REVIEWS

Text and Theology: Studies in Honour of Prof. Dr. Theol. Magne Saebø

Edited by Tangberg Verbum, Oslo, 1994; 381pp., n.p.; ISBN 82 543 0647 8

This is a collection of twenty-one studies in honour of Dr. Saebø, Professor of Old Testament at the Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo, by colleagues, former students and four non-Scandinavians (including R.E. Clements). A number of the essays are in English and German; those in Norwegian have an English or German summary.

The title of the volume acknowledges Dr. Saebø's interest in theology as well as Old Testament, and consequently, while a number of articles are on technical Old Testament topics *(e.g.* Jörg Jeremias, Hosea's influence on Jeremiah; H. Barstad, Akkadian loan-words in Isaiah 40-55), others are of broader interest (*e.g.* K. Berge's evaluation of C. Westermann's promotion of the 'blessing' as a key category in Old Testament theology), and indeed other areas of theology are also represented. O. Skarsaune's well-documented article 'Kodeks of kanon' (Codex and canon) makes an interesting correlation between the codex form of the Christian Old Testament and the popularization of the 'larger' canon. Two articles are in the area of Jewish-Christian theology and dialogue (one on translating the New Testament into Hebrew, by O. Chr. M. Kvarme, which makes important general points about translating the Bible). And there is an interesting account, by D. Rian, of the 'conversion' of S. Mowinckel from historian to theologian, indicating how his work on the Old Testament was affected by this.

The volume is a warm tribute to the scholar who is honoured, and also contains a number of articles which make valuable contribution in their own right to the study of theology

Gordon McConville, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

Letters of Samuel Rutherford

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, r.p. 1996; 206pp., £2.50; ISBN 0 85151 163 5

Here we have a selection comprising 69 of the 365 letters brought together in Andrew Bonar's 1891 edition of Rutherford's *Letters*. From the first edition (Rotterdam, 1664, within three years of his death) until 1891 no less than 29 editions appeared. The 1891 edition has

been through several reprints. These numerous editions testify to the esteem with which the *Letters* have been held through many generations. Those responsible for the selection have given us a well-balanced collection: letters in chronological order from different periods in Rutherford's life, to the wide variety of folk with whom he corresponded, individuals, young and old, ministerial colleagues, fellow sufferers for the truth, ordinary people, nobility, and also letters addressed to groups. As in Bonar's edition, the majority are from the 1636-38 period when Rutherford had been banished to Aberdeen because of his defence of Presbyterianism and non-conformity to Episcopacy. His 'dumb Sabbaths' there greatly grieved him but through his letters he ministered to many.

In the 1891 edition a brief biographical sketch of the person addressed is given, where the information was available. In this edition brief but helpful notes on the correspondents are collected at the end of the volume, with a helpful outline of Rutherford's life.

Rutherford was a scholar and a profound theologian. His learning and scholarship were motivated by the knowledge of God in his soul. His scholarship was recognised beyond Scotland. More than one university in Holland was anxious to have his services. His ability showed itself in a special way in his participation in the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In matters of theology, church order and church/state relationship he did not hesitate to engage in controversy and we see that also in his letters. He needed a great deal of persuasion to accept appointment to the chair of Divinity at St Andrews in 1638, not because he despised learning but because he was at heart a pastor. In his letters we meet particularly with the pastor.

When he was pastor in Anwoth it was said of him that 'He is *always* praying, *always* preaching, *always* visiting the sick, *always* catechising, *always* writing and studying.' (He is said to have risen at 3.00 a.m. each day.) Wherever he is, whatever his circumstances, to whomsoever he is writing he is yearning for Christ, pouring out his love for Christ. He welcomes persecution and trials of all sorts if only they bring Christ with them. His letters are full of Scripture and he obviously expected those to whom he wrote to be familiar with Scripture also. His use of Scripture may at times seem strange and his allusions obscure, but what is not obvious at first will become clear if we stop to ponder.

Rutherford's English style, figurative language and use of Scottish and old English words and phrases, though undoubtedly presenting problems for some, should not put prospective readers off. Bonar in his day recognised the language problem. His 1891 edition has a 12-page glossary. However, most readers will require only limited help.

Nevertheless, if a reprint is contemplated, a glossary, not necessarily as long as Bonar's, would be of real value.

