REVIEWS

Across the Spectrum: Understanding issues in Evangelical Theology

Gregory A. Boyd & Paul R. Eddy
Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002; 287pp., $18.99; ISBN 0-8010-2276-2

Some twenty-five years ago, Bridge and Phypers' book comparing and contrasting paedobaptism with believers' baptism[1] made use of a dialectical approach which was new for many, but very exciting and helpful. More recently, another IVP book which used this method successfully, skilfully edited by Wayne Grudem, handled the delicate issue of miraculous gifts.[2] To appreciate arguments ranged against one's own point of view is to gain a deeper understanding and a stronger faith.

Boyd and Eddy's volume uses a similar method to handle a range of issues over which evangelicals differ: inerrancy or infallibility of Scripture, sanctification, eternal security, baptism and so on.

The eighteen chapters are structured in a similar fashion, starting with an introductory story-type paragraph which purports to suggest situations in which the difference of opinion might arise, but as the book develops they start to grate: 'Jordan was overjoyed when he noticed the Bible that the new employee, Grace, had placed on her desk in the cubicle next to his' (p.193). Boyd and Eddy wrote their book 'specifically for evangelical college students' (p.6) and so the need for this contextualisation is not as obvious as it might be for a more general public.

Each chapter then locates its core issue in a more general philosophical framework, so the Genesis debate, for example, mentions naturalism, pantheism and panentheism, helpfully contrasting each one with the Christian view. In the early parts of the book especially, notably the chapters on biblical inspiration and divine providence, college students will find valuable points of reference, but one weakness is a

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1 Donald Bridge and David Phypers, *The water that divides: The baptism debate* (IVP, 1977).

2 Wayne Grudem (ed.), *Are miraculous gifts for today? Four views* (IVP, 1996).

failure adequately to mention postmodern ideas which are so prevalent today, and which college students in particular would be most likely to encounter.

The heart of each chapter is an outline of the biblical arguments supporting each view. As Don Carson brilliantly revealed,[3] evangelical theology is sometimes rather less rigorously biblical than is imagined, so Boyd and Eddy's approach is refreshing and stimulating. The debate on Hell, in which the traditional 'unending torment of the wicked' view is set against annihilationism, stands out: brevity (a dozen pages or so) adds to the force of the argument, as point after point is succinctly made in favour of one view and then the other.

This is a book not only for college students, but also for reasonably well-read lay people, and certainly preachers and ministers. It offers an intellectual work-out to refresh those whose thinking has gone stale; it sums up the main arguments so as to introduce each issue to new students; at the close of each chapter a balanced bibliography suggests around ten books which develop the arguments further.

The late Professor Wally Robson of Edinburgh University used to tell his students, 'Most of the best books are short.' He would have been proud of this one.

Eric Foggitt, Dunbar Parish Church

Groundwork of Christian Spirituality

Gordon S. Wakefield

Epworth Press, Peterborough, 2001; 145pp., £11.95; ISBN 0 716205459

This is Gordon Wakefield's last book, finished just before his death. It is written in a pleasant, readable style but evidences of great learning and sustained reflection abound. The treatment is largely historical but many comments are made on the relationship of these issues to contemporary life and faith.

An introductory chapter discusses the question 'what is spirituality?' Here is a fascinating, yet tantalisingly brief, comment on the relationship of spirituality to culture and geography. Thereafter, Wakefield traces spirituality from the New Testament to the present day in a series of crisp chapters.

Chapter 1 on the New Testament confines itself to the spirituality of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 cover the medieval

[3] D. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Baker, 1984).

period with interesting discussions of allegory, monasticism and mysticism. Useful overviews of Augustine and Bonaventure are included.

Chapter 5 is called 'The Reformation' and covers Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross as well as Luther and Calvin. The brief comments on Richard Baxter are helpful and illuminating.

Chapter 6, which ranges from the 18th century to the present day, is inevitably sketchy, although it is surprising to find how thin is the section on Methodism from this distinguished Methodist.

The concluding chapter briefly outlines the kind of spirituality Wakefield believes to be appropriate for the 21st century. This he sees as inevitably relating to other faiths; thoroughly ecumenical; involved in action and a communal rather than individualistic spirituality.

The book is certainly helpful as an introduction and taster or as a useful overview for those already familiar with what is an ever-expanding field. There are, however, in my view, some serious weaknesses.

Wakefield, while he defines spirituality, nowhere clearly relates that to the redeeming and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, in the chapter on the New Testament, he makes little reference to the death and resurrection of Christ. The absence of any engagement with the New Testament letters further reduces the value of the chapter.

Similarly, the virtual neglect of the Old Testament is a major problem. This is the more surprising because on p. 10, Wakefield emphasises the foundational and seminal nature of the Hebrew Scriptures for Jesus himself. Something at least on the Psalter would have enormously strengthened the biblical foundations of the book.

A book on spirituality is always going to reflect the author's own emphasis. For this reviewer the book is somewhat weak on evangelicalism: a mere three pages (96-98). John Stott does not rate a mention, although his book on 'The Cross of Christ' as well as 'I believe in Preaching' gives the authentic flavour of evangelical spirituality. Likewise the Charismatic movement is given only the briefest of mentions. Something on the songs and hymns of the various renewal movements would have been very helpful.

The massive influence of C. S. Lewis on Christian thinking and imagination is nowhere mentioned, although the Narnia stories must have profoundly shaped the spiritual lives of many.

The book is useful but it must be read with discernment and supplemented by more comprehensive studies.

Bob Fyall, St John's College, Durham

The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions

Bruce M. Metzger

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001; 190pp., £11.99; ISBN 0 8010 2282 7

Bruce Metzger is a man with an obvious love and passion for the Bible. His entire career has been spent in the closest possible proximity to the Bible, teaching New Testament at Princeton. His reputation is well deserved as a populariser as well as a scholar.

This recent book is a survey of the Bible in translation. There are two parts in the book. The first smaller section surveys the ancient versions of the Bible. This section is divided into a chapter dealing with the ancient versions which were made for the use of Jews, the Septuagint and the Jewish Targums. The second chapter comments on versions intended for Christian leadership like the Syriac, Latin and Coptic versions. The second section is a survey of the English versions, at breakneck speed, from Wycliffe and Tyndale to *The Message*.

It is a well-written book for those of us who love 'the big picture'. It is a reflection of Metzger's scholarship and familiarity with the subject matter that he is able to condense an evaluation of 60 specific versions within the confines of a short book.

Metzger has a gift in making the complex accessible to the non-technical reader. His description of the rise and fall of the Septuagint is both masterly and informative. This is illustrated in his account of how it began as a flagship project facilitated by the high priest at Jerusalem and ended with it being compared to the golden calf! Metzger tells the story of Jerome who defended his Latin translation against detractors, calling them 'two legged-assess', and persons who 'think that ignorance is identical to holiness'. Clearly, lively polemic regarding translation attracted as much emotive language in 404 AD as today.

The section on English translations is divided up into genre. It includes helpful chapters on 'Revision after Revision', 'Simplified, Easy-to-Read Versions' and 'Paraphrases of the English Bible'. The section on the King James Bible is especially helpful. Metzger points out that the KJV was not entirely new but 'steered a course between the Puritan and Roman versions'. He claims that the credit for the vocabulary should go to Tyndale but Coverdale is responsible for 'melody and harmony'.

His comments on the NIV are limited to a basic account of the translation philosophy and a history of the various editions of the translation. There is a note about gender inclusive language but his approach is to state facts rather than to critique. He deals with other

lesser-known translations including 'The Readers Digest Bible', which he rates highly; he was the general editor!

The book ends with a comment on *The Message, which* he describes as an attempt at 'transculturation'. One cannot help feeling that in Metzger's opinion it does not mark the high water mark of Bible translation.

Scholars will be disappointed in what will be, for them, basic revision but the average reader will be informed, thrilled and even amused at the story of the translation of the greatest book ever written.

David C Meredith, Smithton-Culloden Free Church, Inverness

Christianity & Western Thought: Volume 2, Faith and Reason in the 19th Century

Steve Wilkens & Alan G. Padgett

InterVarsity, Downers Grove, 2000; 436pp., $29.99; ISBN 0-8308-1753-0

This is the second volume of a proposed three-part series on the history of Christianity and Western Thought. The first volume, by Colin Brown, was published in 1990, and the fact that it has taken a further ten years for the second one to appear is partly the result of a delay caused by Brown's withdrawal from the project, but also bears witness to the thoroughness with which the present authors – both professors at Azusa Pacific University – have continued the task which he started.

Though the sub-title might imply some kind of apologetic purpose, this book has more of the style of a survey, expounding the ideas of key thinkers in the period under review. The nineteenth century was of course a time of enormous intellectual and political ferment, characterised by new notions in just about every field of human endeavour. So we are introduced here not only to philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, or Mill, but also to social scientists like Weber, not to mention the likes of Darwin, Freud, and others in the fields of the natural and human sciences – as well as key movements such as Romanticism, Pragmatism, Transcendentalism, and so on. Along the way, there are excursions into the world of theological study, including some discussion of the various quests for the historical Jesus, the rise of 'liberal' theology, and its counterpoint in the Princeton School, showing how the cultural movements of the day influenced and interacted with the development of Christian thinking and practice. In other words, there is something about most things and people. Indeed, that must be the book's main strength.

Its authors certainly display a canny ability to summarise enormous amounts of material, and to present it in a succinct and easily digestible form. In that sense, it might be compared to a dictionary of people and their ideas – and it could certainly be used in that way as a reference tool, for its indexes and footnotes are as extensive as its breadth of subject-matter. But it goes beyond the presentation of disconnected information, for the book is written in a narrative style which effectively traces the story of the nineteenth century from beginning to end – and, indeed, forward into the twentieth century, and the rise of Nazism. Moreover, it does it all with the same kind of flair and energy that characterised the people it describes – whose ideas the authors regard as the adolescent phase of contemporary western culture: 'The time came when it had to end, but it was fun and exciting while it lasted.'

Who is it for? Well, it will certainly provide a broad-brush perspective for anyone coming to this period for the first time, as well as offering a useful summary of significant ideas and people for those who need succinct and easily accessible information. It contains the kind of things that professional scholars often taken for granted – and therefore never bother to explain – but which can make all the difference between understanding and confusion for other people. It can be warmly recommended not only to students, but also to anyone else looking for reliable information, presented in an engaging manner.

John Drane, University of Aberdeen

Christianity in England from Roman Times to the Reformation. III: From 1384 to 1558

Kenneth Hylson-Smith

SCM, London, 2001; xxii+354pp., £19.95; ISBN 0 334 02848 5

This third and apparently final volume in Hylson-Smith's series deals with the period in English Church history with which an evangelical will most readily empathise, from John Wycliffe and the Lollards to the final official triumph of the Reformation on the accession of Elizabeth I. It is attractively produced and easy to read, carrying a weight of scholarship with a smooth accessible style.

Several aspects of Hylson-Smith's account were quite striking to the reviewer. First, he gives a high profile to the continuing influence of Lollardy after Wycliffe and on into the early Reformation period. Despite their relative smallness of numbers, the Lollards emerge in this book as an underground movement which possessed great vitality and powers of

endurance. Hylson-Smith sees them as part of an ongoing stream of 'evangelical' protest which blossomed more fully in the Reformation, standing in essential continuity with it and helping to pave its way.

Hylson-Smith's interpretation of the English Reformation itself as two Reformations, a spiritual one running in uneasy parallel with a political one, is eloquently stated. This has long seemed to me the right view. I warm very much to Hylson-Smith's insistence that the Reformation in England had already begun spiritually with the White Horse Inn group and the work of Tyndale, some years before Henry VIII's political Reformation commenced. Once the Henrician reform was under way, Thomas Cromwell stands out as a surprisingly evangelical figure in Hylson-Smith's narrative.

Hylson-Smith's discussion of the modern debate on the state of late medieval Catholicism in England is very helpful. The claims and counter-claims about how well-rooted in popular piety the pre-Reformation Church was, or how well-run its parishes and monasteries were, he dismisses as basically irrelevant to the real issues as perceived in the sixteenth century. The Reformers did not criticise the English Church over these issues; their critique was of a different order:

> They objected to the absence of a freely available Bible in the vernacular. They believed that priests should be allowed to marry, and the church was wrong in refusing them this right. They strongly opposed the mediatorial role which the church had given to priests, and wanted them to be primarily pastors and preachers... the reformers wanted communion in both kinds for the laity. They demanded an end to the whole cult of saints, relics and pilgrimages, the removal of all images from churches, and an end to ornate dooms and church decorations. They insisted that the mass should be abandoned in favour of a service of communion, with no hint of sacrifice in it, and that all the unfortunate and false beliefs and practices that flowed from the doctrine of transubstantiation should be jettisoned. Such a list greatly contrasts with what is commonly taken as the standard by which to assess the shortcomings of the early sixteenth-century church; but these are the kind of things which needed remedying, according to those evangelicals who championed the Reformation and helped to see it through (p. 274).

