

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

Book Reviews

PAULINUS NOSTER. SELF AND SYMBOLS IN THE LETTERS OF PAULINUS OF NOLA

Catherine Conybeare

Oxford: OUP 2000 187pp £35 hb ISBN: 0 19 924072 8

In his own day, Paulinus of Nola was a well-known and well-connected Roman aristocrat who maintained a regular correspondence with prominent people all over the late Roman Empire. As a Christian and an ascetic, he resembles no-one quite so much as Jerome, who was one of his friends, though his personality was a good deal more agreeable. Unfortunately, the passage of time and the emergence of more important theological writers has obscured his reputation, and today he is little known outside specialist circles. Catherine Conybeare aims to put that right with an intimate and accessible portrait of Paulinus. She explains what his letters are like, and the extent to which they reveal his character. Letter-writing in antiquity was an art form which almost invariably had a public dimension. Very few people committed their private thoughts to papyrus if they did not want them to be overheard, and the time and trouble which it took to write in the first place ensured that they seldom wasted their words. Ms Conybeare brings out an added dimension which is frequently overlooked—the important role played by the letter carrier, who was also part of the message. Letters seldom reached their destination without a private carrier, who would then be expected to elaborate on its contents by bringing a personal dimension to the contact between the two correspondents.

All of this is of considerable interest to students of the New Testament, since the Pauline epistles are in this respect very similar. Just as Paul was always a public person, even when writing to Philemon or Timothy, so Paulinus was constantly aware of that wider audience, whom he regarded as his duty to edify and instruct. Ms Conybeare quotes extensively from his writings to show how Paulinus was involved in a wider cultural transition, in which the ancient world gave way to Christianity. This showed itself with great clarity in the realm of personal relationships, and it was not without some pain that the change was realised. One of Paulinus' correspondents was the poet Ausonius, who could not transcend the pre-Christian notion of friendship as a 'yoke' uniting two persons and rise to the wider concept of spiritual communion in Christ, which united not only two people, but all who were born again in the faith of the Son of God.

This is the context in which Paulinus reveals himself, and which he expects his

readers and correspondents to be able to share. As a Christian he could reveal his inmost thoughts, but in a way which could be accepted and absorbed by anyone who knew Christ. Paulinus was always intensely aware of the crucial difference between the material and the spiritual worlds, and it was the latter which claimed his allegiance. But despite his many affinities with Platonism, Paulinus was not a disciple of the Athenian philosopher. His concept of friendship was fully incarnational and Christ-centred, and it is these characteristics, not any lingering connection with Plato, which made his letters so influential.

This book is well-written and highly informative. It is particularly accessible to non-specialists who can approach a relatively obscure figure thanks to Ms Conybeare's help. The many quotations give us a flavour of Paulinus as a writer, and they are all reproduced in Latin as well as in English translation, which gives the book an added usefulness to scholars. It will probably be some time before another book on Paulinus appears, and it will be difficult to surpass Ms Conybeare for lucidity. Those with an interest in late antiquity and the Christianisation of Roman society will want to acquire this book and ponder what it has to say about the world which we have inherited.

GERALD BRAY

CAN A DARWINIAN BE A CHRISTIAN? The Relationship between Science and Religion

Michael Ruse

Cambridge: CUP 2001 pp242 hb £15.95 ISBN 0-521-63144-0

GOD AFTER DARWIN: A Theology of Evolution John F Haught

Oxford: Westview Press 2000 pp 221 pb ISBN 0-8133-3878-6

These two books both deal with the question very much in debate today of the relation between evolutionary science and Christian faith. The author of the first is Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University, has been much 'involved in debate with creationists' and was an expert witness in the Scopes Monkey Trial in 1981. His Preface begins, 'Let me be open. I think that evolution is a fact and that Darwinism rules triumphant....Yet I cannot for the life of me see why so many—Darwinians and Christians alike—think that such a position as mine implies an immediate and emphatically negative response to the question in my title'. He was born in Britain in 1940 and brought up till 1953 among the Quakers whom his parents joined after the War. So he has sympathies with both sides, though his convictions are clearly with Darwinism.

He aims to be fair in answering his title question and I think in the main he succeeds. He quotes the foremost protagonists of today on both sides for instance: Philip Johnson on one, and Richard Dawkins on the other. His style is easy, and most of it is in language that a non-specialist can understand.

One prominent aim is to show that the characteristics of human nature and society which we see today, can be explained as having arisen as easily through the operation of Darwinian principles as through the command to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. In this connection he speaks approvingly of such things as Social Darwinism and Sociobiology' and aims to show that it is not only the Christian understanding of things that leads to what is commonly accepted as good human behaviour: the Darwinian arguments would support the same ideals too. He does not however discuss whether the reverse of this also holds: whether the Darwinian view of things would lead up to the first and great commandment' on which all hangs for the genuine Christian. Of course it would not.

This brings me to my main criticism of his book—its apparent lack of real understanding of what the Bible mean, by being a Christian. Prof. Ruse seems to align the Bible's doctrine of God and the creation with Theism which is alas, poles apart from the Bible's Theism. The difference is not merely the replacement of a 'D' with a 'Th'.

Theism stresses that God expresses Himself in law and order. The trouble with thinkers like Professor Ruse is that they come full-stop with what their eyes can see and their hands can touch, and they consider then that they have plumbed the final depths. They haven't, the God they are weighing-up in their minds is vastly too small. All this is particularly serious in the case of moral matters. Right and wrong lose their ultimate significance without God. They become reduced to relative trivialities; reward or punishment never catch up with them.

Let me summarise things in this way. The biblical account of the Universe (of matter! and life and creaturely rebellion) embraces everything that Darwinism embraces and much more. Darwinism is successful up to a point but stops short because it is able to take cognisance of only what is accessible to man's physical senses. Now mind is inaccessible to them; and through mindless chance alone it apparently arrived late on the scene. Ironically, it is Professor's Ruse's mind that is now championing this Darwinian view. But how can such a latecomer as 'mind' have anything to say about the absolute origin of things? How can it be

so very adept at explaining to itself all that originated before it ever came to be? I am, afraid the logic of this sort of view escapes me: but I must myself recognise and admit that my own thinking mind has limitations as well as Professor Ruse's.

The book is attractively written (at times sentences are long and need to be read more than once), well produced and I gained a good deal from it—except the conviction that 'Darwinism is triumphant'. Darwinism to me may be a part of the truth, but a very small part. I do not believe it contributes much to human life or happiness, or that we gain really very much from it—except when it is seen in the light of the Bible.

