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Book Reviews

STUDYING THE OLD TESTAMENT Annemarie Ohler

T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1985 388pp. £12.50

ISBN 0 567 29166 9

This introduction to Old Testament study follows a fairly rigid form-critical line, concentrating almost entirely on the literary shape of the various Old Testament documents and arranging everything else accordingly. The first chapter concentrates on the peculiarities of Hebrew words and style, demonstrating how a wide range of meaning can be accommodated within a single term or expression, and how concrete imagery can be used to develop complex theological ideas.

The second chapter outlines various types of literature which can be found in different parts of the Canon. Saga is given special prominence, which indicates the author's deep debt to Gunkel, and there are sections covering such things as miracle narratives and genealogies. Poetry is covered in a special subsection, with particular emphasis being given to forms used in worship.

The third chapter deals with the question of particular personalities, and concentrates heavily on the prophetic literature, as well as on books like Job and Ecclesiastes (here called *Kohleth*) which are clearly the work of a single author. The fourth chapter extends this to deal with composite works, putting the main emphasis on the Pentateuch and Chronicles. Finally, the last chapter discusses the question of the overall unity of the Old Testament, relating it to the wider issue of the Christian appropriation of Israel's tradition, especially the use of prophecy to foretell the coming of Christ. The author is a Roman Catholic, which may have led her to maintain relatively conservative views of the value of the Old Testament record, though it must be said that she deals only with the Hebrew Canon and shows no hesitation about employing the methods of modern Biblical criticism. At the same time, she shows an admirable concern to stick closely to the text, and each of her main points is supported by a corresponding piece of Scriptural exegesis. She avoids the deeper theological questions, but does not hesitate to insist that the entire Canon is relevant to Christian life today. In this connexion, it is a pity that her method forces her to relegate Covenant theology, including the important themes of prophetic fulfilment and salvation, to a few subheadings in the last chapter; perhaps if she had started with that and worked through the text from a theological-historical viewpoint, she would have been able to support her thesis even better.

Discerning readers will have much to learn from this book, though it must be confessed that the translation is sometimes overly literal, and heavygoing as a result. Even light German tends to sound stodgy in English! As an introduction to Old Testament study though, it is too one-sided to present the beginner with a fair picture, and will need to be supplemented with other, more eclectic material.

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GERALD BRAY

JOHN: NEW TESTAMENT GUIDES Barnabas Lindars

J.S.O.T. Press, Sheffield 1990 107pp. £4.95pb.

ISBN 1 85075 255 9

This little volume by Prof. Lindars, who followed F. F. Bruce as Rylands Professor at Manchester, is intended to be 'short, up-to-date and comprehensive'

as an introduction to the Gospel of John. It is certainly all three, and is written in a clear, pleasant style which pauses now and then to explain a technical term (e.g. 'hermeneutics of suspicion'). All this is to its credit. It starts with a list of recommended commentaries, the latest being that of Beasley-Murray (1987) which is listed without comment. The first chapter is on *Orientation*, from which it is plain at once that the author takes a liberal view of the Gospel. There is 'a disconcerting lack of agreement between John and the Synoptics', and to suggest two cleansings of the Temple is 'a counsel of despair'; the question of whether Jesus actually said the things attributed to Him in the Gospel is 'disturbing'; and the Gospel writer gives the unfortunate impression that Jesus may have been both anti-Semitic and what is now referred to as 'sexist'. In *The Evangelist and the Gospel* the questions discussed are those of authorship (the 'Beloved Disciple' seems to be an idealization); the origin of the discourses of Jesus (these may well be homilies of the author 'marginally related to a saying of Jesus' used as a 'text'); and the date of writing (late, and at a 'creative'—freely inventive?—stage in early Christianity. 'Such questions can be disheartening to the student', he writes; but facing them can result in 'a much greater awareness of the achievement of the evangelist'. (Is this really the most important objective in studying John?)).

The Readers of the Gospel comes next, and uses the subject-matter as evidence for a date after the Jewish War. The discussion is interesting; the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls opened up the possibility, as J. A. T. Robinson showed, of a much earlier date for the Gospel than had previously been suggested, but the author rejects this. *Understanding John* deals with some of the theological issues: the 'I am' sayings; the meaning of 'the Son of Man'; John's concept of salvation; the *Paraclete*; and so on. With respect to the Resurrection he remarks,

we should be ready to accept that none of these stories is a factual account of what actually happened. They are a careful reworking of stories which are themselves popular expressions . . .

Prof Lindars's summing-up in his last chapter *Application* is in keeping with his consistently liberal stance. 'The study of the Fourth Gospel needs to be done in depth in order to gain a true understanding of John', he writes: not, be it noted again, of Jesus. Again, 'John's narratives and dialogues are so vivid and circumstantial that at first sight they compel acceptance as eye-witness accounts'. However, he continues, 'It takes time to realise' that the incidents recorded '*were never intended to be historical reports*' (my italics). On whose authority are we to accept this 'never intended'? I wonder how C. S. Lewis would have reacted to this dictum? (see his *Fern Seed and Elephants*). Statements like this leave me entirely unconvinced. If John took a tradition about Lazarus, 'creatively' enlarged it to miraculous status, inserted such an artful comment as appears in 12.17,18, and then published it in a form to look like reportage (and which has succeeded for nearly 2,000 years in persuading the church that it was such), then I find my confidence in him as a witness to Jesus severely shaken, if not destroyed altogether. I have not the scholarship of Prof. Lindars, and cannot reply in detail to confident assertions about the intentions of the evangelist, but I must confess that this sort of liberal dogmatism leaves me quite cold. It adds up to the position that all the gospel writers indulged very freely in writing deceptively realistic 'symbolic fiction' (to give it as charitable a name as possible). But surely the Holy Spirit has had *something* to do with the origin and transmission of a reliable record about Jesus?—something, that is, not describable in purely naturalistic terms. Why

is He never mentioned here? Prof. Lindars, in commenting on the method of 'deconstruction' (the effort to purge from the text by a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' the presuppositions brought to it by the orthodox reader) remarks that this is a two-edged weapon. 'In seeking to remove the harm done to a text by the reader's unexamined presuppositions, the interpreter may impose fresh presuppositions which are equally misleading'. That is an honest remark, and I do not doubt that it is intended honestly. It is surely time that liberals took it to heart. Clifford Longley recently suggested in *The Times* that there is a majority attitude about, which can only be called 'liberal fundamentalism'. We seem to be facing it here. It is right that it is recognized as such, and challenged accordingly.

Each chapter ends with a useful Summary, and suggestions for Further Reading. There is a four-page Index of Biblical References and an Index of Authors.

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

**THE CLIMAX OF THE COVENANT:
CHRIST AND THE LAW IN PAULINE THEOLOGY** N. T. Wright
T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1991 304pp., £19.95 (cased) ISBN 0 567 09594 0

This book is a series of exegetical studies on different passages of the Pauline Epistles. As the author states in the introduction, they are a spin-off from a larger work on Pauline theology which has not yet been published, and should be seen in this light. The passages treated range from Romans 7 to Philemon v.6, taking in parts of 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians and Colossians *en route*. The common thread is Christology, and as we read these pages Dr. Wright's indebtedness to both the late Professor George Caird and to Professor C. F. D. Moule (acknowledged in the Preface) becomes apparent.

The various pieces stand out as examples of careful textual analysis coupled with a defence of a 'high' Christology, which ties the Christian belief that Jesus was the Son of God in a unique and ontological sense to the insistence that this belief is always expressed in the context of the Jewish Covenant and Law (= *Torah*). In fact, the author is concerned to rehabilitate Covenant Theology in response to the scepticism voiced in recent years by scholars such as E. P. Sanders and Heikki Räisänen. In boldly tackling the inadequacies of their approach. Dr. Wright has undoubtedly done the scholarly world an immense service. In these pages we are once more talking theology in the grand style, as frequent references to the Church Fathers and to the Reformers make clear. Of course, Dr. Wright is not always happy with their position(s), but the fact that their views merit discussion at all is already a major break with the recent past.