A few oddities in Hylson-Smith may be noted. His chapter on the European context of the English Reformation is brilliant but perhaps misplaced; it is really a monograph on the Continental Reformation *per se*. The great early English Reformer John Frith mysteriously becomes William Frith most of the time. And the cover of the book inexplicably

sports a very fetching picture of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, a seventeenth-century aristocrat well outside the book's timeframe.

These, however, are the tiniest spots in a vast blazing sun. The book is heartily commended.

Nick Needham, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction

C. Hassell Bullock

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001; 266pp., £19.99; ISBN 0-8010-2245-2

This textbook is the first I came across in the new and expanding Encountering Biblical Studies series, and I must admit that my initial impressions were not favourable. I dislike 'coffee-table' books, and here is what purports to be a textbook, but with numerous line-drawings, even some photographs, and a wealth of tables and sidebars with interesting shading effects. (Some volumes in the series even come with a CD-Rom of supplementary material.) Surely this is an exercise in which form has triumphed over substance so that the book is too reader-friendly to be of much use pedagogically.

Not at all; my fears were quite misplaced. This is a methodologically self-conscious series and in a publisher's preface its intellectual and attitudinal goals are listed. The book itself is carefully crafted to achieve its aim of introducing college students to the theological message and practical significance of the Book of Psalms. Each of the 14 chapters of the book starts with an outline of its contents and a list of objectives, and concludes with a set of study questions that are helpful for reviewing material. The book begins with a discussion of the hermeneutics of the Psalms, including a brief introduction to the structure of Hebrew poetry and also a review of the structure of the Book of Psalms and its editorial seams. The next section considers the place the Psalms have had in worship and faith over the centuries, before concluding with a more detailed analysis of the different literary and theological types of psalms in nine chapters: psalms of praise, lament, thanksgiving, trust, psalms of the earthly king and of the heavenly king, wisdom psalms, psalms of torah, and the imprecatory psalms.

The author writes from an evangelical perspective and provides a balanced and sensitive coverage of the issues raised, neither ignoring modern scholarship nor making unwarranted concessions to it. He

exhibits a comprehensive grasp of his material, including gems such as Alexander Montgomery's sixteenth-century metrical version of Psalm 1 and a discussion of current questions regarding the male perspective to be found in the wisdom psalms (and wisdom literature in general).

I have no hesitation in recommending this volume to a student beginning the study of the Book of Psalms. It provides a comprehensive introduction that is up-to-date and challenging. And, yes, those line drawings do help. Two little pictures clarify the difference between a *nevel* and a *kinnor* more than a thousand-word discussion on ancient lyres. Furthermore, this book does have value outside its academic remit. As a refresher course in the theology of the psalms it will stimulate much thought and provide new perspectives for preaching and pastoral care.

John L. Mackay, Free Church College, Edinburgh

Revival Sent From God: What the Bible Teaches for the Church Today

Raymond C. Ortlund Jr

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 2000; 246pp., £9.99; ISBN 0-85111-534-9

This book is divided into two sections, one dealing with 'What God can do' and the other, much shorter section, with 'What we must do'. The volume ends with an appendix in the form of an extract from the works of Francis Schaeffer entitled 'The Persistence of Compassion'.

As the title indicates, Ortlund's aim is to make clear the biblical teaching on the subject of revival, but to do so in a manner that stimulates a longing within the contemporary church for a renewed awareness and experience of the divine presence and blessing. The author writes well and with passionate conviction, with the result that this book provides compelling reading. Here is a sample: 'Let's stop being so timid. Let's trust God so much that we follow his Word without qualifying it to death.' His illustrations are similarly vivid: too many people in the churches today are said to be like the mummified body of the philosopher Jeremy Bentham, wheeled out annually at the board meeting of University College Hospital in London and proclaimed 'Present but not voting'!

Despite the promise implicit in the sub-title of this volume, that it will offer a biblical theology of revival, Ortlund very largely limits his discussion to Old Testament texts and even here tends to assume rather than demonstrate the connection between the prophetic statements cited

and the modem concept of 'revival'. His treatment hardly deals with the realities of a post-Christendom world and when he quotes a poem by his mother which includes the line, 'The savage hugs his god of stone and fears descent of night' we may perhaps ask whether this book relates properly to a world passing through rapid change – not least in relation to the growth of Christianity in the non-western world?

Despite these reservations, I found myself challenged by this work and by the author's evident longing for a renewed sense of the divine grace and mercy in the experience of the church today. His balance between the divine and human aspects of revival is exactly right and the book is studded with observations that stimulate thought, action and, above all, prayer.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision

David F. Wells

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1998; 228pp., £9.99; ISBN 0-85111-577-2

Losing Our Virtue is the third book in a trilogy, the earlier books being *No Place For Truth* (1993) and *God in the Wasteland* (1994). In this volume Wells perceptively traces the development of modernity through the shifting patterns of our language: from the language of virtues to the language of values; from the language of human nature to the language of self-consciousness; from the language of guilt to the language of shame. The new language of modernity is not value-free; it defines who we are and how we think of ourselves and reveals the altered landscape of our souls. Linguistically impoverished, postmodern man finds it increasingly difficult to think in moral categories and is no longer able to understand himself as a moral being. Sin, understood in relation to God, has become for him a conceptual impossibility.

Such has been the insidious influence of modernity that the capacity to speak about sin in relation to God is also being lost in the evangelical church. Wells discerns two kinds of spirituality in contemporary American evangelicalism: 'classical spirituality', which understands sin in relation to God and salvation in relation to the cross, and 'postmodern spirituality', which understands sin in relation to the self and salvation in relation to therapeutic technique.

However, despite the fact that modernity has erased the language of moral accountability we are still moral beings: 'Throughout the fabric of

life... are woven the threads of moral consciousness.' (p. 147) Thus, postmodern man finds his experience shot through with ambiguity, an ambiguity he no longer has the conceptual tools to understand. This contradiction, ultimately the contradiction between creation and sin, becomes the opportunity for an apologetic suited to the postmodern world.

Wells argues that the exploration and explanation of these ambiguities offer the Church its best entrée into the postmodern world. The reality of our sinful condition thus 'becomes the Church's most powerful apologetic weapon. The postmodern world has destroyed logic, dispensed with history, discarded meaning, but deep within itself, as a Trojan horse, is its betrayer' (p. 177). Our conscience is, as Luther learned, inexplicable in the absence of God and inconsolable apart from his grace. This is an apologetic which recognises that 'The ally of faith is not culture but creation, not the ethos and trends of modernity, but the stubbornly present *imago Dei*' (p. 191).

Sadly, however, much of the evangelical church does not see that understanding sin in biblical terms unlocks many of the painful dilemmas of life that would otherwise remain closed and inexplicable. Hence the challenge of the book: is the church 'willing to break with the cultural habits of the time and propose something quite absurd, like recovering both the word and meaning of sin?' (p. 199).

Losing Our Virtue is clear and readable, rigorously documented, with copious footnotes, index and a valuable bibliography. Wells interacts with a wide range of social criticism and provides a valuable insight into the nature of modernity. It will repay much re-reading. This reviewer hopes that the suggestions for an apologetic for the postmodern world will be developed in another volume and looks forward to the trilogy becoming a quartet.

David M. White, St Columba's Parish Church, Kirkintilloch

Is there a meaning in this text: The Bible, the reader and the morality of literary knowledge

Kevin J. Vanhoozer

Apollos, Leicester, 1998; 496pp., £14.99; ISBN 0 85111 463 6

Professor Vanhoozer's book represents a significant step forward in the formation of a coherent Christian response to Post-modernism. Its aim is to defend the Bible from the hermeneutic of deconstruction, which teaches that meaning does not exist in the text prior to the reader's activity. Such

a philosophy, according to Vanhoozer, 'is slowly draining Western culture of its very humanity'. This book's intended readership extends to all serious students of the Bible and will provide a useful apologetic tool to all Christians concerned for the authority of God's Word. It approaches the subject from an unashamedly Christian perspective, using Trinitarian theology as the basis for all human communication and authorship. Vanhoozer founds his own hermeneutic upon Augustine's famous quote '*credo ut intelligam*' (I believe in order to understand).

The book is divided into two sections. The first highlights the impact of the philosophy of deconstruction upon author, book and reader. In such a philosophy 'the author is dead. The author as subsequent subject has been undone, exposed as a metaphysical, rhetorical and ideological construct.' The first section leaves us in the pit, but looking up!

The second section reconstructs the author, book and reader. It is divided into three chapters. The first chapter resurrects the author by helpfully describing him not as sovereign over or a slave of, but a citizen of language. Vanhoozer's definition of meaning as communicative action also lays the philosophical foundation for his own hermeneutic. The second chapter redeems the text. I found this chapter especially interesting particularly in its discussions on literal meaning as literary meaning, the use of commentaries, and biblical interpretation. In the latter discussion, Vanhoozer christens us '*homo interpretans*', a being for whom interpretation is properly basic. Professor Vanhoozer recognises our 'cognitive malfunction' as being responsible for varied and erroneous interpretations. He highlights genre as being determined and uses different kinds of map as an illustration of each genre's truth claim. The third chapter reforms the reader by asking how we should read the text – as creators or discoverers, 'overstanding' or understanding? Vanhoozer describes 'interpretive virtues', highlighting the importance of hermeneutic realism held together with Christian discipleship.

Professor Vanhoozer's conclusion, 'The Hermeneutics of the Cross', encourages both humility, in that we need to be reminded that interpreters can get it wrong, and conviction, in that whilst 'absolute knowledge is not a present possession, adequate knowledge is'.

Professor Vanhoozer's scholarship is of the highest standard. He critically evaluates deconstruction seeking 'neither to bury Derrida [deconstruction's main proponent] nor to praise him, but to understand him'. Vanhoozer's resource base is wide and well marshalled. His understanding of Christian theology, historical and modern philosophy and literature allows him to build a convincing defence of biblical authority. The book is easy to use, with notes and references at the end of

each chapter and a complete bibliography and subject index at the end of the book. *Is there a meaning in this text* is not light reading – every word has been carefully selected and every sentence is pregnant with meaning. Deconstruction is a complex philosophy but Vanhoozer does not shirk in his dialogue with it.

Is there a meaning in this text commends a hermeneutic which finds the middle way between relativism and absolutism, scepticism and dogmatism and between sloth and pride. Careful reading and study of this book will yield the worthwhile fruit both of a deepened understanding of hermeneutics and restored faith in the authority of Scripture.

Colin Dow, Free Church of Scotland College

A World History of Christianity

Edited by Adrian Hastings

Cassell, London, 1999; xiv+594 pp., no price given; ISBN 0 304 70438 5

History, like economic structures, is going global, and the history of the church, a worldwide phenomenon *par excellence*, is following suit. This history of Christianity is truly planetary in its scope as well as taking in the whole of Christian history since its beginnings. The editor of this volume, who alas recently died, was one of the handful of scholars with the credentials to undertake such a venture. Formerly Professor of Theology at Leeds, Adrian Hastings trained for the Catholic priesthood in Rome and served as a missionary in Africa. He was the author of the standard works on the history of Christianity in twentieth-century England and in sub-Saharan Africa over the centuries. He was himself the writer of two chapters in this book, one on Latin America and another on the early period of expansion from 150 to 550 AD, bringing out illuminating themes such as the way in which doctrinal conflicts were influenced by the desire of Alexandria to avoid domination by the upstart Constantinople. His background, however, does peep through at times, as when he assumes that the words of Jesus to Peter about building the church apply to him rather than to his utterance. This boldness contrasts with the extreme care of the author of the previous chapter on Christian origins, Martin Goodman, to banish all presuppositions, leading him to refer to 'reports' of the resurrection rather than the reality. The book contains some really powerful chapters, as attractive as they are authoritative. One is the study of Africa by Kevin Ward of the University of Leeds, who is thorough and up-to-date without losing readability.

Another is the clear treatment of North America by R. B. Mullin of the General Theological Seminary, New York, who, unusually, gives full space to Canada. And a third, by David Hilliard of Flinders University, Adelaide, is a particularly well-digested survey of Australia and the Pacific, revealing the astonishing fact that only seven years after the introduction of the faith to Samoa in 1830, nearly every village had a chapel and roughly half the population was under Christian instruction. The weaknesses of the volume are that it is extraordinarily uneven in its treatment of themes and in its academic referencing. Two chapters, on Byzantium and the Reformation, are so political in emphasis as to neglect the evolution of church life on the ground. Another, on Western Europe since the Enlightenment, is so intellectual in its coverage as to ignore the social history of the churches entirely. The medieval European chapter centres on England at the expense of Italy and most other lands. There are no footnotes in three chapters and they are thin in two others, but in several of the rest they are ample. In addition some technical terms are inadequately explained ('Gnesio-Lutheranism' on p. 268 is the prime instance) and, inevitably, there are a few errors. This is a noble undertaking, but it is not quite the careful survey of the whole world's Christian history that it might have been.