A.C. Boyd, Free Church College, Edinburgh

God and Freedom: Essays in Historical and Systematic Theology

Edited by Colin E. Gunton

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1995; 137pp., £16.95; ISBN 0 567 09725 0

The question of freedom is never far from the centre of modern theology. It dominates the contemporary intellectual landscape, affecting not only our understanding of human nature and human nature in relation to God, but also a variety of modern doctrines of God. Yet the idea of freedom is seldom discussed analytically or critically in theological literature. What it is and what it entails is far too commonly just assumed, whether in the form of the social freedom of the many varieties of liberation theology, or of the existential freedom more common to modern Protestant and Catholic thought.

This book of essays, which is loosely arranged around the theme of freedom, goes some way towards plugging this hole in scholarship. Its main contribution, arguably, is to help to show how multi-faceted the question is. There are contributions on everything from Milton on freedom of expression (Brian Horne) to the problem of grace and freedom (Stewart Sutherland), a treatment of Dorothy L. Sayers on Dante (Ann Loades), a study of Paul (Francis Watson), together with wide-ranging essays on divine freedom (Alistair McFadyen) and on freedom and the *imago Dei* (Christoph Schwöbel). The last three of these are of special interest. Watson attempts what has now become for New Testament scholarship generally a rare move into theology on the basis of recent developments in the exegesis of Paul on law and gospel; McFadyen argues that out of the divine freedom, freedom is given to what is other; and Schwöbel presents the outline of a comprehensive theological vision that merits more sustained development in a complete dogmatics. In addition to all of this, Colin Gunton supplies an introduction and a stimulating, concluding essay.

The list of contributors is impressive, and the standards of scholarship are high. The book is accessible in its approach, and takes up questions of culture as well as theological matters. Nevertheless, as is often the case with such volumes, the reader can be left with a sense of disappointment with this book. It is rather diffuse in its focus, saying much about specialist areas of interest and too little concerning what are really the core issues for anyone wishing a

grounding in the theological aspects of freedom. Specialists will certainly welcome particular contributions, and those undertaking research in the general area would find much in the book that is very helpful, but a better basic orientation to the central issues can be found elsewhere. For this, I would myself recommend selected essays by the Catholic theologian Walter Kasper, in his book *Theology and Church.*

Gary D. Badcock, University of Edinburgh

From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Main Themes of the Pentateuch

T. Desmond Alexander

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1995; xxv + 227pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 85364 647 3

Alexander's stated aims are to a) focus on the actual content of the Pentateuch as it has been received, rather than on hypothetical sources, b) draw on the best insights of recent research into Hebrew narrative techniques regarding the meaning of the text, and c) be as straightforward as possible in presentation, without being non-academic in substance. In these objectives, he is clearly successful, although a price has necessarily been paid. Thus, whilst he avoids the danger of over-concern with issues of authorship, one might consider the one sentence on this matter, which merely notes that there are differing views, to be a corresponding under-emphasis. Likewise, the simple and highly readable presentation is sometimes achieved by passing over substantial areas of scholarly debate without comment, or presenting the author's own view as though it were not disputed. Nevertheless, it is to no small extent due to these 'failings' that it is so successful in providing a well-informed, wide-ranging, and highly readable introduction to the whole of the Pentateuch. Of particular value is the book's broad focus whereby all major aspects of the Pentateuch are addressed, including both narrative and law, and including significant treatments of such topics as the genealogies in Genesis, the tabernacle and holiness.

In a brief introductory chapter, Alexander argues that the Pentateuch, in its present form, should be seen to be a unified work, both in its narrative plot and in its theology. This is followed by fifteen chapters which helpfully divide the Pentateuch into themes that are broadly but not rigidly in the order of the text itself. Thus, for instance, the three chapters on Leviticus are entitled 'Be holy', 'The sacrificial system', and 'Clean and unclean foods' respectively. The concluding chapter summarises the plot and themes of the Pentateuch in the light

of the preceding discussions, focusing on the function of Israel vis-à-vis the nations, or, more specifically, Israel as a light to the nations, and a royal descendant of Judah as the mediator of future blessings to the nations. Alexander finishes by noting that the Pentateuch is also ordered towards the future, since key promises to Abraham remain largely unfulfilled by the end of Deuteronomy. Each chapter is broken up by helpful subheadings, including a one-paragraph summary of the chapter at the beginning and a 'New Testament Connections' section at the end. As a thematic and theological introduction to the content of the Pentateuch, this book is highly recommended.