In treating particular passages, Dr. Wright is probably most successful with Philippians 2:5-11. Here he demonstrates quite convincingly that the Greek word *harpagmos* must be understood as 'taking advantage of an entitlement', a rendering which has recently found its way into the new R. S. V. as '[Christ] did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited'.

Much of Dr. Wright's theological argument hangs on his close identification of Christ with Adam and with Israel as the Covenant people of God. He believes that the Jews of Jesus' day thought that they were meant to be God's 'new humanity', and that Paul and the early Christians transformed this into a new belief, *viz.*, that Christ had become identified with Israel as its king, so that now it is necessary to be 'in Christ' in order to be a member of the Covenant people.

In broad outline this view would appear to be correct, and Dr. Wright insists that it helps to make sense of a number of Pauline passages which otherwise present difficulties to the exegete. The curse of the Law, for example, comes to mean the curse of exile which Israel as a whole was forced to suffer, because Israel as a nation (and not the individuals within it) had failed to keep God's Law. All this is tied in neatly with Old Testament ideas of corporate kingship, and there seems to be no reason why it should not be regarded as a probable interpretation of the texts in question. Problems arise however when Dr. Wright interprets certain key New Testament expressions in ways which may lead the incautious reader to some misunderstanding.

For example, he renders *dikaiosynē* as 'covenant membership', which is undoubtedly a very important aspect of righteousness, perhaps even the key aspect, without being totally synonymous with the idea. Surely there are passages in Paul when the word is used in a more personal sense (for example, 'not having a righteousness of my own') which surely emphasize the moral and spiritual state of the believer to a degree not immediately obvious in the term 'covenant membership'. The same is true of the word 'humanity' which is not used to translate any particular Greek or Hebrew word, but which is found meaning both 'manhood' and 'people'. In some contexts, as when Dr. Wright speaks of the redemption of 'humanity', it is not clear which of the two is meant (perhaps both?).

Readers should also be warned that he translates *psychikos* as 'physical', a rendering which is understandable, given the poverty of the English language ('animal' would hardly be acceptable to most people), but which obscures the distinction between this word and *physikos*, which is the more correct term in Greek. He is also perhaps too ready to call the rhythmic style of Philippians 2:5-11 and Colossians 1:15-20 'poetry', and to set the passages out in poetic style without worrying too much about what an ancient Greek (or Jew) would have called 'poetic'. He recognizes this difficulty on p. 106, but presses on regardless.

In sum, the arguments of this book are challenging and on the whole helpful to our understanding of Pauline theology. Occasionally they are perhaps a little too schematic, and our minds are pressed into a way of thinking which does not quite fit. The conclusion (p. 266) illustrates this nicely:

... christology is, for Paul, a means of redefining the people of God, and also a means of redefining God himself. Correlated exactly with this double redefinition is his rethinking of Torah. For Jews of his day . . . Torah was at one and the same time the charter of the people of God and the full and final revelation of God himself. If then, Jesus has taken on this double role, it is no surprise to find him taking on precisely the role of Torah in Paul's understanding of the plan of the one God.

The general gist of this is acceptable enough, but would one really want to say that Paul *redefined* God? Somehow that seems to be taking the scheme one step too far, in the interest of making what is otherwise a perfectly valid point. Perhaps in his larger book Dr. Wright will be able to adjust his schematization ever so slightly, in order to take account of this kind of thing!

THE PROTESTANT CRUSADE IN GREAT BRITAIN, 1829-1860

John Wolffe

Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991 xii + 366pp., £40

ISBN 0 19 820199 0

After Norman's and Arnstein's studies it might be wondered whether there is much to be added to the subject of this book, but Dr. Wolffe shows amply that there is, not least by concentrating so strongly on the first half of the nineteenth century. His dates take us from the Emancipation controversies to and through the period of episcopal aggression. Not surprisingly, the influences aroused by Ireland—O'Connell, the Irish bishoprics, Maynooth—all figure prominently, but what impresses most is the author's grasp of the subtleties of intertwining forces, not least the ecclesiastical with the political.

After an introductory chapter on 'The Roots of Anti-Catholicism' which duly notes the impact of large-scale Irish immigration into England (it was no accident that McNeile in Liverpool and Stowell in Manchester were foremost in the Protestant crusade), Wolffe considers the work of such organizations as the Reformation Society and the Protestant Association. In his reflections on 'The Anti-Catholic Frame of Mind' he abundantly makes clear what is so often ignored (more so perhaps today than formerly), namely, that Protestantism is not just a protest, not just a negative reaction, but a positive defence of Reformation values. The public campaign, however, could never advance merely on the basis of high principle. Hence the necessity for 'The Mobilisation of Popular Anti-Catholicism' and for the organization of high-level political pressure dealt with in Dr. Wolffe's chapters on 'Protestantism and Conservatism, 1829-1841' and 'Protestantism and Politics, 1841-1850'. These titles serve also to indicate the author's awareness of a quickly changing scene.

Thus it would appear that a three-pronged weapon—philosophical, political, populist—had been forged, but it was only an appearance. The replacement of 'Conservatism' in the first of the above titles by 'Politics' in the second is indicative. No lasting coherence was achieved; and some of the very success indeed of the crusade was so strident as to antagonize, or at least, neutralize some potential sympathisers. Dr. Wolffe may be claiming too much in the extent to which he alleges the decline of the movement after 1850. For this reviewer in that is in every way an admirable study he might perhaps have allowed in this connexion for the diversion of Protestant energies after 1850 from the enemy without, Romanism, to that which was nearer to hand, ritualism. He does note it, but I think there is more to be said. *The Protestant Crusade* is an essential text for the ecclesiastical history of the early and mid-nineteenth century.

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ARTHUR POLLARD

THE ANGLICAN TRADITION: A Handbook of Sources

G. R. Evans and J. Robert Wright (edd.)

S.P.C.K., London 1991 xx + 620pp. £20 pb.

ISBN 0 281 04496 1

Resolution 66 of the 1988 Lambeth Conference said, 'This Conference encourages the publication of the proposed Handbook of Anglican Sources, which will reflect the catholicity of our tradition from the beginning and the concerns of the worldwide Anglican Communion today'. One is always a bit anxious when the Lambeth Conference or other official Anglican bodies endorse a proposal which

has clearly been put to them from another source, though there is not always anything sinister in it. Be that as it may, the present volume is what was being suggested to the Lambeth Conference, and what it endorsed in anticipation.

How far the catholicity of the Anglican tradition is in fact reflected by this volume is open to some doubt. The editors, both academic historians, one from England and one from the U.S.A., appear both to lean to the Anglo-Catholic viewpoint, and the volume of extracts which they have produced has consequently something of the same flavour (though not so pronounced) as its predecessor *Anglicanism*, published by the S.P.C.K. in 1935 under the editorship of P. E. More and F. L. Cross, and often reprinted. Unlike that volume, the present one extends to all periods of Anglicanism (including the patristic and medieval periods, which provide a pre-history common to all churches) and makes an effort to include Protestant, Evangelical and Liberal items as well as those congenial to Anglo-Catholics. It is in the emphasis more than anything else that the leaning of the editors appears—in the passages they tend to select and the way they describe them. Thus, the period 1054–1520 is headed ‘The Maturing of Faith and Order’, and the period 1520–1604 ‘The Sixteenth Century Emergency’!