D. W. Bebbington, University of Stirling

John Stott : The Making of a Leader

Timothy Dudley-Smith

Inter-Varsity, Leicester, 1999; 513pp., £14.99; ISBN 0-85111-757-0

In this first volume of a two-volume work, Timothy Dudley-Smith gives us a well-written, credible and likeable pen portrait of the low church Anglican who may well go down in history as the most influential British churchman in the second half of the twentieth century.

John Stott was born in 1921 into an upper middle class home in central London. Although his father, a Harley Street specialist, was a humanist, his mother retained the Lutheran piety of her childhood and taught John and his two sisters to go to church [All Souls!], read the Bible and say their prayers.

John Stott came to a living faith at sixteen years of age, while attending Rugby. John Bridger, a fellow pupil, invited him to the Christian Union where E. J. H. ['Bash'] Nash, of Scripture Union, presented the challenge of Pilate's question 'What must I do with Jesus?' As a result John 'opened the door' to Christ.

His early discipleship under Nash inspired a strong spiritual discipline, and throughout his life his practice has been to rise early [at 6.00 and even 5.00 a.m.] to spend time alone in Bible meditation and prayer. When serving on the Committee of the CU as an undergraduate in Cambridge, he exasperated his fellow committee members by leaving meetings for bed at 9.30 p.m.!

Involvement in the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union greatly strengthened John's faith. 'I sometimes wonder on what particular scrapheap I would be today,' he wrote almost half a century later, 'if it had not been for God's providential gift of the UCCF.'

On being called to the Christian ministry, Stott moved from Languages to Theology. Although he found the divinity school 'entirely liberal in its orientation', he maintained his evangelical position ultimately because he was convinced it was true. In 1945 he was ordained a deacon to serve in the parish of All Souls, Langham Place and St Peter's, Vere Street.

In 1950 he became Rector at All Souls and adopted five criteria: the priority of prayer, expository preaching, regular evangelism, careful follow-up of enquirers and converts, and the systematic training of helpers and leaders. These became the foundation of what was to become one of the most influential ministries of the twentieth century, extending to every continent through travel and writing.

Over and above his careful expository ministry, John Stott has set an example in many ways: his pastoral care for individuals and astonishing memory for names and circumstances; his observation of a QUIET day every month to think through, pray over and prepare for difficult and challenging issues; his commitment to creating institutional agents of change in the church; his ability to defend the gospel rigorously with the minimum of *odium theologicum*; his recognition that the hallmark of evangelicals is not so much an impeccable set of words as an *a priori* resolve to believe and obey whatever Scripture may be shown to teach.

In this volume covering John Stott's first four decades, Timothy Dudley-Smith's massive research yields hosts of fascinating facts. A few examples: David Jenkins was John Stott's 'fag' at Rugby; Tam Dalyell [then a student] heckled Billy Graham during his 1955 Cambridge University mission; as a young curate Stott tramped the streets *incognito* to discover what life meant for London's homeless; and at age seventy he named Martyn Lloyd-Jones as one of the seven people who influenced him.

The wide reading of *The Making of a Leader* is likely to help to make many more.

Fergus Macdonald, Edinburgh

The Good Doctor. Philip Doddridge of Northampton – A Tercentenary Tribute

Alan C. Clifford

Charenton Reformed Publishing, 8 Le Strange Close, Norwich, NR2 3PN; 2002; 319pp., £9.95 + £1.60 p&p from publishers; ISBN 0 9526716 3 8.

Most of us are acquainted with Philip Doddridge the hymnwriter ('O happy day', 'Hark the glad sound!') and may have heard of *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, but there our acquaintance ends. This unfortunate situation has been happily remedied by Dr Clifford in his fine 'Tercentenary Tribute' (Doddridge lived from 1702 until 1751). The author is thoroughly conversant with the historical background and moves easily among the evangelical leaders of the eighteenth century, though his analogies between Wesley *et al.* and the Viennese composers, or the brass section of the symphony orchestra, strike one as a little odd.

It must be said that Dr Clifford is no disinterested chronicler; he is passionately engaged with his subject. Doddridge emerges as an attractive personality who achieved much in his comparatively short life, as a minister of the gospel and principal of the famous Dissenting Academy at Northampton. The early chapters explain how he was called to these tasks, and describe the theological and social milieu in which he operated, when much of English nonconformity was tainted with Deism and Arianism. There are interesting sketches of the pacific Isaac Watts and the fiery Thomas Bradbury. Another chapter is given over to an engaging account of Doddridge's exceedingly happy marriage, and there is a full appraisal of his educational theories and how they affected the management and curriculum of what became 'the most famous of the nonconformist seminaries'. Doddridge's spirituality, pastoral gifts and views on church polity come under skilful review.

Philip Doddridge, though a courageous man, was nothing if not eirenic; he found party spirit repugnant and was concerned to pursue a 'middle way' between the extremes of his age, believing that charity was an essential component of orthodoxy. This inevitably led to his being accused of theological indifferentism, and of maintaining a fraternal attitude to those whose theology was suspect. Spurgeon was kinder: Dr

Doddridge was 'sound' but 'not always judicious'. Dr Clifford mounts a forceful, and successful, defence of Doddridge's orthodoxy, notwithstanding his policy on non-subscription. And we are assured (in an opportunistic-side-swipe) that in his attitude to Roman Catholicism he would not have concurred with the views of Drs George Carey, John Stott and James Packer!

Dr Clifford devotes a chapter to an expert analysis of Doddridge's hymns and their subsequent modifications. And scattered throughout the book are some fascinating and enlivening details. Who would have thought that Doddridge could lecture on Applied Mathematics and was an advocate of smallpox inoculation, or that Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825-1900), of *Lorna Doone* fame, was a direct descendant?

We have spoken of Dr Clifford's sympathetic engagement with his subject. The discussion of Doddridge's theological views becomes an advocacy of the author's own ideas which are apparently co-incident, viz, his 'Baxterian' or four-point Calvinism. The subject is vigorously addressed in a series of appendices. Dr Clifford takes issue with the 'misleading discussion' of Professor Donald Macleod and others, maintaining that the views of Doddridge represented 'a return to Calvin's balanced biblicism'. In successive appendices the link with Doddridge becomes increasingly tenuous, and by the time we reach Appendix V, 'Lloyd-Jones on the Atonement', we have surely strayed rather too far.

The book is attractively produced, with well-chosen illustrations which evoke the flavour of the period. It is confidently recommended to all lovers of eighteenth-century church history.

Robert Thompson, Belfast

The Gospel to the Nations; Perspectives on Paul's Mission

Edited by Peter Bolt & Mark Thompson

IVP/Apollos, Leceister/Downers Grove, 2000; 448pp., £16.99; ISBN 0-8511-469-7

This book is a collection of 23 essays commissioned in honour of Peter T. O'Brien, Vice Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney. Contributors to the volume include some of today's foremost evangelical scholars. The collective theme of the work is Paul's mission to preach the gospel to the Gentile world.

The book opens with an appreciation of its honorand then divides into four sections. The first section explores the Old Testament background to Paul's mission. Graeme Goldsworthy devotes his attention to biblical theology and the shape of Paul's mission, William Dumbrell looks at Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant in Galatians 3:1-14 and Andrew G. Shead discusses the new covenant and Pauline hermeneutics. The second and largest section deals with various aspects of Paul's mission as developed in the Pauline letters and in the book of Acts. Moisés Silva writes on Paul's mission according to Galatians, Ralph Martin on theology and mission in 2 Corinthians, David Wenham on Paul's knowledge of Jesus' life and teaching according to Luke, Howard Marshall on Luke's portrait of the Pauline mission, Scott Hafemann on the role of suffering in the mission of Paul, Richard Longenecker on priorities and *adiaphora* in Paul's dealings with opponents in his mission, David Robinson on Gentile circumspection in the divine economy, Don Carson on Paul's mission and prayer, David Peterson on maturity as the goal of mission, Colin Kruse on ministry in the wake of Paul's mission, and Andreas J. Köstenberger on women in the Pauline mission. The next section is concerned with the world into which Paul's message was proclaimed. Michael Hill considers the relationship between theology and ethics in the letter to the Romans; Paul Barnett writes on Jewish mission in the New Testament period and specifically in the time of Paul; Bruce Winter examines some of the dangers and difficulties which Paul's mission faced; Edwin Judge explores the impact of Paul's gospel on ancient society; Richard Gibson discusses Paul's evangelisation of the Stoics; Peter Bolt compares and contrasts Paul and Plutarch on the issue of divine anger. The final section deals broadly with the reception of Paul's message in history and in contemporary theology and contains an essay on the uniqueness of Christ, Chalcedon and mission by Robert C. Doyle, and a piece on the place of Paul in modern systematic theology.

As a whole, this volume is an important addition to scholarship on Paul's mission. Many facets of the topic are examined: Old Testament influences on Paul, the apostle's own understanding of his mission and his various reflections on it, the relation of Paul's mission to the ministry of Jesus, Paul's missionary practice, the social and cultural context of Paul's work, *etc.* Various perspectives are brought to bear on the subject, though surprisingly the perspective of missiology is not among them.

Of the many essays, this reviewer found those under the heading of the world of Paul's mission the most illuminating. Each makes a contribution in its own right. Bruce Winter's essay, for example,

challenges the popular view, sometimes linked to Galatians 4:4, that conditions in the world of Paul's time were ideal for the spread of the gospel. He highlights the immense logistical difficulties, travelling hazards, political dangers and cultural barriers that Paul's mission had to negotiate. Winter's essay cautions us against idealising a particular era of Christian mission, whether the Pauline era or more recent periods in history of mission. As he points out, there has never been a golden age of mission. The missionary task may have been different for previous generations and for Paul himself, but it was not easier.

This book will be of value both to those interested in the scholarly study of Paul and to those with an interest in mission.

Edward Adams, King's College London

The Second Disruption: The Free Church in Victorian Scotland and the Origins of the Free Presbyterian Church

James Lachlan MacLeod

Tuckwell Press, East Linton, 2000; 250pp., £20.00; ISBN 1 86232 097 7

In this study of the origins of the Free Presbyterian Church, Dr MacLeod carefully documents the steady accumulation of the combustible materials into which the notorious Free Church Declaratory Act of 1892 was thrown, with such calamitous results.

MacLeod's thesis is that in late Victorian Scotland there were four main currents flowing into the maelstrom which eventually engulfed the Free Church. To each of these currents, which he identifies as, The Changing World; Response to Biblical Criticism and Darwinian Science; Highland-Lowland Divide in the Free Church; The Declaratory Act of 1892, he devotes a detailed and wide-ranging chapter.

Of those currents MacLeod's conclusion is that, 'One alone could not produce schism; two or even three in harness were not able to split the Free Church; but when the four developments converged, the result was dramatic' (p. 235).

The first three chapters fill in the background and set the scene for the climax of the book, the passing of the Declaratory Act and its aftermath.

As the Westminster Confession of Faith and the relationship of the Free Church to that Confession are at the heart of the secession of 1893, MacLeod devotes considerable space to that document. He traces it from its origins in the political turmoil of the seventeenth century to its position of honour in the Free Church until the advancing tide of revision

began to lap around that church in the 1880s. As MacLeod comments, 'If the Free Presbyterians were the product of a battle over the Westminster Confession of Faith, then that document was itself the product of a time of bitter conflict' (p. 180).

The author's access to the John MacLeod Collection of letters enables him to give a unique perspective on the events of the months immediately preceding the crucial Free Church assembly of 1893, as seen through the eyes of some of those who subsequently became leaders of the new denomination. As MacLeod wryly remarks, 'As letters of men who have been portrayed as standing shoulder to shoulder, under the leadership of Donald Macfarlane, this correspondence makes interesting reading' (p. 227). That those men (most of whom were students in 1893) are seen to have had moments of doubt and fear should not make us think any the less of the undeniable moral courage required to walk away from a church, loyalty to which was 'one of life's highest priorities' (p. 236).

In many ways it is a sad story which unfolds in this book. The failure of the conservatives to maintain a unified practical response to the passing of the Declaratory Act meant that the evangelical cause in Scotland entered the twentieth century with a legacy of bitterness and disarray which did not bode well for the future.

The remarkable fact is that both of the conservative denominations (the Free Presbyterians and the Free Church) which emerged from the turmoil of these events replicated in their respective communions the tensions, suspicions and finally the divisions of the parent body from which they both claimed descent.

The book is very fully documented with a comprehensive bibliography, numerous footnotes and an index. Both the specialist and the general reader will, we feel sure, find this a fascinating volume.

