strata yield information about pre-history. Many illustrations were taken from the oldest rocks in North West Scotland, for example Lewisian and Torridonian. Many phenomena such as mineral inclusions may be reproduced in the laboratory today, and radiometric dating can confirm very many of the conclusions drawn from strata, though the speaker deliberately excluded radioisotope data from his talk.

In the Jordan valley today we can see how sand, washed down from the higher ground gradually builds up to cover older rocks and gives us an illustration of the processes which have occurred in the past. The Alpine area of Europe provides examples of inversions where in fact the oldest rocks have been pushed up to lie over the younger.

It is hoped that a paper based on this talk will shortly be published in *Faith and Thought*.

The speaker in the afternoon of the conference was Mr. Michael Poole of the Department of Science Education, King's College, London. His paper, entitled 'Perspectives on Creationist Apologetics', was aimed to make a clear distinction between theories, such as evolution and the attendant views—evolutionism. The same distinction must be made in the case of creation and creationism. The well-received talk is reproduced with little modification in this issue (p. 131) and therefore will not be further discussed here.

At the close of the lectures a lively discussion ensued. The three papers had expressed different angles on a perpetually-recurring discussion—creation, the 'how' and the 'when'. It was encouraging that, although advance booking for the conference had been poor, in

the event the occasion was better attended than for a year or two. The last part of the afternoon was spent in sharing thoughts about the future of the Victoria Institute. Several participants expressed regret that there was a threatened cessation of conferences, at least for a time. However, decisions concerning this are in the hands of the Council and members were happy to accept their guidance.

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Some Scottish Examples 1860–1920

Alan P. F. Sell

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The book is of more than historical interest since many of the issues confronting these scholars are deeply relevant today.

Professor James Torrance comments: "This study is invaluable in keeping alive the authentic tradition that Scotland has produced great theologians . . . but perhaps supremely in the period covered by this eminently readable book."

Alan Sell is Theological Secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

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Professor Donald M. MacKay

With the death of Donald MacKay at the age of 64 we have lost one of the foremost evangelical thinkers and apologists of our generation. He is someone who has influenced us all—and sometimes in ways of which we are not altogether conscious. When he emerged on the scene in the 1950s as a major speaker in student and graduate circles, his influence was far wider than the scientific debates in which he excelled. Evangelical apologetics was largely a 'God-of-the-gaps' variety. Donald MacKay helped us to a far stronger faith in the sovereignty of God, both in the normal, scientifically predictable events and in the unpredictable events that we call miracles. Many of his analogies and compact phrases are now the stock in trade of apologetics, from the phrase 'nothing buttery' to his carefully explained 'complementarity' picture of the relationship between scientific and theological descriptions of reality. He argued powerfully for the ideal of objective knowledge in science and in all disciplines, and for the positive duty of the Christian to pursue advances of knowledge and its useful application.

In these emphases he sometimes crossed swords in courteous but firm debate with both Christians and non-Christians. His answering of questions after a talk was a model of lucidity and concern to help and not to demolish his critics. His books on science and faith were very influential, though they could never quite capture the winning persuasiveness of the personal presentations.

Quite consistently he held at the same time to a strong orthodox faith and to a positive view of science. As he wrote on one occasion:

For biblical theists the only ultimate reality is God, what is real is what God holds in being. It is God who brings into being and holds in being the world in which we find ourselves.

The result of this outlook was an enthusiasm for science as well as an enthusiasm for Christian faith. He was a prolific research worker and managed in his last few years to pack overseas lectures on both scientific and Christian topics and active research into the time between exhausting medical treatments. It was for him never an either/or between science and Christianity, but a both/and.

His integrity was acknowledged and admired by those who did not share his faith and much by those who did. Perhaps it is typified by an incident in a discussion where another evangelical leader stated that, since the Christian world was leaning hard to one side, we should

now lean somewhat to the other. Donald MacKay replied that he wanted to know what was the perpendicular and to keep to that! His exposures of sloppy thinking could be as disconcerting to his Christian as to his non Christian friends. Only the very best was to him fit for the service of God.

His Christian faith, however, was always more than a merely intellectual belief. It was a personal faith and a personal relationship with the living God. I think he would have spoken about it as having other 'dimensions' of reality. As a result he could and did assert a personal immortality for the believer. To quote him again:-

The entry into eternal life offered by Christ is something far more and other than a mere extrapolation of the personality as it exists at the point of death. The stuff of eternal life, as the Gospel of John in particular makes clear, is the relationship formed in our present life with the eternal Son. It is by virtue of this relationship that we can be known by the Father and can be welcomed into eternal bliss in the resurrection.

Knowing at least as much philosophy as most of the doubters, he was nevertheless in no danger of following them in their doubts about the resurrection of Christ and of God's people.

This faith he held clear and firm to the very end of his life. Indeed some of his most original and helpful writing and speaking is concerned with this very question. How can we believe in non-material aspects of life when they seem to be destroyed by the dissolution of the physical body, or distorted by injuries to the brain? In one of his many lively analogies he reminds us that an equation embodied in a computer can be re-embodied in another place and in another form when the computer is destroyed. That is a modern illustration of something that the Apostle Paul describes in more universal terms in 2 Corinthians 5:1 and 2. Here Paul speaks of our present 'tent' which is temporary and ready to be dismantled and packed away, but is for the believer to be replaced by a 'house' which is 'eternal in the heavens'. Paul's homely picture of the tent and the house describes exactly the same thing as Donald MacKay expressed in modern pictures of computers and TV sets, etc. He therefore, had a firm and well thought out confidence in God for eternal life. The same Pauline passage including chapter 4:16-18 puts it like this,

For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

I think that passage is specially appropriate for Donald MacKay.

Therefore, he was never ashamed to speak out about the Christian faith in the highest academic circles. As 2 Corinthians 4 has it again (verse 13), he was one of those of whom it could be said, 'we believe and so we speak'. He knew when to speak and when to keep silent, but as the opportunities served he was able to speak of the Christian faith in circles that are closed to most of us. I remember meeting him for lunch after an important professional seminar in London some years ago. He came down the corridor arguing in a lively way with two people about some aspect of the Christian faith. When we got outside he told me who they were and named two very well-known non-Christian Nobel Prize winners. He could talk with such people about the reality of God and of the spiritual world, and he did not hesitate to do so when it was appropriate. He was both unashamed and unafraid of their intellectual firepower and in this again I believe he set us an example.

For Donald MacKay then, the whole of life was ruled by this personal faith and this confidence in the God whom not having seen he loved and sought to serve. Professional success never turned his head or led him to lose sight of truly Christian priorities. He was concerned to use the gifts and the time that God allowed him in the light of those truths so that, like the Apostle Paul, he could end his course as Paul ends this passage (2 Corinthians 5:9)

Come life, come death, we make it our ambition to please him.

We thank God for a true man of science and a true man of God. We offer our sincere sympathies to his wife Valerie, and the family, and must seek to take up the tasks where he had to lay them down.

O. R. BARCLAY

Our Contributors

Colin Hill (Business Consultant) *Christians—Prophets or Politicians?*

R. H. Allaway (Baptist Church Pastor, and former research chemist)
First and Last Adam

Michael Poole (Lecturer in Science Education, London University)
Perspectives on Creationist Apologetics

C. H. Hill

Christians—Prophets or Politicians?

Christians have generally been ambivalent in their attitude to political involvement largely because religion is in essence a statement of eternal principles which does not fit easily into the transient world of political manifestos. When Jesus said 'I came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it' he was in one sense exemplifying this dilemma. A study of the prayer 'Peace, justice and freedom for all men' may help to put this ambivalence into perspective. The prayer has an honoured place in Christian liturgy and has been adopted by political and protest groups as the goal towards which the organization of society should be aiming. In many societies these attributes are more notable for their absence than their achievement. What can and should Christian organizations and individuals do in order to promote them?

Perhaps the first realistic step is to stop using the phrase altogether. As commonly understood by those who are neither professional philosophers nor theologians the concepts of peace, justice and freedom are mutually incompatible. The words have become debased. For example, in popular thought, peace is today identified primarily with the concept of nuclear disarmament. At a more informed level it is equated with pacifism, whether the conflict is organized by governments or by revolutionaries. In another dimension it is seen as an absence of war. These concepts are passive in the sense that good will be achieved by giving up or refraining from something rather than by imposing it or aggressively seeking it.

Justice is commonly understood in at least three ways: fairness as between individuals or groups; the administration of the law; or a form of society in which, in some general but unspecified way, all men are equal. The understanding of justice varies from retribution to inevitable if not immediate forgiveness—'to understand all is to forgive all'. All of these concepts imply an ultimate ability of some authority to impose justice by force whether that force be moral or physical. Justice therefore is an active concept, since it operates within the concept of an ordered and not an anarchical society.

Freedom is an equally ambiguous term. The understanding of it varies from anarchy, through freedom under the law, to freedom from what is perceived as oppression whether by individuals, organizations or governments. It is essentially an active concept, although in

modern usage it is often associated with aggression, as in the phrase 'freedom fighter'.

There is misunderstanding and contradiction within each term so it is scarcely surprising that the incorporation of all three into a shared vision of a Kingdom of God has yet to be achieved.

What is the starting point?

Since the new Utopia is unlikely to arrive within the life span of today's newly-born baby, the ordinary Christian must be clear as to why the journey towards it should be undertaken at all. History suggests that the quest is never ending and that the signposts along the way are constantly being changed.

Professor Keith Ward suggests that it is in the understanding of others, of their concepts, ideas and aspirations, even though we may not identify ourselves with those aspirations, that we find ourselves.¹ The Christian life, he says, is not one of self-renunciation or of self-realization, but of self-transcendence—an echo of the words of Jesus 'He that seeks his life shall lose it, but he that loses his life for my sake and the gospel's shall find it.' Only thus, says Professor Ward, shall we see that we are parts one of another and therefore all related to God at the centre. By self-transcendence I take Professor Ward also to mean the removal of those hindrances which inhibit the transcendental God who is within us from communicating with that same God who is also around us. A recognition that it is not so much God knocking at the door and asking to be let in, but asking to be let out.

This is a religious view of life which it would be irrelevant to incorporate in a party manifesto. It does not say that in some mysterious way through the activity of some political organization the world will be persuaded to act on the assumption of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, but it does suggest that if we really believe that we only become fulfilled through self-transcendence, then this will also be true of others. In this case we should begin to work for a world in which self-transcendence is given a greater opportunity than self-realization or self-renunciation. As soon as we accept this, we are committed to some form of political involvement, since such changes will only come about through secular intervention in the legal framework of society. But intervention presupposes an elite, a sort of priesthood, to whom alone the detailed knowledge of the desirable end has been given. Since only they know the end it follows that they alone can determine the means. Theirs may well be

1. Prof. K. Ward. Address to Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, 1985.

a largely selfless approach. It would be wrong to suppose that all who seek or assume power do so in order to improve their material lot, even though the improvement may be an inevitable by-product of that power. But the Christian remains highly sceptical both of the infallibility of the knowledge and the incorruptibility of the powerful.

Obstacles to realism

There are perhaps three great obstacles to the development of realistic involvement of the western Christian in the political scene, whether on the international, national or local scale. The first is the sense of generalized guilt which arises from being part of the society in which he lives. He is led to believe not only that the society is immoral but amongst the primary causes of its current immoralities are the sins of the forefathers. In the western world these are typified as imperialism and industrialization.

The response to this sense of guilt takes many extreme forms from 'dropping out' to a belief that evil began in Europe some time in the sixteenth century, is still largely the monopoly of the western nations and what corruption has spread to other races is attributable mainly to the west. The first step to realism is an understanding that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and the second is to claim and to operate within that freedom which comes from a knowledge of sins forgiven. To deny the evils that have been and are the by-products of the spread of western capitalism and imperialism would be as foolish as to deny the great benefits which have also been their by-products. History provides few examples of societies which have notably and consistently promoted peace, justice and freedom simultaneously and even fewer which have not been susceptible to corruption or tempted to imperialism during their development. To attempt to measure the overall effect would be to stretch the limits of cost-benefit analysis way beyond all bounds of credibility. But to conclude or to imply that western imperialism is the primary cause of the absence of peace, justice and freedom throughout the world is, to say the least, a very unscriptural view of the nature of man.

The second obstacle to realistic involvement is the belief that any problem can be solved by a combination of money and technology. Since most money and technology originates in the western world this re-inforces the sense of generalized and collective guilt and leads to suggestions for action which are often impracticable and which, even if they were not, would be unlikely to achieve the desired ends. It may be desirable, for many reasons, that we should give up eating meat. But it certainly does not follow that, if we did so,

world wide famine would be eliminated within a few years. It may be desirable, indeed it could scarcely be argued otherwise, that the world should spend much less on armaments but from this it does not follow that sophisticated health centres and hospitals would spring up in a few short years all over the third world, neither does it follow that even if they did the third world would be notably better off. Man does not live by bread alone, even though he cannot live without it. In order to achieve peace, justice and freedom, the third world, just as much as the developed world, desperately needs a spiritual dimension which money and technology make no claim to supply.

But the third and greatest obstacle to realistic Christian involvement is the belief that there is a relatively short term solution to the achievement of these aims and that, once achieved, the solution or the mechanism for maintaining them will be perpetually acceptable. Such a simplistic belief denies God all opportunity for change and eliminates dynamism from the earthly kingdom.

Future shock is nothing new

It is fashionable to assume that the most discussed problems of today such as inflation, unemployment, the welfare state, war, rapid technological change, ecological pollution, and so on, are new and peculiar to this generation. Even if it is grudgingly accepted that history provides some examples of each, it is argued that the rate of change and the scale of problems are now so vastly different that only totally new approaches can solve them. One difficulty is the dearth of totally new approaches, for there are few forms of intervention which have not been tried and found wanting throughout the long history of mankind. One such approach was forcefully enunciated by Marx in his view that there was an inevitable progress from capitalism through communism to the ultimate withering away of the state. Since this was the destiny of mankind anything which impeded the rapid arrival of this destiny was not only counterproductive but also doomed to failure. As societies had to die in order to be resurrected in a higher form then the duty of the truly enlightened was to hasten that resurrection rather than to postpone it by alleviating the sufferings of this present world. In this view mankind can either accelerate or retard the arrival of Utopia, but cannot prevent it.

The second extreme approach is that Utopia arises not through death and resurrection but by logical, controlled progress towards the desired end. This might be called the genetic engineering approach. Given that we know the desired end we so manage the conditions of development that natural forces will thenceforth bring it

about. In this view Utopia can only arrive through the consciously directed efforts of mankind and God can only work through those who proclaim themselves to be His chosen people, since they alone understand his purpose.

A third approach, which equally illustrates the triumph of hope over experience is that mankind in seeking first his own good will, automatically maximizes the good of others.

It is scarcely surprising that echoes of Judaic/Christian thought are to be found in most political theories whether hierarchical or anarchical since, in the end, both religion and politics are profoundly concerned with the relationship of one man to another and hence with the organization of society. History demonstrates that, both in religious and political thought, the greater the intensity of the vision of the 'best' form of society the greater the dehumanization of that society and the greater the degree of intolerance within it.

The majesty of God and the ingenuity of man

The temptation which faces the Christian, justifiably angry and bewildered in a world in which the strong appear to get stronger and the weak weaker (which is perhaps a more accurate and realistic way of expressing the widening gap between the powerful and the powerless than to say that the rich get richer while the poor get poorer) is to assume that an unjust society can be made just simply by altering the power structure. There is little historic justification for believing that a capitalist or a socialist state *per se* is a just state in any meaningful sense, nor in believing that either is, or must become, more just than the other. Neither is there evidence to support the view that a 'religious' state is more just than a secular one. There is grave danger in believing that all of the troubles of this world can be attributed to capitalists or communists, to landlords or multi-national companies or trades unions, or to resistance fighters. From this, it is a small step to argue that—in the name of peace, justice and freedom—the offending category should be eliminated. 'If thine eye offend thee pluck it out'—as Hitler did with the Jews, Stalin did with the Kulaks, the Church has done with heretics.

We all stand in danger of being seduced by the apocalyptic approach. It is so terrifyingly easy. Yet, by its nature, it can only exacerbate the problems which it is supposed to solve. There is no way in which it can be made compatible with peace, justice or freedom. The Christian must begin from a different base. As the Revd. Edward Rogers in 'A Christian Commentary on Communism' writes:-

"The Social Gospel is not a special sub-division for ecclesiastical amateur politicians, nor is it a humanly planned political programme on which a few carefully chosen New Testament texts nestle with the decorative irrelevance of parsley on boiled cod . . . It would be fatally easy to simplify and distort the demand laid upon us . . . by so emphasizing the "this worldly" aspect as to present faith as though it were a reasonable secularism. (Christianity) is indeed, in its wholeness, the alternative to Communism as it is to every plan to restore society without God; but always, to be true to itself, it must depend upon the majesty of God and not the ingenuity of men. For that reason it is not likely to be rapidly accepted.

The world which is frightened of Communism wants a rival short cut to paradise and wants a programme that can be amended . . . to suit local conveniences and prejudices. The Christian can offer no such programme . . . (He) therefore has to walk the razor edge between waiting on God and serving the present age . . . he is a realist who does not expect too much of sinful men. He is aware of the urgent necessity of social reform, is not thrown off balance by disappointment and is more clearly aware of the tangled complexity of the situation. He knows that to work for the second best whilst proclaiming with equal conviction the attainable reality of the best demands a well informed loving kindness . . . he will learn to sympathise with the politician who cannot wait till all are redeemed but must work now with the materials, good or bad, that lie to hand.²

In essence, then, the individual Christian has to try to understand the political and economic realities which underlie the particular problem he is trying to address, he must try to appreciate what motivates those who do not share his view of how a specific problem might be solved and he must have some idea of how his own views appear to those who differ from him. Humility—not deference—is the key note. The arrogance of those who proclaim that no true Christian can possibly oppose the particular party or cause for which they stand is scarcely a helpful starting point.

From rhetoric to realism

Humility is unlikely to be acquired unless one begins to grasp the complexity of any problem. William Blake's assertion that 'he who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars' is often the start of the long march from rhetoric to realism. The taunt so often levelled at the pietistic—that they are so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly-good—can often be equally applied in its obverse to those who claim that the essence of Christianity is the gospel of a

2. Rev. E. Rogers. *A Christian Commentary on Communism*. Wyvern Books. 213, (1959).

heaven on earth. They become so earthly-minded that they equate the Kingdom of God with a political system.

The Revd. Tom Stacey in refuting a view that religious and political leaders have singularly failed to offer the youth of this country something worthwhile to live for says 'politics is not about inspirational leadership . . . it is about arranging things so that the rest of us can get on with our lives together, inspired or otherwise, with a reasonable measure of order. Religion is not, in the first place, about moral uplift and acts of charity. It is about man's relationship with God.'³ He then quotes the NEB version of Proverbs 29:18 'Where no one is in authority the people break loose' and suggests this as a salutary text for both politicians and senior clerics.

