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REVIEWS

Directory of Women's Organisations and Groups

Lavinia J. Byrne (ed.)

Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, London, 1992;
104pp., £4.94; ISBN 0 851692 28 1

This book is a very useful guide to women's organisations and groups in churches and ecumenical bodies in Britain and Ireland. Here we see the wealth of women's contributions to church life and to social outreach gathered together for the first time since the first women's organisation, the YWCA, was founded in 1855. From the list a definite story emerges of women first of all getting together on a denominational basis, with newer groups gathering on an ecumenical or even political basis, and men nowadays being included as members of some of the more radical groups.

Each organisation lists its objectives, membership and publications as well as supplying contact addresses and telephone numbers. The Directory has been edited by Lavinia Byrne, Associate Secretary for the Community of Women and Men at CCBI. For me this will be much thumbed both as a resource book for tracing women's history as well as from the church history point of view.

Janet L. Watson, Glasgow Bible College

The Bush Still Burns: The Presbyterian and Reformed Faith in Australia, 1788-1988

Rowland S. Ward

Privately, 1989 (available from Author at 358 Mountain Highway, Wantirna, Victoria, 3152, Australia); 566pp., A\$25; ISBN 0 949670 05 7

Rowland Ward may not be well known in Scotland, but in Australia he is well published, having produced studies ranging from *Spiritual Gifts in the Apostolic Church* (1972) to his modernised edition of the Westminster Shorter Catechism with notes entitled *Learning the Christian Faith* (1981). He has the reputation of producing material carefully, even painstakingly researched. This present study will prove no exception.

The links with Scotland are clear. The author works through such topics as the ministers who transferred to Australia, the heritage of the Australian churches, and the Scots Presbyterians who began arriving in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In fact, like a golden thread running throughout the whole book is the theme of the constant interaction, especially in the early years, between the churches in Scotland and Australia. Like his study, the author too has his own links with Scotland. He was born in Melbourne, but trained for the ministry in

the Free Church College in Edinburgh. He now lives in the Melbourne suburbs, and pastors Knox Church in Wantirna.

This is a notable publication that should be of great value to students of both Australian and Scottish church history, especially to ministers and members of the small, conservative denomination Ward particularly deals with, namely the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, but also to any interested in Australian Presbyterianism, especially when one remembers that some 10% of the Australian population have a Presbyterian heritage.

Ward has given the book a wider appeal by the way he has set the history of the PCEA in the setting of the Reformed faith in Australia as a whole. The book can be read as a history of the expansion of the Reformed church in Australia since the late eighteenth century. It resulted from a commission given to Ward from the Synod of the PCEA. With this fully-detailed doctrinal and theological historical study, he has clearly filled a gap in Australian church history. For apart from State histories, which in most cases are very dated, no study of Australian Presbyterianism has in fact been published. It would be a shame if it becomes little more than a historical source book used by PCEA.

The author has been researching and writing in this field for more than a decade. At times it is heavy-going. Ward works minutely through the numerous doctrinal debates that occupied the church in Australia for many of the last 200 years. He includes quotations from contemporary sources, reproductions of the text of several important documents, and brief biographical and other details of 300 Presbyterian ministers who served in Australia prior to 1865, much of which has been carefully tabulated. All is helpfully illustrated by over sixty pictures, drawings and photographs. The thirty or so pages of contextual material concerning the Scottish Presbyterian roots were found useful, well-placed and helpfully succinct. There are also substantial bibliographies and indexes.

Michael D. McMullen, Aberdeen

The Work of Christ

Robert Letham

IVP, Leicester, 1993; 284pp., £12.95; ISBN 0 85110891 7

This book ought to be required reading for all church leaders. The book is the first in a series called 'Contours of Christian Theology', which aims 'not merely to answer current objections to evangelical Christianity, but also to rework the orthodox evangelical position in a fresh and compelling way'. I found that this volume both fired my heart and inspired my mind, and the rest of the series should be worth waiting for – particularly as it is in the creative and capable hands of Gerald Bray as series editor.

My first thought was that the title was rather well-worn and found wanting. Letham takes this up on his first page: "The Work of Christ",

limp as the phrase sounds, actually stands for the most significant realities we can ever face.' What follows is a review of and reflection upon the development of the doctrine (especially pages 24-37), and an exposition of biblical material (under the three-fold office of Prophet, Priest and King). Throughout, Letham does not fail to engage issues of contemporary relevance. In discussing the kingdom of God, he states: 'The work of God in our salvation extends to the renewal of society and the cosmos.' He is positive and balanced in his assessment of liberation theology (especially pages 62-66) and the work of Jürgen Moltmann. He is cautious in his estimation of recent attempts at rapprochement between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The discussion of different theories of the nature of the atonement is helpful. On penal substitution, Letham writes that 'problems arise when the atonement is analysed in detachment from the frame of reference that the Bible gives it'. This theory is about the essence of the atonement but does not exhaust its meaning.

I felt that the author was at his weakest in too often dismissing theological arguments in short space, and wished that he had developed the problem of structural sin. In making telling criticism of liberation theologians, Letham confesses that 'corporate and social sin is a major factor that the church has too long neglected'. If the sin that Christ died to put away is more than personal morality and the careless use of Christ's environment, how do we expect to see transformation of the social and political arenas?

There is an excellent appendix on the intent of the atonement. He attempts to resolve the problem of the extent and efficacy of the cross with the analogy of the wave and particle theories of light. 'No single system can be both comprehensive and consistent', and 'we can expect loose ends to exist in any human belief system.'

The book contains 18 pages of notes, 3 pages of suggestions for further reading and indexes for biblical references, subjects and names. I suspect that this will enhance its overall value as a reference book, but hope that many will buy it for the text, which is both conservative and creative, and for the most part convincing.

Robert Calvert, St Mark's Church of Scotland, Drumchapel

The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought

David A. Weir

Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990; 244pp., £27.50; ISBN 0 19 826690 1

The study of the history of post-Reformation dogmatics is an interpretive battleground these days. and David Weir has entered into this fray with *The Origins of the Federal Theology*. Many serious questions have been asked on the subject of the 'innovations' of the scholastic descendants of

Genevan theology, one sub-plot of which is the development of covenant or federal theology – a story which is interesting and important in its own right. Exactly what constitutes a fully-developed covenant theology? What are its distinguishing marks? Why did it evolve? In what sense, if at all, can Calvin be called a covenant theologian? Was the first covenant theologian Cocceius, or did federal theology originate in Zurich with Bullinger? Is covenant theology a reaction to or the invention of ‘high Calvinism’ (or both!)? Is covenant theology the creation of the Puritans? Is it an improvement on Calvin’s theology or an ‘Arminianising’ regression? Weir does not answer all these questions (nor does he attempt to), but his presentation has clarity, specificity, and plausibility which is lacking in the proposals of many of his forerunners.