John Scoales, Edinburgh

Why angels fall

Victoria Clark
MacMillan, London, 2000; 460pp., £18.99; ISBN 0 333 75185 X

This is far and away the most enjoyable and insightful book that I read last year. These pages are the penetrating reflections of a journalist and medieval historian as he travels through the Eastern Orthodox world. By means of verbatim records and her historical insights, Victoria Clark takes us on a journey through Orthodox Europe from Byzantium to Kosovo. On entering the Eastern Orthodox world from the West, you

discover a very different dimension of time and belief. Their hold on history moves in divine and repetitive circles where 'the past is never forgotten because it comes around again and the future is never new'. It was once said of the Eastern Orthodox that the city is full of workmen and slaves who are all theologians. If you ask a man to change money, he will tell you how the Son differs from the Father; if you ask the price of a loaf, he will argue the Son is less than the Father; if you want to know if the bath is ready, you are told that the Son was made out of nothing.

We usually look at the history of Europe through a Western lens and discount the impact of the schism with the East in 1054. In the East, there was no flowering of a Renaissance, no Reformation, and no age of reason, as the West knew them. The Orthodox Church remained organically bound to the Byzantine State until the fifteenth century when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans. The difficulty in having a debate between the two worlds is summed up by the one who said that the Byzantines felt 'differently about religion; it is difficult to debate about feelings'. The author describes the religious difference as the West tending towards reason and worldliness and the East tending too much to spirit and other-worldliness. In another place, she concludes that Western Christendom has lost its heart and Eastern Christendom its mind. Whereas the Reformation irreversibly altered the mindset of Western man, the Orthodox world had no medieval period (or arguably is still going through it).

There is so much that is gold in this book. The difficulties of aligning religion with national aspirations are well demonstrated, and we are introduced to the heavenly practice of hesychastic prayer. Victoria Clark's strength is as a historian rather than a theologian and she does not try to hide her nominal Roman Catholic outlook. Published at the beginning of 2000, she offers an analysis of the break-up of the Balkans along with the exacerbation of divisions within Eastern Orthodoxy in the communist era. Finally, an Orthodox critique of western consumerism and economic exploitation is highlighted as a totalitarian tyranny and device of the devil himself. The opposition to Greece signing up to the Schengen Agreement was less about human rights and more about the number 666 used in technology for making electronic passports. This is a book that is difficult to put down.

Robert Calvert, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method

John G. Stackhouse, Jr (ed.)
Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 2000; 215pp., £12.99; ISBN 0-8010-2246-0

In the midst of the theological infighting within North American Evangelicalism today, and within the British context where evangelical believers are often not interested enough in theology to fight, this book provides a breath of fresh air. It illustrates that evangelical theology as a discipline is alive and well, and that sometimes evangelicals holding quite diverse theological positions can join together in amiable, vigorous and yet productive discussion toward a common goal of helping the church with her mission in the twenty-first century.

This book grows out of the 1999 annual Theology Conference at Regent College, Vancouver. It is a collection of six essays and three broad responses by eight of today's most fertile evangelical theological minds. These theologians, each committed to Scripture, offer insightful evaluations on the history and current state of evangelical theology, and particularly on evangelical theological method. Ultimately each suggests possible directions for a fruitful re-forming of evangelical theology for mission in an increasingly postmodern context.

Section one sets the stage. In the first essay Alister McGrath looks at the 'state of the art' of evangelical theological method and highlights where the debates do and will lie. He argues, in contrast to David Wells while at the same time sympathetic with his concerns, that evangelicals have not embraced pragmatism and lost interest in theology. In McGrath's view recent evangelical theology has focused on integrating theology and the spiritual disciplines. This, he suggests, is something that we must preserve as we move into the future. In the second essay John Stackhouse Jr reminds us that whatever else it becomes, evangelical theology must continue to be evangelical. This means that we must continue to focus on Jesus Christ and salvation. We must continue to: be Christocentric, be 'Bible people', emphasise conversion and spiritual transformation, remain focused on mission, and be a transdenominational movement.

Part two offers programmatic proposals for reforming evangelical theology by Kevin Vanhoozer and Stanley Grenz. Although the proposals are rather different, both show that evangelical theology has a bright future. Vanhoozer offers suggestions toward a kind of narrative theology (available to every believer) building upon his own 'speech-act' theory of hermeneutics. Grenz suggests why and how evangelical theology should

free itself from the modern constraints of foundationalism so that theology may again become the property of the believing community.

In part three McGrath and Stephen Williams challenge evangelicals as they continually reform their theology to engage more purposefully and learn from the 'Tradition' and other Christian traditions not our own. This is not a call to abandon our distinctives, rather it is a call to mature and learn from others not identical to ourselves. Part four offers refreshing responses from J. I. Packer, Trevor Hart and Roger E. Olson. Each in its own distinct way calls evangelical theology to have the courage of its convictions as expressed in these essays. As Olson ends the book, 'The essays in this collection help make evangelical theological methodology interesting and vibrant without worshiping at the feet of the "goddess of novelty"' (p. 207).

Darrell Cosden, International Christian College, Glasgow

The God of Miracles: An exegetical examination of God's action in the world

C. John Collins

Apollos, Leicester, 2001; 219pp., £11.99; ISBN 0 85111 477 6

Preachers beware! Don't let the sub-title deceive you into thinking that this is a book for preparing sermons. It is, rather, a theological/philosophical treatise on God's action in the world. The aim of John Collins is to examine the Bible to see if there is, inherent in the text, support for a particular way of understanding the nature of God's action in the world – 'special divine action' (SDA) as he calls it (p. 17).

The book is divided into four parts. Part one sets the stage for us summarising various models of understanding SDA from Atheism, through Deism, Traditional (Christian) Theism and on to what he terms 'Limited Theism' – a kenotic view of the relationship between God and the world, or, another example, process thought. Right at the start Collins excludes the possibility of the Bible supporting other than a model that falls within Traditional (Christian) Theism, and he goes on to explore three possibilities within that overall framework: supernaturalism, in which God intervenes in the course of 'nature'; providentialism, in which 'nature' runs its course but the coincidence of time and place *etc.* is the way God acts in the world; occasionalism, in which 'nature' does not really exist for God is always at work sustaining the creation and SDA is that in some particular instance God decides to do things differently.

Part two presents us with the exegetical material and this is the longest section of the book with over one third of its pages. In successive chapters he considers 'texts that seem to *assert*, and not simply to imply, that there are such things as natural properties and causal powers involved in events' (p. 73, italics original) and passages in which he looks for 'an affirmation of natural properties and an explicit identification of special divine action over and above those properties to produce the results'. In doing so he eliminates, first, occasionalism, since 'nature' really exists and, second, providentialism, because God really intervenes in nature. He then examines passages to which advocates of occasionalism and providentialism appeal for support and shows how they are patient of other interpretations, including supernaturalism.

We have a theological evaluation in Part three in which, in short compass, Collins dismisses occasionalism as presented by Berkouwer and others going on to argue for supernaturalism over providentialism.

In the final part he asks if the supernaturalist model can stand up to the arguments of rationalists, empiricists and to postmodern objections. In his opinion it can, and he goes on to argue that there is a strong apologetic available to Christians through the intelligent design of the universe and the scientific exploration of the 'laws of nature' that the supernaturalist model allows.

Who would most benefit from this book? I've already indicated that I don't think it's of great help to preachers pondering on how to declare the gospel from the miracle stories in the Bible. (Indeed, Collins disavows the use of the term 'miracle', which makes it surprising that he uses it in the title of the book.) It would, perhaps, be of greatest help to those especially interested in the relationship between theology/philosophy and nature and to those whose evangelistic opportunities bring them into contact with people of a scientific training or interest. When we ask what motivated Collins to write this book, the final paragraph gives us the answer. 'Promotion of these ideas should encourage glad, critical and constructive participation by Christians in the sciences in the culture in which the sciences flourish' (p. 197).

I have no doubt that that statement is true and it is astonishing how many accomplished scientists have a strong Christian commitment. While the Church has not always lived up to her calling in this regard, our faith encourages us to 'think God's thoughts after him'. And Collins could well be right that supernaturalism is the best model for understanding SDA in the world. However, at the end I was left with some feelings of dissatisfaction at the outcome and some discomfort with his method.

First, I am rather uncomfortable with asking an ancient text questions it was never designed to answer. Collins has a finely tuned set of models to investigate. Did the biblical writers appreciate the nuances of these models, and if they did not, how valid is the exercise? Should we expect all the biblical writers to understand SDA in the same way?

Second, one has the feeling that, although this is supposed to be an exegetical examination looking for evidence to support one of the three candidates, Collins knew the conclusion he wanted to arrive at before he started because his ultimate aim is to encourage Christians to work in the realm of the sciences. That scientific exercise may appear more justifiable if there is such a thing as 'nature' and Christian apologetic benefits if not every event in history is explicable by recourse to 'nature'. It is handy for him, then, that the Bible itself supports supernaturalism.

This was an interesting and challenging book to read and, in spite of the criticisms above, it could well be of help to those in dialogue with scientists in search of a framework for understanding the workings of nature, for that might point them in the direction of the Creator God.

Jared Hay, Balerno Parish Church

The Task of Theology Today: Doctrines and Dogmas

Victor Pfitzner and Hilary Regan (eds)
T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1998; 224pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 567 08674 7

This is the first symposium produced by members of the Australian Theological Forum. This Forum, begun in 1994, is 'an independent theological body that is ecumenical in outlook and seeks to facilitate the engagement of Christian theology with other disciplines in addressing areas of social and cultural concern. It seeks to bring together theologians, other members of the church, scientists and other professionals – whether Christian or not – to explore the connection between faith and life' (p. ix.).

The founders of the Forum clearly felt that, for such a task to be fruitful, contributors should not be sailing in a completely uncharted sea but rather should operate with a broadly consistent view of the Christian faith, for the Forum affirms the Nicene Creed as its 'indispensable presupposition for the theological reflection and interdisciplinary discussion that it seeks to promote'. Although from different backgrounds, the contributors to the present volume, all of whom are systematic and/or philosophical theologians, all appear at least to wish to stand within the historic Christian faith. Of the eight contributors, four

are working in Australia, two in Britain, and one each in the USA and New Zealand.

Colin Gunton writes on 'Dogma, the Church and the Task of Theology' and, with his characteristic clarity, seeks to show the different senses in which the word 'dogma' is used and to set limits to the helpful use of the term. He sees the value of dogmas and confessions as liberating the theologian by providing a properly delimited subject matter, which is 'rich but not infinite' (p. 21).

Carl Braaten deals with 'The Role of Dogma in Church and Theology'. He analyses the current demise of systematic theology and, writing from an American context, notes that we now have 'a flood of experience-based academic theologies' (p. 23). Some decades ago, we tended to think of Paul Tillich as representing almost the extreme left in the contemporary theological world, but Braaten writes of Tillich almost as if he can now be viewed as much nearer the centre, so far has theology now drifted from its historic moorings. Braaten's chapter is a vigorous and well-argued call for a return to a dogmatic Christianity.

Stylianos Harkianakis writes on Dogma and Authority in the Church. I found this interesting, but somewhat disappointing, as, writing as an Orthodox priest, he engages only with other Orthodox writers, which seems to be against the intention of the Forum.

Sue Patterson is next, on 'Creation and Postmodernity'. How does the Christian doctrine of creation fare, resting as it does on the joint premises of divine transcendence and creaturely contingence, when it is viewed through post-modern spectacles? She engages with contemporary thought on cosmology and biology and takes the covenant and christological teaching of the Bible as pointing the way to an answer.

In a most interesting chapter, Stephen Pickard relates the thought of John Locke to the fate of Systematic Theology. Locke, as both a philosophical empiricist and a devout Christian, argued for a straightforward focus on biblical exegesis rather than on systematic theology, and in the process upset the systematicians of his day. Locke's thinking is in tune with the present-day movement away from Systematics to exegesis. Pickard writes of Locke sympathetically, but believes it important for theologians, albeit now more humbly, to seek general truths from patient exegesis. He does not use the term, but he is really arguing for the development of good Biblical Theology.

Denis Minns deals with 'Traditional Doctrine and the Antique World-View', taking the Virgin Birth and Original Sin as case studies. He seeks to relate them to contemporary scientific thinking, but he does so with a

reductionism not found in other chapters, and in the process the doctrines he deals with lose much of their distinctive historic content.

Winifred Wing Han Lamb's chapter is interesting because of the way it seeks illumination from educational philosophy as to the way convinced Christians may understand other faiths in God's World. She finds this particularly in R. K. Elliott's philosophy, which places emphasis on desire and imagination in the process of learning. She says, 'faith provides psychological resources to sustain the desire to understand and to live with difference' (p. 187).

The final chapter, by Murray Rae, looks at the status of doctrine through the eyes of Kierkegaard. He calls for recognition that the Christian faith cannot be reduced to the work of the intellect, for the theological task is a matter of existential urgency. So at the close of a book which has ranged far and wide, each reader is challenged to Christian commitment.