The other book is rather different. John Haught is Professor of Theology at Georgetown University and Director of the Georgetown Centre for the Study of Science and Religion. He puts religion first in importance, not science (oppositely to the previous author), but to him Darwin's understanding is a 'Gift to Theology'. 'As a Roman Catholic I learned from an early age that there can be no genuine conflict between scientific truth and religious faith,' he writes. 'I consider it my good fortune to have been advised throughout my life that believers in God should not look to biblical texts or religious creeds for information of a scientific nature,' he continues. That may be fair enough, but it is not always easy to say when a matter passes from one to the other. For instance, the historical antecedents of the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross are enough (on the level of what can be ascertained in principle by anyone at will, the well-known criterion for scientific evidence) to explain everything that happened at Calvary but to rest with that understanding is to miss almost everything. Acts 4:27, 28 and all that follows is a clear indication of this. Professor Haught is not troubled however. The meaning of the Cross in terms of the Righteousness of God is really flung out of the window. Haught's theology makes a lot of use of Whitehead's Process Theology, and has sympathy with Teilhard de Chardin, Charles Hartshorne and others of similar views. God and 'design', 'law' and 'order' are largely divorced, and God is portrayed rather as standing in the future and beckoning the universe forward as it creates itself.

I must conclude with the author's own words. He writes: 'Rather than attributing to God a rigid 'plan' for the universe, evolutionary theology prefers to think of God's 'vision' for it. Nature, after Darwin, is not a design but a promise. God's 'plan', if we continue to use the term, is not a blueprint but an envisagement of what the cosmos might become. A design, as I have noted repeatedly, closes off

the future and ‘clips the wings of hope...The God of evolution does not fix things in advance! nor hoard selfishly the joy of creating. Instead God shares with all creatures their own openness to an indeterminate future...’ .

This is not a book I would personally recommend. It does not possess the wonderful balance and flavour of the Scriptures, but denies them and runs ahead. I prefer Romans 11.33ff.

DOUGLAS C. SPANNER

JOSHUA: NO FALLING WORDS

Dale Ralph Davis

Fearn: Christian FOCUS, 2000 204 pp £7.99 pb ISBN 185792-602-1

The compelling narrative that is the Former Prophets raises many questions in the modern reader’s mind. After all, the events took place such a long time ago, archaeology is of limited help in describing context and the course of the plot is at times a mystery. Joshua, in particular, contains lists long enough to quench the enthusiasm of many readers. With all this in mind, what is the Christian reader to make of the apostle’s assertion that all Scripture is God-breathed and useful?

Davis’ expositions in the Former Prophets put us in his debt. The re-issue of this volume, first published by Baker Book House in 1988, is very welcome indeed. Davis plots a straightforward course through this potential minefield, with four elements marking his sure-footed approach: First, God’s promises are clearly the theological driving force in the book of Joshua. Yahweh’s promises are intended not as sedatives but stimulants, not to be swallowed but seized. The Lord’s faithfulness in his promises to Israel is applied to the promises made to us as Christians. Second, careful reading of the text as it stands exposes the author’s narrative intentions. Analysed in larger and smaller sections, Joshua reveals a purpose and a structure.

Furthermore, lists come to life when allowed to operate within their context. Third, Davis is well aware of the critical problems. He succinctly addresses questions which are relevant to faithful exposition—such as the relationship of the conquest accounts to comments in Judges. Other questions are relegated to the footnotes and commentaries. In other words, when a can of worms is opened, those worms which pose no real threat to understanding the word of God may be left to wriggle while we get on with the business in hand. Finally, in the difficult area of application, Davis is most helpful in not pressing what is

not clear. Some areas of application of a general nature, which could crop up anywhere in Scripture, are gently applied. Only those which can be more firmly traced through the rest of the Bible and through Jesus Christ to us are given greater weight. Otherwise promises made to Israel are applied to Israel: we are spared the 'flat' application of Israel's promises to the Christian believer which characterises too many attempts at Old Testament application. What a relief.

This is an exposition for the general reader, rather than a technical commentary. The blurb on the back cover is to the point: 'Readable, Reliable, Relevant', and I wish I could have thought of those words first to describe this book.

ED MOLL

ALIEN NATION

Melvin Tinker

Fearn: Christian Focus 2001 158pp £4.99 pb ISBN:185792-677-3

The Christian book market seems to have been inundated with various analyses of contemporary culture. It also seems to be full of books giving a wider audience to the sermon series of eminent preachers. However, books seeking to do both are harder to find. That in itself is revealing and perhaps says a great deal about much preaching today. All too often, even better sermons are either primarily focused on cultural analysis without Scriptural roots, or on solid exposition with sixteenth century application. Rather a crude caricature, perhaps, but it does make Melvin Tinker's recent book seem all the more refreshing. He is clearly rooted in the Bible and his expositions do help the reader to grasp some of the bite and thrust of the various passages; but he is also a man who understands his time, so that his expositions are full of insights from all kinds of different writers and thinkers (not just the Christians).

The range of subjects covered is huge—from marriage and homosexuality to contemporary idolatry, from running children's work in the local church to building a heaven-focused worldview. It is engaging and well written; although it must be appreciated that a short and populist book like this cannot provide more than an introduction to such issues. However, that is part of the book's challenge. If the issues covered are new to the reader, then it demonstrates both how far removed he or she is from the world around us and the need to get better acquainted with it. This book encourages us to be more aware and more attuned—an absolute necessity if we are to preach our timeless gospel faithfully to our current time.

One other thing—it is all too easy to become gloomy when reading this sort of cultural analysis. I often have to remind myself when I see aspects of society apparently disintegrating (as in East Africa) that the gospel was powerful enough to change people in a place like Corinth. This book does something similar—it shows how relevant God’s word still is, and also reminds us of the awesome effect that preaching can have. The likes of Whitefield and the Wesleys changed England through their preaching and this can happen again in the UK (and for that matter in Africa). So, Melvin Tinker’s book is also an implicit encouragement to preachers not to give up. We have a big job to do, but it is not a futile one. Preaching such as Tinker’s, preaching that is both faithful to the Word and relevant to the world, can and will change lives.

MARK MEYNELL

STORY AS TORAH. READING THE OLD TESTAMENT ETHICALLY

Gordon Wenham

Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark 2000 180pp £22.50 hb ISBN 0 567 0867 0

In recent Old Testament preaching there has been a welcome move away from the simple drawing of moral lessons, and a concentration on Old Testament ‘personalities’ (the ‘5 Lessons from the Life of David’ approach). This has been replaced by an increased awareness of biblical theology and the fact that God himself is the chief character of the Old Testament; therefore its purpose is not to present a series of human exemplars for us to follow, but to proclaim his saving words and acts. The truth and value of this approach is beyond doubt (although sadly some very popular authors and preachers are still tied to moralising). However, it does leave one asking if the Old Testament, beyond the obvious passages in the Law and Proverbs, has anything to say about how we should live.

Gordon Wenham answers emphatically ‘yes it does’, and suggests that if we do not see a partly didactic purpose in Old Testament narrative then we are reading it out of its historical context. The goal of this book, an important contribution to biblical theology, is to show that:

‘Old Testament narrative books do have a didactic purpose, that is, they are trying to instil both theological truths and ethical ideals into their readers... Biblical storytellers are not advocating a minimalist conformity to the demands of the Law in their storytelling, rather that they have an ideal of Godly

behaviour that they hoped their heroes and heroines would typify' (p 3).