The central thesis of this book is that ‘the prelapsarian “covenant of works” or “covenant of nature” is the key identifying feature of the federal theology’, and that the origins of this federal theology are to be found in the Palatinate during 1560-90 in two stages: first, through the suggestion of Ursinus (in response to controversy around the sovereignty of God and Adam’s Fall), and then through the writings of Olevianus, Cartwright, Fenner, and Junius during 1584-90. Hence, the origins of federal theology are to be located in Heidelberg, not Geneva.

Weir’s contribution to the historiography of covenant theology is to be welcomed on a number of counts. First, despite the extensive treatment given to the subject in journal articles, there have been few attempts to provide an overview of the development of the covenant theology in a monograph. Second, in spite of the attention devoted to the subject, many myths still abound in scholarly circles concerning the rise of covenant divinity; Professor Weir will lay some of them to rest. Third, many of Weir’s assertions will provoke new discussion of the role of federal theology in the Reformed tradition, for they are by no means beyond dispute. Apart from any other considerations, these commend this work to Reformation and post-Reformation scholars for serious analysis.

Nevertheless, there are deficiencies in the work which limit its usefulness. Weir often makes important claims without argument (e.g. ‘we have established the fact that the identifying feature of the federal theology is the prelapsarian covenant of works’; he has in fact only asserted it). Perhaps this is due to the brevity of this work (only 159 pages of text, minus appendix and index). He also assumes conventional views of post-Reformation theological development (Armstrong, Kendall, Rolston, J.B. Torrance) without adequately interacting with the more recent criticisms of these interpretations by Muller, Woolsey and others. Furthermore, his over-emphasis on the distinguishing role of the prelapsarian covenant and his recourse to the covenantal conditionality/unconditionality theme are misleading, and will divert attention from important Calvinian contributions to the development of federal theology.

Weir's treatment of this enormous (and still largely unexplored subject) is terse, and hence sometimes cryptic (the reader frequently wishes that he would expand his discussion). Clearly, this is reading for specialists, but his introduction will quickly brief the student on the current literature and arguments surrounding the development of federal theology. The appendix includes a bibliography of works (primary and secondary) important for the history of covenant theology, arranged in chronological order from 1690 to 1989. However, the list is not exhaustive and omits some significant literature. It will provide a good starting point for those just beginning their studies in this field. Scholars desiring a more comprehensive inventory may consult Andrew A. Woolsey's superb bibliography in *Unity and Continuity in Covenant Thought: A Study in the Reformed Tradition to the Westminster Assembly* (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1988).

Whatever the weaknesses of the work, Weir argues with a restraint, precision and persuasiveness that have eluded many authors on this subject, and he has given the scholarly community a proposal worth arguing about. We look forward with anticipation to the series which the author has forecast on this same subject.

J. Ligon Duncan III, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS

The Genetic Revolution: Today's Dream... Tomorrow's Nightmare?

Patrick Dixon

Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne, 1993; 253pp., £6.99; ISBN 0 86065 871 6

Patrick Dixon is the founder and medical director of the leading national and international AIDS agency ACET. In the course of his work he has closely followed the progress in gene technology made over the last few years. *The Genetic Revolution* aims to provide an introduction to such technology so that the reader can begin to face the 'urgent ethical dilemmas' raised by the recent advances.

Dixon appears to address his book to the reasonably well-informed non-Christian or Christian reader. However, in the first two chapters of the book he gives an introduction to the subject for those unfamiliar with the science of genetics. Dixon then looks at the facts, first of all as a doctor, and secondly as a church leader with a biblical perspective. Subjects covered include human cloning; genetically altered foods; gene technology and medicine; the risks and benefits, and the rights and wrongs of genetic engineering. In the final chapter he sets out a 'Ten-Point Gene Charter', as a starting-point for 'consumers, theologians, commercial and political leaders' to discuss the implications of what he calls, 'the most powerful scientific revolution in the history of human discovery, with the power to change every aspect of our lives and even to change irreversibly the nature of human life itself'. Dixon ends his book

with a call for urgent public debate, followed by effective international regulation to ensure that 'we take control of advancing gene technology before it takes control of us'.

The Genetic Revolution provides a comprehensive guide to the progress in, and possibilities of, the recent advances in gene technology. Dixon has read extensively and provides over 400 footnotes quoting relevant scientific papers and press reports. Also included in the appendices are a list of useful addresses, a glossary of terms, further reading, plus an extract from the submission to the British Medical Association by the Christian Medical Fellowship on genetic engineering.

On the whole this is a readable and extremely thought-provoking book, though for the lay person with no prior knowledge of genetics, it could prove to be a little inaccessible. Dixon's treatment of the subject is very thorough, sometimes too thorough, even for someone like myself with a background in genetics. Perhaps if a little more space had been given to the discussion of the ethical issues and implications and a little less to the technical details of current advances, *The Genetic Revolution* would prove to be a more effective resource for the average reader than in its current form.

Christine Gore, All Souls Church, London

The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World: The Influence of Calvin on Five Governments from the 16th Through 18th Centuries

Douglas F. Kelly

P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 1992; 156pp., n.p.;
ISBN 0 87552 297 1

Throughout his ministry Calvin showed a very real concern for political issues on both a theoretical and practical level. The theology developed by Calvin and its implications and varied outworkings have played a major role in shaping the Western world. Kelly examines church-state relations in five different localities over a three-century period to show the impact and development of Calvin's thought on civil government.

Calvin's Geneva, Huguenot France, Knox's Scotland, Puritan England and Colonial America provide the historical localities for the development of this area of thought. Apart from its usefulness as a work examining questions still important to us today, this book also provides a helpful example of how a doctrine grows, develops and adapts according to differing social and cultural influences. Kelly moves from Calvin, who is rightly described as Constantinian and medieval, all the way through to the American revolutionaries who established a nation where church and state are constitutionally separated. Within a relatively small compass we are provided with an overview which opens avenues of further thought and study. All the names are here, from Hotman to Witherspoon, with

the shifts in understanding chronicled accurately. As a description of theological development Kelly makes a very useful contribution to our studies of this subject.