If religion is primarily about man's relationship with God, and 'the true aim and purpose of man is to know God and to enjoy Him for ever' then the Christian's involvement in the political process will be directed towards developing a society in which individuals or groups are unlikely to be penalized socially or economically if in their daily lives they try to demonstrate the attributes of the God they are striving to know. Since no two people are likely to have the same understanding of those attributes, any detailed plan for that society is likely to be suspect. Most would agree that the greatness of a nation, in the religious rather than the economic sense, is a reflection of the extent to which its people are both responsible and compassionate, attributes of individuals, not of political institutions. The paradox of trying to legislate for responsibility and compassion by substituting the corporate for the personal is that the legislation tends to create a significant number of irresponsible and selfish people; what is everyone's business rapidly becomes nobody's responsibility.

Peace, justice and freedom are sensitive plants which can suffer as much from well-intentioned intervention as from unrestrained competition. They are only likely to survive in a society in which people neither seek privilege nor envy it, recognise happiness but do not consciously pursue it, do not clamour for rights in greater proportion than they are prepared to accept offsetting responsibilities, are proud of their heritage but humble about their future and recognize that neither the individual nor the institution or organization which they support is an island. The responsible Christian will not create expectations which have no hope of fulfilment, he will be realistic (but not necessarily conservative) in his assessment of what is possible and do his job as effectively as possible with the means which become available to him. Stewardship of natural resources involves

3. Rev. T. Stacey. Letter to the Times, July 10th 1985.

conservation of time and manpower as well as not squandering other natural resources. As a political programme the foregoing, once its implications are understood, is unlikely to win an election, but some form of involvement in the political process does seem to be necessary.

The options in a democracy

Peace, justice and freedom are not conditions but processes and as such they have no final solutions, but it is reasonable to assume that these processes cannot continue in any form of dynamic balance unless certain pre-conditions are met. Not least of these is a consensus that the processes are interdependent, set within finite limits of material abundance and are all desirable as means to the end of knowing God and enjoying him forever. The striving of individuals towards these ends should not be diminished by the view that we are all subordinate to vast collective currents of world affairs. Individuals are, of course, shaped by 'the mysterious currents which move humanity', but equally these collective movements derive their power from the strength or the acquiescence of people within them. F. H. Bradley once wrote 'Personal morality and political and social institutions cannot exist apart. In general, the better the one the better the other.'⁴ So what do we do?

The individual Christian seems to have three choices, each of which appears equally valid and one of which has to be taken if only by default. These choices are not, of course, exclusive to Christians.

First, he may consistently support one political party or pressure group and adhere to it faithfully, whatever he may feel about particular aspects of the way in which it performs, on the grounds that on average it is likely to produce a better balance of peace, justice and freedom than any other. Second, he may say that no group deserves his continuing and unquestioning loyalty; he will support it on some issues but not on others. He may vote differently at each election according as his judgement on past performance and future promises dictates, but within the democratic political system of which he is a part he will lose no chance of urging strongly his views on particular issues. Third, he may say that because politics is about power, because power is corrupting and there are few issues which remain pure once they are taken up by pressure groups, he wants no part in them.

Some side effects of these choices are interesting. In a relatively

4. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, O.U.P. 188, 1927.

evenly balanced party political system, the greater the number of people who take the first choice the less important they become. For if the three parties in the UK, for example, could each count on a solid 30% of the electorate whatever happened, the uncommitted 10% would hold the power. Desirable or not such a state of affairs hardly corresponds with the popular conception of democracy. If the second course is taken, a sufficiently strong pressure group can cause a government to take an unjustifiable step simply in order to remain in power. The third choice, in its attempt to maintain personal purity through non-participation can hasten the corruption of society through failure to protest against the irresponsible use of power.

In practice, most people probably opt for different courses at particular times rather than adhering rigidly to one or another irrespective of circumstance. Rigid adherence can always claim the blessing of consistency and principle—as no doubt did the Pharisees and the inquisitors in the fifteenth century, while those who opt for different courses at different times can claim the blessings of pragmatism and existentialism—as no doubt did Mr Worldly Wise in *Pilgrims Progress* (or would have done if he had had sufficient foresight to coin the word 'existential'.)

Summary and conclusion

At this point we must draw together the three threads of this exposition.

1. The Christian life is one of self-transcendence. (Prof. Ward)
2. To be true to itself, Christianity must depend upon the majesty of God and not the ingenuity of man. (Rev. Edward Rogers)
3. Religion is not . . . about moral uplift and acts of charity but about man's relationship to God. Politics is not about inspirational leadership but . . . (about) arranging a reasonable measure of order.

None of these quotations imply, nor have their authors suggested, that Christians can or should evade involvement in the political process. But it may be fairly inferred that such involvement is conditional, as in any secular activity.

The question to be faced is not how can the Christian put the world to rights but how can he approach, and bring others to approach, the Lord and stoop before God on high? It was the prophet Micah who raised this problem, for if God is transcendent, beyond the range of human experience or reason, it becomes somewhat presumptuous to assume or to infer that our particular blue-print for Utopia is the only

one acceptable to Him. As God said to Job 'Who is this whose ignorant words cloud my design in darkness?' Job can only reply 'I have spoken of things too wonderful for me to know, of great things which I have not understood. I knew Thee then only by report, but now I see Thee with my own eyes. Therefore I melt away. I repent in dust and ashes.'⁵

The danger with our current pre-occupation with the Christian involvement with secular issues—whether they be party politics, nuclear disarmament, liberation movements, anti-communism, animal rights or other causes—is that we lose sight of the majesty of God. In His place we set up an altar to the cause which we have put above all else. It is this danger which is reflected in the words of Shakespeare 'But Man, proud Man, dresst in a brief authority, most ignorant of what he's most assured . . . performs such fantastic deeds before high heaven as make the angels weep.'⁶ A deep consciousness of the majesty of God will call us to walk very humbly in His presence, thereby fulfilling one of Micah's conditions for the approach to Him. We shall see that in the scale of God's assessment our own ingenuity is not necessarily immeasurably higher than that of others who have carefully thought their way through to a different solution. In considering their case we shall have followed the second of Micah's precepts—to deal justly.

Given these two precepts it is difficult for the Christian to adopt any role other than that of an agent of reconciliation. Reconciliation is not a passive concept. It brings differences out into the open. It maintains communication between the opposing sides. It is positive in that it recognizes that there is a problem but also that problems have solutions—often costly ones, seldom final ones, but at least solutions. Confrontation on the other hand is negative since it lessens communication, disguises the true nature of the problem and ultimately leads to conflict from which no solution is possible short of further conflict until the positive course of reconciliation is sought once more. Reconciliation should be the watchword of the Christian's involvement in the bodies which wield social and political power. This is perhaps his hardest task. As Prof. Macquarrie argues, most of these bodies seek to increase polarization as a means of achieving their ends.⁷ Legitimate differences of opinion become hardened into impersonal conflicts as the group becomes swayed by self-interest and seeks to perpetuate itself with a ruthlessness that generally goes far beyond that of individuals acting on their own. It is so much less

5. Job. 38 v.1 (NEB).

6. Shakespeare. *Measure for Measure, Act 2, sc2*.

7. Prof. J. Macquarrie. *The Concept of Peace*. SCM Press, 79, 1973.

spectacular to engage humbly and steadily in pursuit of a solution which will ultimately require reconciliation of opposing views than in joining demonstrations which so often seem designed to provoke confrontation. The unfortunate reality of our time is that party politics and pressure groups are often characterized by carefully contrived intolerance and hatred. It is within that awesome context that a Christian accepts that the price of continuing involvement will almost certainly require endorsement of views and participation in actions which are contrary to his principles.

Micah's third condition for approaching God is to love mercy. The over zealous Christian, faced with a world in which there are so many instances of the lack of peace, justice and freedom, and eager for the social and political change which he sees might remedy this can so easily fall into the same trap as an earlier prophet. Jonah, once he had overcome his initial reluctance to become involved at all, was vastly upset when his target audience listened to his words and repented. God's mercy had put him out of a job and he was furious ('mortally angry' as the NEB puts it). The cause, and his part in it, had become an end in itself. Because he considered his views to be unalterable truth in a rapidly changing world he debarred himself from approaching God on high. No longer did he deal justly, love mercy or walk humbly before his God. He had totally failed to see that time had made ancient good uncouth.

To some this exploration may seem a passive if not a negative approach. But the reality is otherwise. Such an approach requires a rigorous spiritual, intellectual and emotional discipline, evolved for a fast moving spiritual battle in which the targets are seldom those which are apparently so easy to identify and in any case are constantly moving. The Christian must indeed learn, as he intervenes in the worldly structures around him, to be as wise as a serpent and as innocent as a dove in the midst of a perverse and crooked generation. But learn he must for he cannot opt out.

REFORMING FUNDAMENTALISM

FULLER SEMINARY AND THE NEW
EVANGELICALISM
George Marsden

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R. H. Allaway

First and Last Adam

Probably the greatest obstacle to belief in the existence of a benevolent Creator is the presence in the world of so much suffering that cannot be attributed simply to human sin. An earthquake, for example, destroys both good and bad together. Any Christian who wishes to share his faith with others, particularly one who visits people pastorally, cannot avoid grappling with this question.

A common way to absolve God of blame for these things is to blame them all on 'the Fall', to say that man and his world were created perfect, but he 'fell' from this state and brought the rest of creation down with him, by his disobedience recorded in Genesis 3. This concept is embedded so firmly in Western Christian thought that it may surprise some to realize that it is nowhere taught in scripture,¹ as I shall demonstrate later in this article. We may be thankful that it is unscriptural, since this concept raises more problems than it solves.

Theological objections

Quite apart from the question whether a 'perfect' being who can lose that perfection can really be said to be perfect, the traditional view of 'the Fall' raises difficulties for our view of the Incarnation. Did the Son of God take upon himself 'fallen' or 'unfallen' human nature?

Paul's parallelism between Christ and Adam (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 45-49) might suggest he took the 'unfallen' nature that Adam had before he disobeyed. But, if being conceived 'in the likeness of sinful man' (Rom. 8:3) meant that he only *appeared* to be the same as us, but actually was 'unfallen' while we are 'fallen', this would seem perilously close to the 'Docetist' heresy, that denied that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh' (1 John 4:2). How could he have 'been tempted in every way, just as we are' (Heb. 4:15) unless he fought and overcame in the flesh that propensity to sin that is claimed to be the common lot of 'fallen' man?

On the other hand, to affirm that he took upon himself 'fallen' human nature may appear to deny that he was 'without sin', as Edward Irving

1. On Ezek. 28:11-19, the only possible exception, see footnote 1 to R. H. Allaway, *Expository Times* (1986), 97, 108-110.

was accused of teaching (falsely, I believe) when he upheld this view in the last century.² Even greater problems are raised if the classic Augustinian view of the Fall is held, whereby 'fallen' man not only inherits a propensity to sin from Adam, but Adam's guilt.³ In this case, Christ, if sharing our 'fallen' nature, *deserved* to die, so his death was not that of the righteous undeservedly bearing the sins of the unrighteous in their place, and could bring no one forgiveness.

Scientific objections

Contrary to popular thought, the major scientific objections to ideas of a Fall are not theories of human evolution. Darwinian evolution is by no means proven, and, even accepting that Man may have been derived from other animal forms, if being 'in the image of God' means having a capacity to have a relationship with him, which is a straightforward yes-or-no matter, one could postulate a creature who first had such a capacity, who would then be the first 'man'. The historical disobedience of Adam, to sever that relationship, is not, then, incompatible with theistic evolution.

The 'Fall of Man', regardless of whether he is thought of as 'evolved' or 'specially created', is contrary to something far more basic, namely the Laws of Thermodynamics. Human death, like all death, is a consequence of the Second Law, that in any physical process, the total entropy (disorder) of the universe must increase. As Paul observes in Rom. 8:21, the whole of creation is in 'bondage to decay'. Since he says that creation will be set free from that bondage, along with redeemed humanity, at the Parousia, it would presumably follow that, if Man 'fell' into that state, creation fell into it along with him. Such, as has been said, is the classic Western view.

In that case, there could have been no death or decay in the world of nature prior to Adam's disobedience. Yet there self-evidently was such. Even if the entire fossil record is written off as a consequence of the Deluge,⁴ we still have to explain astronomical observations from systems existing ages before man, which appear to be following the Second Law just as in our time. The only way to fit a 'Fall' into this would be to take the 'Omphalos'⁵ argument to an incredible extreme

2. See G. Strachan, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving*, Edinburgh (1973).

3. e.g. Augustine, *The City of God*, 13:14.

4. as in J. C. Whitcomb Jnr. and H. M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, Grand Rapids (1961).

5. Greek for 'navel', which, it is argued, Adam would have had, even though he had never been in a womb. Similarly, trees created fully grown would have had rings as of earlier growth, and so forth.

and argue that God not only created light from distant parts of the universe so that it appeared to have come from objects that had been there for millions of years, when they were only created two days before man, but that he then changed that light on its way, so that it appeared to have come from objects that had been 'fallen' for millions of years, when they only 'fell' shortly before. Such an argument, which turns the whole universe into a gigantic hoax perpetrated by God, makes a mockery of Paul's claim that 'God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made' (Rom. 1:20).

Now let us consider what the Bible actually teaches.

Man in the Bible

It is often assumed that, because Adam was warned, 'You must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die' (Gen. 2:17), he was created inherently immortal, and lost that immortality by his disobedience. He 'fell' from eternal life. Yet we read in Gen. 3:22, 'The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live for ever.' The clear implication of this is that he had not yet 'eaten of the tree of life', had not yet gained immortality. He died the day he disobeyed, in that he lost something potentially coming to him, not something he already had. Man's initial state was one of probation, not perfection.

That life in the Garden of Eden was not intended to be Man's final state was recognized by the speculations of some first century Rabbis. Commenting on Gen. 2:7 (where there are two 'yods' in the Hebrew for 'formed', by contrast with Gen. 2:19, where 'formed' has only one 'yod') it was argued that man had a two-fold formation: one (in common with the animals) 'of earth' in 'this age' and one 'of heaven' belonging to 'the age to come'. This throws light on the meaning of 1 Cor. 15:44f.

If there is an animal body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is also written:

'The first man, Adam, became a living animal;
the last Adam, a life-giving Spirit'

But it is not the spiritual which is first, but the animal, then the spiritual. The first man is of the dust of the earth, the second man is of heaven.⁷

'Of heaven' is not a passing reference to Christ's pre-incarnate

6. see Allaway, *op. cit.*

7. my translation, see *op. cit.*

state, but speaks of the nature of his resurrection body (as in 2 Cor. 5:1–4), the destiny that Adam should have had, but lost for himself and all 'in' him, and which Christ has gained for himself and all 'in' him. (1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

Such appears to have been the view of Christ himself, in Mark 12:25 and parallels. Since man and woman, as created, were ordered to 'be fruitful and increase in number' (Gen. 1:28) and 'become one flesh' (Gen. 2:24), the resurrection state cannot be that in which man was created.

This view of Man's initial state was held by such early Christian apologists as Irenaeus, Tatian and Theophilus, though for another reason.⁸ It was still the view of later theologians, such as Athanasius, who writes in 'De Incarnatione':

He brought them into his paradise and gave them a law, so that, if they kept the grace and remained good they would enjoy the life of paradise, without sorrow, pain or care, in addition to having *the promise of immortality in heaven*.⁹

We may, then, conceive of Man as created a 'perishable' creature in a 'perishable' universe, just as we are now, though protected from its dangers by his fellowship with God in the 'Garden' (as Jesus was able to heal diseases and still the storm),¹⁰ but with the prospect, when he had completed all he was intended to do in this life, of being transformed into a glorified, heavenly, spiritual body, without passing through death, as Christians will be who are alive at the Parousia (John 11:26, 1 Cor. 15:51, 52). He would have had freedom from suffering and the promise of immortality, but only as the gifts of God, conditional on obedience, not as inherent consequences of his created state.

The Son of God became *Man*, just as we are. Yet his perfect obedience in our state meant that he bore death undeservedly in our place. Thus he won for us the destiny of which Adam, by his disobedience, fell-short, and of which all Adam's descendants have fallen-short ever since (Rom. 3:23).

8. They distinguished (incorrectly) between the 'image' and 'likeness' in which God intended to make man in Gen. 1:26. Since he was only created in God's *image* (v. 28), it was argued, the *likeness* was still to come. For references, see Allaway, *op. cit.*

9. Athanasius *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione* e.t. R. W. Thomson, Oxford, 141 (my italics), 1971.

10. The curses on childbearing and the ground in Gen. 3:16–19 are then seen to be curses on Adam and Eve in being expelled from the Garden, so they are then subject to the unpleasant consequences of life in our world, that had been there all along. While Christ, by virtue of his relationship with the Father, could have protected himself from these, he voluntarily chose not to do so, for our sakes.

Creation in the Bible

Someone may ask, 'If the universe in which Man was first created was 'in bondage to decay' just as ours is, and hence imperfect, how could it be said to be 'good' so often in Gen 1? Yet God is said to have pronounced his creation 'good' on every day, even though it was not complete until the sixth day. Even the completed 'good' creation of Genesis 1 is still imperfect, since the night and the sea, though restricted, are still present, but in the 'new heaven and earth' in Revelation 'there will be no more night' (22:5) and 'there was no longer any sea' (21:1). Why should it be 'good' to have present the night and sea, which, in Gen. 1:2 seem to be symbols of darkness and chaos, only one step removed from the Nothing from which God created all things?

Might it not be because God desired to create, not robots, but beings who would freely respond to him in love, who could be adopted as his children? Such a response was only possible in an 'imperfect' world, in which Man, poised between 'light' and 'dark', could have a choice, to 'eat of the tree of life', to humbly turn to the light and grow in God's grace, and finally receive the gift of his eternal life, or to 'eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil', to turn his back on the light, go his own way in pride, and fall back into the darkness, chaos and ultimate non-being from which he was created. Alas, Adam disobeyed, and died, as all 'in Adam' have done ever since, but the eternal Son of God, making within that human nature, that we all share, the filial response to his Father that he had made from all eternity, overcame the same weakness and temptation, that we all face, to gain the gift of eternal life for all 'in him'.

This is not to belittle our present creation. No doubt it was always God's intention, when it had fulfilled its purpose of providing the environment in which he could 'bring many sons to glory' (Heb. 2:10), to deliver it from its 'bondage to decay' to share that glory with them (Rom. 8:21). Though 'subjected to frustration' (Rom. 8:20) by man's disobedience, the resurrection of Christ is the assurance that not only we, but all creation, *will* one day share his glory with him 'that God may be all in all' (1 Cor. 15:28).

A pastoral postscript

I began this article with the problem of suffering. It is not my purpose in the above to explain such suffering away. Job never does find out why he had to suffer, but it is enough for him that he has encountered God in his own experience (42:1-6), and so *knows* the God with whom

he deals. The Christian response to suffering is not to produce some glib answer to explain it, but to point to Christ, in whom we meet the God behind creation, who in his love shared our suffering with us and for us. The great value of this view of Adam's disobedience as a 'fall-short' rather than a 'fall' is that it enables us to see Christ as both truly a 'second Adam' and truly one of us, sharing our human nature as we now experience it.