The book opens with a chapter on methodology (which includes a robust dismissal of post-modernism and a defence of the use of authorial intention in hermeneutics). Here Wenham notes the importance of the 'implied author' in the text, and the importance of discovering what 'patterns of behaviour' he implicitly commends (or disapproves of). Two illuminating case studies follow, of Genesis and Judges, using rhetorical criticism to analyse the texts and their values. Wenham then looks at the relationship between narrative and Law (in the narrow sense). The laws in the Pentateuch 'represent the floor of acceptable behaviour, not the ideal'; what God actually wants is a wholehearted imitation of himself. Thus Wenham argues that the Old Testament has a virtue ethic; references to Alasdair MacIntyre are few but significant. However, he does not argue that the Old Testament presents to us flawless heroes and heroines; rather it shows us God's faithfulness to them in spite of their failures to achieve the ideal. In this chapter, Wenham also gives some criteria for discerning which 'patterns of behaviour' the implied author approves of, thus avoiding the arbitrariness of the old, moralising approach; so Wenham sees Gideon's fleece, for instance, as an example of his timidity, not of how we should seek guidance.

After a chapter considering some of the morally problematic stories in Genesis and Judges, Wenham's final chapter explores the continuity between Old Testament ethics and the New Testament, based upon the belief that Israelite and Christian readers are 'one people of God sharing one story of salvation'. I found his discussion of holiness, and the food laws, particularly helpful. With regard to both food and marriage, in Jesus' teaching Wenham finds that 'On the face of it there is confrontation and abrogation of the old rules, but at a deeper level there is a reaffirmation of God's creative purposes for the human race'.

Wenham's argument is compelling, his exegesis is mostly clear and convincing, and the book is written with the clarity we have come to expect from him. It will be of great help to anyone who preaches on the Old Testament. My one complaint is that not enough is done to link an ethical reading of the Old Testament with a more directly theocentric/christocentric and redemptive-historical reading (although the book closes with some reflections on the character of God). Otherwise we risk a polarisation between the two approaches.

STEVE WALTON

LOVE'S REDEEMING WORK (The Anglican Quest for Holiness)

Geoffrey Rowell, Kenneth Stevenson, Rowan Williams (eds)

Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001 762 pp £35 hb

ISBN 0 19 122476 6

This book is a heavyweight in many senses. It contains writing from over two hundred and fifty Anglican writers since the Reformation. We are given extracts from their books, sermons, letters and hymns. Each author is introduced by one of the compilers. The compilers themselves are all bishops (one an archbishop), and there is a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury and an afterword by the Archbishop of York.

The title comes from an Easter hymn. The preface explains that the work is an Anglican *Philokalia*. 'The name *Philokalia* refers to an extensive collection of ascetic and mystical writings dating from the fourth to the fifteenth century, which has played an important part in nurturing the life of prayer and the pursuit of holiness in the churches of the Orthodox tradition.' This understanding of holiness influences the selection of texts.

The general introduction is written by the Archbishop of Wales (according to the Foreword). It reviews the history of Anglicanism and evaluates major trends. It insists that Anglicanism 'has never taken the line that Scripture alone is the source of true doctrine' (p xxiii) and calls for 'a reflective and theological scepticism' towards theological dogma (p xxv). It also records that in recent years 'demand in Evangelical circles for a doctrinally sophisticated spirituality grew'. So evangelicals talked to Catholics. As a result, 'Catholics concentrated more on the Bible; icons and candles began to appear in Evangelical churches and theological colleges' (p xxxi). This illustrates the compilers' desire to avoid what may be seen as theological extremes.

The Archbishop of Wales then introduces the first section. It covers 1530-1650. The Prayer Book is mentioned but the Articles are not. However, the extracts he presents are Protestant in content and tone. John Bradford tells us that 'the coupling of Christ's body and blood to the sacrament is a spiritual thing; and therefore there needs no such carnal presence as the papists imagine' (p 59). Edwin Sandys writes, 'In prayer no creature may be joined with God. 'God and our Lady help us,' is no allowable prayer' (p 61). Richard Hooker tells us that the Church is 'both a society and a society supernatural' (p 106)

so it is an earthly group under heavenly laws.

The second part is introduced by the Bishop of Portsmouth. It covers 1650-1830. John Wesley is introduced as 'a man who blended Protestant and Catholic traditions' (p. 287) and we are told that Charles Wesley 'disagreed very strongly with the Methodist movement's increasing separation from the Anglican Church' (p. 292). We have full versions of the latter's 'O for a thousand tongues' (nine verses) and 'Christ the Lord is risen to-day' (eleven). John Jebb (1815) sums up the stance of the Church of England. She 'steers a middle course. She reveres Scripture: she respects tradition. She encourages investigation: but she checks presumption. She bows to the authority of the ages: but she owns no living master upon earth. She rejects alike, the wild extravagance of unauthorised opinion, and the tame subjection of compulsory belief' (p 362).

The third part is introduced by the Bishop in Europe. It covers 1830-2001. In his introduction he writes that 'both the Trinitarian emphasis and an openness to the riches of the Eastern Christian tradition, not least through the growing appreciation of icons as aids to devotion, has continued to shape Anglican life and spirituality' (p 376).

This section covers over half the book. It also includes the largest extract from one piece of work: a six-page sermon on holiness by J H Newman, the leader of the Oxford Movement. He writes, 'Narrow, indeed, is the way of life, but infinite is His love and power who is with the Church, in Christ's place, to guide us along it' (p 411).

Former Prime Minister William Gladstone writes on besetting sin: 'When this is found, keep the eye close upon it, follow it up, drag it from its hiding-places, make no terms with it, never remit the pursuit; and so by the grace of God's Holy Spirit may you cast it out' (p 433). F J A Hort writes on ministers (in 1896): 'Nothing is more wanted for the regeneration of England than a vast increase in manliness, courage, and simplicity in English clergymen' (p 465). J B Lightfoot adds that nothing is 'more fatal to that joy and peace which is the promise of the Gospel, than the pessimistic temper, which fastens on all the faults and ignores all the virtues and graces of others' (p 469-70).

Some writers issue warnings: 'evangelical preaching does in the end lose the sense of worship and of reality unless it is coupled with a genuine sacramental

faith' (H H Kelly; p 539); 'it is much more difficult to offer private prayer in a nonconformist chapel than in a church, for in the one there is no point of concentration for the attention, and in the other there is' (R S Ward, p 586).

Other writers issue directions. Evelyn Underhill says that drawing ordinary life into God 'will not happen unless the sacramental principle—the principle of the spiritual significance of visible deeds and things—has a definite expression in our organised religious life' (p 569). Silence must be included. It 'alone can provide for both the extremities of our need and the operation of God's grace' (Ecclestone; p 658). In short, the Reformation was a wrong turn: 'Let us pray to our Lady and the saints, for they are links with him and will help us to love him more' (Morris, p 678).

This section features many Anglican writers from provinces outside the British Isles. Edmund John (in 1986) represents the vitality of much African Anglicanism: 'Muslims and other unbelievers must be counselled to accept the Lord Jesus' (p 734). In contrast, David Penman (former Archbishop of Melbourne) represents the different direction of many in the western world. He quotes these words with approval: 'Anglicans not at home in patriarchal Anglo-Celtic Churches are already forming or joining separate congregations—Aboriginal, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Persian, Feminist, Youth, Gay—and this trend must surely increase, requiring special ministries' (p 754). So what can hold the Anglican Communion together? John Gaden writes, 'Together we move on to the Eucharist' (p 758).