A more in-depth analysis, however, would not have gone astray. The importance of covenant within the Scottish theological and political understanding is correctly emphasised and Knox is seen as an important stage on the road from Calvin to Buchanan and Althusius. Unfortunately there is little to explain the move from the covenant concept to that of political rights theorists. Likewise we have here chronicled, but not explained, the shift from Calvin's natural law theory to the Puritan 'Calvinist' rejection of natural law theology.

There are points where Kelly's analysis is open to discussion. Too much stress is placed upon the formation of presbyteries in the colonies as entities from which power flowed upwards; historical necessity is not the same as philosophical design. The Congregationalists' 'civil contract' was a much greater influence on colonial political thought. Despite these mild strictures this book is to be recommended as a primer for those interested in Calvinist political theory.

There are seeds planted for further thought as we come to examine our present society in the light of what has happened. We may happily have rid ourselves of the Stuarts, but how are we to understand and react to 'the crown in Parliament', which in the English tradition holds an almost unchallenged power? Religious liberty is seen as a mainstay of personal civil liberty; what does this have to say to us who live in an increasingly pluralistic society?

Campbell Campbell-Jack, Munloch, Ross-shire

Judgement and Promise. An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah

J.G. McConville

Apollos, Leicester; Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, IN, 1993; 208pp., £12.95; ISBN 0 85111 431 8

McConville distinguishes between two approaches to the study of the book of Jeremiah. The first one begins with fragments, phrases and words in the text. It proceeds to relate them somehow and so to construct an understanding of the book. He believes that this approach characterises some of the recent commentaries on the book, such as those of Carroll and McKane. McConville favours an alternative approach to the book in which he proposes to examine the major sections of the book in sequence and to discover general themes which can be traced through the book.

McConville divides the book into three parts. Chapters 1-24 trace Jeremiah's abandonment of the hope that God's judgement against Israel can be averted. Thus the city and temple will be destroyed and the nation will be deported. Chapters 25-45 describe a hope based on God's gracious act of redemption which will follow the judgement. The people of God

will continue to exist beyond the exile. Chapters 46 to the end explain how the divine redemption of God's people also brings judgement for those who oppose them, even judgement upon the great city of Babylon.

An important part of McConville's analysis is the way in which he demonstrates the distinctive nature of Jeremiah, its unique contribution to the theology of the Bible. He does this in two ways. First, he separates this book of Jeremiah from what scholars refer to as the Deuteronomistic history. The Deuteronomistic history includes much of the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. It is characterised by a distinctive vocabulary and theological emphasis. The latter is concerned to explain how the destruction of Jerusalem came about as a result of God's judgement upon the nation and its leadership for their sin. Scholars have linked the Deuteronomistic history with the book of Jeremiah, where they claim to find similar vocabulary and theology. McConville argues that Jeremiah is best distinguished from the Deuteronomistic history. He notes important differences between the two: Josiah is hardly mentioned in Jeremiah and his concern for cult centralisation in Jerusalem receives no mention by the prophet; Jeremiah is nowhere mentioned in the Deuteronomistic history; and the Deuteronomistic history does not look to the coming redemption, but ends with God's judgement in the exile, while Jeremiah emphasises a future redemption.

Having separated Jeremiah from the Deuteronomistic history, McConville then focuses on the relationship of the book to earlier prophets. In particular he studies Hosea and finds there similar themes of repentance and of a return from the exile after God's judgement. Both Hosea and the book of Jeremiah focus on the return as an act of God's grace.

McConville succeeds in identifying important themes which tie the book together. On this basis alone he can rightly argue his case for a Jeremiah distinct from the Deuteronomistic history. A book of this size cannot deal with the detailed linguistic data which have been used to argue for the relationship. Nor can it cover all the important theological issues such as the apologetic nature of Jeremiah's confessions or the struggle of Jeremiah to demonstrate that he is a true prophet. These need to be addressed before the arguments of post-exilic Deuteronomistic redactions can be laid to rest. However, students, teachers and preachers of Jeremiah will find here an appreciation of the prophet's life and message which is both theologically perceptive and holistic.

Richard S. Hess, Glasgow Bible College

Articles on Calvin and Calvinism, vol. 7: The Organizational Structure of Calvin's Theology
Articles on Calvin and Calvinism, vol. 11: Calvin's Thought on Economic and Social Issues and the Relationship of Church and State

Edited by R.C. Gamble

Garland Publishing, New York and London, 1992; 385pp. and 247pp., \$57 and \$48; ISBN 0 8153 1084 X and 0 8153 1052 8

These two volumes form part of a series of fourteen books produced under the auspices of the Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, to gather together a significant quantity of English-language articles on Calvin. Placed end to end, the series will no doubt prove a tremendous source of help to those whose libraries do not possess the relevant journals and could not otherwise hope to rectify this deficiency.

The topics covered in these two books focus on Calvin's approach to the problematic relationship of reason and revelation in the theological task and upon various social and cultural problems encountered during his reforming career. These include not only discussion of Calvin's teaching on church and state, but also the implications of his teaching for subjects such as social action and aesthetics. As the editorial policy has been to gather articles for their thematic content rather than their particular interpretation of Calvin, the reader should not expect to find the views expressed to be mutually compatible. Indeed, it is one of the delights of books such as these that radically differing opinions are juxtaposed, forcing the reader to think through the issues and making it painfully obvious that the interpretation of Calvin is likely to remain a highly contentious area of debate.

One good example of this is provided by the classic problem of the knowledge of God. In volume 7, the reader is treated to a number of contradictory interpretations of this aspect of Calvin's thought, from those of Gerald Postema, who does not appear to this reviewer to make a sufficiently clear distinction between natural theology and general revelation, to those of T.F. Torrance who reads Calvin through the spectacles of Barth. Which side, if any, wins is for the reader to decide.

In such an eclectic collection, it is difficult to single out one article as being of particular merit. However, Nicholas Wolterstorff's article in volume 11, 'The Wounds of God: Calvin's Theology of Social Injustice', was, for me, a particularly stimulating piece. In this article, the author, an eminent philosopher of religion, attempts to use Calvin's theology of man as the image of God as a basis for uniting aesthetics and social ethics. The result is both intellectually interesting and practically

challenging as an example of making the biblical, Reformed tradition relevant to the needs of the world today.