Edward D. Herbert, Glasgow Bible College

The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann

Richard Bauckham

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1995; 276pp., £12.95; ISBN 0 567 29277 0

The author is an acknowledged leader in presenting and expounding Moltmann to the theology-reading public. In this book he builds on his earlier work, *Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making* (1987). He revisits the earlier period of Moltmann's work (to 1978) by way of review and comprehensively examines the period up to 1993. The author makes it clear that his aim in writing the earlier book was to explain influences upon Moltmann, to analyse his thought and to expound systematically the central ideas of his theology. Here, however, he wishes to do that and more: he intends to engage also in evaluation and criticism. However, he concedes from the beginning that the overall evaluation is going to be very positive. This explains why many readers will be disappointed. Criticism is not so slight as to be tokenist but nor is it particularly sustained. This means that Moltmann remains insufficiently tested in the crucible in this country. Some have detected in Moltmann's latest work a degree of romanticism. There seems a fine line between his eco-theology and a sentimental view of nature and humanity. This book would have been a good place to raise critically the underlying philosophy and not just the weaknesses of detail in this development. At the same time Richard Bauckham can offer surprising and useful criticism as, for instance, on Moltmann's view of the *Filioque* and the notion of the Spirit as female.

Most of the book consists of sympathetic, careful and lucid exposition. In this regard it is first-class. Teachers of Moltmann's theology should be grateful. A prolific writer like Moltmann can receive only selective treatment in the classroom but this book places

a reliable and readable overview in the hands of students to read for themselves. It also focuses and thematises Moltmann's work for all who are interested in theology, including academics. The examination of particular themes such as political theology, ecclesiology and mysticism brings an integrated and stimulating angle to the subject.

The book aims to lead readers into study of the great German theologian's own writings and it should surely succeed. However, human nature being what it is, most first-timers will approach Moltmann through a secondary source. For English speaking readers, this is definitely the secondary source to choose. Simply do not go anywhere else.

Roy Kearsley, Glasgow Bible College

God the Almighty: Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Love

Donald G. Bloesch

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1995; 329pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 85364 593 0

This book, the third in his series of Christian foundations, is, according to its author, possibly the most important. It is clearly written with warmth, compassion and firmness. It provides good, up-to-date summaries of important debates. It can be bold (Gordon Clark on God as the creator of sin is dismissed as 'heterodox') while remaining conservative and attempting to import Scripture into the argument. Just occasionally this comes across as proof-texting (and one thinks of the texts that could be used against him), but there is a familiarity with biblical scholarship and biblical theology that often backs him up.

The main concern of the book is set out at p.16: the enemy is 'Platonism and Neoplatonism, which from my point of view stand in diametrical opposition to the insights and affirmations of biblical faith'. The confidence with which he engages with these systems of thought as they impact upon theology (particularly through 'the mystical tradition') is impressive and heartening.

There are places where readers of this *Bulletin* may think he has fudged the issue, as where he tries to say that he is neither Arminian nor Calvinist on the question of God's sole responsibility for individual salvation, but does this by painting Arminianism in very extreme terms which makes it look more like a deistic Pelagianism. His own position is closer, I would hazard, to that of the historical Arminius. The five pages given to the authority of Scripture do not fit in too well and one wishes he had simply referred the reader to his volume on Scripture.

But these are minor quibbles: there is an enticing section on God as having a spiritual *body* (with Luther, but also Tertullian?) and therefore being finite as well as infinite in his being (taking the best from Barth – and as so often with Barth it is very good). God's 'immutability' is reclassified in moral terms as 'steadfastness'. The mystical tradition is attacked for making God remote yet near by our likeness to him – a dangerous half-truth – thereby missing the point of the incarnation and the ministry of the Spirit. Process theologians are equally censured for leaving us with a concept of a God who has no more power than persuasion and has only a vague idea of what the future outcomes will be. He gives some approval to Tillich's view that our destiny is 'myself as given, formed by nature, history and myself'. The fear is of necessity but also of a lack of ultimate necessity or meaning to my existence; if everyone has free will, then none of us has very much.

There then follow chapters on God's power, wisdom, holiness and love. This approach to God's morality does well, much better than most on the first three, but stumbles (like so many before him) at the last. Forests have been shredded to define the relationship between *eros* and *agape*. The key for Bloesch seems to be that the latter is a gift which descends and makes *us* descend to act for the loveless which is more than compassion. Lutheran Romanticism is not a bad place to start, given the prevalence of other views, but the assassination of humanitarian love and the exaltation of Christian love leaves a taste of exclusiveness that is a little smug.