No living writers were considered for inclusion. This explains why there is no place for fifty years of writing by either J R W Stott and J I Packer. But it is sad that J C Ryle (especially his book 'Holiness') is overlooked. Evangelicals in the last century are represented by Dr Coggan (Archbishop of Canterbury 1974-80) and David Watson (four extracts from one biography). Evangelicals will be forgiven for thinking that this book knows little of their Anglican world. It includes very little Bible exposition, testimonies of changed lives, or directions to honour the Lord at work and home.

Nevertheless the Orthodox understanding of holiness has been pursued boldly. I minister in eastern Europe and recognise the book will be well-received by many in these parts. It is a great achievement. May it encourage many to pray and be holy. Although length and cost may restrict it from becoming a

bestseller, it will be a reference book of some distinction for years to come.

JONATHAN FRAIS

KEEPING YOUR BALANCE *Approaching theological and religious studies.*
Philip Duce and Daniel Strange (eds)

Leicester: Apollos (IVP) 2001 238pp £9.99 pb

ISBN: 9-780851-114828

Nowhere is the battle between orthodox Christian faith and post-Enlightenment reason more keenly felt than among theological students from an evangelical background. Lecturers in theology and religious studies see them coming, and if they are not sympathetic, they can make these students' lives extremely uncomfortable. Given that few conservatives get appointed to teaching posts in such departments, the chances are that sooner or later, a student will have to fight for his faith or lose it in the liberal mainstream which still dominates the world of academic theology. This is a book designed to help and encourage such students, and it is written by a group of authors who have all had direct, personal experience of what they are talking about.

Of all the contributions, perhaps the one which will strike students as the most immediately relevant is the piece by Laura Jervis, who graduated from Oxford in 1998 and whose brief is to tell us what she wished she had known before starting her course. That is where the intended readership of this book is at, and it would perhaps have been better to have made her essay the first chapter, rather than the second. She is the one who sets the scene for the others to pick up on, and generally speaking, they do this rather well.

Martin Downes is another recent graduate who is involved with students on a daily basis, and like Miss Jervis, he too can speak from where they sit. It is therefore especially encouraging to note that he puts his emphasis on the need for good Biblical preaching, because it is there more than anywhere else that the quality of one's spiritual life will be tested and nourished. Logically, his chapter comes right after that by David Cupples, a full-time Presbyterian minister, who also stresses the importance of good church support. This cannot be stressed too strongly, since theological students need to know where to turn for help when they need it, and as Laura Jervis points out, they are unlikely to get the kind of specialist assistance which they need from their fellows in the Christian Union. In any case, studying theology outside the church context

makes no sense, and is almost bound to lead to some kind of distortion sooner or later. These chapters do not deal directly with the academic issues, but they lay out the necessary foundation for any student's devotional life and so deserve pride of place in this collection of papers.

The other contributions are by lecturers and senior scholars, and quite properly, they concentrate on the more academic issues. Nigel Cameron rehearses the standard evangelical arguments for the inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, which have to be repeated to every generation of students, or else they will be all too easily forgotten. This chapter is strong on the classics, but decidedly thinner on current controversies, especially those about hermeneutics. Students need help in this area as much, if not more, than elsewhere, especially now that so many apparently conservative people have allowed a new hermeneutic to alter their entire approach to God's Word. Stephen Williams deals at great length with the crucial question of faith in relation to 'certainty' and examines the philosophical underpinnings of modern thought in a way which ought to be of enormous help to those who are confronted with a way of thinking which may be quite foreign to them.

Carl Trueman does his best to integrate the spiritual and the academic by stressing the old Puritan devotion to zeal in all things. A theological student must pursue his academic study and his devotional life with the same degree of intense commitment if he is to succeed in both and hold them together in the right way. Laziness in either department will lead to disaster and so it must at all costs be avoided. This is good, sound, practical advice, and it can only be hoped that everyone who reads this book takes Dr Trueman seriously and puts his words into practice.

The first chapter in the book is an updated version of an old booklet by David Field, called *Approaching theological study*. It is different from the other contributions in this collection because it is written from, and basically addressed to, those who are studying in a theological college, not in a secular university. The difference which this makes becomes clear towards the end, where David Field puts great emphasis on the need to maintain good personal relationships in the community and suggests that most theological disagreements are rooted in differences of personality and temperament. A remark like that presupposes that the student body will share a common theological outlook (Evangelical in this case) and take most of the basics for

granted. It may sound strange to students in a more pluralistic atmosphere, where personality and temperament are less likely to be the main factors causing theological differences. But even in an evangelical environment, an approach like this one is liable to create a situation where it is more important to be nice than to be right, with consequences which may be just as devastating to the cause of the gospel as any overtly liberal theology.

Having said that, this is a good book which will serve a useful and necessary purpose in the student world. At an affordable price, it may be just the thing to give to a young man or woman starting a university course in theology or religious studies.

GERALD BRAY

THE SEPTUAGINT AS CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE.

Its prehistory and the problem of its canon **Martin Hengel**
 Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2002 £25 153pp hb ISBN 0-567-08737-9

The Septuagint, which is the name generally given to the standard Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, is one of the most important, yet one of the least studied books to have come out of the ancient world. It originated in pre-Christian Egypt, where Jewish settlers quickly lost the use of the Hebrew tongue and were forced to translate their Scriptures into Greek. Originally, the Septuagint meant only the Torah, or the five books of Moses, which legend claimed had been translated by seventy-two inspired scholars who had been sent to Alexandria from Jerusalem. In time the word (which means 'seventy' in Latin) was extended to cover translations of the prophets and the so-called 'writings', even to certain books which were originally composed in Greek and which constitute what we now know as the 'apocrypha'.

The New Testament writers were mostly familiar with the Septuagint, which had become the standard Bible used in the Jewish Diaspora, and they did not hesitate to quote it in their own writings, a fact which lent further credence to the Jewish legend that its translators were inspired. It was soon noticed that as a translation, the Septuagint left a good deal to be desired, and more literal renderings into Greek were later produced. Eventually the Jews rejected the Septuagint altogether, though by that time it had become the standard Old Testament version used in the nascent Christian church.

Controversy erupted in the late fourth century, when Jerome was commissioned to produce a new Latin translation of the Bible. He took the trouble to learn Hebrew, and regarded the original text as the only proper basis for his translation. In this he was famously opposed by Augustine, who pointed out that the Septuagint was the apostolic Bible and who claimed that the translation was inspired. The church adopted Augustine's view and until the Reformation that is how matters stood. The Reformers of course rediscovered both Jerome and Hebrew, and rejected the Septuagint except in so far as it was used in the New Testament.

Martin Hengel recounts all this history in an attempt to demonstrate that the Septuagint was an authentically Christian text, as well as a marginally Jewish one, and that it therefore deserves to be taken more seriously by the church than it has been in modern times. He is inclined to the view that the translation, including the departures from the original sense, was a part of God's saving purpose, even if he hesitates to call it 'inspired', and believes that the church today should recognise this. In the end, he advocates a position not unlike that of Luther. The deuterocanonical books are useful and good to read, even if they are less authoritative than the Hebrew books, and there is great spiritual profit to be derived from reading and using them.