M. W. Poole

Perspectives on Creationist Apologetics

The 'creationist' movement has arisen as one form of response to a perceived threat to a biblical view of origins. It opposes evolutionary science on grounds of biblical exegesis and of science, and also on general philosophical grounds which include moral ones. Advocates of theistic evolution, on the other hand, see no compelling need, either on biblical or scientific grounds, to oppose current biological thinking.

But how far is the threat felt by the creationist a real one—real, that is, in the sense of being incompatible with biblical Christianity? Certainly the threat has been real enough in terms of the hostile, and sometimes excessive, claims which have been made in the name of evolution. Take for example the pronouncement of the late Sir Julian Huxley, that

'in the evolutionary pattern of thought there is no longer either need or room for the supernatural'¹

or, more recently, Monod's assertion that

'... man at last knows that he is alone in the unfeeling immensity of the universe, out of which he emerged only by chance. Neither his destiny nor his duty have been written down.'²

What is under dispute, though, is not whether some people have made threats, or others have felt under threat. Neither of these can truthfully be denied. Rather it is whether the grounds on which the threats are made can withstand scrutiny. There is a world of difference between a real gun and a replica which temporarily frightens people before its impotence is exposed.

At the very outset it is important to recognize that, in common with the word 'evolution', the terms 'creationism' and 'creationist' carry a

* This paper is based on extracts from the book *Creation or Evolution—a false antithesis?*, published in June 1987 by Latimer House, Oxford, £3.

1. J. Huxley, *Essays of a Humanist* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964) 82.
2. J. Monod, *Chance and Necessity* (Glasgow: Collins/Fontana, 1974) 167.

variety of meanings. In order to minimize confusion a procedure suggested by Roberts³ will be adopted:

Throughout, the term 'Creationist' is used to describe those who hold to a 'Young Earth' i.e. 6000–20000 years old, in contradistinction to those Christians who also believe in Creation (and thus are Creationists) but who take positions which may be termed Progressive or Ancient Creationism or Theistic Evolution.

A disadvantage of the term 'creationism' is that it fails to differentiate between the logically distinct matters of asserting (denying) *divine action* at all and asserting (denying) a *particular theory* of how and when that divine action took place. 'Creation'—as distinct from creationism—will be taken to mean the divine act of 'bringing into being', irrespective of any particular time relationships or specific mechanisms.

A typical compendium of creationist beliefs

This is not a quotation from a creationist source, but a composite piece, made up by collecting together the ideas which commonly appear in creationist literature.

The plain reading of the biblical account of creation requires a short period of six, consecutive '24 hour' days, rather than the thousands of millions of years needed by evolutionary theory. Thus it implies a young earth a few thousand years old, something which is supported by true science, as distinct from orthodox evolutionary thinking, which is not truly scientific. It also implies that many different 'kinds' of plants and animals were separately created in the beginning and are unrelated genetically. The trouble is that our educational system 'brainwashes' trainee scientists into evolutionary ideas. Furthermore, the scientific community's system of refereeing articles submitted for publication prevents any alternative model of origins to the evolutionary one from ever seeing the light of day.

Evolutionary orthodoxy, on the other hand, explains the universe in general—and the earth and man in particular—without reference to God. It replaces the idea of divine creation by chance processes which are wasteful, cruel and which entail the presence of death in the world from the outset. Man is portrayed as wholly continuous with the animals rather than as being uniquely made in the image of God. There is no reference to man as 'a living soul'; he is regarded as nothing but a highly complicated assemblage of atoms and molecules. He is seen as progressing from the common, lowly origin of all living things towards perfection, rather than as having fallen; and his ethical system has evolved naturalistically with him, instead of having been given to him by God. What is more, terrible things

3. M. B. Roberts, 'The roots of creationism', in *Faith and Thought* 112, 1986 (1) 21.

have been done in the name of evolution. Communists, Capitalists and Nazis have all tried to use the idea of 'struggle' to justify, respectively, revolution, cut-throat competition in business, and genocide. Finally—literally finally—an evolutionary view of the world has as its end point the 'heat death' of the universe and takes no account of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ. For reasons like these, no Christian should give credence to evolution.

The above list of central tenets is not exhaustive, nor is there universal agreement among creationists about all these points. In general, however, the points made in the first paragraph are essential to creationism. Those made in the second paragraph seem reasonably to follow if one believes those made in the first, and most creationists accept them.

At this stage it is appropriate to examine the meanings of the concepts *evolution* and *creation* and their associated 'isms', *evolutionism* and *creationism*. This is a necessary prelude to examining whether 'evolution' and 'creation' are alternatives, as creationists claim.

Evolution, Creation and their 'isms'

Evolution

Where the word 'evolution' is used on its own in this text, it should be taken to mean 'organic evolution' as distinct from 'stellar evolution' and 'chemical evolution'. Evolution is the name of a *process* of 'descent with modification'. Everyone is aware that offspring are not exactly the same as their parents and no immediate dissidence arises over this statement. In fact, creationists by and large have no objections to the assertion that evolution occurs on a small scale, although many resist the use of the word 'evolution' and prefer 'microevolution' or 'variation'.

"There is obviously no difficulty in believing that variation leading to microevolution in varieties and near species does occur. The facts point to the correctness of this position, which certainly does not conflict with any part of the scriptural revelation."⁴

The classic example of the *peppered moth* of England, "evolving" from a dominant light coloration, as the tree trunks grew darker with pollutants during the advancing industrial revolution, is the best case in point—[industrial melanism]. This was not evolution in the true sense at all but only variation.⁵

4. A. E. Wilder Smith, *Man's Origin, Man's Destiny* (Illinois: Harold Shaw, 1968) 204.
 5. H. M. Morris, *Scientific Creationism (Public School Edition)* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1974) 51.

'In our discussion of evolution . . . Neither are we referring to "industrial melanism," a case often cited by evolutionists as proof for evolution . . . for this is not evolution at all!'⁶

The comment in the second quotation that this is 'not evolution in the true sense' seems to be a definitional retreat. (A definitional retreat occurs when somebody changes the meaning of a word; in this case the meaning of the word 'evolution' is changed to counter the objection that industrial melanism shows that, at least on a small scale, evolution has occurred.)

What creationists do object to is the theory of large-scale evolution, or 'macroevolution' as it is often called, as distinct from the microevolution referred to above. The former suggests that all living things come from a common ancestor, culminating in man. This creationists see as incompatible with divine creation.

'Christians may quite happily concede that one species of finch might change into another. What they do *not* believe, and must fight with all their strength, is the view that this process can cause changes in the direction of greater complexity.'⁷

In view of the above quotations it is most important to distinguish between

1. the fact of change; 2. the extent of change—micro or macro; 3. the mechanisms of change; and 4. the philosophical ideas associated with the changes.

Failure to differentiate between the concept of evolution as a process of descent with modification and the *mechanism* of evolutionary change, such as natural selection, generates problems. It has led some people mistakenly to believe that evolution has been in doubt whenever Darwin's proposed mechanism (natural selection) has been in doubt. But the important discussions historically have in fact centred on *how* evolution has occurred, not on *whether* it has occurred. This distinction sometimes gets overlooked; which may be illustrated from the following creationist comment:

'There are signs that if we oppose evolution now, we stand a better chance of success than at any time during the last 100 years. One or two non-Christian scientists have recently published articles critical of evolution, and in America people campaigning against evolution are beginning to be a real embarrassment to evolutionists.'⁸

6. D. T. Gish, *Evolution The Fossils Say No!* (2nd ed.) (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1973) 21f.

7. S. Baker, *Bone of Contention: Is Evolution True?* (2nd ed.) (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1976) 5.

8. *Ibid.*, 5.

The last part of this statement is certainly the case! Indeed, a lot of ill-feeling has been caused by creationists among those scientists whose professional debates about the *mechanisms* of evolutionary change have been misrepresented. Such misrepresentations arise through taking passages out of their proper contexts, so giving the impression that the author is disputing *evolution* rather than its *mechanisms*. Other passages which would provide a corrective to the misconception are omitted, with the end result, in some cases, of making it appear that an evolutionary biologist is supporting a creationist position. Not surprisingly, those whose writings have been treated in this way find it intensely irritating. Stephen Jay Gould, of Harvard University writes:

... creationists continually rely upon distortion and innuendo to buttress their rhetorical claim. If I sound sharp or bitter, indeed I am—for I have become a major target of these practices.

I count myself among the evolutionists who argue for a jerky or episodic, rather than a smoothly gradual, change of pace. In 1972, my colleague Niles Eldredge and I developed the theory of punctuated equilibrium ...

Since we proposed punctuated equilibrium to explain trends, it is infuriating to be quoted again and again by creationists—whether through design or stupidity, I do not know—as admitting that the fossil record includes no transitional forms ... Yet a pamphlet entitled: 'Harvard Scientists Agree Evolution Is a Hoax' states: "The facts of punctuated equilibrium which Gould and Eldredge ... are forcing Darwinists to swallow fit [sic] the picture that Bryan insisted on, and which God has revealed to us in the Bible."⁹

The 'embarrassment to evolutionists' referred to in the penultimate quotation may have other reasons than the supposed weakness of evolutionary science. It is an embarrassment which many Christians share!

Evolutionism

It cannot be overemphasized how important it is to distinguish between the *biological* theory of evolution and the *philosophical* ideas which some people have tried to tack on to it, as though they followed from the biology. It is towards these philosophical ideas, I believe, that criticism, Christian and other, is properly targeted.¹⁰ The distinction, often unrecognized, is between *evolution*, a scientific theory and *Evolutionism*, a world-view. This world-view, or interper-

9. S. J. Gould (1984) 'Evolution as Fact and Theory' in A. Montague (ed.) *Science and Creationism* (Oxford University Press, 1984) 123f.

10. M. Midgley, *Evolution as a Religion: Strange hopes and stranger fears* (London: Methuen, 1985).

tation of the world, is anti-Christian and it can be stated, in an extreme form, something like this:

'Mankind has arisen by a series of chance processes from the primaeval slime, by blind and purposeless forces. He is now casting off the undesirable features of his animal origins and progressing towards perfection. A great and indefinite future is in store for him when, through education, science, technology and an equitable distribution of wealth he has learnt to overcome present tensions. Nevertheless, man remains just another animal fighting for the survival of his species; a "naked ape" who is constituted by nothing more than the atoms and molecules which make him up. God is now an "unnecessary hypothesis" for explaining the world, since evolution did it. Neither is God needed as a basis for morality, for other bases are possible, including "evolutionary ethics", and these provide all that is needed. There is no transcendent purpose in life, for the final state of all things will be simply the "heat death" of the universe, when temperatures throughout space will even out to near the absolute zero. However, since this is almost unbelievably far distant, we can for practical purposes forget about it.'

Such a world-view is incompatible with Christianity. It paints a picture of man's emergence by accident as a moral being, rather than as having been purposefully created in the image of God, 'missing the mark' through primal sin and consequently needing a Saviour. It seeks to exchange God-given moral law for an ethical system claimed to be derivable from evolution and it includes no reference to final accountability and judgement. Atheistic world-views have, of course, been around long before evolutionary ideas were extant, but here they are erroneously claimed to emerge from evolution, rather than being read into it. Evolution has been welcomed and borrowed in the mistaken view that it is an ally for atheism.

Many Christians have recognized the incompatibility of this evolutionary world-view and said, rightly, 'We cannot let this go unchallenged.' The creationist movement, despite differences within its ranks, is one positive response of this kind. However, it can be argued that it is the philosophical accretions of evolutionary theory, rather than evolutionary theory itself, which are anti-theistic. Such philosophical system-building is parasitic upon evolutionary theory, and attempts to establish the one from the other involve errors of logic. Some Christian writers do not seem to have appreciated the 'logical Grand Canyon' between the science and the philosophical systems which purport to be based on it. Take, for examples, the following creationist statements:

Our whole society has in fact been influenced by the evolutionist outlook that there is no Creator, that Man is continually progressing and that his

bad behaviour is simply the remnant of his animal past. Such views are based on the supposed 'fact' of evolution.¹¹

... if evolution were merely a scientific theory affecting the interpretation of the data of biology, geology and astronomy, we would not be too concerned about it. Assuming that the problem of harmonising evolutionary history with the Biblical revelation of origins could be satisfactorily worked out (actually, of course, as we shall see later, such a harmonization is quite impossible), most Christians would be quite content to leave the subject to these scientists to work out ... But ... evolution has intruded itself into every area of life. It has become the basic undergirding philosophy of all the social sciences, the humanities, and even the study of religion itself, so that it is impossible to ignore its implications.¹²

In the first quotation the writer has erroneously assumed that evolutionary biology provides a secure base for such assertions. The last word of the second quotation, 'implications', is the key word there. Had the writer used the word 'associations' instead, there would have been no quarrel with what he had said. Certainly all the ideas which he has listed have been, and are, *associated* by some people with evolution. But it can be argued that the anti-Christian views which are sometimes developed within certain disciplines are not themselves *implied* by evolution.

Creation

Creation is a theological concept, not a scientific one. As such, 'creation' is in a different category of concepts from 'evolution'. 'Creation' is the divine *act* of 'bringing into being'. The concept is neither tied to a particular mechanism nor to time. When Christians affirm that 'God created the heavens and the earth' they mean that everything that there is owes its being to God. In the opening words of John's gospel 'Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made'¹³—the writer is referring here to Jesus Christ as the agent of creation.

Creationism

The key ideas have already been given and they fall into two distinct parts. One is the belief in divine creation, as defined above. The other is a 'package' of beliefs about particular time scales and mechanisms.

Creation and/or evolution

There are two grounds on which evolution might have to be rejected by a person who holds to the biblical view of God as Creator:

11. Baker, *op. cit.*, 1f.

12. H. M. Morris, *The Twilight of Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House) 16.

13. John 1:3, NIV.

1. evolution might be *necessarily* incompatible with the idea of divine creation

2. evolution might be contradictory to creation if the biblical texts unequivocally deny such a process.

1. Evolution would be *necessarily* incompatible with divine creation if, say, one conceded claims about evolution like the one given below:

... the theory or idea of evolution teaches that all things happen by chance ... it supposes that everything happens by accident. There is no reason or purpose behind the universe. There is no guiding hand, no plan, in evolution.¹⁴

That is to say, if you accepted the above assertion you could not believe both in evolution and in creation without involving yourself in a contradiction. However, it is one thing to acknowledge that assertions like these are sometimes made by non-Christians, but quite another uncritically to accept them. In actual fact they do not withstand scrutiny. Evolution is a scientific concept and science is concerned with the physical world. Statements about 'God', 'plans', 'purposes' or 'guiding hands' of the 'hybrid' sort given above are outside of its terms of reference. Science leaves entirely open the question as to whether or not there is a God who initiates and sustains processes. It can neither affirm nor deny God's existence. Evolution may or may not be the process which God designs to fulfil his purposes. If it were not for Genesis Chapter 1, the problem would not arise. Evolution would just be one of the many processes that God uses to accomplish his purposes.

Furthermore, the *process* of evolution cannot be treated as though it were an alternative to the *act* of creation, as though as to suggest that a description of the process denies the act! Acts, and the processes involved in these acts, belong to different categories of concepts. They cannot be held to be alternatives. Thus there is no *logical* contradiction involved in believing both in creation and in evolution. Matters are further compounded by writers using the terms 'creation' and 'special creation' interchangeably. 'Creation' means the act of God in 'bringing into being', irrespective of particular time-scales or mechanisms. The term 'special creation' takes a variety of meanings and is typically used to describe ... 'the belief that God in some way *directly* intervened in the order of nature to originate each new species.'¹⁵

14. E. H. Andrews, *From Nothing to Nature* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1978) 3.

15. N. C. Gillespie, *Charles Darwin and the Problem of Creation* (University of Chicago Press, 1979) 20f.

So there are possibilities for misunderstandings when, for example, the book, *The Truth: God or Evolution?* states that one of its goals

'... is to point out that there are only two theories which attempt to explain the origin of all life—Evolution and Creation—and that the discrediting of one of these (Evolution) logically proves the other (Special Creation).'¹⁶

The stated 'goal' is flawed. If the word 'Creation' means 'bringing-into-being-by-God', then it is wrong (Fallacy of the Excluded Middle) to try to persuade readers that they have to choose between two alternatives when, in fact, a third position is possible, that of accepting creation *and* evolution. However, since the term 'special creation' is added in parentheses, this is presumably what is intended to be understood by the word 'creation'. But then the goal is still defective since 'discrediting ... Evolution' does not 'logically prove' Special Creation. The quotation illustrates the failure to recognize that the words 'evolution' and 'creation' operate at different logical levels. One is a process, the other is an act. The alternative to evolution (a scientific concept) is not creation (creation is not a scientific concept) but some other *process* like the once popular 'spontaneous generation'. Thus it is not true to say that

'... whatever the difficulties in believing the theory [of evolution] ... they are incomparably less than the difficulties involved in rejecting the theory, since that would imply special creation ...'¹⁷

The demise of evolutionary ideas and the replacement of current views of an ancient universe by a young earth would not imply God's activity any more, or any less, than does the current picture. One cannot argue to theistic conclusions (divine creation) from non-theistic premisses (the age of the earth). All one can say is that a young age for the earth is consistent with one view of the Genesis text. No valid argument, which forces one to believe in God, can be constructed from any particular view of the age of the earth. There is room left to wriggle.

What the scriptures do declare is that

'Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.'¹⁸

So, the theist will see the universe as God's handiwork, while the

16. M. & S. Hall, *The Truth: God or Evolution?*, FOREWORD (New Jersey: Craig Press, 1974).

17. N. M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1983) 14.

18. Romans 1:20 RSV.

atheist will not see it as such. People who give anti-evolution talks, thinking that those whom they convince will have to believe in creation, are pursuing a logically defective goal—as some have come to realize. Biblical diagnoses about human nature¹⁹ might have suggested that it probably would not be quite so easy as that.

One other way in which evolution could be *necessarily* incompatible with creation by the God of the Bible would be if we knew without doubt that the mechanisms of evolutionary change were such that no God who claimed to be good could use them without contradicting his own nature. But the point is open to debate, and we are not in a position to know this with certainty. Undeniably there is predation in nature, but there is also altruism; and alongside parasitism must be set symbiosis. Tennyson's 'Nature, red in tooth and claw' is an overstatement. This is not to belittle the moral dilemmas posed by animal and human pain, just to say that it is a grey area in which postulated evolutionary processes cannot be said to be necessarily at variance with the revealed character of God. In the biblical view, it is God, through his Son, who is 'upholding all things by the word of his power',²⁰ fallen world as it is, and nature currently includes predation and pain.

Arguments from incompatibility are in favour with many creationists. Nigel Cameron, for example, makes an incompatibility argument the main thrust against evolution in his *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*. It is an area of apologetics which perhaps needs yet more working over.

2. Having pointed out that creation and evolution are not alternative concepts and are not *necessarily* compatible, we turn to the question of whether evolutionary theory is irreconcilable with the biblical records, as creationists claim.