In the chapter on the Trinity there are some excellent summaries of modern positions. Bloesch is less strong on the nuances of the earlier theologians (especially Origen and most Greek theology which he accuses of subordinationism and of conceiving a causally related Trinity, the very thing the East criticises in Western theology). His own conclusions are that the three Persons are three agencies of relation in God, or three foci of consciousness with one overarching consciousness, and that the Father has existential but not ontological priority, in a concept of equality in which there is reciprocity such that the Son and the Spirit 'free' the Father. God, Bloesch thinks, is actually unipersonal (God can be envisaged as both one Person and three Persons) but relates himself to us as Father, Son and Spirit. 'The Father has a certain priority in that his creative action anticipates the creative and receptive activity of both Son and Spirit', but this does not help very much. We can thus pray to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; to pray only to the Father means risking figuring God to be patriarchal. This does not seem convincing ground for invoking the three. It is perhaps better to dwell on the prayers of the Bible: 'Come, Lord!' (1 Cor. 16:22) does not seem to be invoking the Holy Spirit.

The Fall is presented as an historical event, not for positive reasons, but on the grounds that the alternative is that sin is a necessary part of human being. The presentation of such alternatives is thought-provoking, but simplistic. There is occasional misrepresentation of modern spiritualities (*e.g.* the straw man of Greek Orthodox 'deification', and the attribution to Thomas of nature perfecting free will), an over-reliance on Reinhold Niebuhr's analyses (while alleging that Niebuhr did not always escape the Platonism he attacked, since he imported it in his 'Renaissance-flavoured Reformation theology'), a Lutheran coolness towards engagement – even though activism by Christians as what focuses on changing attitudes is right and well-put – if it includes our own. There is a lack of engagement with 'post-modernity' and even a refusal to acknowledge it as a separate phenomenon (merely as 'hypermodernity'). The last part of the book is engrossed with the struggle with North American Process theologians and the authors of *The Openness of God*, notably David Basinger.

My main criticism is of a formal nature: much of the book is more about anthropology rather than theology. Of course the two reflect each other. But it is not always clear that this is happening: something is said about the human condition, then something else is said about God. It also means that too much is attempted in one volume. However in a book of such richness, which is written from a committed standpoint, yet gives much to ponder from diverse sources of theology, and furthermore, analyses and discerns between them, perhaps that is a small fault.

Mark W. Elliott, Glasgow

Homosexuality and the Bible

Mark Bonnington and Bob Fyall
Grove Books, Cambridge, 1996; 28pp., £1.95; ISBN 1 85174 326 X

At first sight, a 28-page booklet might seem like an insult to the complex and emotive subject of homosexuality and the Bible. Already there are too many short sharp knee-jerk reactions, especially from evangelical preachers.

This little book, which is part of the Grove Biblical Series, is different. Written by Old Testament and New Testament specialists, in six short chapters the moral, ethical and theological issues are raised and considered with integrity and thoughtfulness. A variety of relevant scriptures are explored, not as isolated instructions, but as part of the biblical teaching on humanity. These include the place of

creation in sexuality, the call to holiness, the significance of Jesus' friendship with sinners and the texts in Paul.

Different views and conclusions from the traditional ones to which they come, are described briefly. Footnotes give scope for readers to follow up these and other writers.

The booklet serves not only to sketch traditional evangelical thinking on the subject, but to plead for pastoral care and support for those affected more directly by homosexuality. They conclude, 'Our discussion of gay people in the Church is not a call for a witch hunt but for the Christian community to help one another to "lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Eph. 4:1).'

Fiona Barnard, St Andrews

The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography

Edited by Brian Dickey

Evangelical History Association, Sydney, 1994; xxi+417pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 646 16625 5

Some might be forgiven if they expect a work by this title to be just a leaflet or a paperback at best. Surely the evangelical heritage of a two-hundred-year-old country which began as a penal colony and has experienced no major revival is none too illustrious. In fact the volume was written to begin to correct such perceptions, which are all too common. The evangelical component to Australian history has for too long been ignored, removed and, at times, slandered, even by Australian historical scholarship. The editor and the Evangelical History Association, the sponsoring body, are convinced that 'the most powerful Christian tradition brought by the first white settlers to Australia in 1788, and a tradition which remained creative, energetic, dedicated to self-propagation and to the transformation of Australian society through the next two centuries, was evangelical Protestantism'.

The *Dictionary* covers almost 700 individuals who achieved some degree of distinction in Christian ministry, mission or influence in Australia. David Bebbington's definition of Evangelicalism is adopted (four characteristics: conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism), and only the dead are included. The broad range of denominations are covered (29% Anglican; 13% Presbyterian; 22% Methodist; 13% Baptist, *etc*). Of the entries, 251 were born in England and 219 in Australia. The next biggest country of origin is Scotland with 88 (13%). Only 11% are women and less than 10 are aboriginals, both of which reflect historical reality of the period in

view (if only official leadership is in focus) rather than a bias on the part of the editor.