Having said that, one is still thankful that books pointing us to our historical roots continue to be produced, provided they lead people to read the actual writings to which they are here introduced, and do not provide them with an excuse for not doing so. There is such an indifference to the past in some church circles today, both Liberal and Evangelical, that every form of re-introduction to it is important. The illusion that we are self-sufficient without our Christian heritage can only result in superficiality.

The extracts are short (sometimes rather too short) and number six hundred and six in all. There are explanatory introductions, and when (as is occasionally the case) learned languages are included in the extracts, translations are given.

The editors had the advice of a consultative board drawn from many parts of the Anglican Communion, and in their introduction they modestly invite criticisms on grounds of items omitted or lack of balance in the items included, with a view to any future editions. Some of the items included at the suggestion of members of their consultative board are rather odd, and though often of a derivative character are represented as modern. It would have helped to indicate the original sources in such cases.

Some splendidly orthodox items are found here. The editors in their introduction say, ‘We take Scripture as the primary and normative witness and the basis of the faith of Anglicans, as of all Christians. Everything included here is to be tested against that supreme authority’. This is an encouraging start. They go on to include several creeds and conciliar definitions and the full thirty-nine Articles in Latin and in English, and in modern as well as sixteenth-century spelling.

Certain other items are much more dubious. Since the editors are writing for the whole Anglican Communion, they apparently felt some duty to include whatever has been recently introduced in any part of the Anglican Communion, however unacceptable elsewhere. They speak in their introduction of seeking to represent ‘the cumulative common mind of Anglicanism’, but in a body which is becoming so diverse as the Anglican Communion, the highest common factor of the various Anglican churches is an increasingly narrow and inadequate nucleus. Even the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888, itself inadequate, is now being whittled away. The only satisfactory approach (as, to do them justice, the editors seem at many points to perceive) is to proceed from the original principles of Anglicanism, not from its subsequent lack of fidelity to them. The Anglican Communion today, as

Dr. J. I. Packer has pointed out, is a body at the heart of which stand those churches which are most faithful to its historic principles, and at the fringe of which stand those churches which are least so. It is not the oldest or largest or richest of its churches which necessarily stand at its heart, or those with the closest links with Canterbury, but those which remain most faithful to the principles which make a church what it is, the essentially Christian principles which the Reformers restored and for which they died. If these principles are in some Anglican churches neglected, Anglicanism itself is neglected there. Unless Anglicanism is defined by its principles, rather than by its miscellaneous historical phenomena, it is not worth defining at all.

It is a mistake worth singling out to have included among the extracts resolution 43 of the 1968 Lambeth Conference, on the thirty-nine Articles (p. 462f.). This was one of the worst *faux pas* in the history of the Lambeth Conference, much worse than the oft-quoted 1920 and 1930 resolutions condemning or discouraging artificial birth control, which understandably are not found here. At the very least, if the 1968 resolution were to be included, the introduction to it ought to have stated that the number of dissentients from the resolution had to be recorded, and that, far from being based, as it says, on the Doctrine Commission's report on the Articles, the resolution directly contradicts the conclusions of that report.

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ROGER BECKWITH

STILL LIVING WITH QUESTIONS David E. Jenkins

S.C.M. Press, London 1990 226pp. No price

ISBN 0 334 02439 0

This book by the present Bishop of Durham is a reprint of some of the materials first published in 1969 as *Living with Questions*, together with some lectures and addresses given since then; about a third is new. It is divided into three sections: *Concerning God, Concerning Men and Women and Concerning Jesus*, and *Concerning being a Christian*. There is finally the original Postscript, *The Authority of Faith*. For those who have the original book the new chapters are: *Where are we now and where does God want us to go?*; *Failed Priests and Future Servants — On Renewing the Calling of Doctors, Clergy and Carers*; *The Reality of God and the Future of the Human Project*; *God, Truth and Morality: Some shared Questions for Jews and Christians in a Bewildered World*; *Easter Sermon (1989)*; and *The Impossibility and the Necessity of the Church*. There is quite a variety here, and like the curate's egg, some parts will be appreciated more and some less! Of course, they are all strongly liberal (in one place Dr. Jenkins confesses himself surprised to find himself agreeing with Paul), but they are all stimulating to one's own thinking, and for that reason I am glad I have read them. I particularly enjoyed *What is there to Know?*, a splendid analysis of the bases on which people ground what they think they know. He concludes that 'Jesus of Nazareth establishes himself as the starting point for knowing and evaluating the reality of the world', a conclusion with which one can only heartily agree. He is the Light of the world; in Him we have the clue to everything. How can we be sure of this? The Resurrection! But how can we be sure of that? Dr. Jenkins has nothing more to say on that point than '*For some reason* (p. 85, my italics) the disciples became unshakably convinced that death had not put a stop to Jesus and his mission . . . that as a plain matter of fact . . . Jesus was once again alive'; also that God had vindicated one who 'had identified himself with the general context of the

messianic expectation of the Jews', and therefore must be 'recognised as the Christ', with *all that that implied*. His liberalism becomes damagingly weak here; for if this conviction of the disciples was such that they had to seek to share it with others by fabricating stories of an empty tomb, how sane (or honest) we must ask, could it have been? Later, Dr. Jenkins speaks of 'the fundamental axiom of the unity of human beings', *physically*, mentally and socially. 'It is always plausible for anyone to claim that the whole structure and significance of personality must be reduced to its *physical* . . . aspects (p. 63). Yet he is content to believe that the Lord's *physical* element, his body, disintegrated in the grave! How can he, in view of this, maintain that 'Jesus was once again alive'? Or that 'God acted to [re-]establish Jesus in his person'? (p. 126). I am afraid that it just does not add up to me, and I guess it will not to many others of his readers.

Another piece I enjoyed was *Christians and Other Faiths*. He maintains 'the absolute claim of Jesus Christ', that 'he does, at some essential points, put all religions in the wrong', including, incidentally, much in our Christianity. Much of what he says is to be applauded. Loyalty to Jesus Christ he clearly emphasizes (p. 94). Elsewhere he often speaks of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, the God revealed by him and 'wholly incarnate' in him (p. 165). But how does he harmonize this revelation with the view expressed by many eminent fellow liberals (and which I suspect is also his own view) that 'What we call the Old Testament was for Jesus (my italics) *unquestionably the word of his Father*' (John Barton, *People of the Book?*, p. 7; see also James Barr, *Escaping from Fundamentalism*, p. 18, and R. P. C. and A. T. Hanson, *The Bible without Illusions*, p. 57). For if we accept this liberal assessment (as I think we must) it means that our Lord held the Old Testament teaching on God's providential ordering of history—by no means a favourite liberal theme. I suspect that David Jenkins's insistence that 'Jesus is Lord' (at least in this matter of revealing the extent of divine providence) is subject to some serious qualifications!

The Postscript, *The Authority of Faith*, I found most difficult to follow. It is an attempt to locate the principle of authority somewhere at least in the liberal armoury. To me, as I suspect it would to most of my erstwhile university colleagues, it appeared confused and confusing, with a logic which seemed often obscure and sometimes almost contorted. Words like 'faith' are constantly used in different senses, and Dr. Jenkins frequently delivers three adjectival 'punches' where one might ordinarily suffice (to compensate, I suspect, for lack of careful aim. This often grows a little wearisome! There are about six of such triplets on p. 42). If, as I have suggested, university colleagues would be foxed by this Postscript, what hope is there for the majority to understand what it is all about? He seems to have forgotten Matt. 11.25f. To me, it recalled the opening sermon (*There is no God*) described on the publisher's jacket as 'stunning'. Not inaptly; and perhaps that is why neither piece seemed to assist one reader in clear thinking! There is no Index.

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DOUGLAS SPANNER

DISSONANT VOICES: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth Harold A. Netland

Apollos, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1991 323pp. £14.95 ISBN: 0 88111 426 1

Harold Netland is the son of American missionaries to Japan, and is himself a lecturer at Tokyo Christian University. His fluency in Japanese and intimate

familiarity with a technologically advanced but religiously unChristian society makes him uniquely qualified to deal with the question of religious pluralism as this affects Christian witness today.