'... the Bible and evolution contradict each other.'²¹

'... such a harmonization [of "evolutionary history with the Biblical revelation of origins"] is quite impossible ...'²²

Central to any examination of these assertions are hermeneutical questions about the literary *genre* of the early chapters of Genesis, and far too many creationist writers make no mention at all of this key issue, or else dismiss it cursorily by stating, rather than justifying, their own position. This is a serious omission, for the question of literary *genre* constitutes a central issue in the whole discussion of origins:

19. Jeremiah 17:9.

20. Hebrews 1:3.

21. Andrews, *op. cit.*, 4.

22. H. M. Morris, *The Twilight of Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963) 16.

'What kind of literature is it that we are dealing with?' It is not even a simple matter of deciding into which single category—history, sermon, allegory, parable, poetry—it falls. For much of the Bible is a blend of history and symbolism. It is often not a matter of either/or but of both/and. We show no more respect for the Word of God when we insist on literalism, if symbolism is intended, than we do by treating historical narrative, intended as such, as only symbolic.

When considering literary *genre* we have to be careful to avoid the error of thinking that to say a part of Scripture is not to be read as literal history, is somehow to downgrade its status. 'To take things literally' is such an ambiguous phrase that it has caused a lot of unnecessary tensions. If it means that everything is to be treated at face value, it quickly leads to nonsense with texts like 'the valleys also are covered with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.'²³ On 'taking things literally', C. S. Lewis once commented that

'The material imagery [of the Bible] has never been taken literally by anyone who had reached the stage when he could understand what "taking it literally" meant.'²⁴

Abuses of 'taking it literally' when it is symbolic can be matched with abuses of 'taking it symbolically/metaphorically' when it was meant literally, and Lewis commented on this error as well.

'Some people when they say that a thing is meant "metaphorically" conclude from this that it is hardly meant at all. They might think that Christ spoke metaphorically when he told us to carry the cross: they wrongly conclude that carrying the cross means nothing more than leading a respectable life and subscribing moderately to charities. They reasonably think that hell "fire" is a metaphor—and unwisely conclude that it means nothing more serious than remorse. They say that the story of the Fall in *Genesis* is not literal; and then go on to say (I have heard them myself) that it was really a fall upwards—which is like saying that because "My heart is broken" contains a metaphor, it therefore means "I feel very cheerful". This mode of interpretation I regard, frankly, as nonsense.'²⁵

There is a real danger in reading the Bible that we may unconsciously and misleadingly be reading the ancient text through twentieth-century Western scientific spectacles. A remarkable example of this is furnished by one creationist writer who, by contrast with the scientific community at large, thinks the universe is contracting, rather than expanding:

23. Psalm 65:13 AV.

24. C. S. Lewis, *Miracles—A Preliminary Study* (London: Bles, 1947) 95.

25. *Ibid.*, 95.

It may be objected that the Bible refers to the heavens as being "stretched out like a curtain" (Psalm 104:2) or "spread out as a tent to dwell in" (Isaiah 40:22; 42:5; 44:24) and the idea of cosmic contraction would thus be against the Scriptural affirmation . . . However, this paper takes no exception to the idea of the whole fabric of the heavens being stretched out instantaneously at the moment of Creation of matter at the beginning of the first Day, and then being maintained in that "stretched out" condition through the remainder of the six Days of Creation. On the 7th Day when God rested, the whole universe was left to obey the physical Laws that had been "built-in-" [*sic*] and the fabric of space, having been stretched out, then begins to pull together and collapse, in the same sense as a stretched out rubber band does when released.²⁶

Evolution—the question of its scientific status

Opposition to evolution has been mounted, not only on what are claimed to be biblical grounds, but also by claiming that it does not constitute a science. One approach has been to say that the essence of science is the repeatability of experiments. Since evolution is not repeatable, so the argument goes, it cannot be said to be a science and therefore should not be taught as such:

‘. . . it is manifestly impossible to prove scientifically whether evolution took place or not . . . the events are non-reproducible and, therefore, not legitimately subject to analysis by means of the so-called "scientific method".’²⁷

Geology, as might be expected, comes under a similar attack. The writers of *The Genesis Flood* preface their book by saying

‘. . . we do not presume to question any of the data of geological *science*. Science (meaning "knowledge") necessarily can only deal with *present* processes, which can be measured and evaluated at the present time; the "scientific method" by definition involves experimental reproducibility. Thus extrapolation of present processes into the prehistoric past or into the eschatological future is not really science.’²⁸

Such an approach is deficient in a number of ways. Repeatability is certainly important in science, but as a criterion of demarcation between science and non-science it is inadequate. It fails to take into account the distinction between the so-called *nomothetic* sciences, which aim to establish general laws describing indefinitely repeatable events and the *ideographic* sciences which are concerned with

26. B. Setterfield, *The Velocity of Light and the Age of the Universe* (Adelaide: Creation Science Association, 1983) 110.

27. H. M. Morris, *The Twilight of Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963) 29.

28. J. C. Whitcomb & H. M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1966) xxvi.

understanding and explaining unique events such as the origin of species and the formation of our solar system.²⁹ It is quite arbitrary, not to say odd, to stipulate a demarcation criterion between science and non-science which excludes disciplines like biology, geology and cosmology from science, simply because they have an historical (and therefore unrepeatable) element to them. Cosmology is, after all, one of the oldest sciences.

Many people today accept that the philosopher of science, Karl Popper is right in principle in saying that science is concerned with testability. It must be possible to specify, in principle, what data would corroborate a theory and what would falsify it. If there are, in principle, no data which could conceivably count against a theory, then along with Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism, it would count as non-science, according to Popper. On his demarcation criterion for distinguishing between science and non-science, anything which is unfalsifiable-in-principle falls into the category of non-science. With reference to Popper's view of science, however, it is not uncommon for creationist writers to make a second kind of attack on the scientific status of evolution by claiming that evolutionary theory *is* untestable and unfalsifiable-in-principle. For example

'... man can never test this theory because its workings can never be observed by human beings.'³⁰ [untestable]

'Evolution ... is not subject to test by the ordinary methods of experimental science—observation and falsification. It thus does not, in a strict sense, even qualify as a 'scientific theory.'³¹ [untestable and unfalsifiable].

Thus, by Popper's definition, evolution certainly cannot be classed as a true scientific theory.³² The difficulty about these claims is that they boomerang because they are inconsistent with other major goals set in many creationist writings. For the bulk of such literature is devoted to trying to show that when evolutionary theory is tested, it *is* found to be false. But if evolution is non-testable and non-falsifiable, this cannot be done and the effort is wasted. Such attacks are mutually incompatible. They involve a having-your-cake-and-eating-it position and, of course, you can't do both without becoming involved in self-contradiction.

Evolutionists, as might be expected, do not regard their theory as

29. E. Nagel, *The Structure of Science* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) 547ff.

30. E. H. Andrews, *Is Evolution Scientific?* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1977) 19f.

31. D. T. Gish, *Evolution The Fossils Say No!* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1973) 8.

32. M. Bowden, *The Rise of the Evolution Fraud* (Bromley: Sovereign Publications, 1982) 155.

insulated against possible falsification and some of them are prepared to lay down what they would regard as falsification criteria. For instance, as one writer puts it:

'... the hypothesis of evolution *is* falsifiable by a thousand conceivable observations, for example, finding *Australopithecus* bones in strata from the Mesozoic Era. Evolution, therefore, might be a false hypothesis'.³³

It is, however, simplistic to expect that inconsistencies in major scientific theories cause these theories to be rejected immediately. History does not bear this out. Such a belief is known as *naive falsificationism* as distinct from what is called *sophisticated falsificationism*.

But there is a second hidden boomerang for creationists who follow this notion of falsifiability. For if potential falsifiability is taken as the demarcation criterion between science and non-science or pseudo-science, then where does 'creation science' stand? If 1. 'creation science' has something to do with 'creation'; and 2. 'We cannot discover by scientific investigations anything about the creative processes used by God'³⁴; and 3. 'In a pseudo-science, no experiment which would finally refute a theory can be made ...'³⁵ ... then 'creation science' is unfalsifiable-in-principle and therefore not science, but pseudo-science. Furthermore, to pick up the quotation in 3, a few paragraphs later, if

'The pseudo-scientist ... will only look for evidence which will confirm his ideas, and should he be faced with contrary evidence, will simply provide secondary theories in order to explain them away.'³⁶

... how can the creationist escape the charge of being a pseudo-scientist? The above words were in fact penned about Charles Darwin, but he did extensively draw attention to possible objections to his theory.

A third approach to discrediting the scientific status of evolution has been to quote remarks made by Popper. For example, an article in *New Scientist* publicized a passage from Karl Popper's autobiography, *Unended Quest* in which he said

'I have come to the conclusion that Darwinism is not a testable scientific theory, but a metaphysical research programme ... Now to the degree

33. G. Hardin, 'Scientific Creationism'—Marketing Deception as Truth', in A. Montague (ed.), *Science and Creationism* (Oxford University Press) 165, 1984.

34. D. T. Gish, *Evolution The Fossils Say No!* (San Diego: Creation-Life Publishers, 1973) 25.

35. Bowden, *op. cit.*, 156.

36. *Ibid.*, 156.

that Darwinism creates the same impression [—that an ultimate explanation has been reached], it is not so very much better than the theistic view of adaptation'.³⁷

Quotations like these, in conjunction with the status of Popper as a philosopher, have been seized upon to support anti-evolutionary ideas. What seems to get overlooked is Popper's letter published in *New Scientist*, a few weeks later, in which he said

... some people think that I have denied scientific character to the historical sciences. . . . This is a mistake, and I here wish to affirm that these . . . have in my opinion scientific character: their hypotheses can in many cases be *tested*.

It appears as if some people would think that the historical sciences are untestable because they describe unique events. However, the description of unique events can very often be tested by deriving from them testable predictions or retrodictions.³⁸

Criticisms of the power of evolutionary theory to explain data are part of the bread-and-butter of biologists and philosophers of biology. To pursue a Popperian approach, one does not try to shore up a theory in order to practice science, one tries to knock it down. Its weaknesses are exposed by criticizing it. Then, if the theory escapes disproof (falsification) in a fair test, it stands corroborated and is allowed to retain its position in the catalogue of scientific theories accepted for the time being. There is, as already indicated, a lot more to this notion of conjectures and refutations than such a lightning sketch suggests.

Quite apart from the scientific and philosophical aspects of evolutionary theory, it is sometimes the case that biologists—and others—espouse evolution with a zeal fired by personal, rather than scientific reasons. In Sir Julian Huxley's obituary, Sir Peter Medawar wrote,

... so great was Huxley's enthusiasm for the idea of evolution that he came in his later years to treat evolutionism as a sort of secular religion.³⁹

Like others in his family, Julian Huxley was an outstanding biologist, but he was taken to task by the philosopher Anthony Flew, writing from a non-Christian perspective, for his unjustifiable excursions into a philosophy which did not follow from the biology.

A fourth attack has been mounted on the scientific status of evolution by making an issue of the word 'theory', treating it as though

37. B. Halstead, 'Popper: good philosophy, bad science?', in *New Scientist* 1980, 87 215.

38. K. R. Popper, in 'Letters', *New Scientist* 1980, 87 611.

39. P. Medawar, Obituary—Sir Julian Huxley, *Nature* 1975, 254 4.

it were univocal. But it is not. The word is used in discussions about evolution in phrases like, 'Oh that's just a theory', to suggest that it is uncertain, or mere speculation. But this is not the only use of the word. One philosophical dictionary⁴⁰ lists four meanings. Of these, the third, 'A unified system of laws or hypotheses, with explanatory force' is much closer to the meaning of the way the word is used when referring to the 'theory of evolution'—or for that matter, the theory of gravitation. The fact that we often speak in abbreviated form of 'evolution' or 'gravitation' does not mean we have forgotten that these theories are corrigible, like any other scientific theories, in the light of new data.

A fifth, and rather curious attempt to deny scientific status to evolution amounts to a matter of semantics:

'... The fact is ... that "evolution" as such is not itself a recognized science. A student cannot graduate in such a subject or even, generally, take a course of university lectures in the field.'⁴¹

To deny scientific status to evolution because you 'cannot graduate' in it is to use words in quaint ways. As a Christian Professor of Genetics points out

... evolution is not a subject in its own right but a synthesis of disciplines as wide as biology itself: anatomy and anthropology; biometrics and biochemistry; ecology and ethology; genetics and geology; physiology and phylogeny; and so on. Few people can adequately cover this span, and ... virtually all the criticisms about evolution since Darwin first put forward his ideas have come from genuine misunderstandings.⁴²

Evolution is the underpinning principle of biology. It is, to use Kuhn's expression, the paradigm within which biologists work. But you graduate in 'biology', or some similar term. The odd nature of the use of language in this fifth criticism is highlighted if we replace the word 'evolution' by 'gravitation'. The assertion then becomes 'The fact is ... that "gravitation" as such is not itself a recognized science. A student cannot graduate in such a subject ...' Now of course you don't get bachelor's degrees in gravitation any more than you do in evolution. Gravitation is the underpinning principle of astronomy, as

40. A. R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976) 110.

41. E. H. Andrews, *Is Evolution Scientific?* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1977) 2.

42. R. J. Berry, *Neo-Darwinism*, The Institute of Biology's Studies in Biology no. 144 (London, Edward Arnold, 1982) 1.

43. S. Baker, *Bone of Contention: Is Evolution True?* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1976) 28.

evolution is of biology. But you are awarded, say, a BSc Honours degree in Astronomy, not gravitation; in Biology, not evolution.

Fog Warning!

Many of the issues involved in a study of creation and evolution are complex. But apart from the unavoidable difficulties inherent in exploring a complicated topic, there is an additional and unnecessary one. Some writings tend to enshroud in fog, issues which are nothing like so uncertain as they are made to sound. This smoke screen often seems to take the form of asserting that, since there are *some* unanswered questions or anomalies about current professional views in biology, geology or cosmology, therefore *all* is built on insecure foundations and open to serious doubt. There is a need to be alert to the sweeping nature of such claims, examples of which are given below. Such literary devices come close to being 'arguments from ignorance', in which a lack of knowledge about the weight of evidence is used to imply that the opposite is the case. Science is 'unfinished business' and all of its branches have their own collections of problems, inconsistencies and apparent paradoxes. This does not mean that they are all in disarray and thoroughly untrustworthy in the way that the examples below tend to imply.

1. *Biology*

'When the theory of evolution was first put forward, it seemed to some scientists to be a reasonable theory and they therefore set out to test it. The evidence collected over the past 100 years, however, does not support that theory and in fact shows it to be quite unacceptable.'⁴³

'It is not too difficult to demonstrate that the entire concept of evolution is not only anti-Biblical but also utterly unscientific.'⁴⁴

It may be wondered why academic biologists all over the world, Christians and non-Christians alike, are pursuing successful ('progressive') research programmes within an evolutionary paradigm.

2. *Geology*

'... uranium dating is untrustworthy, and potassium-argon dating has large question marks against it. How, under such conditions, can an 'accepted' age of the earth be fixed at all?'⁴⁵

'... uniformitarian geology is based upon a less secure scientific

44. H. M. Morris, *The Twilight of Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963) 28.
45. Baker, *op. cit.* 23.

foundation than is normally admitted. Radiometric dating is far more problematical than most people appreciate and the old geological column (based upon arbitrary sedimentation rates) remains the touchstone of geological time. This time-scale is, on scientific considerations alone, likely to be greatly exaggerated. Although, therefore, the uniformitarian approach is the simplest, it is scientifically insecure. The facts of observation are equally consistent with a "young earth" interpretation.⁴⁶

With reference to the first quotation, the pitfalls to be avoided in uranium-lead and potassium-argon dating are well known by geochronologists. But to suggest that, in the absence of these methods of dating, no estimates of the age of the earth can be arrived at, is perverse. On the matter of uniformitarianism, referred to in the second quotation, comments have already been made. The last sentence is at complete variance with the informed consensus of academic geologists.

3. *Cosmology*

One of the intractable problems for a young-earth view is a consequence of the enormous distances of the fixed stars and the finite velocity of light. It arises because, given that light travels at 300,000 kilometres per second *in vacuo*, the light which reaches us and enables us to see distant stars as stars, left them far longer ago than the maximum of 20,000 or so years that recent creationists maintain. Hence creationists have tried to show: 1. that light could have reached us more quickly than is currently thought; either because of the configuration of space or because light travelled more quickly in the past; and/or 2. that the farthest stars are relatively near, say closer than 20,000 light-years, as suggested below.

It needs to be remembered that the vast distances quoted are not known with certainty. This point is illustrated by the controversy over the position in the universe of the quasars. While most astronomers believe that some of these objects are as much as 10 billion light years away, some have always maintained that they are in fact quite close to us. Recent evidence supporting the latter position is quoted in an article in the *New Scientist* (Vol. 68, p. 513), where we are told that "The whole of quasar theory is built up from so little direct evidence . . . that it is possible that all these ideas are wrong." Caution is thus needed when considering the ages and distances claimed by modern astronomy.⁴⁷

The impression given by writing of this kind is that astronomical distances are so uncertain that they could just as well be as small as

46. E. H. Andrews, *God, Science and Evolution* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1980) 127.

47. Baker, *op. cit.* 27.

creationists require. If one goes to the actual reference, it turns out to be a one and a half column speculation entitled 'Could quasars be local after all?' Written eleven years ago, and referring to some earlier experiments, it raised the question whether quasars are closer to us than was then thought. The 600 word report raised a perfectly reasonable question—and did little more. It came to no conclusions and quasi-stellar objects (QSO's) are still believed to be among the most distant objects in our universe. The quoted comment 'that it is possible that all these ideas are wrong' refers only to quasar theory and has not since been substantiated. It does not refer to *all* stellar distances. But even if the quasars did turn out to be local, it leaves untouched the enormous distances of the vastly more numerous heavenly bodies which are not QSO's.

Our final example of a sweeping generalization, which concerns no less a subject than the laws of science themselves.

4. *The laws of science*

So fundamental to science and so well-attested is the invariance of the velocity of light that physicists are inclined to wince at suggestions that it might have changed with time. But even more astonishing is the comment that

'It is interesting to notice that the fixity of the fundamental laws of science is no longer accepted, even by scientists, with the assurance that it once was.'⁴⁸

and again,

'Recent scientific thinking, though speculative, admits that even the basic laws of physics may not be immutable in time. If this line of thinking is ever confirmed it would provide independent evidence of miraculous (non-contemporary) process in nature.'⁴⁹

We need to be clear about what is being suggested. Scientific laws, like Boyle's law and Ohm's law describe what is found to happen in the natural world. If they turn out not to be good descriptions, they have to be changed to accommodate the more accurate data. This is all part of the scientific enterprise. But the writer is not referring to that. He is implying that the fundamental laws of the physical world, imperfectly described by science, might be changing. Such a suggestion is quite breathtaking. If the assumption that the 'underlying laws of physics' are invariant (uniformity) is abandoned, as distinct from our imperfect scientific laws which

48. E. H. Andrews, *God, Science and Evolution* (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1980) 126.

49. *Ibid.*, 127.

describe them, then science stops instantly. It cannot be practised. The world would be chaotic, not orderly. As such, it would not be amenable to generalizations about regular behaviour. Furthermore, any changing of the laws of physics with time would certainly not 'provide independent evidence of miraculous (non-contemporary) process in nature' except in the tautologous (and trivial) sense of being entailed by the writer's definition of 'miracle'. From 1. his statement 'By definition, a miracle involves the supplanting of natural process and physical law';⁵⁰ and 2. his suggestion that the laws of physics may vary with time; it might appear possible that 3. many more events could be classed as miracles.