While the editor saved himself many headaches by not including the living in the *Dictionary*, it must be said that the survey is thereby greatly diminished. The last fifty years are effectively excluded, which is fully a quarter of Australian history. This is compounded by the fact that in the first quarter there were very few Australians, let alone evangelical Christians. It is like painting a portrait of an individual only up to their chest. For example, one cannot gain an understanding of the Anglican church in Sydney, the most evangelical Anglican diocese in the world, without reference to Marcus Loane, Donald Robinson, Peter and Philip Jensen and John Chapman. The editor is of course aware of this shortcoming and admits that the 'volume contributes only residually to the study of contemporary Australian Christianity of the 1990s. It is very much an historical project.'

Nonetheless, the volume has many worthwhile stories to tell and does so in good style. Most of the biographies are 600 words or less, with a few extended pieces (Howard Mowll, R.B.S. Hammond, Florence Young, Samuel Marsden *etc.*). Indexes according to denominational affiliation and membership of missionary societies make it possible to trace the history of a particular group or organisation. The connection between Australia and the Chinese missions, the eagerness of the early Baptists and Methodists, the fortunes of the Presbyterians, and many other paths can be profitably followed.

One can read of Richard Johnson and Samuel Marsden, the first two chaplains to the colony, both of whom were influenced by William Wilberforce and Charles Simeon. In virtually unprecedented and very difficult ministries both achieved a great deal, but were not free from severe opposition and controversy. Johnson is noted not only for his gospel priorities but for his concern for the education of the children of the colony and with the welfare and evangelisation of the aborigines. Marsden was the more dynamic figure, whose influence extended to promoting mission to the Maoris in New Zealand.

The story of Florence Young also stands out. Young started a faith mission to the Pacific Islanders working in Queensland when she was thirty years of age, in part inspired by George Müller, the Queensland Kanaka Mission. She remained active in her direction and support for fifty years. Bible classes were conducted in Pidgin English and the first twenty-five years saw almost 2,500 converts baptised. When in 1901 the Immigration Control Act led to the islanders being sent home the mission adapted its strategy and supported the repatriated plantation workers in the task of church planting in their homelands.

The mission's objective was to 'bring into being churches which from the outset were self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating'.

D. Broughton Knox, the highly influential principal of Moore Theological College (1958-85), also appears. Knox was an early participant in the Tyndale Fellowship, along with F.F.Bruce, Stuart Barton Babbage and Douglas Johnson, and in his retirement, after four more years of lecturing, helped establish the George Whitefield College for the conservative Church of England in South Africa. It is also worth reading of John G. Ridley, the tireless twentieth-century Baptist itinerant evangelist and pastor, after whom the church in Sydney where this reviewer was a member is named.

The Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography is a valuable reference work. I hope it will supply the basis for further historical work which will accord evangelical Christianity in Australia its rightful place. The editor is a scholarly historian of Flinders University in Adelaide. As Owen Chadwick concludes in his review in the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*: 'this is a serious contribution both to church history and to the general history of Australia'. For Australian Evangelicals today, it is of great value in enabling them to obey the injunction of Hebrews 13:7, 'Remember your former leaders... and imitate their faith'.

Brian Rosner, University of Aberdeen

Jesus And Israel – One Covenant Or Two?

David E. Holwerda

Apollos, Leicester, 1995; xi+193pp., £12.99; ISBN 85111 439 3

In this very well-written, readable and thoroughly Christian book, David Holwerda gives, in this reviewer's opinion, the right answer to the question posed in the title. He clearly shows that there is only one covenant and that is found in the person and work of Christ. The book is then, in part, a response to (a) dispensationalist theology which denies that the church is the Israel of God, and holds to two quite separate purposes for the church and Israel, and (b) certain liberal theologies which see Judaism as a valid response to God without the need, at present, for Jesus. Nevertheless, although Holwerda clearly rejects a two-covenant theology, he does argue from Romans 11 that 'Jewish Israel' still has a place in God's final purposes. However, although he believes that the restoration of the Jews to the Promised Land in the twentieth century is a good thing and is even used by God, he rejects the belief that this is a fulfilment of prophecy with theological implications.

His first chapter is a very helpful discussion of many and various attitudes that the church has had to Israel. So we get a useful summary of Justin Martyr's, Luther's and Calvin's, as well as Barthian and liberal Protestant, convictions about Israel.