Professor Hengel is making a case to a sceptical audience, and we must not be too surprised if he tends to overstate it. Undoubtedly, Protestants have neglected the Septuagint to an unwarranted extent, and there is certainly much to be said for any serious student of the New Testament making himself as familiar as possible with it. That, however, is not the same as putting it on a par with the Hebrew text as canonical Scripture, and even less is it a reason for abandoning the Hebrew altogether (which Professor Hengel, of course, does not want to do). In a word, this book is trying to get a balance in Old Testament study between the claims of the original text and those of the Christian revelation, which undoubtedly read that text in new and unexpected ways. It is a welcome addition to literature on the Septuagint, and if it encourages people to read the latter more seriously, then it is all to the good. But if it creates enthusiasts for the Septuagint as opposed to the Hebrew text it will have gone too far. The pendulum needs to stay firmly balanced, with a fair appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Septuagint as a translation and a just recognition of the role it played in the origins of the Christian church.

IRENÆUS OF LYONS**Eric Osborn**

Cambridge: CUP, 2001 307pp hb £45 ISBN:0-521-80006-4

Irenaeus of Smyrna, who became the Greek-speaking bishop of Lugdunum (Lyon) in 177, is one of the most fascinating of the fathers of the early church. Although he wrote relatively little, and most of that survives only in Latin translation, he can nevertheless claim to be the first post-Biblical Christian writer to have left us enough material to make it possible to construct a systematic theology. This is what Professor Osborn has brilliantly done in the excellent and important new study. Fully acquainted with the sources, the secondary literature and the different thought worlds which lay claim to his legacy, Professor Osborn takes us through the life, writings and doctrine of this highly significant thinker. Along the way, he explodes a number of popular myths which have entered common understanding of the man and his period.

First to go is the notion that somehow Irenaeus represents 'early catholicism'. Professor Osborn dismisses this idea, and in the process makes it plain that 'early catholicism' is too vague a term to be of much use in analyzing early patristic writings. Then he has a go at the belief that Irenaeus was a mere 'biblicist', quoting endlessly from Scripture with very little method in this apparent madness. On the contrary, says Professor Osborn, Irenaeus had a highly sophisticated hermeneutic and a profound understanding of how Paul and John could be tied together. Finally, the assertion that Irenaeus was essentially an aesthetic theologian whose doctrine of recapitulation is a brilliant portrait of redemption is carefully dissected and dismissed. Far from being an impressionist painter, Irenaeus was a deep and complex thinker, whose teaching about reconciliation resembles a philosophical system more than any kind of painting.

Professor Osborn begins by developing the theme that Irenaeus ought to be understood under four broad headings. The first of these is divine intellect, the second is economy, the third is recapitulation and the fourth is participation. The first two quite clearly derive from ancient Greek philosophy, and neither Irenaeus nor Professor Osborn makes any apology for this. As an evangelist, Irenaeus had no choice but to expound the Gospel in terms which his audience would comprehend, and he did this brilliantly. But in the process, as Professor Osborn shows so well, the philosophical terms which he employs are turned inside out to become tools of Christian theology rather than relics of pagan wisdom.

Irenaeus spent much of his career battling the various so-called ‘gnostics’ who can perhaps best be described as people who were trying to merge Christianity and secular philosophy but who only succeeded in demonstrating how inadequate the latter was for expressing spiritual truth. By following the teaching of Scripture and especially its high christology, Irenaeus was able to demonstrate how only the incarnation of the Son of God could make sense of the links between heaven and earth which the gnostics were trying to explain by their own curious inventions. Anyone who thinks that Christian orthodoxy was the product of fourth-century in-fighting must read this book, because Professor Osborn shows quite clearly that Irenaeus based his entire system on precisely that orthodoxy. Everything that exists finds its ultimate meaning in Christ, and this is the logic which undergirds Irenaeus’ famous doctrine of reconciliation, which Professor Osborn expounds at great length. Yet, as he goes on to add, none of this makes any sense without the fourth ingredient, which is participation.

The difference between Christianity and any form of Greek philosophy is that the latter was theory, whereas the former was (and is) life itself. The mind of God is not there simply to be contemplated and enjoyed, those things are both possible and important. Rather, its chief purpose is to invite us to participate in God, by knowing his mind and by entering into dialogue with him. Again, the incarnation is the model, and every believer shares in that to some degree. Spirit and matter are not in conflict, but cooperate to make God’s glory known in every part of his creation. Nothing is hidden from the light or cut off from the love of God, and even the manifestation of the divine judgment on sin and evil is but a revelation of that love and that light at work.

Professor Osborn has produced a stimulating book which will be of great benefit to all who read it. No doubt other scholars will have reservations about this or that, and some of Professor Osborn’s judgments may be modified over time, but on the whole this work seems destined to become a classic in its field, and it is unlikely to be replaced for a very long time, if ever.

GERALD BRAY

INVITATION TO THE SEPTUAGINT K H Jobes and M Silva
 Carlisle: Paternoster 2000 351pp £17.99 hb ISBN:1-84227-061-3

This is an unusual and outstanding book. When did we last see Evangelical scholars devoting serious study to the Septuagint (LXX), the Old Greek translation of the

Old Testament? No-one recent springs to mind except David Gooding. Yet the Septuagint is an extraordinarily important work, both as an ancient interpretation of the Old Testament and as background to the New Testament, which is considerably influenced by it and frequently quotes it. The Protestant conviction of Jerome's wisdom in giving primacy to the *Hebraica veritas* ought not to have resulted in a neglect of this secondary but none-the-less very important authority. Yet it has. All credit to the authors of this book for standing against the trend.

They have produced a work which is learned and up-to-date with the latest scholarship, and yet is accessible to beginners. Each chapter starts with a clear summary of its contents, elementary explanations of terms and issues are frequently included, helpful examples are given of the points made, the book is illustrated, and there is a glossary. At the same time, the most difficult problems are not shunned, and scholarly questions which are still under investigation (like textual criticism or the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls) are made the subject of interim reports. There is a survey of previous work in the field, especially since the mid-nineteenth century, there is advice about editions and scholarly tools, and the later Greek translations (notably those of Theodotion, Aquila and Symmachus) are not neglected. It is satisfying to see that the recent of the old theory of a larger Alexandrian Jewish canon, including the Apocrypha, are taken for granted.

I hope this excellent book reaches a second edition, and I have a few small suggestions to the authors if it does. It is by no means certain that the Letter of Aristeas is the oldest account of the translation of the LXX Pentateuch (p 33). The fragments of Aristobulus, now that their genuineness has been re-established, may well be older. (The name of Humphrey Hody, who as long ago as 1684 disproved the authenticity of the Letter of Aristeas, deserves a mention, incidentally.) The Samaritikon is referred to (p 42), but without any explanation that this was probably the Greek translation of the Pentateuch made for the use of Samaritans. It is stated that 1 Esdras is not part of the Hebrew canon (p 78), ignoring the possibility that it may be a free and interpolated translation of Ezra, similar to the Old Greek version of Daniel or LXX Esther. It is somewhere said that in the Septuagint the Minor Prophets precede the Major Prophets, but, though this is generally true, it does not apply to Codex Sinaiticus. The authors might also consider including references to passages where the Septuagint bears witness to an older Jewish tradition of interpretation than the Massoretic pointing, such as Psalm 22:16 and Daniel 9:25.