The Introduction tells us that the Forum hopes this volume will be the first in a series focusing on the nature of the theological task in the contemporary world. Like most symposia, the volume is a little uneven, and your reviewer found some of the chapters more significant and constructive than others. Most of them are well written, although one that I forbear to identify (if you read the book, you will certainly discover which I mean!), is, in my judgement, unnecessarily abstruse. The general quality is high and without doubt such a series should find a welcome among those who are seriously interested in theology.

Geoffrey Grogan, Glasgow

The ethics of human cloning

Neil Messer

Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001; 24pp., £2.50; ISBN 1 85174 470 3

The author begins with a brief history of cloning and discusses some of the present and potential uses of animal cloning in the treatment of human disease. A distinction is made between 'reproductive cloning' – generating a human child by cloning – and 'therapeutic cloning' – in which embryos are used as a source of pluripotent stem cells. The booklet only deals with the former use of cloning and it would have been of interest to have some discussion of the latter. He discusses the issue of risk *i.e.* for whose benefit and at whose cost is cloning being done. The risk to the child produced by cloning cannot be measured until it is born. He also argues that since we are introducing the element of 'making' into

procreation we may see the child as a commodity rather than an individual for whom we have respect. There might be a gradual change in attitudes so that it became normal to control the genotype of one's children and it might be considered irresponsible not to do so.

As a Christian the author states that 'attempts to create a person would be tantamount to taking upon ourselves tasks which belong to God alone'. He accepts that such an issue is unlikely to convince somebody who is not a Christian. However the author wisely challenges the church to be a community in which the truth of what it says can be clearly seen. Only then may its theological claims be taken seriously.

The ethics of transplantation

Keith M. Rigg

Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001; 24pp., £2.50; ISBN 1 85174 479 7

In the introductory chapter a factual overview is given and key ethical issues are considered. Subsequent chapters look at the issues from the donor perspective, the recipient perspective and further issues which developments in medicine are creating. The author states four ethical principles for developing a framework for discussion – autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice.

From the donor perspective the author discusses issues of defining when death has occurred. Consent and possible changes the law, which might lead to the assumption that somebody is willing to be a donor unless they have specifically opted out, are also mentioned. Living donors are submitting themselves to a major operation they do not need. What is an acceptable risk and what if the donor is a child or somebody with mental incapacity? Another issue discussed is commercialism of the donation process.

From the recipient's point of view the author discusses the central issues of selection and allocation criteria. He argues that equality of access to organs is a fundamental ethical principle but consideration must be made of patient compliance with treatment and success with previous transplants.

Finally the author discusses further developments such as xenotransplantation. In all the discussion the overarching ethical principles are love for God and others and the fact that the body belongs to God and fully informed decisions should be made in this light.

Both these books are clearly written and will give a useful framework for those concerned about these issues. They are particularly helpful in

their application of biblical principles to these topics. They should guide Christians as they see further developments in both fields in the future.

Susan Holloway, Clinical Genetics Unit, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh

Human Cloning. Religious Responses

Edited by Ronald Cole-Turner

Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 1997; 151pp.; ISBN 0 664 25771 2

The achievement and phenomenon of 'Dolly' was announced to an awe-struck world in February 1997 and this collection of 12 responses from across the (Christian) religious spectrum (nine from the USA, three from the UK) was published the same year. Such a prompt response was itself an achievement. Necessary as it was, laying down an early baseline reaction to a scientific breakthrough as provocative as the theory of evolution or splitting the atom, it will make interesting comparative reading with more reflective responses that emerge in future years, benefiting as they will from the wisdom of hindsight. My personal view is that future Christian responses to the question of human cloning might be less diverse than the range presented here, for the editor has, I suspect rather skilfully, assembled opinions which are far from being clones of each other.

In this compilation half the contributors are somewhat forcefully against human cloning, three are basically against but leave the door of speculation ajar just a little, whilst three basically argue for human cloning, though from different perspectives. Two chapters in the 'for' category use, in my opinion, rather spurious and blinkered arguments, apparently failing to consider the issues in breadth. These include the writer whose concern for justice is strongly focussed in such a way that human cloning presents the perfect opportunity for gay and lesbian couples to aspire to be parents on an equal basis to heterosexual partners. The writer appears not to acknowledge any justice issues that may pertain to the cloned individual. It should not be assumed, however, that arguments presented in the 'against' category are always coherent. One writer asserts that, 'Most of the new reproductive technologies separate love, the conjugal act, parenting and the family...' – surely a far too sweeping statement and one for which no evidence is provided. My own anecdotal experience as a physician working in a relevant discipline places me at odds with such a strongly worded assertion.

The contributions impressing me most, and there are several, were those which presented a combination of rational argument, a sense of historical and/or ethical perspective, and the dimension of Divine transcendence which confidently leaves God out of the nitty-gritty of molecules and methods. If we acknowledge God as sovereign Creator it follows that his divine purpose is just as much a driving force in the assembly of water, H_2O, as in the assembly of DNA. It therefore seems theologically mistaken, to me, to elevate the status of DNA to superior sacred value. Hence, the vexed issue on which many argue against human cloning, namely the complex 'identity' of the cloned individual, should not centre solely on the genetics but, rather, genuine spiritual issues. Chapters by David Byers and Brent Waters achieve this rather well, concentrating their arguments on 'love' and the 'family' respectively. Sir John Polkinghorne, possibly the only contributor who can claim eminence as a scientist as well as a theologian/ethicist, provides a characteristically balanced and unemotional overview. Human cloning frequently evokes a 'Yuk' factor, such that many – probably most – find the whole concept abhorrent. However, thought-provoking contributions by Ted Peters and Ronald Cole-Turner himself point out the difficulty of constructing *any* theological argument *against* human cloning.

The breadth of views presented in this book make it stimulating reading, both for those wanting to explore the consequences of 'Dolly' and those who think the arguments are clear-cut one way or the other. It comes with several appendices that are official (early) position statements of several Christian denominations.

Peter D. Turnpenny (Clinical Geneticist), Exeter

Genetic Engineering for a New Earth

Celia E. Deane-Drummond
Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 1999; 24pp., £2.25; ISBN 185174 408 8

This concise and very readable booklet will be helpful to those who need to be appraised of the ethical and theological arguments both for and against genetic engineering of non-human species – covering agriculture, transgenic animals, and moving on to the issue of cloning (Dolly, *etc.*), including briefly, despite what is stated in the introduction, humankind. Its length precludes a detailed analysis of any individual point or theme but the main headings are there and the writer is clearly familiar with the science as well as ethics and theology, which is so essential in bringing balance to a subject which is easily dominated by polarised, uninformed

dogma. Those looking for a shortcut to relevant Scripture passages for Bible study or sermon preparation will be disappointed – there are only two direct references to Bible verses, both Old Testament, but many Judeo-Christian doctrines are woven in, including the Fall, God's covenant relationship with creation, suffering and evil, stewardship and love. These culminate with the writer's appeal to readers to seek solutions to the controversial issues through searching for wisdom. Whilst the final chapter, 'In Search of Wisdom', draws on a variety of ideas from science, church tradition, and even the philosophy of Aristotle, lacking is more direct reference to the theme of redemption, which is surely key to Christian orientation, and we are not overtly encouraged to seek this wisdom from a scrutiny of Bible Scripture. The theological emphasis appears to be that of continuing revelation.

This is, nevertheless, worth reading because of the balance of arguments presented and the surprising amount of information and detail packed into a few pages. Included is a brief section addressing some of the public responses to genetic engineering, which points out that much of the objections centre around 'the natural order' of the world, the concept of which 'relates to the idea that nature as untouched by human interference is good'. From this many sense that tampering with nature by introducing irreversible genetic change is threatening if not intrinsically wrong. The 'natural' versus the 'unnatural' is a recurring theme in the booklet and it is rightly pointed out that genetic engineering has brought more 'natural' medicines such as human insulin and human growth hormone, to the enormous benefit of many. Whilst the 'unnatural' argument is very much part of the popular psyche, it is in fact weak in many aspects (in relatively recent history slavery was part of the natural order of the world – so our concept of the 'natural' can be enlightened), but the application of wisdom would allow for responsible use of transgenic techniques. The writer points out, rightly in my view, that 'the belief that all life is entirely defined by genetics needs to be challenged', and she cites another writer (Ted Peters) who points out that those who view the world as sacred are in danger of encouraging (probably unwittingly) a doctrine of genetic determinism – 'if genetic engineering can be used for good, then it becomes a sin *not* to use it'.

Today's revolution in genetic knowledge and its powerful technologies are a challenge to some comfort zones of conservative and evangelical Christianity. It is incumbent on us to explore the issues with open minds and Celia Deane-Drummond's booklet is a good place to start.

Peter D. Turnpenny (Clinical Geneticist), Exeter

Theology and Piety in the Reformed Federal Thought of William Perkins and John Preston

Young Jae Timothy Song
Edwin Mellen, Lampeter, 1998; 248pp. (hard); ISBN 0-7734-2239-0

This volume is a doctoral dissertation presented to Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. It is a work of considerable scholarship and demonstrates a deep and thorough acquaintance with both the primary and secondary literature in the area of seventeenth-century covenant theology. It will be of particular value to other scholars in the field and of much less use to the general reader.

Those engaged in the study of early Reformed theology are divided concerning the proper interpretation of the Calvinist tradition. There are those who see a radical discontinuity between Calvin and the Reformed Confessions of the seventeenth century and others who see continuity and development. Within the study of covenant theology there are also significantly different alternatives offered. In particular, there is the supposed divide between those who have developed covenant theology from a 'historical' perspective, like Cocceius, and those who have developed it from a 'loci' or 'dogmatic' perspective, like many of the English Puritans. Those who favour the historical perspective have often accused the other side of rationalism, while those who favour the loci approach have often accused their opponents of historicism.

As Dr Song explains, this division has often caused unnecessary polarisation and led to a failure to understand the full breadth and scope of covenant theology. Although he believes that the distinction between the two schools is helpful as a methodological distinction, he affirms strongly that only when the two approaches are taken together and seen as complementary will a full appreciation of covenant theology be obtained.

In developing this thesis, Dr Song goes on to argue that in Puritan federal thought, the relationship between 'system' and 'piety' was much more significant than has formerly been realised. In order to demonstrate this, he uses William Perkins and John Preston as case studies. In the course of this study he clears up many misunderstandings which have arisen from less rigorous earlier scholarship, for example, the view that Preston did not hold to the 'double decree'.

He concludes that a proper understanding of the covenant, such as is found in Perkins and Preston, provides the church with a sound dogmatic basis for preaching the gospel and warns against the danger of separating system from piety.

This is a most stimulating book, which repays study, but is somewhat demanding and requires some knowledge of the literature already published in this area.

A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Transforming the World?

David W. Smith

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 1998, 125pp.; ISBN 0 8536 819 0.

David Smith has written a short history of the evangelical movement since the Great Awakening, with particular reference to what (if any) social impact the movement was making as it went through a number of changes over the years. The original impulse of the Evangelicalism was a 'world transformative Christianity' (p. ix). 'While the individual experience of conversion and the blessing of personal fellowship with God resulting from it were central themes in the Evangelical message, these were *not* regarded as providing an escape from social responsibility' (italics Smith's). David Smith plots the changes over time – some due to the impact of forces outside of Evangelicalism: evolutionary theory, biblical criticism, absorption by the social order's power brokers. Other changes were more due to changes within the Evangelical movement: approaches to the ecumenical movement, differing millenarian views. It is clear from the outset that David Smith's sympathies are for the world transformative approach, which he claims, is being faithful to true Evangelical roots and principles.

I worried that coming to this book aware of the work of *e.g.* Bebbington, Marsden, Moberg, Wallis and others, I would find this book superfluous. Not so. This is a well-told story. A short book for the amount of ground covered, Smith moves the story along rapidly, yet with sure touch. Interest is heightened by his uncovering some different characters in the plot: yes, Simeon, Spurgeon, Booth *etc.* feature, but there is also analysis of the Chartists, Edward Miall, Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar, Brian Griffiths.

The concluding chapter identifies important voices to be heard in the present day Evangelical movement, and also is a call for an engaged and active faith in order to grab the great opportunities that there are today. He mentions six 'voices' – Mainline Evangelicalism, Anglican Evangelicalism, Reformed Evangelicals, Charismatics, Anabaptists, and Fundamentalists. The task of mission today is one of great opportunity due to the break up of Christendom: 'secularisation brings positive

benefits to all churches by compelling them to make a fundamental revaluation of their purpose and calling in the world, so providing an opportunity, or a *kairos* for the rediscovery of their true nature' (p. 120). But the Church needs to let go of power and have her life more explicitly shaped by Christ. This is the primary missionary challenge. The second is to create a credible Christian apologetic. Smith urges us to take this road while, in conclusion, voicing his fear that Evangelicalism might (once more) retreat into a privatised religion and a justification of the status quo, and so fail not only itself but also the Lord.