It is certain that many will find these books an excellent source of scholarly thinking about Calvin, and that the material they contain will continue to fuel interest in the Reformed tradition in general.

Carl R. Trueman, Department of Theology, University of Nottingham

Pilgrim Theology: Taking the Path of Theological Discovery

Michael Bauman

Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992; 232pp., \$12.99; ISBN 0 310 58531 7

Written by that rare creature, a theologian who is not afraid of letting it be obvious that he enjoys doing theology, this book is of use not just to the student about to begin studies but also to those of us who have grown settled in our theological patterns. Bauman attempts to point out the difference between a fortress theology and a pilgrim theology, and in doing so makes a plea for continual theological education rather than theological indoctrination.

Fortress theology is that which sees its function as the defence of a particular settled doctrinal understanding, be it that of denomination or theological party. Such theologians are dangerous, especially when they wear the garb of the truly Reformed and evangelical. A careful reading of this enjoyable book will help us to recognise and resist nonsense in all its forms, especially when pronounced by our own theological gurus. Throughout the book Bauman follows the admirable, and safe, principle of 'No names, no pack drill'. This however gives the added enjoyment of trying to identify the targets of his shafts, that is until we realise the book is as much a mirror as a spotlight.

Bauman defines the proper work of theology in the following manner, 'Theologizing is faith and understanding coming to grips with reality in order to produce a Christian mind (and character) that knows the truth about things, and because it knows the truth about things is liberated from the shackles of error and sham.' Pilgrim theology, or theology which is always exploring, testing, journeying onward, is marked by intense biblicism, methodological suspicion, and theological tolerance.

The book is split into four sections. Theological method; Theology proper, Christology and Spirituality; Hermeneutics; and Political Theology; with additional chapters on ethics, history and eschatology. It will be a rare reader who finds him or herself in agreement with Bauman throughout, but he is a writer who encourages and stimulates to fresh thought. The reader is instructed, challenged and even provoked, but never, never bored.

As well as making a valuable point which should be accepted by all who are serious about doing theology, Bauman does sterling service by

reminding us that theology is not just important and serious but also exciting, intriguing and even fun. Theological systems should be kept humble, they provide a foundation from which we can explore and upon which we can build. This call to theological dynamism is worth giving to every student who leaves our congregations to study theology. It is worth reading by all of us who face the danger of intellectual hubris within the safety of settled and unchallenged presuppositions.

Campbell Campbell-Jack, Munloch, Ross-shire

A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature

David Lyle Jeffrey (ed.)

William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992; xxxii + 960pp., £55; ISBN 08028 3634 8

In one sense we have always known how deeply the literature of our islands has been steeped in the Bible. Yet it is only in the last half-century, coinciding with a new scholarly awareness of the complex internal literary tradition within the Bible itself, that there has been much systematic exploration of that biblical tradition in English. This book is, to my knowledge, the first attempt to summarise that work with any degree of comprehensiveness, and, just as important, to place it alongside a history of biblical interpretation, so that the reader can cross-reference from, say, Milton, to the theory and practice of his seventeenth-century contemporaries to see how the Bible was being read and understood by them.

Even a cursory skim through the list of contents will confirm how selective has been the use of biblical themes by English-language writers. As one would expect, Genesis, the four Gospels and Revelation top the bill, with Acts, the Old Testament histories and major prophets following some way behind. If the Pauline Epistles have lacked a good story-line, they have always had some powerful rhetoric to make up for it – at least in the Authorized Version. Minor prophets and books of the law bring up the rear. The exception, of course, is Jonah, which has a strong claim to be considered one of the world's earliest comic novels – and has always had a good following among later writers. Three-and-a-half columns is perhaps a little on the mean side for him.

Yet even if many of the entries in the main dictionary section are predictable enough, there are also some surprises. That the Devil should get six-and-a-half columns is presumably only his due, but that Cana wine, for instance, should get nearly as much may not be so obvious to those (like myself) unaware of what a popular trope it was in medieval and Renaissance writings. The more generalized theme of madness still gets five-and-a-half. Some particularly rich topics are broken down into smaller units. Thus Elijah gets three-and-a-half columns, but the 'Still

Small Voice' gets another column on its own (where your reviewer is delighted to find he has achieved immortality in a footnote). It is good to see also that there has been some attempt to exclude a specifically Christian bias to the interpretation of the Old Testament. Jewish traditions are contrasted with the various Christian ones so that the reader is given a sense not merely of the richness and variety of the biblical literary heritage, but also its controversialness and plurality over the centuries. Nor, in spite of the book's title, have the compilers confined themselves to English literature: no discussion of the story of Joseph, for instance, would be complete without reference to Thomas Mann's magnificent *Joseph and his Brothers* – and sure enough, he gets honourable mention in the Joseph section.

Nevertheless, such a comparative survey would not be complete without reminding us how culturally variable any such undertaking as this is going to be. The size of the entries is not just dictated by the wealth of literary reference available: there is always a cultural perspective to any such selection, and we should always be aware of how different Victorian or seventeenth-century priorities would have been. By way of illustration, in the bibliographical section at the end (itself over a hundred pages long) are sections on 'Historical Studies in Hermeneutics', 'Biblical Commentaries Available to English Authors', 'Patristic, Medieval and Renaissance Commentaries', and books on the use of the Bible by specific authors.

Weighing over two kilograms and with almost a thousand pages, this is not a book to tackle all at once, but one to treasure and explore at leisure. If we were to follow the unit pricing now practised by the better supermarkets, the £55 price tag is not, in fact, outrageous: it works out at about 0.5p per page, but given most people's budgets it is more likely to remain a book consulted in libraries than to be found on the general reader's shelves.