By far the largest part of the book is an excellent study of the relationship of Jesus to Israel dealing with the questions of 'Identity', 'the Temple', 'Land', and 'Fulfilment'. He skilfully and movingly shows us, through illuminating biblical exposition, that Jesus *is* Israel and Israel *is* Jesus who gathers up in himself Israel's destiny. Preachers who want to show how the Old and New Testaments bear witness to one another as they bear witness to Jesus will find much to help them in these main central chapters of the book. Readers who believe in the essential unity of the Word of God will find much to strengthen and deepen their conviction.

Superficially this position would lead to the conclusion that Jewish Israel has no further unique place in God's purposes. However, Holwerda's fine exposition of Romans 11 will not allow him to reach this conclusion. He points out that the seeming final judgement on unbelieving Israel in the Gospels and Acts is only a judgement on that *present* generation. He notes that there may be hints in the gospels of a final restoration of Jewish Israel (*e.g.* Luke 21:20-24), but Romans is the only New Testament book that deals theologically with the *future* of Jewish Israel.

However, in spite of my high opinion of this book, I wonder whether Holwerda has really thought out the eschatological implication of his 'Jesus is Israel' theology. For if the death of Jesus means the death of Jewish Israel, will not the resurrection of Jesus guarantee the resurrection of the people who died? That resurrection cannot merely be the New Israel, because in the prophets it is the very people who are judged that are finally restored. God cannot let them go because in his predestinating will they were disobedient so that the world might be saved through the cross of Jesus. They were disobedient for our sake and this was God's purpose of mercy for Jew and Gentile alike. Surely it is the very incarnation and atonement in God's eternal purposes that lies behind Paul's theology in Romans 9-11. Further, since the whole of Scripture teaches us that nature as well as humankind is the creation of God and the object of redemption, it seems clear to this reviewer that if we grant that this representative people still have a unique destiny to fulfil this cannot finally be separated from that land that represents all lands in God's purposes. In short, just because the final fulfilment of prophecy in Jesus has a universal fulfilment in all the earth, that does not mean that particular fulfilment in one people and one *land* has lost its place in God's purposes.

This does not mean that there are two covenants, for both the destiny of New Israel and that of Jewish Israel cannot be understood apart from that one incarnation and atonement accomplished in Christ. As the new Israel bears conscious witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus, so Jewish Israel bears unconscious witness to the same Jesus in its long and mysterious story.

I certainly recommend this book, most of all because of its profound biblical insights into Israel's destiny as found in Christ alone. Whether the author has fully drawn out the eschatological implications of the relationship between the particular fulfilments of prophecy in a *continuing* Jewish Israel and the universal fulfilments in the whole earth I am not so confident.

Howard Taylor, St David's Knightswood and Glasgow Bible College

When God's Voice is Heard. Essays on Preaching Presented to Dick Lucas

Edited by Christopher Green and David Jackman
IVP, Leicester, 1995; 187pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 85110 656 0

This collection of essays was produced to mark Dick Lucas' 70th birthday. John Stott gives a personal tribute in his foreword, which is followed by Christopher Green's potted history of Dick's life and his work at St Helen's and the Proclamation Trust. The entire book is a fitting tribute to a man who has done much to encourage the growth of expository preaching.

The book is in three sections. These deal with the Word, the preacher and the audience. Peter Adam considers the preacher's authority in terms of the sufficiency of Scripture. The doctrine is defined, and its basis in Scripture shown. This is followed by an interesting discourse by John Woodhouse on 'the preacher and the living word'. One would like to hear him develop his thoughts on the Spirit's use of the Word as the essence of Christian experience: 'the fundamental Christian experience is experience of the Word of God.' The third contribution is Peter Jensen's advice on how to preach from the whole Bible.

Section two begins with a description by James Packer of the place of theology in the life and study of the Christian, especially the preacher. Then come articles by Roy Clements and Edmund Clowney on the preacher as 'prophet' and pastor respectively. They have telling comments on the spiritual experience and orientation required for gospel work.

Two chapters each on preaching for the church and for the world make up section three. Frank Retief uses lessons from people like

Ryle, McCheyne and Spurgeon in describing the character and work of a preacher who 'grows the church'. The type of changes required in a church are outlined by Philip Jensen, who relates them to preaching that is predictable (because faithful to the Word), and also unexpected (because such faithfulness cuts across the agendas of fallen – even Christian – human beings). Preaching in relation to the world is dealt with first by Don Carson. He takes pains to show how every preacher needs to understand the diversity and changes in society; but emphasises that a correct understanding comes only from a biblical perspective. John Chapman concludes with a study of evangelistic preaching. The book is concluded by David Jackman with a thought-provoking article on training for the ministry, and the centrality of the Word in that activity. One sees here the thoughts that influenced the development of the Cornhill training programme.