David Smith is to be congratulated on giving us a racy, passionate, insightful call for a Christianity that changes lives and life.

Gordon R. Palmer, Edinburgh

God's Control over the Universe; Providence, Judgement and Modern Science

P. G. Nelson

Whittles Publishing, Caithness, 2000; 88pp.; £3; ISBN 1-870325-88-5

The principal concern of the revised and expanded edition of this book is the tension between a scientific understanding of the way the world works, in some sense as the outcome of impersonal scientific 'laws', and the biblical account of God's activity. The author's background (which is shared by your reviewer) is not that of a theologian with an interest in science, but a professional scientist (in his case a lecturer in chemistry) who is a Christian believer, committed to the authority of Scripture.

After a brief introduction, the second and third chapters describe first a mechanical and deterministic view of the universe, and whether God could act in such a universe with sovereignty and freedom, and secondly the kind of universe described by quantum mechanics, with inherent indeterminism and unpredictability, and how God could intervene in this kind of world; in both cases the author argues that God's freedom to act is not seriously limited by our scientific models. He then proceeds to consider how our understanding of human freedom of choice is affected by scientific views of physical processes; and then how human agency with real freedom of choice interacts with or limits God's sovereignty and action. There is a briefer consideration of the role of the devil and evil spirits. Two further chapters (added since the first addition) treat the subjects (more familiar to theologians) of Arminian and Calvinist understandings of divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility, and of the question of prayer; the aim is to illuminate

these questions from the point of view of the earlier discussion of scientific matters.

The book is aimed primarily at the Christian reader who is neither a professional scientist nor a professional theologian, and is written in as accessible and nontechnical a way as possible; a substantial number of references allow for further study, as well as indicating the research and study which has gone into writing the book. It is rather ambitious to attempt to cover the variety and difficulty of subjects treated, ranging from quantum indeterminacy to the possible relevance of chaos theory to the working of the brain. My judgement is that those with prior knowledge of some of the scientific subjects discussed would find the explanations unhelpfully simplified, while those without this knowledge would find them incomprehensible! I also predict that theologically trained readers will have their own, different objections! For many reasons the questions dealt with are important and difficult. But I suspect that the greatest benefit that most of the readers of this journal would gain from reading this very reasonably priced publication would be to be stimulated to read some of the very useful works which are referenced here.

Paul Wraight, Aberdeen

The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search For The Jew of Tarsus

Ben Witherington III

IVP, Downer's Grove & Leicester, 1998; 347pp., £14.99; ISNB 0 85111 772 4

The aim of this engaging study is to examine both primary sources and recent scholarship in order to set us on the road to 'a new, fresh and hopefully more historically accurate picture of Paul'. As befits this aim, *The Paul Quest* has an original approach. It is neither a chronologically ordered life of Paul, nor a study of his thought organised around theological categories or examinations of his letters. Instead, there are discussions of the major roles filled by Paul (prophet and apostle, rhetor and writer) and aspects of how he functioned in these roles (realist and radical, anthropologist and advocate, storyteller and exegete, theologian and ethicist). This is prefaced by a consideration of the main aspects of Paul's identity (Jew, Christian and Roman Citizen) and, crucially, an examination of how we should set about reconstructing an ancient personality. Witherington accuses older scholarship of anachronism, assessing Paul as if he belonged to the modern West. His novel approach

is an attempt to avoid the assumption that 'Paul as a human being was basically just like me'.

In some respects, this approach works admirably. The Paul who emerges is neither a genius towering above his first-century world, nor an inconsistent pragmatist whose advice to churches was entirely determined by circumstances. In an important corrective to evangelical readings that major on how his gospel addresses the individual, Paul is portrayed as a builder of communities patterned on the example of Christ. The work of the Spirit, and what Paul means when he speaks of being 'in Christ', are both discussed primarily in relation to Christian community. Paul does not mean his rhetoric of community to be taken metaphorically. There are 'real spiritual fellowships, connections, unions, pollution'. Given this, it is not surprising that social ethics loom large. Here it is helpfully emphasised that Paul does not fit our contemporary categories. Precisely because Paul's focus is on building Christian communities, he can appear a radical and a reactionary by turns. He believes in hierarchy within the church, but not the patriarchal one of Graeco-Roman society. He offers slaves and women equality within the church, denied them elsewhere, but does not explicitly condemn the institutions that disadvantage them.

Witherington thus provides the thoughtful reader with plenty to consider about our priorities for the Christian life. He does it lucidly, engaging with serious scholarship but always remaining accessible to those who are not Pauline specialists. Technical issues are clearly explained, as, for example, when he describes how decisions as to which rhetorical forms are used by Paul affect interpretation. Yet, despite its considerable virtues, there are also respects in which this book is problematic. Given that it aims to avoid anachronism, fashionable intellectual resources are used too uncritically. Paul's personality is reconstructed using Mediterranean anthropology. This helps to make the point that Paul was not a modern individualist but Witherington's Paul often simply fails to fit its prescription of what an ancient personality should be like, so threatening the coherence of the portrait presented. Similar, if less severe, problems apply to the use of narrative theology to provide underlying coherence for Paul's thought.

Finally, Paul the theologian is rather neglected. It is admittedly more usual to neglect the side of Paul highlighted by this book, but this is still a problem. We are told that the story of Christ's death and resurrection stand at the centre of Paul's thought, but little is said about how Paul understands the significance of the cross. Justification receives scarcely a page. It is held to concern how one gets into the body of Christ, and is therefore apparently of less interest than growing in Christ

as community. Yet even if its significance were restricted to conversion, which one doubts, justification remains important. Paul had to find converts in order for Christian communities to exist at all, a concern which we, in an ever more secular society, can ill afford to ignore. In the quest for Paul, Witherington's attractive and credible portrayal of a community builder is only part, albeit a crucial one, of what we can discover.

Stephen Chester, International Christian College, Glasgow

Inventing the 'Great Awakening'

Frank Lambert
Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1999; 300pp., £12.50; ISBN 0 691 08691 5

Frank Lambert of Purdue University has given us a scholarly contribution to the debate on the 'Great Awakening'. The title may seem to suggest that there was no such thing as a 'Great Awakening' in the American colonies in the 1730s and 1740s, but that it was a fabrication of 'spin'. The truth proves to be much more complicated, and a great deal depends on the meaning of the word 'invention'.

The phrase 'the Great Awakening' was coined by nineteenth-century revivalists (according to Joseph Conforti). Jon Butler rejected the idea that there was one cohesive revival which 'swept' through the American colonies: there were only local 'awakenings'. Lambert's thesis is that it was the colonial revivalists themselves who constructed the idea of a coherent inter-colonial revival (though not the term, 'the Great Awakening'). In the eighteenth century 'invention' had two meanings: 'the discovery of a thing hidden', and 'the fabrication or designing of something new', and both meanings apply to the promoters of the revival.

The story begins with a revival in Jonathan Edwards' church in Northampton, Massachusetts, from 1733 to 1735, publicised by Benjamin Colman of Boston and then by Isaac Watts and John Guyse in London. Edwards' account, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprizing Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton, etc.*, was edited and introduced and given its title by Watts and Guyse. But the editors heightened the element of 'surprize', not being aware that there had been six similar previous awakenings in Northampton. The narrative was used to promote and shape revivals both in England and elsewhere in the colonies, and the 'hype' greatly increased with George Whitefield's

arrival in America. Careful publicity through the newspapers ensured that large crowds greeted him. But even so, the awakening did not affect all the colonies (nor all of England and Scotland), but only those parts where there were Scottish Presbyterian, English Puritan or German Pietist settlers and church traditions. The awakening split even those in the Puritan tradition, the opposition to 'the great ado' being led by Charles Chauncy, minister in Boston.

Frank Lambert has given us a careful and useful study, and Scottish readers will be particularly interested in the links to the revivals at Cambuslang and Kilsyth. But there are two fundamental problems with his thesis. First, there is an underlying assumption that it is false to take measures to promote an 'awakening' and then to proclaim it as 'a work of God'. This is a theological, not an historical judgement, and Lambert perhaps needs to reflect on 'the paradox of grace'. Secondly, although the painstaking research covers the revivals broadly associated with Whitefield and the Calvinistic evangelicals in the Puritan and Presbyterian traditions (documenting their geographical spread), it fails to take into account the wider evangelical revival led by the Wesleys and the evangelicals within the Church of England. When the long term statistical effect of this is taken into account, it may be seen that Edwards and Whitefield (and the Wesleys!) lit a fire which did not turn to ashes, but which burned steadily, leading to evangelical advance in Britain and America throughout the next two centuries and, through overseas missions, to the transformation of world Christianity. Seen in this longer perspective in was surely a turning point, and so a 'great' awakening indeed.

T. A. Noble, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City

The Care of Creation

Edited by R. J. Berry

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 2000, 194pp., £9.99; ISBN 085111 657 4

In the main dining area in the new Eden project in Cornwall, which houses a variety of ecosystems inside large plastic domes, there is a quotation from R. Buckminster Fuller, high up on the wall: 'Spaceship earth came with everything provided except the Operating Manual.' Evangelical Christianity has traditionally been quick to point out the perceived error of such this statement: 'We have an operating manual, it's called the Bible.' Taking seriously what the Bible teaches with regard to creation, now that is another story.

The Care of Creation is an attempt to inform and challenge us all in this task. It takes as its starting point the Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation of 1994, which has been signed by several hundred church leaders throughout the world. This provides a fascinating commentary on the text of the declaration by 20 leading theologians and environmental practitioners from around the world.

As to be expected from such a collection the contributors are passionate about their particular perspectives and in the main write well and succinctly. Each chapter begins with a paragraph of biographical notes, which helps set the scene of the following essay. Though the authors have had no contact with each other, and there is little overlapping of areas commented upon, the book holds together well.

The Care of Creation reflects the good and thoroughly biblical understanding that God intends our care of the creation to reflect our love for the creator. Professor Lynn White's influential lecture given at the American Academy of Science in 1966 is included straight after the declaration and gives a backdrop against which the statement is presented.

While Professor White is correct in his analysis of some strains of Christianity, which have 'de-sacralized' nature and allowed it to be exploited without restraint, much else of what he writes is less applicable to the present world. The observations regarding connections between right wing American Christianity and its opposition to conservation are relevant to recent decisions in the USA regarding carbon dioxide emissions and other environmental issues. As Calvin der Witt writing on the motivation for creation care rightly suggests, 'many will first have to become aware of creation and its God declared goodness. From this awareness, we can move to appreciation, and from appreciation we can move to stewardship'.

Illustrating that God's creation cannot be regarded as a mere side show, Stephen Rand puts it this way: 'imagine Michelangelo completing the Sistine chapel ceiling and sharing all his learning, experience and skill with his children, then offering them the use of his paints for their own artistic expression- and finding that they use them to scrawl ugly graffiti across his masterpiece'.

There are inevitable limitations due to the vastness of the subject yet t as one contributor points out the declaration is strangely silent on the issue of bio technology which is intimately related to care of creation. It is observed that 'this is a battlefield on which we are already losing the struggle for the care of creation'.

The stress on Creation theology by Matthew Fox and others has had the effect of driving a wedge between the creator and the creation. *The*

Care of Creation suggests that it is not creation theology that we require, but a theology of creation. This will be true to the Word of God and to a profound out-working of our role as stewards of his creation, holding together our genuine concern and love for both creator and his creation. In the words of Timothy Dudley-Smith's hymn,

> The God who set the stars in space
> and gave the planets birth
> created for our dwelling place
> a green and fruitful earth.

I believe this book could prove to be a most useful starting point from which to initiate a dialogue between church and society on the future care of creation. I heartily commend it.

Philip Noble, St Ninian's Episcopal Church, Prestwick

God Spoke to Them: An Overview

Peter Williams

Gwasg Brynterion Press, Wales, revised edition 1998, 223pp.; ISBN 1 85049 139 9

Peter Williams is a recently retired pastor having ministered in a large Baptist Church in Bournemouth. His only previous book 'Encounters with God' focussed on the practical spiritual lessons to be learned from some of the lesser-known characters of the New Testament. As a follow-up, in this book, he turns to 'character studies of Old Testament people' based on a series of sermons preached during 1996. In his preface, the author says, 'I have tried once again to present these 'lives' as faithfully as possible, including their triumphs and failings and drawing out the lessons and principles applicable to life in today's world.' The characters used in 26 different chapters cover a range of people from the well-known Noah and Moses to the lesser-known Nabal and Abigail, and Elihu.

Undoubtedly, Williams, in his presentation of each character study, is eminently faithful to the biblical text and he makes a valid, and often successful, attempt at the application of their principles to the life of the ordinary Christian in today's world. He writes clearly and in terms of the basic exegesis and application of the biblical material about each character, in many ways, helpfully. The book is not difficult to read.

