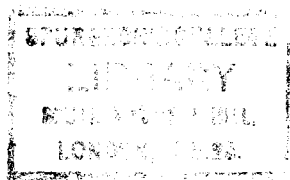
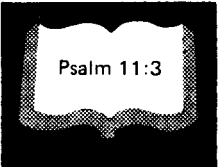


Foundations

**A Theological Journal
published by the
British Evangelical
Council**



If the foundations
be destroyed, what
can the righteous do?



Psalm 11:3

FOUNDATIONS is a Theological Journal
published in November and
May by the British Evangelical
Council.

EDITOR Rev Dr Eryl Davies MA BD
23 Bryn Eithinog
BANGOR, Gwynedd, N.Wales
U.K. LL57 2LA

*All MSS, Editorial Corres-
pondence and Publications
for Review should be
sent to the Editor*

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Rev Brian Edwards BD
Rev Hywel R.Jones MA
Rev Peter Naylor MTh

BUSINESS MANAGER Mr Aubrey J.Roberts
58 Woodstock Road North
ST ALBANS, Herts,
England, UK AL1 4QF
Tel: St Albans (0727)
53148
(Evenings only)

All orders for this Journal must be pre-
paid and should be sent to the Business
Manager. Please make out cheques and postal/
money orders to the BRITISH EVANGELICAL
COUNCIL in £ sterling. The price per issue
is £1.25 post free with effect from Issue
No.7

ISSUE No. 6

Price 75p

May, 1981

C O N T E N T S

EDITORIAL	p. 1
A REVIEW OF THEOLOGICAL JOURNALS 1980	p. 3
Eryl Davies	
TRANSLATING SCRIPTURE - AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	p.22
Rev Philip H.Eveson, MA MTh	
CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORK - REFLECTIONS FROM CHURCH HISTORY	p.32
Dr Ian Shaw	
BOOK REVIEWS	p.48

*Within the context of the
B.E.C. doctrinal basis,
writers are free to expound
and apply Scripture but the
personal views expressed
are not necessarily
endorsed by the B.E.C.*

Those wishing for further information about the
aims, activities and Doctrinal Basis of the
B.E.C. are invited to contact its General
Secretary (Rev Roland Lamb) at 21 Woodstock
Road North, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4QB
Telephone: (0727) 55655

ISSN 0144-378X

EDITORIAL

"May I take this opportunity of saying how much I have appreciated this journal ..." "I should like to say how delighted I am with this publication. It certainly fulfils a need in the U.K. ..." "Foundations is very helpful indeed ..." "I am very grateful for Foundations ..." "Just a note of appreciation for the copy of Foundations we recently received. It has long been my opinion that there is a need for such a journal ... My only regret would be that I finished reading it in two hours and now have a six-month wait for the next issue!"

These comments by Pastors illustrate the encouraging way in which this journal has been received and appreciated since its first appearance in November 1978. While imperfections have marred each issue we are nevertheless grateful to God for the blessing which has been upon FOUNDATIONS since its inception.

It is significant that nearly all the letters and comments of appreciation received by the Editor have come from Pastors and this we regard as encouraging. While the journal can be of great value to ordinary church members and church officers its main ministry is to Pastors and this clearly distinguishes FOUNDATIONS both from other theological journals and devotional or historical periodicals.

Our primary aim is to help Pastors by discussing contemporary theological issues in a scholarly but thoroughly biblical and relevant manner. For this reason the articles are both academic and practical, written not for the University library but for the working Pastor. By means of major articles and book reviews, we inform and stimulate Pastors and others by keeping them abreast of contemporary theological news and questions and also by encouraging them to apply themselves to such issues.

One important feature of FOUNDATIONS is the space given

to the general content and assessment of theological journals and new theological books. In this current issue, for example, at least 19 journals are reviewed as well as six new and important books. This kind of help is invaluable to Pastors in terms of what to buy or subscribe to and informing them of what is being written both by liberals and evangelicals. Recently a Pastor told me rather excitedly that as a result of a book review in Issue 5 of FOUNDATIONS he recommended to his members that they should also buy the book and 35 members responded. There are no prizes for guessing the title of the book or the identity of the Pastor!

The most frequent complaint concerns the format of this journal. For example, some have requested a more attractive appearance including real printing. Some changes in format will be introduced in the next issue, notably a thicker cover and 'perfect' binding but nothing more ambitious can be considered at this stage due to high printing costs. A circulation well in excess of 2000 will be required before we can consider realistically a radical change in format. In the meantime we are grateful to our printer for his valuable work and co-operation and we ask our readers to advertise and commend the journal to others.

Have you considered subscribing to FOUNDATIONS yourself? Does your Pastor receive it? Would other Church officers benefit from reading it? One Pastor wrote recently, "Clearly this journal is beginning to make a useful contribution in our churches". Why not introduce FOUNDATIONS into your church and sell a few copies there? If your Pastor or colleague does not receive it regularly, encourage him to do so and take advantage of our special offer. Churches could help, for example, by giving their Pastors a gift of a three-year subscription costing only £6 instead of £7.50 on Issues VII-XII. This is a practical way of helping the Pastor and the church.