The book deals briefly with four major non-Christian religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Shinto. Buddhism and Shinto are known to the author personally, the others he has studied mainly from secondary literature. But in each case, he seeks to demonstrate what it is that adherents of these religions believe about the central issues of Christian faith—the nature of God, the nature of salvation and the meaning of Jesus Christ. He shows clearly that there is no unity among the great world religions on any of these questions, and that attempts to make them all equally valid as roads to 'Reality' come up inevitably against the law of contradiction. Where two religions disagree, both cannot be equally right (though he admits that both might be equally wrong!).

The author has worked and studied with John Hick, the leading exponent of religious pluralism in the English-speaking world, and he is familiar with the main writers in this field, both Protestant and Catholic. Over against them he sets, in addition to his own opinions, the considered reflections of many leading Christians, including Sir Norman Anderson and the late Bishop Stephen Neill, both of whom have worked and written extensively in the area of inter-faith dialogue. Curiously, he does not seem to know the work of Bishop Lesslie Newbiggin, which would also support his position.

Basically, this book argues for Christian exclusivism—the belief that only in Christ can a man be saved—against the modern trends towards either inclusivism (containing other religious insights in a wider, basically Christian framework) or pluralism (all roads lead to 'Reality'). He recognizes that this is an unpopular view nowadays, but insists that it is the only one which is compatible with Christian claims about the person and work of Jesus Christ. Fundamental to his argument is his assertion that religious truth is not something entirely different from ordinary truth, that it has a propositional content which must be respected (and accepted by Christians), and that other religions are incompatible with certain key aspects of it. It is not possible, for example, to be a Muslim and confess the incarnation of Christ; such an idea is the height of blasphemy in Islam and cannot be reconciled with Christianity however hard one might try. He also makes the useful observation that those who do try are almost all Christians of a decidedly liberal sort; very few Hindus or Muslims bother trying to integrate Christian insights into their religious traditions!

John Hick's pluralism forms the backdrop to much of what Mr. Netland says, and it is a pity that he does not bring out its essentially Platonic character more clearly. Hick's universe is built around a concept of the Real which is the supreme and ultimately inexpressible abstraction. Whether it is unknowable is a moot point, since all human attempts to describe it are bound to be inadequate. This is why Hick can say that all religions are basically equal and equally valid, because the human mind cannot get beyond its own limitations in trying to express the 'Real'. Destroy the Platonic framework, but defending the claims of revelation for instance, and Hick's universe falls to pieces.

It is also a pity that in the inevitable discussion of the fate of those who have never heard the Gospel through no fault of their own, Mr. Netland fails to deal with the Christian doctrine of election. We cannot know whether God saves people who have never responded to the claims of Christ, but we can know that God has already chosen those who will be saved. Whether that choice will become visible in

this life through the work of evangelism, or whether it is reserved to the next life is something we cannot know this side of heaven, but there seems to be no reason to doubt God's fairness in this matter. It is true that the doctrine of election has sometimes been used to justify a refusal to evangelize, but this is a perversion of its true significance. Evangelism is a calling of the lost sheep who have gone astray, not an attempt to work a change of species on goats! Once this is understood the fate of the heathen becomes less burdensome to the Christian conscience, without giving us any excuse to avoid our evangelistic responsibilities.

The modern world is one in which pluralism is a growing threat, and this book is an admirable introduction to a potentially explosive theme. Ministers and others needing information on the subject should get hold of it without delay.

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GERALD BRAY

**PATTERNS FOR WORSHIP A Report by the Liturgical
Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England
(GS 898)**

Church House Publishing, London 1989 296pp. £10.50pb.

ISBN 0 7151 3727 1

This large, and at times repetitive, volume is a great disappointment. That the members of the Liturgical Commission have worked hard cannot be questioned. But their theological and liturgical convictions can and should be.

Like the *Alternative Service Book* of 1980 *Patterns for Worship* includes both the ambiguous and dubious. The first post-communion prayer on p. 78 (cf. p. 159) contains an in-built contradiction whilst that on p. 85 enshrines a very questionable theology. The rubric on p. 93 asks us to do something society may not want us to do, namely to confess its sins. The suggestion that baptism be conducted in the context of the Lord's Supper (p. 99) is to be resisted (it is surely better to keep the sacraments separate) as are signing with a cross prior to (p. 101) and the giving of a candle at (p. 102) baptism. More importantly we must refute and oppose the idea, unfortunately gaining support amongst evangelicals(?), that baptism, as opposed to faith, is the means to church membership (p. 103). The Confessions on p. 122 and elsewhere lack the 'ring of assurance' that they ought to contain. And, we must ask, did Jesus really make himself 'nothing' as we are told in the prayers on pp. 75 and 132? The proposed alternative introductions to the Lord's Prayer (p. 137) are somewhat artificial and stilted in tone. We must question the trend of calling Christmas 'this holy night' (p. 140) and draw back from asking God to 'give us grace to entrust the departed into his unfailing love' (p. 144). The latter is both theologically questionable as well as spiritually impossible. In the Resurrection prayer (p. 160) we are asked to say something that is true for the eleven but not of us. If the Saints prayer (p. 164) is deemed acceptable then in due time we will see increasing numbers descending into deeper confusion as to what the Lord's Supper is all about. And the General prayer on p. 167 will no doubt be seen by some as a sop to the feminist movement.

Not everyone will agree with the Commission's four-fold definition of Worship as set out on pp. 265f. Nor will all endorse the statement that 'it is no longer sufficient in the Church of England to produce a worship book which consists simply of texts, to say or sing' (p. 264). What has happened to the principle of common prayer?

Churchman

All in all, then, *Patterns for Worship* is not a book to be recommended for purchase. There are better modern liturgies on the market (for example *An Australian Prayer Book*). The Liturgical Commission ought to be persuaded to revise for the better what we already have instead of multiplying the options available and adding to the doctrinal and liturgical confusion that abounds.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne GEORGE CURRY

A SHORTER ALTERNATIVE SERVICE BOOK

Cambridge University Press, Hodder & Stoughton, Oxford University Press
and S.P.C.K., London 1991 £3.95 ISBN 0 521 50769 3

The publishers of the *Alternative Service Book 1980* are to be commended for extracting from it a shorter verbatim work of the most frequently used forms of worship such as Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, Rite A and B Holy Communions, and Initiation services. Its clear print on good quality paper will be welcomed by clergy and laity alike. Directions to ministers and people, and headings of various sections in pale blue print make its pages attractive. Pagination is that of the original book. This production is bound to root the alternative liturgy more firmly in the churches where it is used. In a brief sentence Archbishop Carey whole-heartedly commends its production.