But there is a very high price to pay for this appearance of possibility. If the laws of physics are not invariant, the fixed baseline that enables us to know when 'the supplanting of . . . physical law' has taken place has been removed. Thus there is no way of knowing whether a miraculous event has occurred or not. The word 'miracle' has been evacuated of meaning.

Two sentences, taken from the *New Scientist*, are all that is offered in support of this inordinate notion of the mutability of scientific laws. They are

It is crucial to our existence that the nuclear force is stronger than the electromagnetic force. If these forces had the same strength in the heat of the "big bang", as some theories predict, then the electromagnetic force weakened, and the nuclear force strengthened as the Universe cooled, yielding the forces experienced today.⁵¹

On referring back to the *New Scientist* it turns out that the quotation was a caption beneath a diagram illustrating the balance between the fundamental forces of nature, without which balance we should probably not be here. The article was about elementary particles and the origins of matter in the 'Hot Big Bang' at temperatures almost beyond our imagination. To suggest that speculations about how the fundamental forces of nature might have related before and after the first 10^{-35} of a second of the Big Bang could justify saying that 'the fixity of the fundamental laws of science is no longer accepted, even by scientists, with the assurance that it once was', is grossly misleading.

Postscript

'Only a very great and generous mind can champion truth and point out

50. *Ibid.*, 99.

51. F. Close, 'Particles play the generation game', in *New Scientist* 1979, 84 703.

the invalidity of established tenets without being carried away by a crusading zeal into injustice to some sound insight underlying the more patent absurdities.⁵²

A quotation like this is a good one to try to keep in mind when making a critique of this kind. My intention has been to highlight a few of 'the more patent absurdities' in the hope that these may quietly disappear from the debate. At the same time I have made a constant effort not to be 'carried away by a crusading zeal into injustice to some sound insight'. But lest it should seem that creationism has received overmuch criticism in its attempts to provide a biblical reply to evolutionism let me rehearse some of those sound insights which the creationist movement stands for.

It has rightly drawn attention to the fact that there is a world-view which claims evolution as its justification. But where atheism attempts to use evolution as a crutch, the crutch needs to be shown to be unable to provide such support. Creationists have also stood firm for biblical inspiration, as I do myself. They have re-emphasized that science is not static but dynamic and changing. Rightly have they sought to take the Christian challenge into the debating chamber and the media. They have reiterated that man is sinful and has a tendency to look for possible ways of justifying those courses of action which appeal to him and excusing those darker deeds for which he wishes to avoid blame. Furthermore, they have stressed that this is a created world, arising from the plans and purposes of God, not from a cosmic accident. As such, it exists for the glory of God. Nevertheless, I have a grave sense of disquiet about a great deal of the creationist apologetic. My feelings of unease have grown, rather than diminished, while researching the literature.

Many staunch evangelicals are very concerned about this. To say that the integrity of the writings is very much open to question is not in any way intended to imply intentional dishonesty or deception by any writers. But the lack of logical soundness in the arguments, the factual inaccuracy of the data and the inconsequent nature of so many of the conclusions which are drawn are deeply disturbing. Equally disquieting is the way in which snippets of material from standard scientific sources are brought together and claimed to furnish authoritative support from recognized professionals for a young-earth position. Frequently, these extracts turn out to be improperly understood and taken out of context. Extensive references are given, in such

52. S. Ratner, 'Evolution and the Rise of the Scientific Spirit in America', in A. Montagu (ed.) *Science and Creationism* (Oxford University Press, 1984) 411.

creationist writings, particularly to in-house publications. Where standard scientific works and popular science journals are quoted they do not always appear, when traced back to their sources, to bear out the conclusions which are claimed to follow from them. Often it seems to be the case that the intentions of the original authors have been misunderstood. All this is a matter for grave concern, given the Christian commitment to truth and the responsibility which writers have to other people who go to them for information. If one goes to a well-stocked Bible shop one usually finds many volumes of this kind of literature under the 'Science and Christianity' section. Many of the publications come from America, but a growing number, following the same general pattern, come from British writers. Their style is similar and the subject matter repetitious.

The worrying question is, what message is being communicated? If it is that the Bible is to be believed because of creationist writings like these, then trouble lies around the corner, at least for some Christians; it may well be those Christians whose 'faith' is strengthened because they uncritically accept what they read or hear, not being in a position to check out the subject matter. It is especially likely to cause problems for students who will find their studies in biology, geology, astronomy and a host of other disciplines to be completely at variance with much of what is said in creationist writings. If such students are firmly convinced that the creationist position is a faithful reflection of the Bible then they are likely to 1. abandon their studies; or 2. abandon beliefs in the trustworthiness of Scripture; or 3. live in a state of uneasy, perhaps paralysing, tension.

Some of these students experience strong pressures within their churches, even to the extent of being told that, to be a good evangelical, they have to adopt an anti-evolutionary stance. For one young convert, who was referred to Paul's letter to the Philippians, it was called 'bowing the knee'. For another, the unChristian condition imposed upon him, for continuing as a member of his House Church, was that he should accept the teachings of *The Genesis Flood*. For a young Christian—and for some older ones too—the following kind of equivocation can be very confusing:

'The Christian therefore cannot be an evolutionist; he can only be a creationist. For a Christian to reject that God is the Creator is to deny one of the fundamental truths, and hence the authority of Scripture.'⁵³

53. A. J. M. White, *What About Origins?* (Newton Abbot: Dunestone Printers, 1978) 13.
54. H. M. Morris, *The Twilight of Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), 13. f.

The potential confusion arises because of the ambiguity implicit in the word 'creationist'. For while it is true to say that 'all creationists believe in creation', it is not true to say 'all and only creationists believe in creation'; other Christians do as well. For the reasons spelt out earlier, there is no logical—and in many Christians' view no biblical—contradiction in an 'evolutionist' believing in creation. Creationism is a 'package' consisting of a belief in divine creation plus a whole additional set of beliefs relating to times and mechanisms of origins. There is no logical contradiction involved in accepting the former while questioning the latter.

Some creationist writers reply in similar form and say that evolution, too, is a 'package':

Evidence continues to accumulate that it [evolution] is rather an anti-Christian, anti-theistic way of thought, a system rather than a science.¹⁵⁴

But this brings us full circle to a key point which was made early on and subsequently re-emphasized. That is, that it is essential for Christians to recognize the distinction between (1) the scientific theory of evolution and (2) the philosophical parasites which have become attached to it. Taken together, these make up *evolutionism*. Evolutionism is a 'package' consisting of a belief in evolution plus a whole additional set of beliefs which may include ideas about moral progress, atheism, reductionism, naturalism and so forth. It is to this additional set of beliefs that Christianity is implacably opposed. There is a Christian task to be performed in society, to challenge these toxic additives, where they occur. They get smuggled in to a whole range of political and legislative decisions, as well as into education. They appear in the conclusions which are drawn because they were present in the original, and often unstated, presuppositions.

Creationism has recently attracted a lot more attention from the scientific and philosophical communities. Some of the literature has been polemical and has amounted to little more than certain writers taking an opportunity to give vent to anti-Christian feelings. Such writings often blur the difference between creationism and creation, so that by attacking the former they conclude that they have disproved the latter. But much of the literature is scholarly and carefully argued. The points made are well worth noting. Quite often it seems that non-Christian contributors have seen more clearly than some Christians that evolution need not present a threat to the doctrine of divine creation.

The conclusion, then, is that, in principle, both creation and evolution may be accepted without inconsistency or disloyalty to Scripture. Furthermore, the grounds on which each may be accepted

are distinct. Creation-by-God can only be known by revelation, through the Scriptures. Evolution, on the other hand, stands or falls with the scientific evidence. Creationism and Evolutionism, however, are different matters and need to be carefully distinguished.

The author, a Lecturer in Science Education at King's College London, is at present on nearly full-time secondment, for two years, to the Farmington Institute for Christian Studies, 4 Park Town, Oxford. He is preparing materials on the interplay between science and religion for use in the senior part of the secondary school age range.

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Garth Lean, *Frank Buchman: a life*, Constable, 1985. 590pp. 88 illustrations. Hardback. £15.00

Reviewing this book is like trying to cram a rainbow into a jam-pot. It covers a colourful spectrum of the life of a remarkable man whose aim was to remake the world under God's direction. For this purpose he was instrumental in launching the Oxford Group, later Moral Re-Armament, world-wide.

Garth Lean's other books include *John Wesley, Anglican* and *God's Politician*, about Wilberforce. This is the first definitive biography of Frank Buchman. Among largely favourable reviews in the British Press Anthony Howard in *The Observer* commented on one quality: it was 'admirably balanced and meticulously researched'. Though the author was a lifelong friend and co-worker with Frank Buchman, he writes with objectivity about the strengths and weaknesses of his subject. He points to the mistakes of some of those working with Buchman, including his own! He describes the passionate support and equally passionate opposition which Buchman experienced.

Lean has received letters from all over the world. One Catholic priest in Asia wrote: 'I read the book for forty hours continuously. It has changed my life. The Holy Spirit talks through it'. Lean was startled when Cardinal König, then Archbishop of Vienna, told him two years ago: 'Buchman was a turning point in the history of the modern world through his ideas'. The Cardinal is a leading authority on Eastern Europe and on Christianity's relationship to other faiths. A more secular

commentator, Peter Harland, former Managing Editor of the 'Sunday Times', described Buchman as 'the supreme Christian conscience of the 20th century'.

The story starts in a small Pennsylvania town in 1878 where Buchman's German-Swiss ancestors settled in search of religious freedom. It moves to Britain and a profound conversion through a vision of the Cross at Keswick. Then come spiritual 'laboratory' work and campaigns reaching and changing individuals and crowds at U.S. universities.

India followed, where he later met Mahatma Gandhi, the Viceroy and Nehru, a foretaste of the statesmen in many lands with whom he forged friendships. In China he had close talks with Sun Yat-sen, who overthrew the Manchu dynasty in 1912 and set up a republic. Buchman believed—sometimes perhaps over-optimistically—in God's power to change a statesman and so influence a whole nation. A chapter on 'Hitler and the Gestapo clamp-down' describes Buchman's efforts to redirect the lives and aims of Nazi leaders. Visits and campaigns—always focussed on individuals—took Buchman to Japan, South America, Europe, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

More important than geography were the basic truths Buchman applied in his work whether with the statesman or the ordinary man', to use one of his phrases. In a chapter 'First Principles' Garth Lean describes 'certain distinctive emphases' in Buchman's message and work. They were: Listening to God, Absolute Moral Standards, A World Aim.

He learnt the first of these while working 18 hours a day with two

phones ringing and a stream of students visiting him at Penn State University. He told F. B. Meyer, a visiting English minister, 'the changes in their lives are not revolutionary enough to affect their careers or communities'. Meyer asked: 'Do you give God enough uninterrupted time really to tell you what to do?' Buchman set aside an hour—from five to six a.m.—before the phones were likely to ring. 'It was for listening to God twice as much as you talk to Him'.

Absolute Moral Standards—one of his tests for God's guidance—came from Robert Speer's book *The Principles of Jesus*. Speer summed up the Sermon on the Mount as Absolute Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love. Buchman and his friends used these 'Four Absolutes' to help hundreds of thousands across the world find a starting point for change and guide lines for their walk with God.

Remaking the world he regarded as a normal aim for 'the ordinary man and the statesman'. It was an aim that from his earliest meetings in Princeton, Cambridge and Oxford enlisted young men and women of high calibre in the greatest global task.

Buchman received support and opposition from Church leaders. In the Thirties Archbishop Lang of Canterbury said he was 'being used to bring multitudes of human lives in all parts of the world under the transforming power of Christ', while Bishop Henson of Durham accused him of 'megalo-maniacal self-confidence'. Archbishop William Temple praised the 'witness and true discipleship of the Oxford Groups'. Professor B. H. Streeter, the Oxford theologian, became a close friend and fellow-fighter.

Buchman was decorated by seven nations including Germany, France and Japan for his effect on their relations with other countries. Among the 45 short chapters are fascinating ones on 'Life with Buchman', on his dealings with Communists, on friendships with trade union leaders and on being made a blood brother of a Canadian Indian tribe.

In his final chapter 'Assessments' Lean writes: 'It is too early to come to any final conclusion about Buchman's place in history, but König's observations illustrate what was, perhaps, his greatest achievement—the creation of a world-wide network of people committed to carry on the same work.' He quotes Lord Blanch, former Archbishop of York, speaking at an MRA centre in 1984: 'MRA is able to call upon a group of people who will go anywhere and do anything if they are called by God to do it'.

Lean adds that of the multitudes Buchman reached 'thousands pledged themselves to work together to alter the moral and spiritual climate of the world. It is this dedicated fellowship which men like König and Blanch have observed in action'.

REGINALD HOLME

R. Laird Harris, Swee-Hwa Quek, J. R. Vannoy (eds.), *Interpretation and History, Essays in Honor of Allan A. MacRae*, Christian Life Publishers, Singapore, 1986. 300pp. Bound. n.p.

Seventeen former pupils contribute essays to honour a man whose godly and scholarly teaching and example have evidently had a major impact upon evangelical witness in the United States. There are also six

brief and two lengthy personal tributes and a bibliography of Dr. MacRae's writings.

R. Laird Harris discusses the New Testament use of the Old in 'Prophecy, Illustration and Typology', the second class offering a particularly helpful approach to such passages as the Rock in 1 Cor. 10, and Hosea 11:1 cited in Matt. 2:15. Five essays concern Old Testament topics: J. R. Vannoy on Divine Revelation and History emphasizes the gap between biblical teaching and the presuppositions of the historical-critical method; R. E. Longacre uses 'discourse analysis' to propose an understanding of the question 'Who Sold Joseph into Egypt?', avoiding division between sources and providing an essay which may stimulate further investigation of Hebrew narrative forms profitably; 'Toward a Covenantal Definition of *tôrâ*' by P. R. Gilchrist considers uses of the word, concluding that it denotes 'instruction, teaching' in the context of God's gracious covenant; S. J. Schultz presents a survey of the meaning of sacrifice prior to Moses, and E. B. Smick describes religious practices from Ugarit which shed light on biblical passages, while insisting upon the uniqueness of Israel's revelation, the prophets are seen as using 'Canaanite' idiom to enrich their preaching. R. A. Peterson's short essay 'Christ's Death as an Example in the New Testament'—a challenge to devotion—R. C. Newman's 'Perspective Transformation by Means of Parables' (demonstrating the aim of most of Jesus' parables was to change attitudes and opinions) and W. Harold Mare's expanded word-study, 'The Work

Ethic of the Gospels and Acts', fall under the heading New Testament. The section Theology and Philosophy contains five chapters. In his 'The Bible and the Modern Mind' V. C. Grounds explores ways of defining 'the modern mind', finding it is really the mind of man ever since the Fall, and that the Bible provides the up-to-date alternative. R. J. Dunzweiler argues that the term 'inspiredness' best describes the phenomenon of Scripture since the loss of the original manuscripts. In 'Three Sides to Every Story' G. R. Lewis asserts that in the list 'yours, mine and the facts' the third side can be 'God' since the facts owe their existence to Him, and He is the Ultimate Absolute to be presented to the Relativist. W. W. Paul explores aspects of 'Time and Historical Thinking' in various philosophies, and W. B. Wallis gives 'Reflections on the History of Premillennial Thought', representing the views Dr. MacRae upholds, and adding exegetical notes on key passages. Three essays are grouped as 'Church History and Missions'. In 'Church History Revisited' T. V. Taylor outlines the content, approach and application the subject involves; W. W. Harding makes 'An Examination of Passages cited by Jehovah's Witnesses to deny Jesus is God' (Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:15; Prov. 8:22; John 14:28; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Cor. 11:3), concluding all are consistent with orthodox doctrine; 'Cross Cultural Witness: Conflict and Accommodation' comes from evidently painful experience, J. M. L. Young drawing upon the situation in Japan to set out possibilities and limits, ending the volume on a note of missionary challenge.

Dr. MacRae has every reason to

praise God for the effects of his ministry, many others will be grateful for one or another of these essays collected for him as a stimulus to Christian thought and service.

A. R. MILLARD

Nigel M. de S. Cameron and Pamela Sims, *Abortion: the crisis in morals and medicine*, IVP, 1986. 151pp. Paperback. £2.25

Abortion is fast becoming the major moral issue for Christians. This is hardly surprising given the frequency of abortions and the controversies that surround it. Nevertheless Christians on the whole are badly informed and tend to adopt polarized positions which neither help the validity of their case nor the unfortunate victims of abortion. Any book, therefore, that can give a balanced view must be welcome.

This slim volume is written jointly by a theologian and a consultant gynaecologist and deals with all aspects of the abortion issue. There are chapters relating to the law regarding abortion, what abortion means in practice and its effects upon the mother, the family and those involved in the operation. Other chapters deal with the theological and moral issues and a final chapter reflects on the Warnock recommendations and possible future developments.

The medical sections are excellent. There are detailed descriptions of methods employed both in prenatal screening for possible handicaps and in abortion itself. Other sections clearly explain the development of the foetus from fertilization to birth, so that the reader is under no illusion as to what is being aborted.

One chapter deals with hard questions, by which the authors mean the possible grounds some Christians regard as justifying abortion. They believe abortion is only acceptable where the death of the baby is inevitable or the life of the mother is genuinely in danger. They do not accept that rape, incest, or a malformed foetus justifies it, but rightly observe that Christians have no right to impose their views on others. They do have a duty if they believe abortion to be murder not to collaborate with it in any way.

The least satisfactory part of the book are the chapters written by Cameron on the theological issues involved. He criticizes the views of the evangelical Christian doctors Gareth Jones and Rex Gardner, but his arguments carry little conviction. Is his analogy to refute the issue of natural foetal wastage valid? He maintains that the fact that foetal wastage occurs no more justifies abortion on grounds of foetal abnormality than the fact that there is a high mortality rate in the third world justifies infanticide. Surely the two are very different. Nature (? God) causes malformed foetuses to be aborted, mankind through mismanagement causes the death of otherwise healthy children in the third world. Also, is it really rational to believe that heaven is full of immature humans who died *in utero*, something that Cameron claims on the basis of Psalm 8, and Augustine? A major objection to such speculation has been voiced by Professor Wennberg who points out that if this were the case then God would be bestowing immortality upon beings committed to Christ without making a commitment, and possessing

values without having chosen them. This being so it is difficult to see the point of historical existence if heaven can be gained by instantaneous metamorphosis (R. N. Wennberg, *Life in the Balance*, Eerdmans 1985, 49).

This is a useful book, but one that should not be accepted uncritically.

R. S. LUHMAN

Alan Storkey, *Transforming Economics: A Christian Way to Employment*, SPCK, 1986. 212pp. Paperback. £5.95

This book is an 'attempt to develop further a Christian perspective on economics', (p. ix) motivated by the author's 'sense of shame at the indifference and complacency with which the unemployed and their dependants have been treated' (p. ix).

Part I discusses three economic theories.