Stephen Prickett, Department of English Literature, University of Glasgow

Calvin's Wisdom: An Anthology Arranged Alphabetically

Graham Miller

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1992; 391pp., £14.95; ISBN 0 85151578 9

Graham Miller, a former missionary and minister of the Presbyterian Church in Australasia, and sometime Principal of the Melbourne Bible Institute, has presented this book as a welcome gift to the church at large. It is a fruit of his lifelong devotion to the study of Calvin, which included a disciplined reading of all fifty-five volumes of his commentaries and tracts inherited from his father. He offers us what he claims to be an anthology, but the writer of the blurb wisely qualifies the

work as something more than that. 'It is virtually a dictionary of his thought, almost an encyclopaedia of his theology.' It is not an anthology in the sense of selected chapters and passages to be found in John Dillenberger's *John Calvin* or Samuel Dunn's compilation of quite lengthy passages from his commentaries and sermons, nor yet again a choice from Calvin's familiar style of connecting subject-related units of Bible texts, as are found in the *Library of Christian Classics* series, volume 23, *Calvin's Commentaries*. In *Calvin's Wisdom* we have something quite different.

Miller has presented us with 391 pages of quotable quotes, sandwiched between a short autobiographical prologue and a half-page epilogue. Each quotation is normally two or three lines long, sometimes stretching to a short paragraph. They cover the entire range of Calvin's writings, relating to what surely must be every conceivable issue to which Calvin addressed himself. They are arranged in alphabetical order, with subjects of greater significance – the Bible, Christ, the Holy Spirit, Predestination *etc.* – broken down into sub-divisions. In all, 226 topics are dealt with. What we have, then, is something of a concise dictionary of his thinking on all these matters, portholes looking into his vast knowledge of biblical and ecclesiastical theology. If sometimes the arrangement of quotations appears to lack coherence, the reader very quickly gains insight into Calvin's understanding of the subject to hand. Almost every one, even the shortest, whatever the starting point, refers without ado to God himself. For example: 'Those who arrogate the least fraction of strength to themselves apart from God only ruin themselves through their own pride' (Ps. 11; 409); 'The endurance of the cross is the gift of God... even the sufferings themselves are evidence of the grace of God' (Phil. -Col.; 48); 'Whatever God promises belongs to his elect... not... to all' (Jer.; 128).

In the prologue, Mr Miller tells us that when he was a young man, Calvin's writings were in limbo. Even so, he was infected by his father's devotion to the Reformer. In recent years there has been a very considerable resurgence of interest in Calvin and many works have been written on both Calvin himself and many aspects of his theology. Alas, there is no shortage of those which deservedly earn the poor assessment which Miller has given to one of the earliest examples – 'spiritless compared with Calvin himself'! At least, Miller learned one lesson from this somewhat arid work, which he passes on to all would-be students of Calvin: 'To know Calvin, we must first *read* Calvin.' Clearly, this is what he wants us to do for ourselves, and accordingly has presented us with a casket of jewels from the immense treasure of Calvin's writing. The book is then both an introduction to those who have not yet discovered Calvin, and a quick reference to any aspect of his teaching for those who have reached a degree of maturity as a student of the doyen of all Bible expositors.

Peter Cook, St Andrew's Church, Cheadle Hulme

Concise Dictionary of Religion

Irving Hexham

Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, and Leicester, 1993; 245pp., £8.99; ISBN 0 8308 1404 3 (USA), 0 85110 645 5 (UK)

This short reference work is intended to meet the needs of undergraduates when they are first introduced to the field of religious studies. Irving Hexham has recognised that most courses are essentially Christian in orientation and so there are relatively more entries dealing with Western tradition than with other religions. Realising that there can be great difficulty in obtaining information about more obscure figures, each item has been addressed not according to an evaluation of its overall importance, but according to the difficulty students will have in finding information. Thus, greater space has been accorded, for instance, to Abraham Kuyper than Thomas Aquinas. There is material on African and other neglected religious traditions as well as new religious movements known as cults, in addition to items related to major traditional and world religions.

Hexham believes that there is an overemphasis on certain narrowly defined academic traditions in religious studies to the neglect of studies dealing with religion in the world and this is apparent in the selection of material. Others might disagree with this view. A new undergraduate, whilst finding this a useful volume, would perhaps feel a certain frustration in that it does not deal comprehensively with all his/her needs in this area, although it is relatively inexpensive. In addition, the cross-referencing system could be confusing for new students.

Janet Watson, Glasgow Bible College

Out of the Rut, into Revival: Dealing with Spiritual Stagnation

A.W. Tozer

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1993; 178pp., £3.99; ISBN 0 340 59565 5

This book of collected sermons from the well-known Christian author comes with a warning from its publishers. It asks the reader to be prepared for reading material that was originally spoken and warns seasoned Tozer readers that the experience might be painful! This is a warning well worth giving because throughout the book there are many indications of a sermonic rather than written form. There are many repetitions of phrases and ideas, some of the ideas introduced are not followed through and many of the arguments lack precision.

The aim of the sermons is to speak to a general Christian audience, so that one is not looking for detailed argument. However, my immediate response to the book was to wonder whether the publishers were doing a service to Tozer's ministry by publishing material in this form. It does not reflect the more measured and considered approach of his other work. Bald statements such as 'if you do not have reformation you cannot have regeneration' are at best unhelpful and at worst unbiblical. On certain other occasions I simply could not see the point of his illustrations.

The only valid reason I can find for publishing such material is that it reflects one man's deep concern for the route Evangelicalism has taken. Although the sermons come from over thirty years ago many of his concerns still ring true. He spoke the words in this book partly in opposition to an Evangelicalism that is essentially conversionism or 'easy-believism'. He nails that particular distortion on a number of occasions throughout the book most helpfully when he challenges those who use manipulative techniques to secure 'decisions'. He also has some penetrating insights into Evangelicalism and its attachment to activism. He criticises the establishing of committees as the panacea for our spiritual ills and has sharp words for the social activities of the church when they divert us from our proper aims. Positively he presents his vision for the local church in, what was for me, the best chapter in the book. Rather than the conciseness of the arguments or the power of the analysis the main thrust which comes across in the sermons is Tozer's heartfelt concern that the evangelical church avoid complacency, apathy and accommodation to worldly methods and thinking. One cannot help but be challenged and moved by the depth of that concern, which he communicates on virtually every page.

Tozer is perceptive and penetrating. My concern is that his message is not presented here in the best format in which to harness the power of his insight.

Andrew Bathgate, U.C.C.F, Edinburgh

Lord of the Saved: Getting to the Heart of the Lordship Debate

God's Law in the Modern World: The Continuing Relevance of Old Testament Law

K.L. Gentry, Jr.