Whether the Preface is correct in stating that the *A.S.B.* is now used 'in the vast majority of parishes in England' when many churches are returning to the Book of Common Prayer usage is a moot point. The production of the shorter book may strengthen the impression that the *A.S.B.* is the legal liturgy of the Anglican Church. To correct this view it is unfortunate that the publishers have not included statements in it from the Preface of the full *A.S.B.* It is there affirmed that the *Book of Common Prayer* retains its authority as a doctrine standard, and that the *A.S.B.* is 'intended to supplement the Book of Common Prayer, not to supersede it', and that the *A.S.B.* is to be used 'in conjunction with it'. It would be advantageous if a shorter book of services from the Prayer Book were produced.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

THE METAPHYSICS OF MIND Anthony Kenny

Clarendon Press, Oxford 1989 176pp. £17.50 ISBN 0 19 824965 9

Anthony Kenny is Warden of Rhodes House, Oxford, and was previously Master of Balliol College. Before that he was a priest in the Church of Rome, and his autobiography, *A Path from Rome* was reissued in paperback form by the Oxford University Press in 1986. He is now a secular philosopher in the tradition of Wittgenstein and Ryle. It must be said at once that the present book is a beautiful example of clear, careful, and logical writing on a subject that needs all three. It is enlivened by well-chosen illustrations which succeed admirably in 'earthing' the argument when it threatens to become rather abstract, as in the discussion of freedom and physiological determinism, where his (hypothetical) opportunity to strangle his kitten helps to clarify the point! Kenny is strongly opposed to Descartes and his dualistic view of the interaction of two separate entities, the mind

and the brain as we may now call them. This view, he concedes, is still the most widespread view among educated people in the West who are not professional philosophers; and even the latter are profoundly influenced by it. It may indeed be recalled that the *doyen* of philosophers of science, Sir Karl Popper, in a book written jointly with the eminent brain specialist, Sir John Eccles, *The Brain and its Self* (1977) defended the idea of interactionism, even to the extent of speaking of a 'ghost in the machine'; and other extremely eminent brain and nerve specialists, like Sir Charles Sherrington, have taken the same line. Kenny does not set out to demolish this view, though he is strongly against it. What he does is to examine the structure and workings of the mind in a way that follows closely the plan of Gilbert Ryle's notable book of 1949, *The Concept of Mind*, using the methods of linguistic analysis. His chapter headings are: Descartes' Myth; Body, Soul, Mind, and Spirit; The Will; Emotion; Abilities, Faculties, Powers, and Dispositions; Self and Self-Knowledge; Sensation and Observation; Imagination; The Intellect; and Psychology. In the end he offers no clear theory of the mind-body relationship himself, but leaves it a profound mystery. One guesses it may have to remain there, for it seems almost self-evident that the mind will never be able to fathom its own nature; to think otherwise would seem to be like imagining one can chew one's own teeth.

For myself, I have gained three things from reading this book. It has been a valuable discipline in rigorous thinking on a subject which has a bearing on the thorny problem of how God can be conceived of as acting in the physical world, a problem which has led Maurice Wiles, for example, into a frankly deistic position. It has this bearing because the mind-body relation forms one of the most promising analogies for trying to understand it. Then it has alerted me to the enormous significance of the use of language as constitutive of intellectual activity and as marking one of the most important differences between man and the animals. This being so, there is a very strong reason for maintaining that revelation must employ language, in fact, be propositional. Finally, it has drawn my attention to the great difficulty of accounting for the origin of the faculty of language by an evolutionary mechanism based on Natural Selection; for language conveys meaning in a way quite different from that in which, say, animal gestures do. The latter carry their own meanings at once, whereas words, the elements of language, are symbols which only acquire their meanings as a result of arbitrary *social* convention. But mutations, to which evolutionary appeal is made, are matters appearing in *individuals* in Darwin's theory; so there is a considerable problem here and it is not at all clear whether it can be overcome.

This is a taxing book, but one well-worthwhile for anyone interested in conservative apologetics. There is a helpful index, and the whole is produced to the usual high standards of the University Press.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

MAN AND WOMAN IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Werner Neuer

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1990 224pp. £7.99pb. ISBN 0 340 51721 2

This work first appeared in print in Germany in 1981. This is its first edition in English. Gordon Wenham has done a fine job in translating Werner Neuer's most important and first-rate contribution to the male/female debate. Both author and

translator, but especially the former, have put us very much in their debt.

The book itself consists of five sections of unequal length. In chapters 1-4 the author illustrates the topicality and significance of his subject. He also highlights the essential differences between the sexes. Secular, that is non-theological studies, are referred to extensively. Mr. Neuer is a scholar of some breadth. In chapters 5-8 the Bible passages that directly relate to the topic in question are considered. Special attention is given to Genesis 1-3 and the letters of Paul. Neuer here shows himself to be an expositor of considerable ability. In chapter 9 the main lessons from church history are surveyed and summarized. In chapters 10 and 11 the author establishes what he calls 'The continuing validity of the biblical view of man and woman' and issues a heartfelt plea for us to both own and practise it. He rounds off his masterly analysis of this subject, in chapter 12, with a concise and most useful summary of the main points in the preceding chapters.

One cannot speak too highly of this book. That may sound trite but it is true. Certainly it ought to be read by as wide an 'audience' as possible irrespective of one's views concerning the ordination of women and the place of women in the church. All of us urgently need to hear what Werner Neuer has to say on these issues.

Although the learning of the author is evident on every page (the notes are copious and the bibliography long) it must also be said that his style is both engaging and popular. Neuer has the all too rare gift of being able to lead one through a theological and sociological minefield in a clear, compassionate and authoritative manner. It really is so refreshing to come across a (German) scholar and writer whose concern is for us to know and embrace God's purpose for mankind, male and female, created in his image.

If you have not bought this volume yet, go and buy it straight away. And once bought, put time aside to read, mark and inwardly digest its contents for, as Neuer says, 'When God's will for the fundamental relationship of male and female remains unobserved, there are the gravest consequences for human life and conduct, even if God is obeyed in other spheres' (p. 21).

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne GEORGE CURRY

DELUSION OR DYNAMITE? Reflections on a quarter-century of charismatic renewal Gervais Angel

Marc (Monarch), Eastbourne 1990 191pp. £8.99pb. ISBN 1 85424 076 5

Gervais Angel is Director of Studies at Trinity College, Bristol, and as would be expected, he has given us in this essay a very careful, thorough, judicious and irenic study of an influential movement in the church of today, a movement which often arouses widely diverse reactions. It is in two parts. The first charts the rise of the modern movement, which may perhaps be said to have come to Britain with the ministry of the South African, David du Plessis, in 1959. Its main features are briefly outlined, and then follows an account of its impact on the various church bodies: the Roman Catholic Church, the new House Churches, the Church of Scotland, the Methodists, the Baptists, the United Reformed Church, the Brethren, the Anglican Communion and lastly, the Pentecostal Churches. Around 1978 a possible decline seemed to set in, but it proved only temporary, and today things are as active as ever. This part ends with a summary of up-to-date assessments of the movement from a number of Protestant, Catholic and House Church sources.

Part Two of the book is a sympathetic examination of the specific charismatic phenomena in the light of Scripture. This is done with admirable carefulness, and is cast in the form of seven questions, here paraphrased: What is the evidence of the indwelling Spirit?; How can we certainly identify a modern phenomenon with a Scriptural gift?; Are 'tongues'—particularly for private use—meant for all?; How are public gifts to be supervised?; Are gifts a sign of maturity?; How can true be distinguished from false?; Is there a rank order among gifts, and how do they relate to 'natural' gifts? Each question is discussed (rather than answered) with great care, and at the end of each a summary of the points established is provided. There is a final chapter which draws the threads together in a very helpful way. The reader is left to make up his own mind, but he is not, to be sure, just abandoned in a mass of confused argumentation. There is a foreword by Michael Harper and a broadly luminous 'Afterword' by Jim Packer. There are eleven pages of Notes, an Index of nine and three of Scripture References.

This is a most useful book, scholarly yet easy to read. An indication of its breadth is the fact that the reader will meet here not only such popular leaders as Arthur Wallis and David Watson, but also such academic giants as C. F. D. Moule and Jürgen Moltmann. I wish it a wide circulation.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

WOMEN ELDERS IN THE KIRK? Ed. A. T. B. McGowan

Christian Focus Publications Ltd., Tain, Scotland 111pp. No price
ISBN 1 871676 30 4

Most readers will know that Deanery and Diocesan Synods have already considered the new Draft Legislation for the ordination of women to the priesthood in The Church of England. A debate has been going on for over fifteen years now in one form or another, and it looks as though the issue may well be settled by 1992. From past votes it seems that the majority of the members of the Church of England are in favour, but for it to become law there must be at least a two-thirds majority. However, can this be achieved in the present climate of opinion?