ROGER BECKWITH

OPERATION WORLD **Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk**
Carlisle: Paternoster 2001 798pp £14.99 pb ISBN 1-85078-357-8

First published in 1974, this great world prayer guide is now in its sixth and most comprehensive edition. For the first time it is also possible to purchase a CD which gives far more detailed information that can be reworked for future use. This may well be the last edition from Patrick Johnstone and we are thankful to him. Like the compilers of concordances, people of rare gifts are needed to continue such a work.

The world is fascinating, maps and statistics intrigue us, but in the aspect of the expansion of Christianity these subjects are inexhaustible. To such a picture Operation World adds the dimension of prayer showing both how prayers have been answered and what challenges meet us now.

For most of us this book will be as near as we will ever come before Glory to a world tour. In it we meet the Pygmies—we read that churches are growing among this despised people—what a rebuke to apostate Britain. Only the Lord knows who are his so no system of classification will be perfect but the authors are careful to explain with what sense they use the terms such as ‘Christian’ and ‘Evangelical’. As the success of the gospel must have encouraged the downtrodden reader of Acts, so the church abroad can inspire the West.

The subtitle of Operation World is ‘When We Pray God Works.’ It has always been so. On Psalm 10:17 ‘Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:’ the Puritan, Thomas Watson, said simply, ‘prayer sets God to work.’

We may not agree that the spread of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement is an answer to our prayers (p 5), or with the logic of the ‘peoples group’ approach of the Joshua Project (p 6). We do agree with the use of Mark 16:15 (p 7) so whilst ‘the selection of agencies mentioned is not intended to be a mark of validation or rejection,’ we do hope that the next edition will include the more conservative bible societies who cast no doubt on this text.

We all have much to pray for but don’t pray enough. Operation World inspires us to pray far more—to which all good Calvinists and Puritans will say ‘Amen’.

PETER RATCLIFFE

REBUILDING THE MATRIX Science and Faith in the 21st Century
Denis Alexander
 Oxford: Lion 2001 510 pp £20.00 hb ISBN 0 7459 12443

This book is nothing short of brilliant. It is one of the most well researched, well argued and clearly presented volumes on the relationship between science and the Christian faith that has been written in recent years. It is a mine of information and clears away much of the fog which surrounds this subject. The basic thesis of the book is that modern science was conceived in a theological womb—that of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. This gave both a firm epistemological base from which to operate and also the proper ethical motivation—as stewards in God’s world we are mandated to enquire into the workings of that world for God’s glory and humankind’s benefit. This, of course, has been acknowledged for many years by Christians and non-Christians alike.

What Dr Alexander does is to provide ample and fascinating documentation to show how this was the case, why science and Christianity became pitted against each other—the so called ‘conflict thesis’ and how, if science is not to run into the sand, not least because of the onslaughts of postmodernism, serious consideration should be given once again to the theistic world view which launched and shaped modern science in the first place.

The author begins not by considering the scientific enterprise ‘head on’ but by way of a more general consideration of why we believe what we believe. He shows how many of the things we believe we are practically unaware of, they are unquestionable ‘givens’ which form part of our mental furniture. What is particularly interesting is the way in which some of these ‘paradigms’ we tacitly accept are composed of myths which are regarded as fact. For example, it is now part of scientific folklore that pre-scientific people of the medieval period can be referred to as ‘flat-earthists’. This is now a term of abuse used to designate anyone whose views conflict with a so called modern scientific outlook. This is focused in the alleged debate which took place between Christopher Columbus and the doubting clerics at the council of Salamander. Columbus argues that the earth is round, the clerics that it is flat. This has no basis whatsoever in history. Columbus’s sailors, like everyone else in the West, believed that the earth was round—it was basic Aristotelian philosophy.

The mythology of the ‘great debate’ between Columbus and the church came to

be disseminated in popular thought by Washington Irving in 1828! It was pure fabrication. Such mythology was useful, however, to forward the programme of some who wished to portray science and faith as being at loggerheads. The same is true of the infamous Oxford debate between ‘Soapy’ Sam Wilberforce and T H Huxley. Wilberforce, like many of his fellow clergy were amateur ‘natural philosophers’ (the self designated term used before the term ‘scientist’ was coined by another ‘scientific’ clergyman—William Whewell in 1834). Wilberforce mainly challenged Darwin’s ideas on scientific, rather than theological grounds. In fact many churchman, including Frederick Temple who was also at the British Association meeting in Oxford, welcomed and espoused Darwin’s ideas as being compatible with the Christian faith and underscoring the belief that God is moment by moment actively involved in his world through the natural processes.

As well as giving some critical insights into the history of science—often setting the record straight, Dr Alexander surveys the present scene with critical aplomb. The overreaching claims of scientism as well as those of creationism (young earth creation science) are scrutinised and both are shown to be severely wanting. Alexander claims, and to the reviewer’s satisfaction at least, demonstrates, that evolutionary theory per se is both theologically and morally neutral and fits in with either a theistic or non-theistic world view. The question of miracles and whether science is able to comment on them is discussed in some depth and the need to develop a science with a human face is the subject of the last chapter.

At a time when there is a tendency to engage in ‘science bashing’, with Christians unthinkingly joining in, it is refreshing to have a book which is non-polemical, judicious and a delight to read. Even if one does not have a scientific background, that is no barrier to gaining much from this splendid book. The size and price might deter some people. That would be a pity, there is so much here that any serious student of science and Christianity will find which will be of immense benefit. This is a book I shall go back to again and again.

MELVIN TINKER

JESUS THE SEER

Ben Witherington III

Peabody: Hendrickson 1999 427pp hb np ISBN:1-56563-344-X

Witherington is an accomplished evangelical New Testament scholar from the USA. Among his earlier books was one called *Jesus the Sage*, in which he traced the development of Wisdom literature from its Old Testament roots,

through the inter-testamental examples, to its consummation in Jesus. In Jesus the Seer, he has now done the same with prophecy.

Jesus is called a prophet in the New Testament quite often, he frequently quotes Old Testament prophecy, and his coming was accompanied by a new outburst of prophecy among his forerunners and followers. So the book has a real and worthwhile theme.

There is also much to commend in the way the theme is treated. The author is learned and judicious, though it is surprising that he does not make something of the revelation of Jesus as the Word of God, and the prologue to St John's Gospel does not anywhere seem to be quoted.

What seems most questionable about the book, however, is that the author does not keep even written prophecy within canonical boundaries. He sees it as extending without break from 1600 BC to AD 300. One wonders why he even ends it at that point, for if one is to ignore the evidence of 1 Maccabees and Josephus and the rabbis that prophecy ceased in the inter-testamental period, and the judgment of the early church that Hermas and the Montanists were not true prophets, why should any prophetic claims be rejected at any period?