Presbyterian and Reformed, Phillipsburg, NJ, 1992 and 1993; 104pp. and 81pp. n.p.; ISBN 0 87552 265 3 and 0 87552 296 3

These two small books deal with two closely related issues: the role of Christ as Lord in the believer's life, and the role of the law for the Christian. *Lord of the Saved* is set against the background of American dispensationalism and seeks to assert the classic Reformed position that

one cannot divide Christ and possess him as righteousness without also possessing him as Lord. As such, the focus is primarily upon individual salvation and the sanctification of the believer. The book is readable and presents a clear and concise summary of the issues involved. As such, it might well be suitable as preliminary reading matter for someone troubled by these issues.

God's Law seeks to broaden the scope of these arguments and asserts a form of what has come to be known as 'theonomy' or 'Christian reconstruction'. The movements to which these two terms refer are generally characterised by a belief that the Old Testament law is still normative for all societies and for all members of those societies. It is tempting to interpret Gentry's zeal for this idea as an over-reaction against his dispensationalist roots, but the rejection of one unbalanced system for another scarcely qualifies as an improvement.

The problem with a book such as this is that it deals with issues to which there are no easy answers in a way which implies that the answers are virtually self-evident. In a world beset by moral relativism, there is a great temptation to look for such easy answers to the problems we face, but Gentry's brevity raises far more questions than it solves. For example, if the law is still applicable in the all-embracing way that is argued for here, one must face countless problems of interpretation in making laws for ancient Israel relevant to issues raised by today's world. Gentry is aware of this, and hedges his argument with phrases which claim that the Law is to be applied 'taking into account the full significance, purpose, and situation of the original intent of the various laws individually considered'. Exactly what this means is not made clear, and yet, if one is a sabbath-breaker, homosexual, or even an insolent child, the need for precise criteria in this matter could mean the difference between life and death (or at least the difference between ways of execution!). Other theonomists have worked in detail on these problematic issues, but Gentry's over-simplification of the subject could well prove dangerous in the wrong hands.

At times, Gentry's argument bears a striking resemblance to classic prosperity-doctrine. In the conclusion to the book he makes the following statement:

Christianity has given birth to the greatest possible prosperity, stability and liberty known in history. To the extent that the Christian view is also the biblical view...we may expect God's objective blessings upon that people whose God is the Lord, as evidenced in their law code.

Such a passage presupposes a close formal identification of old and new covenants, an identification for which Gentry does not offer arguments of sufficient sophistication. It also points towards a crudely mechanistic, even legalistic, understanding of God's providence: despite claims to the contrary, Gentry's view of God seems to allow little scope for evangelical grace and mercy.

Gentry also passes over three other presuppositions of the theonomic system: paedobaptism, as everyone in society must be within the covenant and thus under covenant obligations; the Presbyterian concept of church-state link, as theology clearly functions as a potent political ideology; and postmillennial eschatology, as nobody can be so naïve as to think that a theonomic government will come to power in a liberal democracy without a voting majority who adhere firmly to Christianity. These issues, central to theonomy's plausibility, are scarcely touched upon, as is the same with all of the other prickly questions which the system raises.

All Christians must surely feel sympathy with Gentry's desire to see a world which honours God, but the fact remains that his particular vision is neither as simple as he makes it appear, nor consistent with the teaching of the one whose kingdom is not of this world. *God's Law* is a classic example of an attempt to bring important issues to the attention of a wide audience which results in oversimplification and paints a picture which is just too black and white. While theology should not be the preserve of an intellectual elite, there are some subjects which cannot be dealt with on a simple level. Theonomy's implications are too far-reaching, and, one may add, too sinister, for it to be reduced to the level of the 'sound bite'.

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Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work

Eugene H. Peterson

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, rp. 1992 (1980); 241pp., £7.95;
ISBN 085244 221 1

Working the Angles

Eugene H. Peterson

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, rp. 1991 (1987); 131pp., £6.95;
ISBN 08020 0265 6

The author is the Professor of Spiritual Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, having served as the pastor of Christ our King Presbyterian Church, Bel Air, Maryland for twenty-nine years. Peterson's thought-provoking books are intended to call the attention of fellow pastors to the need to return to the 'old resources' of Bible, prayer and spiritual direction as the basis for all pastoral ministry. *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* shows how five Old Testament books produce a solid foundation for much of what a pastor does under five headings: the pastoral work of prayer-directing: Song of Songs, of story-making: Ruth, of pain-sharing: Lamentations, of nay-saying: Ecclesiastes, and of community-building: Esther.

Peterson accepts Karl Barth's exegetical foundation for using the Song of Songs in pastoral work. In his exegesis of Genesis 2 he examines the

sexual nature of humanity, 'created male and female', and demonstrates that the human being is created in such a way that a covenantal relationship can be engaged and developed. Pastoral conversations, the author holds, involve a quest for intimacy. The language of sexual love in the Song is used to describe the dynamics of all who seek to experience the personal realities of living out whole, healthy and fulfilled relationships. Such intimacy is a difficult task, says Peterson, for a large percentage of persons who are in the care of a pastor are burdened with feelings of inadequacy and are without conscious self-worth. The best way for the pastor to reassure them is through prayer, that is to say the urgent, expectant prayer that requires the compelling quality of God's invitations and promises to be perpetuated in others.

In some ways, this first study was the most penetrating, although helpful insights are given in each of the other four. For example, Peterson uses the book of Ruth to remind the pastor in house-visitation of the need to be a companion to persons in pilgrimage, rather than a public-relations agent for the congregation. In the Lamentations study on pain-sharing the author helpfully differentiates between the catharsis experienced through modern psychological techniques and true spiritual healing. Ecclesiastes is used creatively to help the pastor deal decisively with people's false expectations. In the study on Esther, Peterson reminds American pastors, in particular, of the requirement to exercise pastoral work within the context of building communities. 'The American is a person without a community – part of a crowd, not of a group.'