1. Monetarism assumes that 'the market' works according to discoverable laws. Storkey comments: 'There is no such thing as *the* market, but many different markets, and far more is involved in them than price solutions' (p. 24). Money is part of 'an integrated and complex economy', and is *not* the 'fulcrum of all economic change' (p. 31). 'Monetarism' describes how the City would *like* the economy to behave.

2. Keynes preferred a decision-centred approach, as does Storkey, but his disciples have developed his ideas into a theory about how the economy does in fact operate—leading again to fatalism. Storkey's criticism is that money-flows between and within institutions other

than the Government find no place in this theory. This is a system to the liking of professional economists.

3. Marxism and socialism put employment *first*—so that labour rules, rather than serves. Storkey believes that such a theory ignores the quality of the goods produced and the quality of institutions. This is the bureaucrats' economic theory.

At the root of all three economic theories lies the heresy of 'naturalism'—the view that economics is an objective science. Storkey points out—rightly, in my opinion—that the values espoused by the different institutions lie behind each different theory. He tells us that the way the economy behaves is *our responsibility*, and not an objective fact which we can discover by a scientific economics.

Part II—on a 'Christian alternative'—begins with a sketch of such biblical themes as 'stewardship' and 'blessing'. Storkey believes that the parable of the workers in the vineyard *is* about employment, whatever else it might be about.

Then come chapters about the institutions which shape our society. The banks are accused of 'structural sin' (p. 94). Workers and consumers should be on company boards—for 'a company is a community of workers and shareholders serving the public,' (p. 112). The professions are 'closed shops' which serve the practitioners and not the public. The family is an important institution. Storkey notes the growing no-job/two-job polarization.

He discusses five forms of Welfare State (recognizing that they overlap in practice): 1. Laissez-faire paternalism, 2. Individual insurance, 3. Col-

lective insurance; 4. State Socialist rights; 5. The 'Mosaic' model—the kind of redistribution recommended in Leviticus 26.

'A consolidated tax-benefit system would help to create a redistributive system which is not rule-bound and administratively dominated' (p. 162).

A good discussion of Trans-National Corporations follows, and then a perceptive piece on the effects of the capital-intensive research which survival in world markets requires. (Here a discussion of the accelerating changes in technology—which Storkey admits he has left out—*would* have been useful). The way in which we destroy *real* wealth (e.g. the environment and the housing stock) and the fact that 'economic catastrophes become yearly more probable' (p. 174) leads to his astonishment at our lack of concern.

Part III draws together the policies he would like to see applied in institutions. 'Medium-term policy should . . . concentrate on transfers to the poor, increased expenditure on infrastructure, reorientating taxation to wealth and financial transactions and away from corporate investment and necessities, and on improving the balance of trade' (pp. 182–3).

The effects of our electoral system are discussed in a final chapter, as are the theological roots of the book. 'In the biblical text and in daily life it is clear that public events are God's concern and come within the scope of the Good News' (p. 201). The relevance to the book's argument of the closing text—'Come to me, all who are weary and burdened . . . '—needs to be argued.

This book is worth buying and reading carefully. Alan Storkey has

constructed some clear arguments in some difficult territory—the boundary between economics and theology. We could have done with more detail in some areas: for instance, on the greater flexibility of employment patterns which some forms of integrated tax and benefit systems might create.

I would have valued more discussion of the *feasibility* of some of the ideas. Much of the first part of the book is taken up with explanations of why monetarism, keynesianism and socialism *don't* work. This should have been balanced by a discussion of the Christian alternative's *feasibility*, as well as its *desirability*. I feel that the author has made valid connections between Christian faith and economics, but I might be feeling this simply because I happen to agree with his conclusions. I am aware that I do *not* agree with T. S. Eliot's *The Idea of a Christian Society* (which tends towards elitism and totalitarianism). Thus a discussion of hermeneutical method should have been included in the book. There are a few middle axioms in the text ('relationship', 'justice'); but the validity of using middle axioms to mediate between the biblical text and the behaviour of institutions should have been argued. The theological insights, on which the thesis is based, are disconnected and scattered. There needs to be some co-ordinating concept—for instance, the 'Kingdom of God'.

The book closes with an 'Introductory Christian Economics Bibliography'. Can economics be Christian without being *by* Christians? Can economics be Christian without being *called* 'Christian'? I would have liked to have seen a broader

bibliography. In particular, James Robertson's two books *The Sane Alternative* and *Future Work* should have been there.

The price is reasonable, and I recommend this book. We cannot hear too often the message that we are responsible for the kind of society in which we live.

MALCOLM TORRY

James Bentley, *Martin Niemöller*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1984, this edition 1986. 253pp. Paperback. £2.80

This is a fascinating book, well worth reading by anyone who wishes to understand the difficulties of being a Christian in Germany in the twentieth century, and especially during the Nazi period. Martin Niemöller was born in 1892 and died only two years ago in 1984, so that his life spanned the whole period. The nature of the man, passionately involved in the crisis of modern Germany, was such that he touched most of the deep issues of that period.

James Bentley, writing as he says a biography rather than a history, nevertheless manages successfully to weld the two strands together. He writes in a matter-of-fact style, which is clear and concise—in fact, eminently suited to the subject. The long talks which Bentley had with the elderly Niemöller between 1979 and 1983 bring personal conviction, and to these individual and family details are added a good background of research on the relevant documents and other material. The select bibliography is concise, while covering most aspects.

Niemöller, born to a father of farming stock who became a Lutheran

Pastor, and to a Westphalian mother who also had French Huguenot blood in her veins, was in a strong Christian environment throughout his boyhood. His initial decision, however, was against following his father into the ministry—rather, he was determined to pursue a sea-faring career. There was no conflict in this for him—he had learned from his parents 'the two dogmas which were taught in the Christian church of that time—and especially in the German Protestant church—namely that a good Christian is a good citizen, and a good Christian is a good soldier'. So he became a sailor, and when World War I broke out he quickly gained promotion, until he reached the position of Commander of a U-boat and gained the Iron Cross, First Class. The shock of the surrender of the German fleet in 1918/19 was shattering to a man of such intense personal and national pride as Niemöller. He could never accept the Weimar Republic, and felt bound to Kaiser Wilhelm by his oath of loyalty until the latter's death in 1941. Wilhelm II had dispensed everyone from this oath—"but how could he?" asked Niemöller. The oath was a solemn pledge between three people, for it was made in the presence of God. Wilhelm II could not speak for God.

It was this reliance on God which now prompted a call to the Lutheran Ministry which could be denied no longer. By 1924 Niemöller was ordained, and by 1931 became pastor at Dahlem, a fashionable suburb of Berlin. Once more, he was at the centre of German political activity and crisis. Like many others who longed for a Germany which could hold up its head with pride, he voted

National Socialist in 1924 and again in the spring of 1933, the last free German elections of the 30s. Niemöller wanted a renewed alliance between the church (Protestant) and the German nation, and in 1933 thought the dream was coming true.

Soon, however, Martin was forced, as one who stood for the faith of the Reformation to reject Hitler's approach, and especially his policy towards the Jews. It was in his nature to be a leader, to ignore the threat of the Gestapo presence at his services, and to continue to confront Hitler. From his pulpit he condemned the Nazi methods, and with Bonhoeffer, Dibelius and Karl Barth, built up the 'Confessing Church' as a Christian opposition.

Niemöller's stand, and his determined obstinacy, were bound to offend Hitler, who bore him a personal grudge and confined him in a concentration camp at Sachsenhausen. The conditions of the camp and Niemöller's reaction to restriction and deprivation, are well brought out by Bentley. 1939 and the outbreak of the Second World War, in which his three sons were soldiers, made Niemöller face further agonising decisions, again well described by Bentley. Niemöller's action in offering to serve Hitler's Germany in 1939 was later to provoke much ill-feeling towards him. Six years later he himself wrote a long letter to George Bell explaining why he had done this. 'We Christians in Germany were aware of the fact that we had a people and a mother country that we loved' Niemöller explained. On September 3rd 1939 there seemed open to him only two possibilities:- '1. Should Hitler win the war Germany would be lost, as

Hitler was the murderer of her soul long before he became a mass slaughterer of huge proportions. 2. Should Hitler lose the war, Germany would be lost because the other powers would tread us down completely and would treat us as they did in 1918.' Both possibilities were horrifying to him. 'In this dilemma', he went on, 'there seemed to me as for thousands of other Germans who loved their country, no other hope, considering the war had actually broken out, but that through a new government we might come to a negotiated peace'. His letter ended: 'I could see no other way for myself either as a Christian or a German'.

However, he was to remain in the grim conditions of a concentration camp until 1945, when the Americans released him. Once again, Niemöller became a central figure as he, in the deliberate presence of ecumenical representatives, signed with other German Protestant church leaders the Stuttgart declaration of guilt. 'Through us endless suffering has been brought to many people and countries', the Stuttgart declaration admitted. 'True, we struggled for many years in the name of Jesus Christ against a spirit which found its terrible expression in the National Socialist regime of violence, but we accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously, and for not loving more ardently'. Now a new beginning was to be made, the declaration went on. 'It fills us with deep joy that in this new beginning we may be aware of the whole-hearted unity with other churches of the ecumenical fellowship'. Courageously, he

tried to put this message across in his own country, and in the wider context he fought for German reinstatement amongst the civilized nations of the world, as a part of the Christian brotherhood. So it was that he played a major part in the shaping of the World Council of Churches.

In 1948 Niemöller met Metropolitan Nikolai of Kiev, under the auspices of the Moscow-inspired world peace movement, and later saw this as a turning-point in his life. 'Because I was an ecumenist, I became a pacifist'. But, as James Bentley rightly explains, the former U-boat officer, who had volunteered to fight for Hitler's Germany in 1939, became a pacifist also out of a deep love and concern for his own country. 'Should Germany be divided in separate spiritual spheres, it could be the last terrible fate for my country'.

Gradually, during the 1950s, when he was campaigning against West German rearmament, Niemöller was moving inexorably towards pacifism. The atomic bomb was the catalyst. He used his position in the World Council of Churches to spread his views on nuclear weapons. He walked with Canon Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral and with Bertrand Russell from Windsor to Aldermaston in 1958 on the first CND march. To pacifism, he added a hatred of racism, which he saw as a threat to world peace. He campaigned right to the end, 'obedient to his conscience and to the call of God'.

Bentley's final chapter, 'Portrait of a human being', is a succinct and effective conclusion to a fine book. One feels that he reaches into the heart of the man who had 'become the conscience of Europe during the

Second World War', and whose character was at the same time both simple and complex. There can be no question that Pastor Niemöller was one of the great men of the twentieth century, and James Bentley's book is worthy of such a man.

W. A. HAYWOOD

K. G. Greet, *What Shall I Cry?*, Epworth Press, 1986. 96pp. Paperback. £3.95

This book is shot through with theological, informed compassion. It has to do with social issues, but it proceeds from deep theological insights and concerns—for nearly fifty years I have tried not to move far from the Bible in my preaching'. It is well informed, as we should expect from one who was for 17 years the secretary of the Social Responsibility Division of the Methodist Church. It is compassionate, with a compassion too close to life as it is ever to sink into sentimentality.

The subjects dealt with here are those of poverty, unemployment, the arms trade, privilege, and discrimination (of sex and race)—hot potatoes, all. The writer would not expect us all to agree with all he says. He writes as a deeply convinced pacifist, and he has no great love for an educational system which allows the private schools to continue as they are. (I was sorry that the figures of 'the percentage of those educated in private schools now working in various powerful professions' were for 1973—except in the case of the Church of England bishops, where the 1950 figure is also given. There may have been a move in the right direction in the last 13 years.)

Dr. Greet knows his world, and he is at home with the writings of people like the late Barbara Ward and Dr. Brandt who know it even better than he. Anyone who does differ from him will find an array of facts and figures which will take a good deal of controverting. I found the chapter on *The Sin of the Arms Race* enough even to suggest despair born of the folly of the generation of which we are a part. And yet there is no despair in this book. There is hope, because the writer knows the God of hope whose plans will finally be realized in Christ.

A sober book, to make us think, pray, and act. We need it. I hope it will have a wide circulation.

DONALD COGGAN

J. D. Thornton (ed.), *Witness at Work*, UCCF Associates, 1985. 25pp. Paperback. £1.00

This booklet, edited by J. D. Thornton, comprises eight summarized talks from a series of meetings instituted by the Business Study Group of the UCCF under the title 'Witness at Work'. The speakers came from various backgrounds in the business world and each takes a different but equally thought-provoking theme relating, for example, to the way we should relate as Christians to various problems that arise, to ethical and moral attitudes, to other Christians at work and to the various lifestyles that we lead, no matter what sphere of work we are engaged in. At the end of each talk, the speaker suggests a bible passage to read to consolidate what he has said and to show that his argument is scripturally based and, hopefully, scripturally sound. Each

theme also has a list of questions after it for further thought.

This is a very easy booklet to read in the sense that it has only 25 pages. However, as I read through each theme, I could not help being challenged in some way on the shortcomings of some of my own relationships at work and my attitude to certain aspects of my work. One must be completely open and honest with oneself when reading this booklet, preferably with bible at hand to refer to the various references given, if it is to have the desired effect on the reader. It would also make a good discussion series for Youth meetings or Christian groups at work as well as for individual self examination. This book is to be recommended to all those who desire to bring Christ with them INTO their work place and not leave Him outside the front doors.

STUART K. CHALMERS

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, *The Politics of Compassion*, Orbis Books, 1986. 132pp. \$8.95

The main purpose of the admirable book is conveyed in the striking title. Far too many Christians see religion in highly personalized terms: 'an after-life insurance policy'. The great Christian virtues, like love, forgiveness and compassion relate only to the dealings between individuals. According to Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer this view is a distortion of the Gospel and a dilution of what Christianity in its wholeness is really about. He writes of 'the liberation of theology' from such narrowly restricting interpretations. Christian compassion must be expressed not only in per-

sonal dealings but also in programmes and policies designed to alleviate the lot of those who suffer because of injustices of every kind.

Against this background, the author tackles the related problems of world hunger, American policies in Central America, and the arms race. The facts are set out with admirable clarity. The progress of the argument is indicated by italicized headings and the content of each chapter is helpfully summarized at the end. The whole text is faithfully related to the teachings of the Bible.

The book is full of startling assertions. For example: 'All the world would be well fed if missiles were edible'; or again: 'America's Christmas bill for 1983 was \$125 billion—this is nearly twice the combined GNP of the thirty-one poorest countries (\$63 billion) with a total population of 287 million'.

The concluding chapter not only presents a number of practical suggestions for action but deals also with the very important question: how can Christians remain hopeful in a world where the problems are so daunting?

This is one of the best books on the relating of faith to action to appear in recent times. It is marred only by a generous sprinkling of split infinitives.

KENNETH G. GREET

Peter Lee, *Poor Man, Rich Man: The priorities of Jesus and the agenda of the church*, Foreword by Desmond Tutu, Hodder and Stoughton: London/Sydney/Auckland/Toronto, 1986. 239pp., incl. notes, appendices. Paperback. £2.50

In his *Bias to the Poor* (1983), Bishop David Sheppard of the Church of England wrote: 'For the Church to hear the cry of the poor will mean losing its innocence on social and political matters' because 'Christianity is both about justice and about Christ changing people from inside out.' *Poor Man, Rich Man* is the story of how one part of the church is losing its innocence and recovering a sense of the *whole* gospel. The book—as its subtitle implies—is about the ministry of Jesus and the mission of the church. Its author is a white, male South African, an evangelical, charismatic Anglican priest who argues with cogency and conviction that our priorities as Christians must be those of the Christ after whom we are named. Faithful to the biblical vision of *shalom*, especially as found in the prophets and Luke-Acts, Lee calls for the church to preach radical conversion and commitment to the poor. Out of his faith flows a passion for both personal holiness and social justice.

Luther once wrote: 'If you preach the gospel in every particular except those which affect the issues of your day, you are not preaching the gospel at all.' Lee, for whom evangelical witness is inescapably political witness, is concerned about the concrete context of his theology, the life-situation of South Africans struggling to hear and follow what God's Spirit led Jesus (quoting Isaiah) to call 'good news to the poor'. Lee is concerned, in other words, with what liberation theologians call *praxis*. For Lee, orthodoxy must be wedded to orthopraxy: 'Unless we are *doing* the Christian life we are not *believing* rightly' (p. 187). Although Lee criticizes some aspects of liberation

thought, his book is a nice example of the 'hermeneutic circle' at work. Out of our political and social life together, we exegete the Bible, and in turn allow the biblical text to exegete us.

First, context. We are all familiar with the state terrorism that is apartheid, and the heresy of its theological justifications. South African society is one of 'acute economic imbalance . . . inexcusable educational deprivation . . . racist laws and attitudes . . . minimal human rights . . . grossly inhuman practices in detention and relocation.' There is, Lee continues, 'an overwhelming military, a ruthless police and a parasitic and ideologically-motivated bureaucracy' (pp. 173–174). 'The whole business is a horror story of deceit and brute force, land deprivation and unspeakable hardness of heart.' The policies of apartheid represent 'creeping genocide' (p. 194). The state endlessly creates laws to protect the sacred social order, yet, Lee notes, 'Injustice is reinforced when the oppressor lays a heavy weight of legal observance on the very ones who suffer from the law's distortion' (p. 116). Apartheid stands condemned by the cross: 'The crucifixion must stand for ever as the ultimate rebuke to injustice, to the devious use of power, to the lie, to kangaroo courts and pliable magistrates, to torture . . . and the cheapening of human life, to legal expediency and the bureaucratic shrug' (p. 117).

Turning from the world to the word, Lee recognizes that the God of the Bible is not neutral. In his reading of the law, prophets, psalms and gospels, 'God is for the oppressed, afflicted and needy'; throughout his-

tory, 'the people God chooses to deal with are the needy, the lowly and brokenhearted' (pp. 76 and 89). Lee argues that Luke 4 shows that Jesus began his ministry with an integral and 'very explicit commitment to social justice and human liberation' (p. 43). Wealth and power are for Jesus' a massive danger, especially in fostering complacency and callous lack of care for those on whose backs the wealth is made' (p. 135). To know, love, and serve the God of the oppressed is to defend, protect, and seek justice for God's powerless and poor—yet without denying pastoral love to the oppressor, who is also bound by the powers of sin and death, also in need of liberation.

What all this amounts to is an affirmation of the lordship of Jesus, and a resolve to help build God's 'kingdom' in the power of the Spirit. These words have clear political connotations, though most evangelicals have neglected them in their spiritualizing interpretations of a kingdom admittedly 'not of this world'. Yet, argues Lee, 'It is precisely the kingship of he who comes from beyond being effected in the here and now of earth which is "the kingdom of God" in New Testament teaching' (p. 92). Any full-blooded faith will not be surprised at material incarnations of divine love and justice.

'Salvation is by faith alone,' Calvin once wrote, 'but saving faith is never alone.' For Lee, the gospel of Jesus is about *social* and not merely private and personal transformation. 'It is necessary for the repentance we preach to include a turning from social sin, from direct exploitation or oppression of others, and from collusion with institutional evil in our

world ... Anything less does not constitute biblical repentance and does not release divine forgiveness; for God ... does not look lightly on societal sin' (pp. 204-205). Is not salvation, Lee asks, 'a wider reality of God's work in the world, in which not only individuals are saved but other scars on God's order are healed—in which, in other words, the Old Testament's image is fulfilled of a world in which God is Lord and his people dwell, at peace with him and each other, in a *shalom* of true worship, social harmony, justice and compassion?' (p. 114).