Modern evangelicals tend to get themselves into this dilemma by identifying pseudonymous apocalyptic with true prophecy, and they are led to do that by accepting, in the interests of academic respectability or whatever, the critical consensus that Daniel is pseudonymous. If they were willing to subject that 'assured result' to a truly critical inspection, they would find that it was never very well grounded and that more and more evidence has recently been accumulating against it.

ROGER BECKWITH

DEUTERONOMY: The Commands of a Covenant God

(Focus on the Bible)

Allan M. Harman

Fearn Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2001 288 pp £7.99 pb

ISBN 1 85792 665X

Allan Harman has written a fine exposition of Deuteronomy. He places the book in its literary, canonical and historical contexts without compromising evangelical convictions about Scripture. The emphasis is on explanation, with

Christian applications restricted to those explicit in the New Testament.

In less than two dozen pages, Harman introduces the book of Deuteronomy in relation to the rest of the Pentateuch and the Old Testament, and goes on to summarise main themes. This is a brilliant example of introduction. Harman analyses the structure of Deuteronomy in the light of contemporary covenant treaties, and following the work of Kline. He shows that the covenant document which God makes with Israel has an historical prologue, a statement of the covenant basis, an explanation of that basis, and makes provision for the continuation of the covenant. The laws in the central section (chs 6-26) can be grouped into ten sections, one for each of the Ten Words that form the basis of the Covenant treaty with Israel.

The commentary proper deals with the text in short sections of a few verses each. Hebrew is transliterated, references to English versions are most often to the NIV text. As Harman was involved in the NKJV translation of Deuteronomy, this is sometimes suggested as a better alternative. The connectedness of the text emerges from the treatment, helped along by cross-references to other parts of the commentary. A particular delight are the tools Harman brings to bear from time to time: a word study here, a comment on the wider biblical background there, a reference to the archaeological background somewhere else. These are gems, and models of the judicious use of critical tools to shed light on God's word. Cross-references to other parts of the Bible set this author apart from non-evangelical commentators: all the important New Testament quotations and allusions are mentioned in the commentary, and New Testaments passages are allowed to act as interpretative controls. In dealing with later Old Testament mentions of Deuteronomic themes Harman has a sure touch and wears his learning lightly. Books for further reading are listed at the end on one page, and the commentary ends with an index of selected subjects. One wishes the latter were longer and had included Hebrew word-studies and other nuggets buried in the comment.

Explicit applications for Christian learning and living are relatively few. The New Testament writers applied several themes and quotations from Deuteronomy to Christian living, and Harman is content to rest with those. Never is this a dry book, however, because the willing reader encounters the living God through opening the biblical text. Highly recommended.

ED MOLL

THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS Leigh Churchill

Carlisle Paternoster 2001 273pp £9.99 pb ISBN 1-84227-080-X

THE BIRTH OF EUROPE Leigh Churchill

Carlisle Paternoster 2001 285pp £9.99 pb ISBN 1-84227-081-8

As your household gathers around the breakfast table each morning for prayer and Bible reading, why not throw in a chapter of Eusebius or Lactantius? At your next evangelistic initiative with young people, why not try out. Sozomen, Theodoret or Bede? Usually the works of these historians are left in the basement to gather dust, their pages unread and often uncut, dismissed as irrelevant by today's mission-minded Christians. Yet it is Leigh Churchill's conviction that recounting tales from church history can be a powerful evangelistic tool and an inspiration to whole-hearted service of God. He believes the church is weaker because we are largely oblivious to God's acts over the last 2000 years.

These two volumes provide lively summaries of key events and personalities from the first millennium of the church, from Pentecost to the conversion of Russia. We meet missionaries and martyrs, godly theologians and heretics, mad emperors and prayerful monks. God is shown to be at work in the ecumenical council and on the battlefield, in blessing and judgment. We read about God guiding, testing and protecting his people, and his use of hailstorms, earthquakes and tidal waves to bring about his purposes. There are numerous examples of zealous Christians for us to imitate but also numerous warnings about the dangers of corruption and hypocrisy within the church. Churchill's style is fast-moving and easy to read, aimed at bright teenagers or adults who want a very simple introduction to church history. A further two volumes are anticipated, to bring the story up to date.

Churchill's approach is not without its difficulties. The nature of his project means that he relies upon early histories without interpreting them. Yet a biblical Christian cannot simply take these historians at face value, without questioning their theological presuppositions and historical bias. The worldview of Eusebius or Bede was not identical with that of the Bible - they regurgitate much dubious folk tradition and write with a specific political agenda. Churchill does exercise some discretion when following them. For instance, we hear about King Oswald but not that his arm was kept 'incorrupt'

at Bamburgh—we are told about Aidan but not that his soul was seen being carried up to heaven by a band of angels. Elsewhere we are warned that the fantastical travels of Brendan are ‘legend rather than history’ (vol 2 p 146) and that Columba’s clash with the Loch Ness Monster is merely ‘reported’ (vol 2 p 152). Nevertheless, Churchill recounts many other bizarre ‘miracles’ as if they are certainly true. What is the biblical Christian to make of the walls of Caesarea ‘weeping’ at the sight of persecution or Bishop Lawrence waking to find deep lash marks across his back, having been whipped by the Apostle Peter in a dream? What are we to make of visions of martyrs, shining crosses and pillars of fire in the sky, or Martin of Tours meeting in the street with the devil incarnate? An explanation of the caution we need when assessing these accounts would have been valuable.

ANDREW ATHERSTONE

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

Origen

Translated by Thomas P Scheck

Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press Two volumes:
 Vol I (Books 1–5) 2001 411 pp £33.95 hb ISBN 0-8182-0103-9
 Vol 2 (Books 6–10) 2002 340 pp £33.50 hb ISBN 0-8182-0104-7

The Greek original having been lost except for a few fragments, this English translation is from the Latin one made in AD 406/7 by Rufinus. In its Latin version, it is Origen’s only commentary extant in a form coherent from its beginning to its end, and exerted a great influence on later Christian thought. In this Commentary, Origen did not forcefully impose his own views on the thought of the apostle Paul but made a humble interpretation of it and invited readers to think for themselves.

The Commentary contains material of interest to many kinds of scholars. Feminists will be delighted to find statements that women were reckoned among the clergy. Ethicists and moral theologians will find a wealth of explanations and particularizations of the Christian virtues mentioned in Romans 12 and 13. Protestants interested in the Calvinist doctrines of unconditional election, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints, should look at Origen’s thoughts on these beliefs. Other readers will want to take in Origen’s discussion and study of the several meanings of ‘law’ and ‘spirit’ in Paul and the Old Testament, while others may wish to examine his harmonizing of gospel and law. Also of interest are Origen’s definitions of

many words in Scripture and explanations of the difference between them. On the other hand, scholars interested in the Alexandrian school of allegorical exegesis will be disappointed because there are surprisingly few examples of this method in the commentary.