In *Working the Angles*, Peterson calls the attention of his fellow pastors to three basic acts – prayer, reading the Scriptures and giving spiritual direction – that are so critical to the pastoral ministry, in that they determine the shape of everything else. Only by being attentive to these three acts, says Peterson, can pastors fulfil their prime responsibility of keeping the religious community attentive to God. The reviewer found this smaller paperback to be a much more incisive treatment of the pastoral task than the first book. The introduction is dynamite! For example, 'It doesn't take many years in this business to realise that we can conduct a fairly respectable pastoral ministry without giving much more than ceremonial attention to God.' Then this: 'I don't know of any other profession in which it is quite as easy to fake it as in ours.' He then expands that statement. Readers who are pastors will cringe! Peterson has, at times, a brilliant poetic turn of phrase. Of much pastoral praying, he says 'these so-called prayers are often cut-flowers words arranged in little vases for table decoration.' The most helpful chapter for this reviewer was the one in the general section on Scripture, entitled, 'Turning eyes into ears'. Much stimulating material, exegetical as well as applicatory, is given by Peterson to develop his main thesis that 'reading Scripture is not the same as listening to God'.

Eugene Peterson's style of writing is extremely ornate and poetic. After a time, the vague, almost mystical strain and lack of precision can

be frustrating and even irritating. He comes across as eccentric at times. Maybe all authentic theology should have an eccentric dimension, in as much as it should be penetratingly 'off centre' in the world's terms. For those readers prepared to put up with the idiosyncrasies and flowery euphemisms, there will be a rich reward in studying these books. Peterson has much to say to the modern pastor seeking to be faithful to Scripture and authentic in the face of human need.

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The Celtic Way

Ian Bradley

Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1993; 134pp., £7.45;
ISBN 0 232 52001 1

The question arose early in the reviewer's mind, 'Why review in an evangelical journal a book which is not especially confined to evangelical interest, and by an author who shows no apparent or particular evangelical sympathies?' Further consideration, however, convinced him that the book provides two very important spheres of interest, of just as much significance for the furtherance of Evangelicalism in the next century and millennium as for the Christian church at large. The first sphere is concerned with opening up the relatively unknown world of Celtic Christianity, which in turn prepares the way for the second, which is that if Christianity is to survive and advance in future ages, it must return to something of the Celtic way.

As we draw towards the end of the twentieth century, we find the Western institutional church, whatever its modern denominational guise, burning up much of its resources in merely trying to survive. At the same time, there is a 'new' brand of Christianity which is alive, well, in good heart and making headway, especially amongst young people. It sits loose to denominational structures and is not formally defined. It ranges from green theology to Spring Harvest. The establishment dare not dismiss it as sectarian or take Bishop Butler's attitude towards it as merely enthusiasm, which for him was 'a very horrid thing'. Its own survival may well depend on it; the key to the future of British Christianity could be more readily found in *its* lap. Yet this 'new Christianity' which resists being (over) institutionalised, is charismatic in zeal and holistic in outlook – just like the Celtic church of old!

Ian Bradley, a minister and lecturer at Aberdeen University, points to a revival of interest in Celtic Christianity in recent years. Indeed 'it is now very much the vogue', he maintains. Universities are encouraging Celtic studies, anthologies of Celtic poetry and prayers are regularly among the best sellers. Even more important, 'Experts in areas as diverse as pastoral care, spiritual guidance, green theology and missionary outreach are finding much to commend in the doctrines and practices of the early

Celtic church and are holding it up as a model to be followed by contemporary Christians.'

Having traced the immigration of the Celts across Europe from the Black Sea, driven by a wanderlust which was later to make Celtic Christians superb missionaries, he depicts them as a rural people who lived very close to nature with a very strong sense of the immanence of God, which made the transition to Christianity relatively smooth. Celtic religion was founded on a theology of creation. The Celtic Christians were great lovers of the Psalms. Their emphasis in the atonement was on *Christus Victor*. For them, God is always present to hand, and Christ their ever-willing protector. The well-loved St Patrick's Breastplate (to which Bradley devotes an entire chapter) gives expression to their faith at its best. But that religion was not the highly structured Christianity of the Western church to which it had to succumb at the Synod of Whitby in 664. It was a religion of the hermit, or the individual and his walk with God, centred on autonomous religious communities far less regulated than the communities of the later Roman order yet nonetheless cradles of scholarship and sanctity and bases for missionary endeavour. Celtic Christian culture was more akin to that of the Desert Fathers and modelled on the informal itinerant ministry of Christ and his disciples in the Gospels and Acts.

Now that the institutionalised church of St Augustine and his forty missionaries from Rome finds itself under grave threat and may well collapse in the next millennium, Bradley argues, it may well be that the Celtic way is the alternative 'way forward now for Christians in the so-called developed world, and that the third millennium will see a return to those localised and provisional communities which flourished in the first one, leaving the highly structured institutions and elaborate church buildings, with which we have been familiar for the last thousand years, looking increasingly like ecclesiastical dinosaurs.' Both of these symptoms are already to be found at the other end of the channel tunnel!

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Reason and Reality

John Polkinghorne

SPCK, London, 1991; 119pp., £6.95; ISBN 0 281 04487 2

John Polkinghorne is President of Queen's College, Cambridge and was a Cambridge Professor of Mathematical Physics prior to being ordained as an Anglican priest. In this book he explores the relationship between science and theology. His thesis is that theology is to religious experience as scientific theory is to ordinary experience, that revelation in theology is akin to discovery in science: 'Both science and theology involve the acceptance of a broad interpretive framework which is neither impervious to experience nor vulnerable to ready falsification by it.'

Polkinghorne describes himself as a 'critical realist' who, in both science and theology, is involved in a 'search for increasing verisimilitude in our understanding of reality'. For him, understanding undergirds beliefs which lead to further understanding. Yet he believes that the scientific enterprise is easier to undertake than the theological, as it is limited (or should be) to concern with certain impersonal and largely repeatable phenomena. The most successful exploratory schemes in science are found in subjects with the least degree of complexity. He is critical of physicists such as Stephen Hawking who hope to discover a 'theory of everything' and to explain why the universe exists in terms of mathematics alone. He believes that there is more to the mind of God than the physicist can ever discover. The hubris of Hawking and his ilk belies the fact that theology is the attempt to reflect upon encounter with the divine, and not ungrounded speculation, suggests Polkinghorne.

From the point of view of evangelical theology the key issue here is the assertion that revelation, the account of that divine encounter, is to be compared with discovery in science. We must welcome Polkinghorne's defence of the rationality of the theological process and his affirmation of the debt owed to Christian thinking by modern scientific method. He recognises that, on the basis of a biblical worldview of an orderly and uniform creation, which is grounded in the being of a rational Person who had created freely so that empirical investigation was required, science must engage in an open-minded investigation of phenomena with, as far as is possible, no constraint from our prejudices and expectations.