This book therefore is of particular interest to those who are concerned about the matter. The Church in Scotland has had women Elders in office for something like twenty-five years. In spite of this, the issue of women's ordination is still causing difficulties and provoking discussion within the Kirk. The purpose of the book is twofold:

1. On a theological level the intention is to contribute to the on-going debate.
2. It shows us that liberty of conscience is being denied to those who cannot accept the ordination of women as being agreeable to the teaching of scripture.

The four writers of the book give Theological reflection, The Biblical picture, The Present Situation, and where we stand . . . and why.

In the chapter on the biblical picture Peter White really rehearses all the old biblical principles that most of us already know! However, they are put in a very presentable and readable form which might prove a helpful tool in the hands of the doubter.

Explanation is given of the major change which has taken place in the Church of Scotland in the past twenty years. When it was first agreed women could be ordained to the Eldership, it was also accepted that there would be liberty of

conscience for those who could not agree. Legislation was originally permissive. That is, it was permitted if those concerned agreed that it was desirable. From that initial stage it has now been changed: 'Women Could' be ordained to the Eldership; then 'Women Should' be ordained to the Eldership, and now the church is being told that 'Women Must' be ordained to the Eldership. Thereby the legislation which was originally permissive, has now become compulsory. This means that those who are in disagreement with the ordination of women to Eldership, and who feel that they cannot participate in such ordination or allow women to be ordained in their own churches must be *deposed* from the ministry. This, of course, is a very serious situation as it takes away the right of individual conscience. Indications are that those who are already in the ministry and cannot accept the current position, will have to resign, and that those who are thinking about the ministry in the Church of Scotland will not be accepted for that ministry unless they also, at the same time, express their willingness to accept the ordination of women as normative.

The writers therefore are facing a very difficult situation. They want at all costs to avoid confrontation but they do want to meet with those who are on opposite sides of the fence to talk and discuss. The conclusion expresses some of their hopes with regard to what might be achieved.

This is a book which could well be of help to those whose consciences are troubled about the current debate, but I have to confess that it seems to be a debate which will not be resolved to the satisfaction of both sides!

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JOHN HALL

ROBERT RUNCIE Adrian Hastings
Mowbray, London 1991 221pp.

ISBN 0 264 67209 7

That Robert Runcie proposed a Roman Catholic priest-theologian to be the author of this book speaks of his interest in Rome as well as his desire to have an objective portrayal given by an historian whom he had never met. The author has fulfilled his task admirably. His book is not a biography but an exploration into the mind, temperament and disposition of Runcie and a searching analysis of his years as Archbishop. He does not hesitate to reveal him as a chameleon fence-sitter who preferred taking a middle course on most serious issues that came before him. Hastings sees him as a liberal-Catholic who failed to give a firm positive lead on many matters that needed his clear guidance and direction. Attention is drawn to his marital life as hardly fulfilling the idealistic concept of mutual union, but agrees there is a close affection between him and his wife, in spite of explosive situations.

The author's aim is to unwrap Runcie as he was during his eleven years as Archbishop. Little space is given to his early ministry and less to his decade at St. Albans. If more had been written about the latter perhaps a different Runcie might have appeared. He does, however, reveal the shock that Dr. Runcie felt when offered the appointment to Canterbury and how he wept like a child on the shoulder of a fellow Bishop. The book places Runcie within the context of the evolution of the Archbishop's office and the type of men who filled it during this century, judging that it is too great a task for one man to undertake with a small staff. Much is made of the movement for the priesting of women and Runcie's cautious attitude to it until the close of his time as Archbishop when he accepted it. Of importance, as a Roman

Catholic theological-historian is, Hastings's claim that this movement sprang from the wave of feminism in the 1960s and the current Western stress on sexual equality. In this he holds that Runcie temporized on a moral issue in the face of proven ecclesiastical discipline. He attributes this to his temperamental conservatism and catholic sympathies which prevented him giving a dynamic lead on an important issue, as well as his desire to keep Anglicanism intact.

In this and other matters Hastings considers that Runcie, during his eleven years at Canterbury, was motivated by the purpose of holding the church of England together and exercising a balanced influence upon the Anglican Communion of churches. To that end he is shown to have travelled perhaps more than any Archbishop of Canterbury this century, having paid eight visits to the African churches. His warm personality and his all embracing middle-liberal approach made it difficult to him to make dramatic pronouncements on one side or another. Such is the Runcie of Hastings's book. In it he stands forth as an open-ended Anglo-Catholic who, while desiring a closer union with Rome, held himself back out of a sense of historic Christianity. His view of Primacy was that of service, not of honour, a view starkly contrary to Cardinal Hume's who, in his address to the General Synod, affirmed that he could not accept the union between the two Churches unless Primacy was that of the Roman Pope.

Claiming that Runcie is no theologian, historian, or writer, Hastings has included in the book what he styles 'Nine Readings' in which Dr. Runcie declared his faith in God, the resurrection of Jesus and reflections on the Prayer Book, amongst others, which reveal a deep conservatism.

The author's chapter on 'Church and Society' demonstrates Runcie's attitude to and influence upon the Church's responsibility towards the nation. Hastings has an astonishing grasp of post-war Anglicanism that makes his book one of the best commentaries on the National Church's current life. He has, however, a few errors of judgment such as holding the view that since the Reformation the Church of England has had a secret priority towards re-union with Rome. But all in all, Runcie stands forth in the book as a man much loved by those who knew him, and as a conscientious Primate.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

ROBERT RUNCIE A Portrait by his friends

David L. Edwards (ed.)

Collins Religious Publishers, London 1990 231pp. £5.90

ISBN 0 00 627520 6

This book is not a biography but a compilation of forty-eight short essays descriptive of Dr. Runcie's eleven years as Archbishop of Canterbury. Written by world-wide friends, including Lord Whitelaw, Archbishops, Bishops, clergy and laity, they offer to the reader a literary portrait of a man who has made a singular impression upon the public mind. The authors are drawn from a wide-spectrum of religious traditions and are remarkably frank in their assessment of his strength and weaknesses. Subjects covered include the man himself, his attempts to retain Anglican comprehensiveness, the ecumenical movement, his relationship to the Orthodox and Roman churches, controversial issues such as the proposed priestly ordination of women, and an appendix by three previous Archbishops. Throughout, it is a sensitive appreciation of Dr. Runcie's warm personality and compassion

for others. Although attention is drawn to his earlier life, no mention is made of his ten years as Bishop of St. Albans that served as a preparation for the See of Canterbury. An essay by one who worked under his episcopacy during those years may well have softened the blunt criticisms with which some writers describe his Canterbury Archbishopric.

The book makes clear that Lord Runcie pursued a too universalist policy in the affairs of his office. Much is made of his indecisiveness and 'fence-sitting' due largely to his disposition to see all sides of a matter without ultimately pronouncing the way ahead. As a liberal Catholic he is shown to have lacked both a scripture approach to important issues, and a firm hold of accepted traditions. That he pursued a fluid course is seen in his attitude to the Roman Church and his readiness to go so far in it until caution forbade him to go further. In this the essays reveal him as an explorer rather than a consolidator.