Apartheid is structural sin, the institutionalization of evil, violence, and injustice. It represents an ideology which betrays Christ and denies the divine image in humanity. I am an uneasy pacifist, for biblically there can be no peace without justice, and the nature of the South African regime is such that the classic criteria for a 'just war' against it seem to be fulfilled. The gospel of Christ is a gospel of peacemaking and reconciliation—yet reconciliation with apartheid is impossible.

According to Frank Chikane of the Johannesburg Institute of Contextual Theology, 'There are conflicts that can only be described as the struggle between justice and injustice, good and evil. To speak of reconciling these is not only a mistaken application of the Christian idea of reconciliation, it is a total betrayal of all the Christian faith has ever meant. ... No reconciliation is possible in South Africa without justice.' The call for justice is a call for revolutionary change. Christians hope and pray that the change will also be peaceful. Lee approaches, then retreats from the question of the use of violence in

resisting violence. 'There is a time to say "no" to the police, a time to lie down in front of the bulldozers, a time to march in the streets, a time to ask how the just war theory applies to internal affairs' (p. 202). Here, the widely-quoted statement on violence made several years ago by Kenneth Kaunda, the President of Zambia, remains relevant:

'*Apartheid's* challenge not only to Africa but to all humanity is so absolute that if there is no other way we must face up, as the free world has done before in this century, to a long, hard struggle which cannot exclude the use of force. Pray God we may all be preserved from such an awful fate.

Only South Africa itself has the power to avert what is rapidly becoming inevitable by demolishing the whole vicious apparatus of *Apartheid*, setting all South Africa's peoples free from captivity to the past and offering their immense talents and energy in the service of the development of the whole continent. I am not optimistic, but I have much faith in the providence of God. That alone seems to stand between us and the void.'

One final note. Given the theme of *Poor Man, Rich Man*—faithfully following the biblical call to justice—the presence of sexist language in the book is ironic and distressingly inconsistent. The title, unfortunately, is typical of the text. On page 51, for instance, Lee discusses how 'God used the leadership of men ... to guide, exhort and challenge his people.' He really does mean *men*, for no women's names are mentioned among the leaders of God's people. But what about Sarah, Miriam, Hanna, Deborah, Hulda, Anna, Mary, Martha, Junia, Priscilla, and dozens of others recorded in the Bible? It is a curious lapse, especially

in a book that serves as a kind of commentary on Luke's gospel; for Luke, of all the evangelists, takes most care to highlight the roles of the women disciples, and Jesus' relations with other women as well.

Apart from this, I highly recommend this clearly written book as a call for liberation that is both prophetic and pastoral, and fully evangelical. It is valuable for its Christian perspective on South African political realities, and for its theology of 'poverty' in its varied material and spiritual aspects. Indeed, Lee's account of the many faces of 'the poor' found in the Bible is most helpful. Also of interest is Lee's conservative yet critical examination of many biblical texts, from Leviticus and Deuteronomy, through Isaiah, and on to the gospel narratives, beatitudes, and parables.

PAUL FAYTER

David Cook, *Thinking about Faith: a beginner's guide*, IVP, 1986. 220pp. Paperback. £4.95

This book has been written as a beginner's guide to philosophy and its impact on religion and theology. Cook has attempted, and on the whole succeeded, in taking the fear of philosophical debate away from the average reader, who would never normally tackle such literature. To help the novice, the author has appended to each chapter a short glossary of philosophical terms, and a small reading list has been added to aid the reader in the next stages of philosophical thinking. However, this book is not to be glossed over lightly. I found some chapters quite heavy-going, and on the whole, one should read each

chapter thoughtfully and slowly in order to grasp the full value in them.

To many Christians, philosophy is to be avoided at all costs. We are warned by the apostle that we should avoid arguments that lead nowhere, but Cook shows how the use of philosophy can help us to define our Faith, and study our religion, resulting in a stronger faith for the believer. Many philosophers have used logical thought processes to attack Christianity, and other forms of religion, but Cook argues that the arguments are as weak as they make ours out to be. We should not be afraid to use, as it were, their own philosophical approaches to support our Faith.

The author tackles subjects such as life-after-death, prayer and miracles, and deals with the argument that science has made faith obsolete. Although the author has a firm grasp on how to tackle philosophy, what does emerge is his very positive and basic belief in the Word of God; he always falls back on the authority of scripture. In the end, it does not matter how many philosophies attack the Christian Faith, what matters most is the effect of that faith, producing a positive change in the individual by the power of the Holy Spirit. We become new creations, the old having passed away. This, in the final account, is what our faith is about.

However, the sceptic is very difficult to satisfy, as Cook says, and many will never believe, no matter how much evidence they are confronted with. It is easier to pick holes than to state a positive case, but this does not mean that there is no point in such proofs. It is only proper that we do define our faith as much as

possible, so that it is seen to be on proper, legitimate grounds. Cook says 'there is a pragmatic test for God's existence in the transformed life of the believer. This does not mean that God exists beyond all possibility, but it does demand that the Christian interpretation be taken seriously by non-Christians. The Christian is a sign of God at work to others'.

With regard to life-after-death, many would argue that a God of love would not even consider the possibility of eternal suffering. It would contradict the logic of God's being full of love and mercy, and therefore eternal life with God is for all. Cook makes it plain that this 'universalism' is against all scripture, and that the God of love has shown the way to avoid punishment for those who believe, not wanting to send anyone to hell. The author does not ignore the matter of sin, and what it means to God. All the basic reasons for Christ's coming to earth, dying and being raised—in effect the whole basis of our Faith—is examined by one who knows the Christian pathway from experience.

Hence, any Christian who thinks he should avoid such books on philosophy, quoting Col. 2, 8 should heed Cook's entreaty to read the qualification which is integral to Paul's point 'see to it that no-one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human traditions and not according to Christ . . .' If Christ is central to your philosophical thinking, do not be afraid to delve deeper in search for wisdom. I would recommend this book to any Christian who is not satisfied with the 'simple faith' of the newly-converted.

STUART CHALMERS

Colin Brown, *That you may believe—miracles and faith, then and now*, Paternoster Press, 1985. 232pp. Paperback. £6.95

This book is divided into three sections, each dealing with a thought-provoking question. 'Can we still believe in miracles?' 'What do miracle stories tell us about Jesus?' and 'Can we expect miracles today?' There is a list of books for further reading, and subject and name indexes.

In the first section, Brown deals with some philosophical arguments for and against miracles, and discusses the changing attitudes of many Christians towards them. The criticisms of the 18th century sceptic, Hume, are dealt with in some depth. Brown details Hume's argument that the miracle accounts were supported by various witnesses who could not substantiate their evidence, and also that people looked at miracles from different viewpoints and sometimes corroboration was difficult. Brown says that this criticism can only be taken so far. One must look at cause and effect, the results of miraculous works. In the case of the Resurrection, Brown argues that if this did not occur, the existence of the Church would be unthinkable, in fact senseless. This reiterates Paul in 1 Cor. 15:13, 14. In many deliberations concerning the miracles of Jesus, and this must include the Virgin Birth and Resurrection, the whole point of Christ's ministry is neglected. Brown has a true heart-felt knowledge of Christ's purpose, which comes out clearly in this book. Brown concludes the first part of the book by asking 'What then is a miracle?' quoting scripture to

show that the mighty works carried out by Christians in the Early Church were attributed to the Spirit. This is the crux of the debate; Christ never performed miracles until he was baptised in the Spirit after his water baptism, and this is what Brown concentrates upon in the second part of his book.

The author looks at the stories in the gospels, beginning with Mark's account, this being the earliest. Two factors which Brown claims are most neglected by those who examine the miracle stories are the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the attitude of the Jews to miracle-workers (opposition). The former is the necessary 'power from on high', which is required to perform the miracles, clearly evident from scripture. The latter demonstrates that if such miracles were not performed by Jesus, the Jews would not have vehemently adhered to their laws, given in Deuteronomy 13, dealing with sorcerers and magic-workers. Brown argues that this is proof that Christ was performing many miracles, and this should be taken as historical fact. With regard to the Holy Spirit, the most essential character in the debate, the author criticises those who jump straight from Christ's baptism, to post-Pentecostal experiences. One must look at Jesus' ministry and see why these miracles were performed, the meaning behind them, the situations which arose requiring signs and wonders, before moving on to the Acts and Epistles. Jesus was empowered at the Jordan, and He promised the disciples that they would be 'clothed with power from on high' at Pentecost. It is the same spirit who lives in true disciples today. It is this which Brown refers to

in the last section, when he asks 'Do miracles still happen today?'

When we discuss miracles, we are mainly talking about healing ministry, as this played a prominent role in the life of Christ. He came to heal body and soul, and it is this concept which unfortunately divides many of the Christian denominations today. Brown takes the view that extremely few miracles occur today, though he does not deny that they do so. He does not believe that the Church today has a special ministry of healing, and quotes two references, one being the death of Canon David Watson, pronounced healed, but who died later, and the case of a friend who was cured of cancer. Although physical healing does not occur in many instances, God will still give the grace, to those who are His, to accept the situation they are in. As Brown says, such people often impart more comfort and show more of Christ's charisma to those who have come to comfort than vice versa. Brown takes the addendum to Mark's gospel, chapter 15, 9-20, and claims that in his view this is not authentic scripture, and that therefore the Church does not have any special mandate to heal. I am not sure if Brown is safe-guarding his argument by using the word 'special', because many charismatics would not agree. Healing should be part of any Church although possibly not practised widely. There are many gifts of the Spirit, and though not everyone has all of them, one of them is healing. If this *is* given, then it ought to be practised within the fellowship of the recipient. The fact that healings occur is attested to by many genuine Christians worldwide. Is it so important that we

should have to convince the world of healings today if the individual who has asked for healing, or has knowingly or unknowingly been prayed for, is healed? Brown does make the point, correctly, that the danger to the individual is when healing does not apparently occur, and the person questions what he believes is his lack of faith. He may become more depressed, and his condition deteriorate further physically and mentally. However, if counselled properly, and believing that God will give the grace to die, this situation should be overcome in a caring, Christian fellowship¹.

This book is well-written and well-thought out. For the Christian who believes in miracles today, there may be slight disappointment in the lack of momentum at the end of the book, but I presume that the author is trying to show us that miracles are not to be found round every corner. To quote out of context, we should not 'have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof'. I would recommend the book as an informative background to anyone who wishes to delve deeper into the miraculous works of our Christian faith.

STUART CHALMERS

Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, Longman, 1986. 352pp. Hard-back. Illustrated. £12.95

Richard Dawkins describes himself as a 'passionate advocate' of Darwinism who is out 'to persuade and even ... to inspire' (p. x). He evidently feels that this confession absolves him from the duty to be objectively fair in summarizing the evidence for

and against the theory he favours, and cheerfully warns the reader accordingly. He sees himself as arrayed in battle for popular support against the well-known teleological arguments of William Paley, and seems to think that the case for theistic belief in the createdness of our world hangs on the possibility of disproving Darwinian explanations of the origin of species. In thinking this of course he shares some pre-suppositions of those (mainly Californian) opponents who wave the banner of 'scientific creationism'; but Dawkins clearly feels that he is on the winning side. With a disarmingly juvenile chortle, he assures us on p. 5 that Paley's argument, for all his 'passionate sincerity' and 'biological scholarship', is 'wrong, gloriously and utterly wrong.'

In assessing the merits of the book it is important to distinguish between two questions that Dawkins constantly (and apparently willingly) confuses. One is whether the technical theory of self-organizing systems, from which he borrows his key ideas, predicts that random mutation plus natural selection can meet *quantitatively* the constraints set by geological data, especially on the time available for 'trial-and-error' on the Darwinian model. The other is how far the case for theistic belief would be strengthened if Darwinian theory failed.

On the first score, Dawkins makes a case that many will find persuasive, and devotes much skill and patience to an exposition of the principles behind it. An able and imaginative teacher, he exposes clearly the fallacies in general arguments that 'order could not arise from chaos' and in misapplications of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The issue he fails

to address quantitatively is whether in fact the accumulation of small genetic changes (with retention and favoured reproduction of advantageous ones) could have bridged *quickly* enough the gaps between species lacking complex structures such as the mammalian auditory or visual system, and those enjoying their advantages. For evolution to work smoothly and rapidly, the selective advantage must be a fairly continuous function of location in genetic space, such that the exploratory process can be expected on average to 'roll downhill' automatically towards the outcome that needs explanation. In general, however, the theory of self-organizing systems has had to recognize what is called the 'mesa problem'. Instead of a continuous function with a well-defined downward gradient at any point, the selective advantage may sometimes form a surface with relatively flat regions (no appreciable gradient) separated by discontinuities (like the canyons between mesas) in which the exploratory process can easily get trapped, since the only effect of small displacements there are disadvantageous. Whether and where such problems may arise is a quantitative empirical question; and it is hardly good enough for Dawkins to wave it aside on p. 78 with the trite remark that 'geological time is awfully long'. 'My feeling is that, provided the difference between neighbouring intermediates in our series leading to the eye is *sufficiently small*, the necessary mutations are almost bound to be forthcoming' (p. 79). Well, well, maybe. But it is not the work of a careful scientist to advance any theory as dogmatically as Dawkins

does on the basis of such inadequately supported 'feelings'. Somebody, some day, had better do the sums; and until then, honesty demands that the intellectual gap be recognized.

A related technical point is fluffed on p. 232, where Dawkins rightly argues that the probability of improvement resulting from a random genetic adjustment will be closer to one half, the smaller the adjustment. What he fails to bring into his calculation is the fact that the selective advantage of a vanishingly small unit change will generally also be vanishingly small, so that the 'improved' variant will take correspondingly longer to get established so as to provide a jumping-off point for further mutations in the 'right' direction. What needs to be calculated is not just the size of unit change that will equalize probabilities of improvement and the reverse, but the size of change that will *optimize* the compromise-relationship between the *chance* that the change will be advantageous and the *magnitude* of the selective advantage if it does turn out to be advantageous. In general this will *not* require the change to be as small as possible, as Dawkins suggests on p. 232, where his aim is to discredit 'saltationist' theories that postulate large 'macromutations' to bridge gaps in evolutionary development.

The other question—how far the case for theistic belief would be strengthened if Darwinian theory failed—surfaces only by implication from time to time, and is never adequately faced. Hugh Montefiore gets a good deal of stick for expressing doubts about the adequacy of Darwinian theory, as well as for

'smuggling God in by the back door' as a supervisor of the evolutionary process (p. 316). Such beliefs, we are told, are superfluous, and 'assume the existence of the main thing we want to explain, namely organized complexity'. Deities have (for Dawkins) far too much organized complexity to be postulated as 'given'.

The theological muddle thus created is the worst feature of an otherwise enjoyable and informative book. Dawkins seems quite unaware that from the standpoint of biblical theism, as distinct from classical deism, the case for belief in the createdness of our world—its *ontological* origin in God's creative word—would not be strengthened by any conceivable failure on our part to trace the *chronological* origin of its present structure. When we say that a novel has an author, we do not imply that there are inexplicable discontinuities in the past of the world he has created, nor would the discovery of such things strengthen our belief in his authorship. The divine Authorship of our world, according to theism, is what accounts for there being 'something rather than nothing'—regardless of its complexity. That our world is in fact complex may set us all kinds of chronological puzzles of the sort that Dawkins seeks to solve; but he—and we—would be grossly mistaken to imagine that the solving of such puzzles could remove any need to believe in the God of theism. Whether *that* concept is superfluous depends on whether, as a matter of fact, there is God to be reckoned with. And for evidence on that score, the Scriptures would direct our attention elsewhere.

DONALD M. MACKAY

D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (eds.), *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1986. 468pp. Paperback. £9.95

The stream of writings on the topic of biblical inspiration and inerrancy shows no signs of drying up. Among the more solid contributions inspired by the work of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (but having no official connection with that body) are two volumes of essays edited by Don Carson and John Woodbridge. The former collection (*Scripture and Truth*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1983. 446pp. Paperback. £7.95) and the present one are intended to be seen as forming a whole, dealing comprehensively with a wide range of relevant topics.

An opening essay by Don Carson discusses recent developments in the doctrine of Scripture. Kevin Vanhoozer offers an important discussion of how upholders of biblical truth can recognize the fact that the Bible contains varieties of material; he makes good use of the semantic theories of J. L. Austin and J. Searle to offer a much more nuanced understanding of the nature of biblical truth. Moises Silva gives a conciliatory treatment of the problems of reconstructing history from biblical statements, and argues that conservatives and non-conservatives have often misunderstood each other.

Craig Blomberg writes a lengthy and well-illustrated essay on the problem of harmonizing divergent narratives by a variety of techniques including 'additive harmonization' or 'harmonization in the narrow sense', i.e. the view that the different accounts can be 'added together' to get at the underlying story (e.g. by

recognizing that Mk. 14:22–5 and Lk. 22:15–19a refer to different cups at the last supper). His essay is important (a) in showing that 'additive harmonization' occupies a minor place in the range of critical techniques, and (b), in showing that the procedures are thoroughly legitimate aspects of historical method, as can be seen from their use in dealing with problems in Josephus and in Arrian's and Plutarch's lives of Alexander.

Douglas Moo explores the concept of *sensus plenior* as a means of coping with the problem of the NT attaching meanings to OT passages which are not obviously the intended meanings of the original human authors: is the meaning found there 'really' there? He expresses some well-founded doubts regarding Walter Kaiser's claim that the OT texts have only one meaning and shows sympathy for aspects of Brevard Childs' canonical approach. He concludes that there can be a meaning found by the NT writers that goes beyond the human OT author's intended meaning but which is based on it, and that in some cases this arises from reading the OT texts in their canonical context.

John Frame comments briefly on the Spirit's role in the Scriptures. John Woodbridge argues that even before the 'Enlightenment' the inerrancy of Scripture on scientific and historical matters was a well-known belief; it is not a comparatively modern development. G. W. Bromiley furnishes an exceptionally clear summary of Barth's view of the authority of Scripture and shows how inconsistencies with regard to history and inerrancy mar an exposition which has considerable merits.

Finally, David Dunbar shows how the development of the canon presupposes that the process of divine revelation is a completed one; the process of recognizing the canon is a logical development from principles inherent in the biblical books themselves.

The fields surveyed here are diverse, with the result that the book is a collection of loosely related essays rather than the development of a single theme. It is a work of scholarship rather than a book for the usual IVP clientele. In these and other respects it shares the character of its predecessor. It is best regarded, therefore, as a collection of scholarly essays—not all of equal merit—which gather up different aspects of the debate about Scripture. Carson admits that much conservative writing on Scripture has not been particularly creative and has been rather apologetic. To some extent this is true of this symposium, but there are also welcome tendencies to adopt an open attitude to methods of biblical study, to explore the relevance of modern literary criticism, to do original research in the history of doctrine, and even to show how evangelicals can learn from Barth. Specialists in different areas will find much of value in this volume, and students wrestling with the issues raised by biblical criticism in particular can be warmly recommended to the essays by M. Silva, C. Blomberg, and D. Moo.