However, neither does it make compulsive reading. For this reviewer it is a book that lacks sparkle and, at times, creative imagination. There so often seems to be an almost anaesthetising predictability about where

each chapter is heading and, sadly, there are few creative, and therefore challenging, surprises when we get there.

It is difficult to discern if there is any consistent principle behind the choice of these particular characters as opposed to others in the Old Testament. The flow of the book does move us through the sweep of the biblical material from Genesis to Daniel with a somewhat surprising tag-on of Elihu in the last chapter which, if the general structure of the book had been followed, would fit more logically as chapter 21.

While there are some useful insights into the 'wide variety of people God used and even blessed in pursuing His eternal purposes' that could be helpful for the busy preacher there seems, to this reviewer, to be little that is either new, compelling or, indeed, creatively applicable for the twenty-first century to make this book a must for one's study bookshelf.

Norman Maciver, Newhills Parish Church

Two Millennia of Church and Community in Orkney

Frank D. Bardgett

The Pentland Press Limited, Edinburgh, 2000; 148pp., £7.95; ISBN 1 85821 759 8

Although the publisher suggests that this is a book for the general reader, it is more likely to appeal to those with an interest in, and knowledge of, Orkney. Knowledge of Orkney's geography is essential to understanding references made to locations. Notwithstanding, Dr Bardgett has made good use of the opportunities he had as the Community Minister in Orkney, combined with his love for church history.

Covering two thousand years in some 140 pages suggests that either nothing much happened during that period, that there is a scarcity of information, or a selective story is being told. All three have an effect on why the story is so short. The Orkney church is not renowned for 'setting the heather alight' so it is not surprising that nothing much of great moment occurred in two thousand years of the church, yet during that period there have been some significant events, some of which have only a passing reference, if at all. The first thousand years are covered with a lot of speculative 'ifs and may be' about circumstances – solid facts being lost in the mists of antiquity. This makes the initial part more tedious to read, but fortunately a thousand years is as a day (about 40 pages) and Bardgett picks up, and maintains, a smoother pace for the second millennium!

Beginning the second millennium mid-way, at the Reformation, after a brief reference to Orkney's Norse Middle Ages, Bardgett then singles out the Secession Church in Kirkwall to represent the church in the latter part of the second millennium. He finishes his story short by ending in the nineteenth century and leaves out the last century of the millennium.

The author is particularly taken with the third Secession minister, David Webster. He also interestingly weaves into the story the contrasting St Magnus Cathedral minister, Dr William Logie – the one evangelical and the other, as far as the former is concerned, a 'moderate'. Nevertheless, whatever the labels, both, in their own way, maintained a zealous ministry for the cause of Christ, as Bardgett shows. Bardgett's restricted approach, although regrettable in that he does not bring the history up to date, does enable him to use the period he deals with to challenge the present church, giving the history an application of contemporary significance.

There are two comparatively minor niggles with the publication itself. Two indexes at the end of the book include people and places, but not a general index to make this a handy reference book. It is not possible, for instance, to search for references to a particular denomination.

On a technical point, the publication is marred by poor graphic reproduction, despite the publisher's claim that the text is 'well illustrated'. The dark, low-resolution pictures are an eyesore and detract from the text.

Overall, anyone knowing and loving things Orkney will find the book informative and fascinating. It is a useful book to have on a visit to Orkney, to read on a wet morning waiting for the afternoon sunshine, before visiting some of the sites mentioned!

Trevor G. Hunt, Evie, Firth & Rendall Churches, Orkney

The Change of Conversion and the Origin of Christendom

Alan Kreider

Trinity Press International, Harrisburg, PA, 1999; I26pp., $11.00;
ISBN 1-56338-298-9.

The starting-point for this book, which is part of a series on Christian mission and modern culture, is the breakdown of Christendom in the West. Kreider sees this as a more accurate diagnosis than to talk of the demise of Christianity. He enthusiastically quotes the historian Sir

Herbert Butterfield who said in 1949 that this was 'the most important and the most exhilarating' period in the history of Christianity for 1500 years since there are no longer external inducements to be a Christian. As in the early church, now virtually all professing Christians have freely chosen to be such.

Christendom, by contrast, was marked by lack of choice. From the fourth century on many people became attached to the Christian church either because they were pressurised or because their own social prospects would be improved. Kreider illustrates that this development left its mark on the church's own understanding of conversion. He begins his historical survey by looking at the church in the second and third centuries, and details the various stages characterised by rigorous training and oversight which preceded full acceptance into the Christian community. He highlights the importance attached both to individual integrity and to adoption of the behaviour patterns of the Christian church before baptism.

One of the first signs of a changing situation in the fourth century was the anomalous position of the Emperor Constantine, who for much of his reign publicly acknowledged the Christian God but remained unbaptized and so outside the code of conduct imposed on Christians. As the fourth century progressed and more people desired to become Christians, fewer demands were placed on those seeking baptism. Rather than undergoing a process of resocialisation, prospective Christians at best were urged to battle against individual sins and to make a useful contribution to wider society as opportunity allowed. Any suggestion of building a Christian counterculture had disappeared.

Kreider is enthusiastic for but not entirely uncritical of the pre-Constantinian church. No one today, for instance, would want to imitate the frequent ceremonies of exorcism which those seeking baptism had to undergo. Kreider does, however, feel that we need to recapture the effort that was expended on remodelling the values and the conduct of potential converts, especially as we have tended to endorse a model of conversion based on a change in belief, which in turn produces a spiritual experience.

The strength of this book lies in its historical analysis. Early church initiation procedures are a difficult area to study because of the patchy nature of our evidence. Kreider's treatment has both the merits and the disadvantages of brevity. Thus, I had the impression of being offered edited highlights without much consideration of the limitations of our sources. Nonetheless, the overall framework presented by Kreider is sound. Perhaps a more unfortunate omission is the lack of a theological framework in which to assess the historical developments. It is clear, for

example, that initiation procedures in the second and third centuries had moved some way from apostolic practice. Was this a legitimate adjustment to new circumstances or did it amount to an addition to Scripture? Another issue which cries out for treatment is that of baptismal regeneration, but that is reserved for future work.

In short, Kreider is right to contend that many of us have taken Christendom so much for granted that we have overlooked its ambivalent legacy. He is also justified in focussing on Christian initiation as a vital subject for study. His book should prompt further thought in this area, but it is too brief to be a definitive account of the important matters it raises.

Graham Keith, Ayr

Dispensationalist Eschatology and its Influence on American and British Religious Movements

Peter E. Prosser

Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, 1999; xviii+349pp.; ISBN 0 7734 8000 5

Dr Prosser, who serves as Professor of Church History and Christian Doctrine at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia, argues the thesis (the book is in fact his doctoral thesis, at one point so described) that Pentecostalism is derived from the holiness tradition, and beyond that from Methodism, so that the dispensationalism it drew from Fundamentalism was alien to its genius. The author was once a leader in charismatic Catholic circles in French-speaking Canada, which explains why there is a substantial section on the rise of charismatic renewal in that part of the world but nowhere else. Because he assumes Pentecostal-charismatic continuity, he wants to purge his own background of a theological perspective derived from dispensationalism that he justly characterises as pessimistic. Beginning therefore with Pentecostalist origins and dispensationalist teaching, he embarks on a study of 'sociological and historical influences' in chapter 3 that entails a discursive sketch of the history of Dissenting English-speaking Protestantism since the Reformation. This account is necessarily selective, but it is also often mistaken. Take, for example, the account of Presbyterianism. The Westminster Confession, it is said, 'could have no appeal' for the disinherited poor (p. 101); but that it undoubtedly did have in parts of Scotland. Later we are told that Methodism caused 'a considerable consentment for greater democracy amongst many of the

wealthy in the nation' (p. 116). The meaning is unclear; the use of 'democracy' is anachronistic; and the judgement is wrong. Nor, unfortunately, is this an exceptional quotation. The writer goes on to discuss the spread of dispensationalist teaching from J. N. Darby to the reception by Pentecostalism of this style of thinking around the First World War. There is some original material here: there is, for example, a welcome use of Horatius Bonar's *Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*. Far more of the text, however, is professedly derived from the standard works on the subject, especially George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (1980). Furthermore, the argument of the book is flawed. In order to demonstrate that dispensationalism was alien to Pentecostalism, it is essential to show that it was absent from the origins of the tradition. The author, however, does not do that. Indeed, he (rightly) explains that dispensationalism was one of the currents flowing into the early Pentecostal movement (p. 19). So the case he is making is invalidated by his own contention. To understand early Pentecostalism the reader should turn to R. M. Anderson's *Vision of the Disinherited* (1979) or now (though this was published after Prosser's book) to Grant Wacker's *Heavens Below* (2001), which suggests that the element of prophetic teaching played a rather smaller part than Anderson had contended. But there can be no doubt that the thesis of this volume is wrong.

D. W. Bebbington, University of Stirling

Beginning Old Testament Study

John Rogerson, ed.
SPCK, London, 1998; 163pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 281 05103 8

This revised, and in parts re-written, edition intends to take account of changes in Old Testament study since the first edition appeared in 1983.

Rogerson's useful outline history of Old Testament study clearly sets out to make the approach of modern critical scholarship more palatable to students 'from conservative backgrounds'. Notwithstanding the passing recognition given to its roots in the radical rationalism of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Rogerson represents modern critical scholarship as the true heir of the open, critical, questioning approach of the early Bible translators and commentators and of the Reformers, while a (quite undifferentiated) 'modern conservatism' is viewed as the offspring of the uncritical tendencies of post-Reformation

Protestant scholasticism (with a dictation theory of inspiration and proof-texting approach to the use of Scripture) and of Pietism.

David Clines offers a balanced assessment of the value and limitations of the various 'criticisms', distinguishing 'first', 'second' and 'third order' methods in Old Testament study. His discussion of rhetorical criticism, however, does not take account of the recent return to a classical understanding of rhetoric, such as informs, for example, Thomas Renz's *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (E. J. Brill, Leiden 1999).

Rogerson then introduces the way the historical critical method functions and how it has been applied in ever more radical ways in recent years, making some useful distinctions and clarifications along the way. His helpful consideration of the worldview of the Old Testament offers a welcome corrective to ideas such as that the Israelites 'lived in a somewhat mystical world in which they were unable to make some of the distinctions that are fundamental to our perception of life', and that their belief was 'the product of a pre-scientific mentality that somehow made faith in God "easy"'.

Paul Joyce examines critically the idea of 'corporate personality' and the developmentalist view of individual responsibility in Israel, issuing timely warnings about the dangers of scholarly bandwagons, and about the perils of creating a neat, but simplistic, system which misrepresents a more complicated set of data.

John Barton turns a well-focussed critical eye on various understandings of what Old Testament theology is, or should be. While he believes that its task is 'the purely ancillary one of helping us to understand the categories and ideas with which the OT text works', he does concede that it is legitimate to synthesise its results, 'so as to produce a summary of the theological impression a careful reading of the whole OT is likely to make'. Barton then explores the distinct, but related, topics of 'ethics in Ancient Israel' and 'the ethics of the Old Testament'.

Joyce explores how Old Testament scholars handle general difficulties about the Old Testament and apparent conflict or inconsistencies between the Testaments, giving short shrift to Marcionite, allegorising and fundamentalist approaches alike, in favour of the application of historical criticism and the recognition of 'the rich diversity of both Testaments'. Any attempt at harmonising Joyce rules out *a priori*, as characteristic of fundamentalism, as 'not facing up to the issues' and as intellectual dishonesty. Recognition of the difference between a naïve, unreflected

fundamentalism and well-reflected, scholarly conservative thinking is surely called for here!

Rogerson's epilogue offers some (disappointingly thin) thoughts about using the Old Testament in the Church, and some further thoughts about its use in deciding social and moral questions, exemplified in a discussion of homosexuality in the light of relevant Old Testament passages. Warnings are given about 'plucking texts out of context' and 'applying them without remainder to today's world'. Rogerson suggests, somewhat relativisingly, that 'a more responsible way of using the OT' lies in recognising what he calls 'imperatives of redemption and structures of grace'. Old Testament laws are to be construed as 'attempts within their particular setting to order life graciously so as to reflect... the gracious actions of God who sets people free'.

Students beginning academic study of the Old Testament will gain from this book a helpful insight into where modern critical Old Testament scholarship is 'coming from', but in its disregard of the tradition of open, critical questioning in non-fundamentalist, conservative scholarship, and its dismissal of all conservative views from serious consideration by caricature, it falls somewhat short of being impartial.