What does Polkinghorne mean by 'revelation'? 'I do not mean a divinely guaranteed set of propositions, made available to us by their being written on tablets of stone, or whispered into the mental ear of the human writers of scripture... Religion depends upon those revelatory moments of divine disclosure which cannot be brought about by human will alone, but which come as a gracious gift.' For Polkinghorne, God has revealed himself through the life of the man Jesus Christ. 'The Word of God is not a proposition but a person. Its eternal utterance is not the foreclosing of rational inquiry but an invitation to personal encounter.' He does not deny that God could have revealed himself through propositions, but asserts that full personal knowledge must be open and involve taking the risk of encounter, which may include ambiguity.

How, then, does Polkinghorne view scientific discovery? Science is not an entirely objective, impersonal process which might well be conducted by a computer. He follows Michael Polanyi's account of science as involving 'personal knowledge'. 'By that he meant that tacit skills are called for which imply that the task could never be delegated to a computer, however cleverly programmed.' Yet he rejects the notion 'that the scientific world view is just a paradigm socially agreed by the scientific community'. In other words, science is done by persons who 'know more than they can tell' (Polanyi) and who bring to their observations ways of knowing which are not entirely explicable in terms

of empiricism. Scientists follow hunches and trends. They operate within a community which influences the choices they make about methods and whether to accept results if they are novel or contradictory.

How can we compare discovery to revelation? Is not discovery about 'I-it' rather than 'I-thou' (Buber)? Polkinghorne quotes with approval John Barton: 'the Biblical text mediates not information or opinion but encounter'. There seems to be a degree of confusion in Polkinghorne's thinking about the relationship between revelation and discovery, which he wants to present as analogous.

First, we must ask whether scientific discovery leads to the reporting (in journals and books) not of information or opinion but encounter. It may be that the flash of insight which constitutes the moment of discovery for the scientist cannot be explained purely in rational terms, but that insight must be tested and verified by experimentation. It must be presented to the scientific community for corroboration. Its effects must be repeatable. The critical realist believes that the scientist is indeed encountering aspects of reality in the setting-up and observation involved. But he or she brings to the experimentation prior commitments which involve information and opinions. Presuppositions are brought to bear on the study in question, and the results must be expressed in relation to them, in a way that is acceptable to the scientific community, who expect that claims to discovery will indeed be backed up by information and opinions. Without that, the idea of discovery is meaningless.

Secondly, Polkinghorne accepts Barton's notion of revelation uncritically. Nowhere does he attempt to demonstrate the validity of his assertion. In fact such a demonstration is impossible. For no philosopher of religion would deny the possibility that a Supreme Being could, having created humankind with the ability to communicate to each other by means of information and opinions, then inspire humans (without needing to use mechanical means) to pass on divine information and opinions which could not be gleaned otherwise. In addition, the biblical notion that mankind is made in the image of God strongly suggests that such a feat is not only possible, but probable.

Thirdly, Polkinghorne seems to confuse the doctrine of inspiration with what Calvin called the 'internal testimony of the Holy Spirit'. Calvin held that the words of Scripture were the result of a mysterious working of the Holy Spirit who guided the writers to communicate information and opinions from God to people, so that Paul could claim 'All Scripture is God-breathed' (2 Tim. 3:16), *i.e.* the origin of Scripture is in God's Spirit. But he also emphasised that the message of Scripture had to be impressed upon the mind and conscience of the believer so that the truth had effect in people's lives. In that sense the Bible had to *become* the Word of God – its truth had to be revealed existentially to the believer who had to make it his own. That phenomenon is much more like the idea of discovery which Polkinghorne has – the encounter with a given reality which initiates a response and an explanation.

The study of science and theology continues to develop, and this book is a useful introduction to the issues, given the criticisms outlined above. Here is an area where evangelical theology has much to contribute, as the work of T.F. Torrance demonstrates, but which requires a re-visioning in terms of biblical theology to counterbalance an over-emphasis on certain insights from the philosophy of science.

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The Lion Book of Christian Thought

Tony Lane

Lion Publishing, Oxford, 1992; 256pp., £7.99; ISBN 0 7324 0575 0

Lion have made a wise move in re-issuing Tony Lane's most helpful guide to distinguished Christian thinkers over two millennia, first published in 1984. In a way, 'The Lion Book of Christian Thinkers' might have been a better title. Indeed, if just two more distinguished names could have been found, the title could have read 'A Hundred Best Thinkers!' There are no indictable omissions. All the great names of the patristic, medieval, Reformation and modern periods receive careful and sustained treatment. Several names appear which even graduates in theology may know only vaguely or not at all (Ephrem the Syrian, Simeon the New Theologian, Thomas Bradwardine and Philip Jakob Spener). In addition we encounter the key confessions and creeds from Nicaea to the Barmen Declaration. The list of theologians includes non-western contributions. In addition, a very useful background sketch precedes each major epoch of Christian thought.

In the areas familiar to this reviewer there is a very obvious accuracy and carefulness, an impression sustained throughout. Treatment of difficult ideas and writers is superbly clear and jargon-free. However in the handling of some theologians this is achieved by skirting more difficult concepts. The treatment of Karl Rahner, for instance, majors on the now famous 'anonymous Christianity' and avoids his more difficult Christological and Trinitarian writing. Similarly nine columns on Barth do not refer to his doctrine of the Trinity even though Barth saw the Trinity as the root of all Christian doctrine.

All the same, the packing of so much in such an accessible way into such a small space is a great achievement (and suggests the author would be useful to have around during a house-move!). A reading of the book (as opposed to simply using it for reference) would put any intelligent reader in possession of the main questions that have confronted Christian belief. It would be an excellent place to begin reading in Christian doctrine. The treatment throughout is strongly historical. Thus can reduce the precious space available for analysing a writer's thought and lead to imbalance of treatment, but it also has its advantages. It gives each account a human interest, relevance and attractiveness. To know, for

instance, that Schleiermacher came from a pietistic tradition explains a lot.

Although the general approach makes the book accessible, an index together with brief section bibliographies, would greatly increase its usefulness and harness the interest likely to be aroused. All in all, very good value for money, scholarly, very readable and highly commended. And watch out for some welcome humour, as for example on the condemnation of Pope Honorius as a heretic: 'This only goes to prove that if you want to be infallible you cannot be too careful about what you say.'

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