Dr. Runcie's view of women's priestly ordination is frequently mentioned by the essayists. Here, again, he is seen adopting a vacillating attitude to it. Those who sat at his feet in General Synod knew how cautious he could be on important matters, and how he saw himself as an 'All-Round Primate, an attitude that made him the butt of ecclesial and national criticism. Of great merit, however, is the appreciation expressed in the essays that he was the Church's man of the hour in relation to the Anglican Communion which he bonded closer together. The general tone of the book is that he was the most popular Archbishop of the twentieth century. It is a fascinating study of an outstanding personality.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

A CENTURY OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY Roger Moorey

Lutterworth Press, Cambridge 1991 189pp. No price ISBN 0 7188 2825 9

The author of this book is Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and President of the British School of Archaeology at Jerusalem, and so is well qualified to write a history of Palestinian archaeology. He gives his readers an accurate and absorbing account of the various crises and conflicts which have developed over the years, dividing his history into periods, with about half the book covering discoveries and controversies since 1948, the year of the foundation of modern Israel.

Broadly speaking, the story is one which moves from an almost exclusive interest in the historical accuracy of the Old Testament, through a period of great discoveries, many of which were only marginally connected with the Bible, to a re-evaluation of Palestinian archaeology as a discipline quite unrelated to Biblical studies. The narrative pays proper tribute to the great names—Flinders Petrie, John Garstang, W. F. Albright, Kathleen Kenyon and Ronald de Vaux—without neglecting the faults in their work and the criticisms of it which have been made by other scholars.

It becomes clear as the story unfolds that we have now moved from the heroic age of archaeological discovery, which came to an end in the 1930s, to a period in which much more painstaking, but also much more narrow, research dominates the field. The broad culture which sustained an Albright, and enabled him to move easily through a wide range of disciplines, is no longer to be found, which makes the fine art of synthesis that much more difficult to achieve. This is especially relevant when we come to the question of the Bible's relationship to archaeology,

which many modern archaeologists seem to regard as an irrelevance.

Is Middle Eastern archaeology a discipline in its own right, or does it exist merely to support the truth claims of the Bible? Historically, it was the second of these factors which dominated discussion, and Christians are still concerned about the issue because of the implications which it has for their faith. Professional archaeologists, like the author of this book, may find it tiresome to have to deal with enthusiastic believers, looking for confirmation of their faith, but largely uninterested in the finer points of archaeology as a discipline, but they need to be reminded that without this interest, neither the personnel nor the money would have been forthcoming to undertake the excavations mentioned in this book. The author makes this point quite well, and demonstrates that he is equally impatient with modern attempts to subordinate archaeology to the interests of sociology or anthropology.

This is all to the good, though the author's lack of sympathy for conservative Biblical scholars leads him to underplay the significance of certain issues in Old Testament study. He mentions research which has been done into the Flood, the Patriarchal Narratives and the Israelite Conquest of Canaan, but the fact that conservative scholars have had their views questioned on each of these matters seems to him to be sufficient ground to reject their conclusions. At one point he even criticizes Kathleen Kenyon because as a devout Anglican, she persisted in believing that Joshua and Judges contain historical facts!

Palestinian archaeology has not yet found the proper balance between the written witness of the Bible and the mute testimony of artefacts dug up from various tells and other sites. Without the control exercised by a written record, the latter will always be open to a wide variety of interpretations, and any number of theories will be entertained within the scholarly world. Scholars thrive on this and like nothing better than to challenge 'established' conclusions; among them, general acceptance of a single idea is usually a sign that they are no longer interested in the subject!

But it will always be true that the Bible is the only important cultural survival from the ancient Middle East, and it will continue to put a special stamp on archaeological discoveries made in the area. We cannot expect archaeology to 'prove' the Bible in any crude way—all that is required is that it should make the Biblical narrative a plausible account of what happened in history. The discovery that Abraham and Moses lived on the fringes of developed civilizations, and were capable of producing the kind of laws and traditions associated with their names is enough to sustain the claim that they actually did so—a claim which is made on the basis of the Biblical text, not on that of archaeological evidence. Biblical studies and archaeology may go their separate ways, but Christians will continue to draw on the latter for support, if not 'proof' for their claims. That much, at least, becomes clear as one reads this book, which is likely to be the standard introduction to its subject for some time to come.

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GERALD BRAY

CHRISTIAN ETHICS, OPTIONS AND ISSUES Norman L. Geisler
 Apollos, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1990 335pp. £14.95

ISBN 0 85111 418 0

To state and in most cases counter and then appraise six distinct ethical systems (or 'options') in 132 pages must earn Dr. Geisler an award for bravery at the very least

but inevitable brevity of both presentation and refutation leaves a sad impression of (respectively) aunt-sallying and too-easily-reached conclusions. The 'options' are antinomianism, situationism, generalism (utilitarianism), unqualified absolutism (there are ethical absolutes and conflict between them is apparent, not real), conflicting absolutism (choosing the lesser evil) and graded absolutism (there are higher and lower moral laws and the higher is always to be chosen). Dr. Geisler is a shrewd thinker and a well read author and while this part of his book has only a limited usefulness it will provide a sound starting point for anyone prepared to use it as such: a 'first word' and by no means the 'last word'.

The 'issues' selected for study in the second part of the book are abortion, euthanasia, biomedical issues (genetics, genetic engineering, the balance between speeding and allowing death, etc.), capital punishment, war, civil disobedience, homosexuality, marriage and divorce, ecology. Each of these chapters is well worth reading. As in part one the style is sometimes tiresomely repetitive but there is some excellent material specially under the first three headings above. The sections on war, and civil disobedience are superficial.

The Apollos imprint goes from strength to strength and this volume is certainly not an unworthy addition. Ethical issues force themselves on the Christian conscience today in a way that astounds those who can remember pre-war and immediately post-war conservative evangelicalism. Dr. Geisler has put us in his debt for making basic issues clear and driving us to further thought and study.

11 Littlefield, Bishopsteignton, Devon

ALEC MOTYER

THE RITES OF LIFE Christians and bio-medical decision making
Caroline Berry

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1987 207pp. £7.95 ISBN 0 340 39518 4

The sub-title of Dr. Berry's book, 'Christians and bio-medical decision making', indicates the topics dealt with. As a consultant medical geneticist she is well qualified to write such a book and I found her approach courageous, sympathetic and free from dogma.

The first chapter on man's place in Nature gives the theological background in a conservative account of creation from the theistic evolution standpoint, though insisting on a historical Adam. Dr. Berry's approach is illustrated well by a sentence from the first page: 'Christians are aware of the immense value of every human life in the eyes of God, exemplified most strikingly in His sending His Son to die to save each man and woman'.

The next chapter is on contraception, which is considered legitimate for Christians. I was surprised that A.I.D.S. was not mentioned among the hazards of promiscuity. The third chapter deals with infertility and the problems associated with artificial insemination, *in vitro* fertilization and surrogate motherhood. A very balanced account of abortion, including the legal aspects, is given next. Dr. Berry considers that in general it is to be avoided, but that it is sometimes justified. She comments that 'water-tight ethical systems may be illusory mirages in reproductive biology and that zones of "don't know" must be accepted'.

Experimentation on human embryos is considered in Chapter 5 and the 14-day limit of the Warnock Committee is supported. Problems at the end of life are considered next, in particular the severely handicapped infant, euthanasia and the maintenance of 'life' in a brain-dead patient. Discussing brain-death, Dr. Berry

considers that it is 'the image of God in man' which is to be preserved, not life in a vegetative state. She has no sympathy for euthanasia, especially since the severest pain can now be controlled. There are occasions when patients should be allowed to die rather than be subjected to burdensome medical or surgical treatment.

A final practical chapter deals with financial problems for the National Health Service. New and expensive techniques make increasing demands on the Service and the budget cannot be stretched to meet them all. Not long ago it was accepted that most premature babies would die. Now large sums of money are spent in providing intensive care so that they survive. Would this money be better spent on hip surgery for elderly arthritics, or kidney transplants? The same money might save many more lives if used in preventive measures for Third-World countries. Like the rest of us, Dr. Berry has no easy solutions, but she is right to set out the problems. There will inevitably be tensions and unresolved questions for the Christian. This book sets them out very clearly and offers many helpful answers.