One or two small corrections and observations may be offered. Publication of the book came too soon to enable D. Carson to know that the brothers D. and R. Basinger were not attempting to deny the 'concurvive' theory of inspiration but rather to

question the 'Freewill Defence' (see their essay 'Inerrancy and Freewill: Some Further Thoughts', in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 1986. 58 351-4). K. Vanhoozer suggests that the present reviewer belongs with those who limit 'inerrancy to Scripture's speech on religious matters' (p. 102); I fear that, despite what I thought to be a perfectly clear statement to the effect that 'partial infallibility' is not a viable solution and that no hard and fast line can be drawn between history and theology (*Biblical Inspiration*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1982, p. 65), I may not have emphasized sufficiently that, when I speak of infallibility as being the quality of the Bible whereby it is entirely trustworthy for its God-given purpose, that saving purpose manifestly includes more than narrowly religious matters. M. Silva comments that E. Haenchen's commentary on Acts 'knows not Ramsay' (132), but this appears to be a slip, as *St Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* is certainly cited in the 1959 German edition. Not all of C. Blomberg's examples are convincing; for example, he needs to justify his view that a textual variant which produces a harmonization is to be adopted, even if the MS evidence is slim; granted that there was a tendency among later scribes to harmonize, can one show that there was also a tendency in the opposite direction.

In his pre-publication comment Dr. R. T. France expresses the hope that this volume will 'contribute significantly to mutual understanding among Evangelicals'. I believe that his hope is well-grounded. In this connection it is interesting that Don Carson (35f.) comments that Robert H. Gundry maintains 'with integrity

the full authority and inerrancy of Scripture'. But if Gundry's real failure was that he adopted faulty methods of interpretation, it becomes all the more difficult to see why he was forced to resign his membership of the Evangelical Theological Society. May we, for our part, hope that for the future there will be greater tolerance within Evangelicalism for all who uphold the 'divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture'.

I. HOWARD MARSHALL

Joel Green, *How to read the Gospels and Acts*, IVP, 1987. 179pp. Paperback. £4.95

I found this a refreshing book, which to a large extent fulfilled its author's aim 'to chart the lay of the land for studying the Gospels and Acts, the nature of these writings, the background they presuppose, and the way they embody the good news.'

Green is positively eager to ask and answer the usual church discussion group questions. For example, why four gospels rather than a single, authoritative account? What are we to make of the differences, major and minor, between the gospel stories? Do the gospels tell us 'what really happened'? Green shows how each of the apostles wrote his gospel to address certain needs, how each gospel retains its integrity as a literary work, and how they all complement and balance each other. He brings out the problems of different parallel verses, such as Matthew 5:3 ('Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven') and Luke 6:20 ('Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God'), and shows

how this enhances the richness of the gospel message.

A particularly rewarding chapter is that which sets Jesus in his own historical context. Green has a real command of the works of scholars on both sides of the Atlantic, and this includes the sort of cultural and sociological analyses which authors such as Geza Vermes, Martin Hengel and Gerd Theissen have given us. We see how Jesus, in order to make his message comprehensible to the people of his day, had to work to a considerable degree within the constraints imposed on him by his culture. We understand more clearly why the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders found Jesus' involvement at the table with sinners so reprehensible and objectionable.

Again, Green shows that the gospel writers fully intended to preach the Christian message by means of relating historical events. They 'preach with history'. They include material which specifically makes the point they are concerned to get across. They are not solely interested in writing a factual account as mere chroniclers. Their agenda are both historical and theological; they write as persons who believe that the historical man Jesus lives on as the Risen Lord. This shows most clearly in John's gospel, with its clear statement of purpose 'Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name' (John 20:30-31 NIV). The other gospels have different emphases, Matthew stressing that Jesus is the promised

Messiah, Mark carefully linking Christology with discipleship, and Luke emphasizing above all, salvation in Jesus Christ. Green's conclusion is that the writers should share, with Paul, consideration as theologians of the early Christian church.

In the final pages of the book, the author considers the message of the gospels, looking at them as story/narrative, discussing apocalyptic and farewell discourses, bringing out the different forms of Jesus' teaching, e.g. figurative language, exaggeration, and irony, examining the parallels, and showing how central is the concept of the kingdom of God. He has much to say which is perceptive and illuminating, even for those who know their New Testament well.

One minor caveat: the title of the book would lead one to expect a more sustained discussion of Acts. This is nevertheless a book which can be read with advantage by both scholars and ordinary churchgoers who wish to find out more about the gospels.

W. A. HAYWOOD

D. M. Mackinnon, *Themes in Theology: The Threefold Cord*, T. & T. Clark, 1987, 243pp. Hardback. £14.95

This is an intriguing book by Professor Mackinnon as it has the curious effect of evoking mixed feelings towards it. On the one hand one cannot but feel a sense of admiration and gratitude for the way he perceptively explores some of the more tricky issues in philosophical theology. On the other hand, many times one is left feeling frustrated and bewildered as questions are often raised with no hint of how they might be answered, and where obscurity

of expression (which some might take as a mark of profundity) makes for uneasy assimilation. (Why for example is there a plethora of quotations in Latin, Greek, German and French, some of which are quite extensive, with no translations provided for those who are not so familiar with these languages?)

What the reader is presented with is a varied collection of some of Professor Mackinnon's lectures, papers and book reviews (some of the best and most accessible material being contained in the latter), sorted into three sections according to the dominant subject matter, whether it be philosophy, politics or theology, and concluding with a most interesting epilogue entitled 'Kenosis and Self-Limitation'. The advantage of this arrangement is that many of the essays are self-contained and so can be read in their own right. The disadvantage is that as an overall piece of work it can seem a little disjointed (I for one could not detect the 'cumulative effect' mentioned by the Bishop of Ely on the inside of the book cover), as well as becoming a little tedious and irksome in its repetitions (e.g. Charles Raven's contention that the world is more than the stage-set for the divine drama appears in the same phraseology no less than four times in a relatively short space).

In the first section Professor Mackinnon, who clearly warms to Kant and the 'reverent agnostic' approach, takes the reader through a variety of issues raised in the area of philosophy and religion. The controversy between Moses and Aaron over the 'Golden Calf' provides a focus for a discussion on the 'Inexpressibility of God'. Understandably this is fol-

lowed by an all-too-uncritical paper on 'Kant's Philosophy of Religion', so much so, that one is left wondering whether Mackinnon actually approves of Kant's subordination of religion to morality (for an excellent counter to this see Stanley Hauerwas' 'The Peacable Kingdom'—SCM). Kant is also the starting point for the next essay on 'Time and Space' which highlights the problems in epistemology rather than provides resolutions. A much more historical treatment follows in a highly informative piece of work on the 'British Idealists', while the philosopher's analytical mind is turned to the question of 'Metaphor in Theology'. This begins by making the necessary distinction between the nature of language (whether it is literal or metaphorical) and the referential status of that language. Far too often one comes across arguments which dismiss or ignore the latter on the basis that such language is 'only metaphorical', an argument which only appears to carry force because it rests upon a confusion. This is a most valuable paper, as is the more cautionary work on 'Mortality'.

The middle section is composed of three substantial lectures which explore in a highly original way the interplay between politics and religion. In the first lecture Mackinnon's thoughts (often subtle) revolve around the contrasting characters and events which form the substance of Huxley's book 'The Grey Eminence' and Koestler's 'The Yogi and the Commissar', and it is interesting to see how resonances of both are detected by Professor Mackinnon in recent human history. The other two lectures, entitled 'Creon and Antigone' contain many pertinent

insights into the nuclear arms issue, with Mackinnon falling squarely in the unilateralist's camp.

The third part of this trilogy of works, which at first sight might appear slightly disparate but which centres upon matters of Christology and Trinitarian belief, is a mine of gems. For Mackinnon, the idea of 'kenosis' (the meaning of which is unfortunately never specified) is seen as providing valuable insight not only into the incarnation, but also the Trinity, and this is pivotal to much of Mackinnon's thinking as is evidenced by the epilogue. This is the way Mackinnon himself eloquently expresses the relation: 'It is as if the theology of the Triune God, understood as a completion of the theology of Christ's kenosis and the complex simplicity of his redeeming mission, provided the context within which traditional debates concerning the alleged divine impassibility are transformed. God is transcendent in the sense that the world's dependence upon Him is totally asymmetrical. Yet in Himself He is such that the very dependence of the world upon Him is expressive of His eternal relatedness. The creator's humility before his creature is the centrepiece of the mystery of the divine humility, which is the very ground of the divine omnipotence. That power in its absolute sovereignty must not be conceived abstractly but in terms of the total and unfettered perichoresis of the persons.' (p. 159). Although Mackinnon expressly acknowledges his debt to the German theologian von Balthasar on this matter, one does trace faint echoes of Barth in some of what he says.

Those who have attempted to wrestle with Schillebeeckx' two

mighty works on Christology but who still feel at sea or who are daunted by the task and would welcome some sort of introduction, could not do much better than to read Professor Mackinnon's critical review of Schillebeeckx' 'Jesus' and 'Christ'.

Those seeking easily digestible theology had better look elsewhere; this is a book which requires careful reading, and at some points re-reading, in order to appreciate the benefits it offers.

MELVIN TINKER

R. Lundin, A. C. Thiselton and C. Walhout, *The Responsibility of Hermeneutics*, Paternoster, 1985. 129pp. Paperback. £7.95

Roger Lundin, Associate Professor of English at Wheaton College, contributes the first of the three chapters, entitled 'Our Hermeneutical Inheritance'. This is a brief and perhaps over-concise discussion of some aspects of the baneful influence of the Cartesian and Baconian ideals of 'objective', 'disinterested', 'presuppositionless' analysis in the arts, and in biblical interpretation. These are the ideals most widespread in Fundamentalism, with its strong suspicion of the relevance of tradition, and its belief in the accessibility of the truth of scripture through neutral observation and exacting study. Lundin criticizes this in the name of Gadamer and Wittgenstein: the ideals are unattainable, for our interpretation depends on the questions we ask, and these arise out of our historical milieu. As we make our enquiry from within the horizon of our own experience and relate what we find to it, our 'interpretation' of an event or text could never be truly

'neutral'. Nor should we strive for such: we understand someone writing about (e.g.) pain precisely because we know what pain means to us, and to those around us. So-called 'presuppositionless' exegesis (which has sometimes perhaps unkindly, but pointedly, been called 'the exegesis of the empty head') could only stutter where the knowing subject can speak freely. All this does not mean, Lundin assures us, that our interpretation is historically determined (in reading we may make discoveries which challenge our assumptions and our tradition)—nor that we should 'abandon the quest of *validity* in interpretation (there are ways to adjudicate between rival explanations of a work)—but we cannot expect to provide a universally accepted 'neutral' method which will generate purely 'objective' exegesis. Lundin's thesis is not new, but it bears repetition and it is engagingly stated.

The second and longest essay, by Clarence Walhout, Professor of English at Calvin College, entitled 'Texts and Actions', seeks to elucidate some of the relationships of meaning that may be said to exist between text, authorial intention, and reality in (chiefly) literary works. Walhout charts the shift from viewing literature as 'a criticism of life' through the literature-as-language model (using Derrida and De Man as foils) to a literature-as-action model, which he adopts and elucidates. An 'action' model of literature begins with the recognition that a text (like a speech-act) is both an object of a writer's action and an instrument thereof. The meaning of the text is not autonomous (as in the literature-as-language model), but related to

the text's place in this broader category of the history and purposes of the writer. Texts are like utterances: their (valid) interpretation depends in part on the writer's intention and situational context (which is not simply to *identify* meaning with author's intent!), and on his relation to his readers. And like utterances they may simultaneously have multiple purposes emerging at different levels of analysis (e.g. to narrate a story, at the same time to amuse, to challenge the reader to give up drink, and to win a prize offered by the Literary Guild).

Within the context of this model, Walhout explores the important but difficult subjects of *reference* and *mimesis* in fictional works. Can one speak of the *referent* of statements about Huck Finn when such a person only exists in Mark Twain's story? Yes, affirms Walhout; *reference* is appropriate even in fiction—to denote the relationship of referring expressions to entities *in the universe of discourse*, the world imagined by the writer's text. *Mimesis* is the term used for the relationship between the fictional world of the literary work and the real world; between, say, the character portrayal of Huckleberry Finn and the world of behaviour and character of real boys—the former being intended to resemble some special aspects of the latter and to help us explore the real world through the image. Fictional worlds are anchored in what the author conceives to be the real world of the putative readers, but ask the reader 'What if your world were like this?' The work is thus shaped by author's concept of the world; and its interpretation by both this and the

reader's concept of the world. The interpreter has to elucidate at least five interconnected levels: he must analyse the surface structure and semantics of the fiction; then survey the world it portrays; then infer from the narrative strategies how the author interprets and evaluates that world; then compare the fictional world to the real world, and so go on to elucidate and evaluate what the author is saying about the real world. While these comments are made about fiction it should be clear that a similar process is involved in the analysis of non-fiction; especially where centuries or cultural gaps separate the reader's world from that of the writer. Walhout completes his essay comparing what he has said about elucidating fictional works with interpretation of historical genres.

The third and final essay, by Tony Thiselton (formerly Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield; now Principal of St John's College, Nottingham) examines 'Reader-Response Hermeneutics, Action Models, and the Parables of Jesus'. A general introduction relates what has been said so far to biblical hermeneutics, and laments that we too-frequently try to reach a general paradigm of hermeneutics and force it on specific instances which do not fit (e.g. either the treatment of parables as allegories or Jülicher's insistence they contain *no* allegory or Crossan's insistence they subvert world-views etc).

If Mk. 4:10-12 suggests Jesus' parables demand a readiness to respond, this invites us to examine parables from the perspective of a reader-response model of hermeneutics. Dodd and Jeremias confined them-

selves to distilling Jesus' teaching out of the parables and so disarming them. At the other extreme some varieties of reader-response analysis have lost all contact with Jesus' intention (or Mark's or Luke's) and have dissolved meaning into interpretive response (so Fish *et. al.*).

An Action model of hermeneutics helps to guard against the interpretive dangers that beset writers on the Parables, precisely because it points to the multiplicity of functions performed by such speech-acts. Parables start by setting up a narrative framework, but this corresponds to an implied state of affairs in the real world and so allows the parable (if understood) to function, secondly, as an act of warning or assurance as well as the advance of a truth-claim, etc. Recontextualization of the parable in the interpreter's world does not necessarily keep the whole of the original meaning, nor utterly change it, but usually shifts the relative priority of the various actions performed by the parable. The real question is whether or not the new use is a 'responsible' one.

Here we have three stimulating essays offering important insights. It is an unfortunate irony, however, that these three authors (who are so acutely aware of the problems and significance of the reader in interpretation) should provide such a compressed, jargon-filled and demanding writing. We await the English translation with interest!

MAX TURNER

John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, IVP, 1986. 383pp. Casebound £9.95. Paperback £5.95

In view of the centrality of the cross

of Christ in the New Testament, it is surprising that very few books on the cross of Christ have been written by evangelical authors for thoughtful readers in the last fifty years. John Stott's *The Cross of Christ* fills a significant gap in Christian literature and has rightly been described as his *magnum opus*.

The book is divided into four parts. After three introductory chapters which constitute Part One, John Stott argues in Part Two for a truly biblical understanding of the notions of 'satisfaction' and 'substitution'. In Part Three he considers the three great achievements of the cross, namely, saving sinners, revealing God and conquering evil. In Part Four entitled 'Living under the cross' he seeks to show that the cross transforms everything. It gives us a new worshipping relationship to God, a new and balanced understanding of ourselves, a new incentive to give ourselves to mission, a new love for our enemies, and a new courage to face the perplexities of suffering.

The author shows a wide acquaintance with both historical theology and modern literature. It is perhaps surprising that he does not consider the extent of the atonement, that is, did Christ die for all men or only for the elect? Mark 10:45 and Mark 14:24 say that Jesus will either give his life or pour out his life 'for many', an echo of Isaiah 53:12 'he bore the sin of many'. Stott comments 'Some have been embarrassed by the apparently restrictive nature of this expression. But Jeremias has argued that, according to pre-Christian Jewish interpretation of it, "the many" were "the godless among both Jews and Gentiles". The expression therefore is not exclusive ("many, but not

all") but, in the Semitic manner of speech, inclusive ("the totality, consisting of many"), which was "a Messianic concept unheard of in contemporary rabbinic thought"' (p. 147). I suspect that the discussion of this point will not satisfy everyone!

Stott discusses sympathetically Hans Küng's monograph *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection* (1957) but perceptively observes, that 'more than a quarter of a century has passed since the publication of his book, and one is not conscious of any widespread proclamation in the Roman Catholic Church of the gospel of justification by grace alone through faith alone' (p. 186). This observation must surely be borne in mind as Anglicans and Roman Catholics consider the recently published *Salvation and the Church*, an Agreed Statement by the Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission ARCIC II.

The reviewer has greatly enjoyed reading *The Cross of Christ* and recommends it wholeheartedly.

MICHAEL J. COLLIS

Arthur Custance, *Two Men Called Adam*, Doorway Publications, 1983. 253pp. Paperback. \$10.50

In this book Dr. Custance seeks to address himself to the basic contradiction which he sees exists between an evolutionist view of the world and a creationist view of the world. Custance's book is a study of the origins of both the first Adam, i.e. our forefather and the originator of man's fallen state, and also the second Adam, i.e. our Lord Jesus Christ, the redeemer of mankind. These two historic characters stand, according to Custance, in direct

opposition to one another. Both are a proto-type and representative of the other and also of what can be said of 'true man'. Dr. Custance argues that evolution cannot account for the arrival of the first Adam. He also claims that a Jesus Christ who is part of an evolutionary chain of events cannot represent all mankind and therefore cannot be a saviour.

I must confess that when I started to read this book I thought that I was merely ploughing through a somewhat eccentric Fundamentalist tome. However, I found as I read on that this was not the case. Fundamentalist it certainly was, eccentric it was not. With impeccable logic, Dr. Custance makes his case according to his own presuppositions. The argument is spoiled only occasionally, e.g. in chapter seventeen whilst dealing with the resurrection body and the human future state, when he gives way to wild speculation.

This book is a very good read for those who want to engage with a well-argued and challenging Fundamentalist theology. I have two basic arguments with Custance. These

concern his approach in general rather than this book in particular. Firstly, he concludes that the view argued in this thesis is the only really Christian approach. This claim, though forcefully backed up by rational argument, appears to me to be narrow-minded and verging on intellectual arrogance. Secondly, I was left with the impression that biblical theology should be allowed, in Custance's view, to dictate to science the direction and the correct conclusion of its studies. Thus biblical dogmatics would replace the strangle-hold on science which was removed when papal dogmatism was smashed at the Reformation. This would surely put the clock back hundreds of years and benefit nobody.

Personally I am not in sympathy with Dr. Custance's approach, but I found the book a useful reminder that those of us who would seek to rewrite theology in terms of twentieth century thought must be careful that we end up with an adequate image of Christ, i.e. a Christ who saves.

M. W. ELFRED

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