As with Rufinus's other translations of Origen's work, scholars dispute whether he accurately represented the original. Such misgivings are compounded by the fact that the Latin is only one-half the length of the Greek. Although a defender of Rufinus, the English translator (Thomas P. Scheck) admits that Rufinus omitted large portions of text, altered passages he thought heterodox, modified the Commentary to meet the needs of Latin readers of his own time (one hundred and sixty years after the original was written), spoke with his own voice, simplified the Commentary's difficult concepts, covered over difficulties, and worked from a standpoint different from Origen's. Nevertheless, Mr Scheck shows in his 'Introduction' and in footnotes throughout both volumes how Rufinus accurately represented Origen's thought and that in the extant text we have Origen's interpretations rather than Rufinus's. Throughout his translation Mr Scheck adequately deals with the contrary opinions of some modern critics.

Mr Scheck's erudition makes him a worthy translator. The footnotes reveal his impressive intensive and extensive grasp of the Bible (including the Septuagint and the Old Latin Version), his thorough knowledge of the correspondence between the Greek and Latin meanings of several words and phrases, and his great acquaintance with other writings of Origen and of other early church fathers. Mr Scheck also makes a contribution to scholarship which facilitates cross-referencing and consulting the Latin text: he has inserted at the relevant points in his translation the Migne chapter numbers in brackets; it is desirable that this feature be copied in other translations.

DAVID W T BRATTSTON

JOHN STOTT: A GLOBAL MINISTRY Timothy Dudley-Smith
Leicester IVP 2001 238 pp £14.99 hb ISBN 0-85111-983-2

To many of my vintage John Stott has been both mentor and friend. The cover and title of this second volume of his biography has its own message. To see an ageing John Stott dominating a stormy sea is a parable. His Global Ministry is not just in terms of the thousands of miles travelled but the influence he has

had on the Christian world over the past half century. There have been, and still are, choppy seas and John has stood resolute in them all.

For myself John's link with Keswick is an interesting thread in the book. At that age old Convention his exposition of Romans 5-8 was a great defining moment. His relationship with Reform is a little more ambiguous. I guess his irenic spirit has found the more belligerent note of Reform a little uncomfortable. Reading one of his latest books on evangelical unity leaves some tinge of sorrow in that we are still striving for it.

From these pages emerges the genuine picture of a man which is awe inspiring. His extraordinary discipline, his willingness to travel many miles and deliver endless addresses, his remarkable memory for people, his powerful intellect and his simple life-style shine out from this remarkable story.

It would, however, be wrong to suggest that this remarkable man is anything less than thoroughly human. I was delighted to discover his love for chocolate and, though am utterly unimpressed by his zeal for the snowy owl, I am so glad that he had time for such relaxation and I found a little gem when he was busy repenting over an orgy of self pity!

It is intriguing to ponder how an autobiography might have been written. My guess is that there would have been a sense of what might have been. We may thank God for the providence that saved John from becoming a bishop but we are right to ask serious questions about a church which can manage without such a man being very much at the top end of leadership within the denomination. This book should be read as not just the story of a man but reflections on the church which he has sought to serve so faithfully. The Church of England Evangelical Council, which was very much his baby, has not always fulfilled the high expectations. It is poignant to read in the book of how another of my great mentors, Alan Stibbs, left an early meeting in tears because he saw the way things might be going.

Perhaps most obviously the tension point within this book is the saga of the National Evangelical Anglican Congress movement. One reviewer refers to 'the well hyped Keele' the wobbly Nottingham, and the lead balloon Caister'. This very significant attempt to be more pro-active as evangelicals within the Church of England was very dear to the heart of John Stott. Yet many would

now see the seeds of some of our present compromised evangelicalism within the movement from the earliest days. Some of us hope that NEAC 4 in 2003 might just redress the balance.

I personally have had many dealings with evangelicalism outside the Church of England and I know how much the events of 1966 still rankle. It was not only the year when England last won the World Cup at soccer; it was a time when John Stott and Dr. Lloyd Jones had their well publicised and controversial disagreement over evangelicals within the denominations. It is almost essential, having read Timothy Dudley-Smith's biography, to buy Iain Murray's book, 'Evangelicalism Divided', as a counter blast. There is a huge difference between the interpretations of that event. Suffice it to say that we are still living in the light of it and attempts to bring evangelicals together again are not always proving successful.

Inevitably John was involved in debate over controversial issues such as the charismatic movement, so painful to him in its early days at All Souls. There is the tension of John's involvement as a theological adviser to the World Council of Churches and the debates he had, with great courage, against Bishop Spong and in print with David Edwards. The whole issue of annihilation, which comes from the latter publication, has again created an aura of controversy around John.

But there are areas where there can be no doubts. We can rejoice that John found over the years an increasing balance between evangelistic outreach and social concern. The abiding influence of his many books will go on making his name long after he has gone to his eternal reward.

The title of this second volume indicates perhaps the most abiding work that John has done. His overseas tours became, increasingly, the centre of his crusade to encourage Christian leaders throughout the world to be built up in the faith, to be equipped for service. The fact that now we in the United Kingdom are low in the league tables of evangelical life is sad, but it is also a back-handed tribute to those who have ensured that the Third World is not only catered for socially but spiritually, not only economically but theologically. Perhaps that will be one of the greatest legacies John will leave to a very grateful world.

PHILIP HACKING

NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD**D M Lloyd-Jones**

Bridgend: Bryntirion Press 2002 80 pp £4.95 pb ISBN 1 85049 179 8

We first ask why have such a little book of only four sermons on Ephesians 6:10-13 when we already have many pages of Dr Lloyd-Jones on Ephesians in print? Quite simply the previous work dealt with the devil's attack on individuals, whereas this volume reminds us that the devil also operates worldwide by causing war, as well as through astrology, the occult and spiritism. It should serve as a help to those concerned about or fascinated by the witchcraft which is so heavily represented at present in novels, film and children's television.

Lloyd-Jones is frequently penetrating through his pithy phraseology. The devil's purpose is to produce lawlessness and chaos. He works on our pride causing greed and selfishness and leading to distrust and uncertainty. Why are there wars? It is because there are people like Cain. Totalitarian regimes are demonic.

Demonology includes things like fortune telling and extra-sensory-perception but these cannot be evaluated except by Scripture. Lloyd-Jones describes the phenomena of astrology, black magic and especially spiritism which he says took a major step forward in World War I when many wanted to hear from their dead. Spiritism however is evil, forbidden, anti-revelation and anti-Bible. It is against the true view of resurrection, denies final judgment, heaven and hell. It sees the afterlife as a continuation of this one.

The case of Saul (1 Sam 28:11-13) is against spiritism because Samuel was not called up by the woman, but appeared. The Transfiguration also is not to be understood as spiritism. Spiritism is not faith in God because it always wants to know what is going to happen. This criticism could also apply to charismatic prophecy and all who will not rest in faith today.

Lloyd Jones warns of the dangers of demon possession by mediums and those in 'churches of self-abandonment'. Prayer is a cure (as shown by Pastor Hsi), as is becoming a Christian. Lloyd-Jones believed in exorcism. Hitler mesmerised people and may have been devil-possessed. Devil possession was rampant at the time of Christ, then again under Rome in the middle ages. These sermons provide insight into phenomena that seem to be more common now as the British people reject God.

PETER RATCLIFFE