As one would expect in a collection of this kind there is a variety both of style and compactness of material. But it is well-constructed and presents its theme clearly (note the appropriate title). This is a book that integrates theology and practice in a satisfying way. There is nothing that a busy preacher would find unnecessary; and the preaching task receives theological direction and support. The passages dealing with the preacher's spiritual condition are searching. It is well referenced, allowing for further study.

Archibald N. McPhail, Campbell Street Church, Oban

The Problem of Polarization: An Approach based on the Writings of G.C. Berkouwer

Charles M. Cameron

Edwin Mellen Press, Lampeter, 1992; 597pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 7734 1633 1

In this exposition of the theology of G.C. Berkouwer, Dr Charles Cameron approaches the subject in a way which is quite distinctive in relation to previous studies in the work of Berkouwer. He does not attempt a systematic overview of Berkouwer, nor does he centre on one particular doctrine. Rather, he seeks to show that Berkouwer has been able to pioneer a biblical understanding of the relationship between God and humankind (the central feature of any theology) by avoiding the twin pitfalls of objectivism and subjectivism. Berkouwer has thus, argues Cameron, produced a balanced theology which is able to guide us through difficult waters without the polarisation and confrontation which have been the hallmark of so much theology over the centuries.

Cameron argues that much of this polarisation has taken place because of a faulty objectivity-subjectivity contrast based on the 'competition motif'. In developing this argument he deals with the Calvinist-Arminian debate by way of background before going on to discuss the pietism-scholasticism divide. The main focus of the work is to show how Berkouwer steered a course between existentialism on the one hand and scholasticism on the other, while retaining his evangelical identity.

This contrast between 'polar opposites' is the central, recurring feature of the book. For example, he contrasts humanism and existentialism, critical rationalism and conservative rationalism, and Reformed scholasticism and universalism. In each case Cameron demonstrates how Berkouwer avoided the dilemma and refused to be drawn into a stark polarisation. Berkouwer's approach, argues Cameron, excludes the way of authoritarianism, the way of rationalism and the way of mysticism. Those whose own reading of Berkouwer has already led them to the conclusion that Berkouwer stands mid-way between Barth and mainstream Evangelicalism, offering a challenge to both, will have that instinct verified and documented.

As the thesis is developed, the central doctrine of revelation is discussed. The debate on natural theology is well handled, and Cameron does helpfully draw out the differences between the position Berkouwer takes and that of others, including the careful distinction between Barth's denial not only of natural theology but also of general revelation and Berkouwer's affirmation of general revelation. A summary of the Barth-Brunner debate is helpfully included.

It is, however, in the extended discussion on revelation and Scripture that the most significant challenge to traditional evangelical orthodoxy is posed. Cameron discusses Berkouwer's contribution to the role of Scripture in evangelical theology and interacts with deism, biblicism and Christomonism. Having disposed of the deist position he then focuses on the difference between Barth on the one hand and with those he calls 'scholastics' or 'biblicists' on the other. In one sense this is the axis around which the whole book revolves, with the constant reminder that Berkouwer avoids such polarisation. In this respect Cameron's argument bears comparison with the Rogers-McKim hypothesis, although Rogers and McKim perhaps ended up a little closer to Barth than Cameron does. This section of the book does raise major issues, however, not least because of the categorisation of the 'Warfield' view as biblicist or scholastic and the suggestion that it is not truly evangelical.

At the end of the book, when one has ploughed through the argument and the 223 pages of notes, there remains a sneaking

opinion that one could take almost any theologian and demonstrate the way in which he was able to avoid the extremes on either side of his own position. To argue that this is signally and distinctively true of Berkouwer is a difficult case to argue although Cameron does so with real conviction. What is certainly true is that one understands Berkouwer far better at the end of the book because, whatever one makes of the overall argument, Cameron is most certainly a fair and judicious interpreter of the great Dutch theologian.

A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological Institute

Evangelizing the Culture of Modernity

H. Carrier

Orbis, Maryknoll, NY, 1993; 168pp., $18.95; ISBN 0 88344 898 X

Orbis Books has been a boon to theologians and theological teachers wishing to widen horizons beyond the narrow world of western critical philosophy. It has published works which engage with world-wide cultures and has claimed the leading edge of Catholic thought. Its writers have not been afraid of iconoclastic prophecy and the breaking of new ground. This book certainly falls within the Orbis orbit. But it is an unusually safe and predictable orbit. It begins with a careful appeal to Vatican II and, more dubiously, further back, to justify the very exercise of engaging culture. Paul John II's pronouncements pop up frequently. It gives the impression of a book written for internal consumption. The result is a message to the author's own context which has long been heard outside of it, a sense of the true but commonplace. Moreover, there seems to be little recognition of the concept of 'post-modern' culture, notwithstanding the argument as to whether it is just a phase of modern culture. A book as current as this should at least have noted the issue.