Eryl Rowlands, International Christian College, Glasgow

Engaging Unbelief: A Strategy From Augustine and Aquinas

Curtis Chang
IVP, Leicester, 2000; 187pp.; ISBN 0-85111-472-5

As the title of this remarkable book suggests, the author seeks to discover strategies for Christian mission in a postmodern culture from a comparative study of the works of Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. On the face of it this might not seem to be an approach that is likely to result in very fruitful outcomes and one can imagine potential readers concerned about the practice of mission today passing over this volume (that, frankly, was my initial reaction). It might be possible to envisage Augustine as having important things to say to us today (although didn't he justify coercion in evangelism?), but can any good thing come out of Aquinas?

Curtis Chang, who is himself a practitioner of mission as an Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship staff worker in the USA, blows away such misconceptions and opens up refreshingly new lines of thought and strategy in this book. The similarities between the contexts in which

these church fathers did their work and that in which we seek to do mission today is to be found in the fact that they, like us, faced what Chang calls an 'epochal' challenge. For Augustine, the challenge was provided by the interaction of the gospel with Graeco-Roman culture, while for Aquinas it arose from the emergence of Islam as a threat to Christendom. The bulk of Chang's book involves a comparative study of Augustine's *City of God* and Aquinas's *Summa contra Gentiles* in which he seeks to show that both adopt a rhetorical tactic which involved entering sympathetically into the challenger's worldview, retelling their story from the inside, and then, crucially, 'capturing the retold tale within the gospel metanarrative'. This then leads to a discussion of how a similar strategy might enable us to meet the challenge of a truly missiological engagement with postmodernity.

It is impossible to do justice to the profound and highly original nature of this study within the limits of this brief review. I suspect that Chang's work will make an important contribution to both patristic and medieval studies and it is without doubt important within the fields of both church history and missiology. However, to describe it in this way is to sell it short since what this author does is to bridge such categories in a work that succeeds brilliantly in demonstrating the relevance of history to contemporary church life and witness. By viewing both Augustine and Aquinas through the lenses provided by cross-cultural mission, Chang replaces the tired stereotypes of a dusty approach to church history with a dynamic study which, while never sacrificing academic rigour, allows both the fathers to speak powerfully across the centuries. *Engaging Unbelief* is not an easy read and, despite its relative brevity, requires very close attention. Yet it seems to this reviewer to be an enormously important book, full of fresh insights of great practical value in relation to mission in a postmodern context. And it is a volume which, despite my initial, superficial reaction, I shall be reading again and again.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

The Realm of Reform

Robert D. Kernohan (ed.)
Handsel Press, Edinburgh, 1999; 183pp., £9.95; ISBN 1 871828 48 1

This is a varied collection of essays, brought out to mark the historic coming of the Scottish Parliament and our entering into a new millennium. The editor has gathered a range of prominent Scots

contributors most of whom 'sit distressingly leftward, politically or theologically or both, of the benignly liberal conservatism and unrepentant unionism of its editor'. Some of these 'lefties'(!) take up broad-ranging subjects – such as William Storrar on Scottish Calvinism, David Wright on the Church being national or Christian, Johnston McKay on the relevance or otherwise of the Church. Others pick up much more particular or specialised questions – T. F. Torrance once more on theological and natural science, George Bruce on mother tongues, Stewart Lamont on the information revolution. Only a small number *e.g.* Donald MacLeod and Ian Mackenzie, directly tackle the declared context of the new millennium and the Scottish Parliament.

But most deal bravely with big and contemporary issues, though often, such as in Russell Barr's examination of the parish system, only opening up (helpfully) the issues without taking us a great deal further forward in knowing what to do, or where to go. Chapters by Catherine Hepburn and Donald Smith are challenging, while others – Johnston McKay and Ian McKenzie's are far too self-concsciously smug to be much use at all. The postscript is also somewhat indulgent: a very personal ramble through the editor's reading tastes. The millennium and the Scottish parliament are here – and perhaps with less impact than many had hoped for. Vital questions about the nature of the church, her relation to society, and her mission remain. There are valuable contributions to the continuing debate in these pages. Some excellent chapters notwithstanding, this volume was not one to leave a lasting mark.

Gordon R. Palmer, Edinburgh

Our Triune God. A Biblical Portrayal of the Trinity

Peter Toon
Victor, Illinois, 1996, 269pp.; ISBN 1 56476 553 9

Peter Toon's pedigree is well known to evangelicalism in Scotland. He is an evangelical Anglican scholar with academic teaching credentials from Oxford and the USA. He is known for scholarly and astute defences of mainly conservative positions within the evangelical community. This very particular gift carries both credits and debits. On the credit side we find ourselves with a modern book, in touch with today's critical literature, presenting the Trinity in a deeply devotional way, in line with the early church confessions and faithful to mainline tradition. As a bonus, we meet robust repelling of radical or destructive writings. On the

debit side, however, one is not always sure that the balance is right. The author can sometimes be over-sanguine about the church's tradition, overlooking its contextuality and frailty. And is it really necessary to aim a hail of bullets at 'political correctness' (p. 26) when exploring feminist theology? 'PC' is a very easy target in this crude, conceited and individualist age. It demands mental effort and sensitivity to others on the part of communicators, something that even many clergymen and other preachers appear to consider beneath them. It is quite possible critically to evaluate the weaknesses of some 'feminist' theology (and there are many versions) without disparaging all efforts made to make truth and its communication as meaningful to women as to men. Whose side would Jesus be on I wonder? If only we could ask Mary and Martha. Equally, while it is true that many feminist theologians are far from a traditional view of Scripture this should not make more conservative Christianity blind to everything creditable in their challenge. At one time theologians stressing social concern were dismissed as 'liberals' but evangelicals had to humble themselves and recover that lost note to their witness.

This sort of thing apart, Peter Toon's book nevertheless is a rewarding read. Legitimate targets also take direct hits (*e.g.* non-Trinitarian theism, individualism, pantheism *etc.*) The heart of the book is the conviction that the Trinity belongs to the life and conviction of the NT. True, the NT church often did not elaborate trinitarian statements, instead focusing on binitarian ones, but a trinitarianism is more often *implicit* because the Holy Spirit's role is assumed. This mirrors the viewpoint in John 3 that like the wind, the Spirit is known by his effects. In this line, most of the book concentrates on the rich biblical sourcing of Trinitarian belief and fills very well a gap for student and professional alike.

This will not be the book for exploring the engagement of the idea of the Trinity with cultures and society, politics or ethics. But there are plenty of other books for that.

Roy Kearsley, South Wales Baptist College, Cardiff

A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions

Denis J. Janz (ed.)
Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1999; 386pp.; ISBN 0-8006-3180-3

Denis Janz, Provost Distinguished Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Loyola University, has gathered in this volume a large, multi-faceted selection of primary source material from the

Renaissance and Reformation periods. There are six chapters, covering 'The Late Medieval Background', 'Martin Luther', 'Zwingli and the Radical Reformation', 'John Calvin', 'The Reformation in England', and 'The Counter/Catholic Reformation'. The book is clearly and attractively laid out, with a brief introduction by Janz to each chapter and extract. Perhaps these introductions err on the side of economy, but Janz's intention is obviously to step aside as quickly as possible in order to let the primary sources speak for themselves.

The translations read smoothly, and the selected passages are made more accessible to the reader in this large format volume by being divided on each page into two columns, after the fashion of many English Bibles. Some of the sources would be difficult or expensive to track down elsewhere, and Professor Janz is to be congratulated on bringing them all together so handily into a single reference work. For example, having read much about the Dominicans Heinrich Kraemer and Jacob Sprenger's epoch-making *Malleus Maleficarum* of 1486 (*The Witches' Hammer*, constantly reprinted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: the most influential book ever written about witchcraft), for the first time I am now able read a lengthy extract from it in the 'Late Medieval Background' chapter of Janz. Other gems include the extract from Dietrich Kolde's *Mirror for Christians* (1470), which – in the midst of medieval Mariology unacceptable to Protestants – exhibits a basic trust in God's mercy alone for salvation; and Cardinal Cajetan's thoughtful response to Lutheran theology, some of which reads somewhat like a learned Reformed critique of popular Evangelicalism.

Janz's book does leave me with a few slightly puzzled questions, although these should not be seen as seriously marring the usefulness of the work. Why is there nothing on Wyclif and the Hussites in the 'Late Medieval Background' chapter? Why is Zwingli so oddly bracketed together with the Radical Reformation? In the same chapter the Radicals are overwhelmingly the Anabaptists; the Spiritualist Radicals are represented only by Thomas Muntzer and Hans Denck (besides, Denck combined the Spiritualist and Anabaptist impulses of Radicalism in equal measure), and the anti-Trinitarian Rationalists are not represented at all. Why does the English Reformation merit a whole chapter to itself, but there is nothing on the Danish, Scandinavian, Dutch, French, Scottish, or other national Protestant Reformations? Why in the chapter on 'The Counter/Catholic Reformation' is there no extract to illustrate the theology and spirituality of the highly influential 'Catholic Evangelicals'?

These omissions do not prevent my recommending Janz's book as an extremely convenient and rich handbook of primary source material on the Renaissance and Reformation eras.

Nick Needham, Highland Theological College, Dingwall

Harry Potter and The Meaning of Life

Philip Plyming
Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001; 24pp., £2.50; ISBN 1 85174 482 7

The Harry Potter phenomenon cannot be ignored. The books have sold 66 million copies and pundits reckon that the tale is up there with Coca-Cola in the way it has reached deep into the hearts of local communities.

Plyming attempts to ask the question, 'what is this book about?' He reacts against two mistaken approaches; the first is to view the Harry Potter series as a series of analogies to the Christian faith, seeing Dumbeldore as an Aslan-type figure and Hogwarts as Heaven, the second is to view them as some sort of covert occult handbook. He wants us to simply read the books and engage with the issues.

The book identifies four themes raised in the Potter series: 'transformation of character, 'choices', 'good and evil' and 'relationships'. The author argues that we deal with each of them in the same way as Paul dealt with the Athenians in Acts 17; we use them as a basis for sharing our faith.

This book is essential reading for anyone who wants to relate to contemporary society. It is the best book I have read on the issue. The conclusion of the book is that the Potter series is simply full of allusions which are ideally suited for starting off deeper discussions. The author argues that this is popular apologetics at its best and I wholeheartedly agree with him.

This is a book for the personal evangelist, not for the conspiracy theorist!

David C. Meredith, Smithton-Culloden Free Church, Inverness

Homelessness and Evangelism

Ralph Upton
Grove Evangelism Series No. 52, 2000, 24pp.; ISBN 1-85174-449-5

This booklet is aimed at churches concerned to do something about homelessness in their area. The author is the Housing and Homelessness Officer for Liverpool Diocese of the Church of England.

A concise introductory chapter sets the scene in terms of definitions of homelessness, reasons for it and current government responses.

The chapter on *A Christian Response* is welcome because it indicates the need for action, not just at a local level through individual projects, but at a national political level. It is sometimes too easy for well meaning individuals to initiate projects without taking account of this broader context. Upton adopts John Stott's position that social action should not be seen as a means to evangelism, nor as a manifestation of evangelism but as a partner of evangelism. His argument would benefit from expansion but the scope of a Grove booklet does not permit that.

Options for practical responses are then examined with chapters on Soup Run and Outreach, Drop in Centres and Hostels and Move-On Accommodation illustrating with examples from different cities and churches (of varying sizes) around England.

There are two strengths here. Upton is aware of and addresses criticisms that are sometimes made of certain types of work. He also emphasises the need for thorough research, consultation with other agencies and consideration of ecumenical possibilities before launching new projects.

This is a helpful booklet. Although English in background most of what is said can be translated easily into the Scottish context. However, it would have been useful if the appendix of useful contact addresses had included some from north of the border. Scottish readers wanting to follow up some of the ideas in the booklet would find the Scottish Churches Housing Agency, 28 Albany Street, Edinburgh (0131 447 4500) a good place to start. It can provide information, education, advice and support to groups seeking to tackle homelessness in their local area.

Graham Dickson, St Stephen's Comely Bank, Edinburgh

Preaching with the Grain of Scripture

Stephen Wright

Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge, 2001, 24pp., £2.50 ISBN 1 85174 468 1

Written by the Director of the College of Preachers, based at Spurgeon's College, London, this booklet is No. 20 in the Grove Biblcal Series.

Using the metaphor in the title, the author helpfully discusses what constitutes a healthy relationship between preaching and Scripture. Highlighting the requirement to balance faithfulness to the gospel and the Bible, he also identifies the need to treat traditional interpretations both

sympathetically and critically while stressing the importance of respecting both the content and the form of Scripture.

Admitting their value, he warns against allowing the pressures of a lectionary, thematic preaching and particular sermon structures to militate against 'going with the grain'. He concludes with four outlines of his own sermons as examples of the points he has been arguing.

This is a useful encouragement to preachers who want to echo the author's desire that we treat the Bible with integrity and that God would use our efforts to impact people's lives for his glory. While recognising the limited space available the list of resources might have included books on preaching by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John Stott and the volume edited by Sam T. Logan.

John W. Lockington, Larne

BOOK REVIEWS