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J. N. HAWTHORNE

In Brief

THE GOOD FIGHT: Randle Manwaring

Howard Baker 168pp. £14.95 hb

This autobiography will be of great interest to readers of this journal. Not only was Randle Manwaring Vice-Chairman of Church Society but also he was a distinguished businessman in the City. He is of course a poet and deeply involved as a Reader in the life of the Church of England. But what is of principal interest is the way in which a man can be a known Christian in the stress and the conflict of the City. This is a remarkably honest book and should be read by many whose vocation is to business and finance. But there are many churchmen and women who will also find this story quite fascinating.

The Rectory, 5 Newell Street, London E.14

JOHN PEARCE

HARD SAYINGS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: W. C. Kaiser

Hodder and Stoughton, London 1991 259pp. No price

ISBN 0 340 54617 4

Dr. Kaiser brings all his enthusiasm for the Old Testament to the discussion of seventy three problem passages: moral difficulties like Gn. 22 (Abraham's testing, human sacrifice), Ex 9:12 (Pharaoh's heart), 1 Ki. 22:20 (the evil spirit from the Lord), 2 Ki. 2:23 (the she-bears); hermeneutical problems like Gn. 2:17 (death), Ex. 21:23 (*lex talionis*), Zc. 6:12 (the Branch). The treatment in each case is brief even where brevity is the foe of satisfactory treatment, as in Gn. 2:18 (the helpmeet), Nu. 22:20ff (Balaam), 1 Ch. 21:1 (Satan). But each study in what is for the most part a fine book has something worthwhile to say: commonsense exegesis of Job 19:23ff, a sturdy realism about Cain's wife, correctives to a denigratory attitude towards Ecclesiastes, a strong affirmation of the rigour of Biblical truth in Is. 45:7. Oddly one of the problems most frequently raised—Joshua and the slaughter of the Canaanites—is not included but ministers will find here useful pointers on many, many matters raised by those sincerely puzzled by the Old Testament.

10, Littlefield, Bishopsteignton, Devon

ALEC MOTYER

BE SATISFIED—ECCLESIASTES Warren Wiersbe

Scripture Press, Amersham 128pp. £2.75

ISBN 1 872089 50 3

For the launch of an Old Testament series of BE books, Warren Wiersbe has chosen the book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes 1 vv. 1-3 is asking is Life worth

Living? This is the theme of the book and also the title of Chapter One of *BE Satisfied*. Ecclesiastes is not an easy book to understand and to some seems muddled, contradictory and to argue itself round in circles so they have given up reading it in frustration or have misunderstood or misinterpreted it. *BE Satisfied* will be very helpful for anyone who has had this experience. The layout of the book and chapters help to bring greater understanding and aid the study of Ecclesiastes.

We see how the book of Ecclesiastes does have a message and practical application for us today. As we look at the society which Solomon investigated so long ago we see similarities with our world to-day: 'injustice to the poor' (4: 1-3), 'crooked politics' (5:8), 'incompetent leaders' (10: 6-7), guilty people allowed to commit more crime (8:11), 'materialism' (5:10) and a desire for the good old days (7:10).

As we study the monotony of life, the vanity of wisdom, the futility of wealth and the certainty of death, we are also able to see that we can enjoy life: 2:24, 3:12-15, 22: 5:18-20, 8:15, 9:7-10. Indeed the author of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, urges us to enjoy life and be satisfied with what God has given us. The final chapter of *BE Satisfied* is called 'What is Life?' all about?' and looks at Ecclesiastes 11 and 12. We see what we need to live by faith 11:1-6, enjoy life now, 11:7-12:8, prepare for judgment 12: 9-14. Chapter 12 vv. 13-14 are the key verses.

What, then, is the conclusion? On page 128 we read this: Is Life worth Living? Yes, if you are truly alive through faith in Jesus Christ. Then you can be satisfied no matter what God may permit to come to your life.

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 1 John 5:12. You can receive life in Christ and—be satisfied!

London, S.W.18

NICKY COOK

CITY VISION Stuart Murray

Daybreak, London 1990 160pp. £8.95pb.

ISBN 0 232 51884 X

In this volume Stuart Murray endeavours *first*, to introduce us to the city; *secondly*, to provide a Biblical understanding of the city; and *thirdly*, to sketch in some strategies for urban mission.

The first he does well. With regard to the second it appears that he may be guilty of special pleading. His belief that the Bible lays particular emphasis upon urban mission needs to be tested. In most instances his use of the word *city* can be replaced with the word *people*. This fact leads one to look twice at his argument.

In the third section, of some one hundred pages, there is much that warms and challenges the heart. Although the author's view of prophecy and his interpretation of some Bible passages (see pp. 69f., 92f.) are open to question.

Mr. Murray's enthusiasm for the inner-city and urban mission comes through in every chapter if not on every page. Therein lies the strength of this book. Oh that many more shared Stuart Murray's burden for those without faith in the vast urban tracts of our land.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne GEORGE CURRY

Churchman

DOUBT: HANDLING IT HONESTLY Alister McGrath

Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester 1990 144pp. £2.50pb.

ISBN 0 85110 880 4

'This work', so the author tells us in the *Preface* (page 7), 'had its origins in some talks given to students . . . in December 1988.' Although geared primarily to students—the illustrations and applications clearly demonstrate that—there can be no doubt (please pardon the pun) that the subject matter of this volume will appeal to many besides.

Dr. McGrath writes in an easy-to-follow and engaging style. In the space of some six chapters he tells us what doubt is; addresses the doubts that some, if not all of us, have from time to time about the gospel, ourselves, Jesus and God; and concludes with some advice about how to handle it. The last chapter, in particular, contains much practical wisdom and the book is worth buying just for that.

Two questions arise. In chapter one, page 18, it is possible to interpret the author as implying that we are morally neutral and free to choose either belief or unbelief. This is surely unfortunate, especially when you remember what Paul says in Romans 8.7. And then in chapter two, page 55, he describes God as 'doing his best.' We can see why, but surely this is not the happiest way of stating things?

However it must be stated quite clearly that there is much within the covers of this small work that will help the (young) Christian beset with doubts and the Christian who is keen to help his fellow believer(s) in that unhappy position.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne GEORGE CURRY

HELPING THE DEPRESSED Alistair Ross

Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne 1990 94pp. £2.25pb.

ISBN 0 86068 876 7

This is a helpful little book. The author, a pastor whose responsibilities include chaplaincy work in a psychiatric hospital, sets out his aims in the Introduction. He wants to help Christians. He wants us to know what depression is and what it feels like. He also wants us to see how we, both as individuals and as members of churches, can help the depressed. In the nine short chapters that follow, in a simple and straightforward manner, he fulfils his aims. I have two quibbles. The distinction between demonic oppression (which we see more often) and demonic possession ought to have been spelt out a little more. And secondly a paragraph or two on the difference between schizophrenia and manic depression would make this otherwise excellent popular introduction to this subject even better.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne GEORGE CURRY

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Other Books Received

- Abingdon Press** D.E. Messer, ed., *Send Me? The Itinerary in Crisis*, 1991, No price; J.W. Moore, *Can You Remember to Forget?*, 1991, \$8.95
- Albatross Books** A. Nichols, *David Penman: Bridge Builder, Peacemaker, Fighter for Social Justice*, 1992, £5.99; M. Reeson, *No Fixed Address: The Story of Noreen Towers and her Friendship with Sydney's Homeless*, 1992, £5.99
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- Hodder & Stoughton** M. Green, *New Life New Lifestyle*, (revised) 1991, £3.50; *Why Bother with Jesus?* (revised) 1991, £1.99; *You must be Joking!* (revised) 1991, £2.99; C.R. Swindoll, *Improving Your Serve*, 1991, £3.50
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