Much of what the author says, after the initial review of Vatican II, focuses on western culture. It is familiar stuff to Evangelicals, who have long had the incisive analysis of Os Guinness and others to wake them up if they were not yet fully comatose. However, it invites the interesting question of whether thinking evangelical lay people have, surprisingly, been better briefed culturally than their counterparts in Catholicism and whether Carrier's book is meant to bring his constituency up to speed. Prophetic glints do shine through in places, particularly where Carrier highlights the impersonal and inhuman results of a society striving for a fully rationalised and impartial system. He gives a chilling and accurate account of modern pluralism. It removes, he argues, all common culture and delivers power into the

hands of researchers, media and educators. The agnosticism of this group is more pronounced than that found amongst its consumers, the population as a whole, and the result is profound tensions in society. Carrier should be ringing alarm bells here for Catholics and Evangelicals alike.

Other sections deal with inculturation, addressing non-western cultures, and the relation of science and religion. There are many useful quotations and worthy observations but the whole is mainly a respectable Catholic version of issues which have been raised by evangelical apologists for a long time. However, if the author succeeds in taking the Catholic conservative forces with him down the road of cultural engagement, the resulting openness in world-wide Catholicism may bear welcome fruit in ongoing dialogues. One of the many worthwhile quotations summarises the book's message: 'a faith which does not become a culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out.' John Paul II said it.

Roy Kearsley, Glasgow Bible College

The Principle of Mercy. Taking the Crucified People from the Cross

Jon Sobrino

Orbis, Maryknoll, NY, 1994; 199pp., $16.95; ISBN 0 88344 986 2

Jon Sobrino is one of the most influential and perceptive of the first-generation liberation theologians in Latin America. In this book he maintains his high standard of integrity, humanity and passion, once again to recall theology back to the task of proclamation and healing in the world. Moving from Spain, his country of birth, to live in El Salvador as a Jesuit novice did not in itself transform his outlook. In a valuable autobiographical cameo, Sobrino traces his awakening from 'dogmatic slumber'. This process began with seeing the poor, continued with the reading of Rahner and Moltmann, but became decisive only when he realised that he had to learn from the poor. Then he knew that he had to 'Salvadorize Rahner and Moltmann' rather than 'Rahnerize or Moltmannize the people of El Salvador'. The humility and challenge of this awakening breathe through the whole book.

The book begins with two challenges. First, it questions the 'triumphant naiveté' of western individualism which, contrary to its boasts, 'has not humanized anyone or become more human'. Second, theology can do its work only in the presence of the 30 million

starving people in the world today. This means that it must move from the principle of 'faith seeking understanding' to that of 'love seeking understanding'. If suffering constitutes the fundamental reality of our world then theology must be one of liberation. Sobrino works this out throughout the book, falling again and again upon the criterion of the 'principle of mercy' to test the church's thinking and doing. In the process he analyses 'the crucified reality of the third world' and applies it all to our standards of priesthood and solidarity. He succeeds in his aim to make mercy a rugged, as well as gentle, quality and he packs the book with incisive, critical observations which in a good sense are *without* mercy – to the complacent and the morally blind! There is no hiding place for quietism, Eurocentricity or super-spirituality.

Any traditional Christian can benefit richly from this work so long as it is recognised that the book aims to reach the parts we had rather not know about, rather than to provide a theology of everything. It is written from deep compassion for the poor and their unremitting, chronic and unrelieved situation. In Sobrino's view the time is long spent (500 years!) and it is the moment for change. Where might we find Christian theology in this crisis? Sobrino draws on Latin American experience but makes it powerfully familiar and relevant in a Europe where the number of poor is quickly growing. Moreover, every section is diffused with a practical spirituality and compassion. True, it could say more about the evangelical transformation of individuals that can release justice for the poor. But we have heard all that often enough and the poor (with whom Jesus was preoccupied) do not seem to profit so very much from it. Could plain disobedience here be why the 'spiritual' blessing Christians often seek is either withheld or transient? The reason why Evangelicals should read this Catholic liberation theologian is simple: if they do not take seriously the issues raised here, their generation, or the one that follows, may wake up one day and find Christianity almost extinct – blessings, hallelujahs and all.

Roy Kearsley, Glasgow Bible College