We need your support and prayers if FOUNDATIONS is to make an even more vital contribution to pastors and churches in the future.

A REVIEW OF THEOLOGICAL JOURNALS 1980

Eryl Davies

The Review of Theological Journals 1979 in our May issue (No.4) last year was appreciated by many readers who, for various reasons, have access only to one or two journals. Some readers have requested that the review of journals in this issue should be extended and this was a request your Editor could not refuse, hence this extended review!

The aim of this review is to inform readers, especially Pastors, of news, trends and problems within contemporary theology.

I expected it! Indeed, given recent trends, it was inevitable. And at last, in 1980, I read "it" - in an American Roman Catholic theological quarterly entitled BIBLICAL THEOLOGY BULLETIN, A JOURNAL OF BIBLE AND THEOLOGY (Jan 1980, vol X, No.1). I am referring to a serious, theological attempt to adapt Mariology to liberation theology. "It is strange," writes Juan Alforo of the Mexican American Cultural Centre in Texas, "that liberation theologians have generally ignored the basic role of Mary as the liberator of Christians from their needs. For Mary has a PRIMARY ROLE in the liberation of the oppressed. She appears with the Lord when he begins his struggle to save the world, prods him to do his first miracle and then stands at the cross." (p15). In this article, entitled 'The Mariology of the Fourth Gospel', the writer, assuming the chiasmic structure of John's Gospel, argues that the two passages in the gospel which mention 'the mother of Jesus' suggest a more advanced Mariology. While this imposition of Mariology upon the gospel is distasteful to us, at least we should be aware of what is being wrongly claimed for Mary in contemporary theology and at the same time improve our own hermeneutics! To return to Alforo again, the statement in John 2 that "the mother of Jesus was there" he takes like other Roman Catholics to refer to her mediatory role and the words "they have no wine" to her intercession and

concern for needy people. Her statement to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you", he sees - wrongly, of course, as illustrating Mary's intermediary role between her Son and believers; even today, he claims, Mary tells the Son that people have no wine nor peace nor freedom, rights, food, jobs and affirms and focuses more sharply on the function and mission of her Son. When Mary is then reported as standing by the cross (19:25), Alforo concludes, "Cana and Calvary constitute two poles and key moments in the ministry and revealing mission of Jesus. Both moments work a radical change in the life of Jesus; after that, He is not the same for He starts a new way of life; Mary is present on both occasions" (p5).

In the April issue of the same journal, there was an interesting article carrying the title, 'Selecting a Bible Translation' in which the RSV was recommended as the best translation for study purposes. We were reminded of two general approaches to translating the Bible: the linguistic equivalence or formal correspondence which is exemplified in the AV (1611), ASV (1901), RSV (1952) and the New American Bible of 1970. There is also the dynamic equivalence which takes greater liberties with the original Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic, especially where the text is uncertain and examples of this approach are the Jerusalem Bible (1966), NEB (1970), Good News Bible (1976), etc. The RSV, it is claimed, is "very faithful to the original biblical languages ... and adheres to traditional Bible English" (p71) although eliminating "thee's and thou's" and changing some 300 English words whose meaning has changed. The RSV, we are told, "has gained immense and wide-ranging respect" (p72). The article is far from satisfactory, but its estimate of the Living Bible (which sold more than twenty-two million copies in the first seven years) most, if not all of our readers would concur with. It is "totally useless", an "irresponsible paraphrase" in which interpretation too often takes over from responsible translating (p71). If you want help in checking and assessing translations then the author suggests two theologically innocuous sample texts - Genesis 31:35 and the description of agape in 1 Corinthians 13:7. The NIV is only given a brief mention:

"a clear translation, its style terse, direct, plain and unembellished. Critics say it does not compare with the RSV ... It is not recommended for study purposes" (p74).

No comment from your reviewer at this stage, but we'll return to the NIV shortly so keep on reading!

Another journal, **THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL QUARTERLY**, published in Washington, I found to be unnecessarily technical, dry and extremely critical with articles like 'Deutero-Isaiah' and 'Some Doctrinal Variants in Matthew 1 and Luke 2 and the Authority of the Neutral Text' (Jan '80). Here is more evidence of the continuing acceptance by the Roman Church of a critical attitude towards the Bible. One article in the April issue, 'Qumran and the "weakness" of Paul' (astheneia and dynamis in 2 Corinthians 10-13) concludes that the weakness of which Paul boasts was not a physical or psychological disorder but rather the persecution he encountered in preaching.

I enjoyed reading, albeit quickly, the **HAVARD THEOLOGICAL REVIEW** and was especially interested in issue 72:3-4 where there was a helpful section on 'Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations' (p315). One such dissertation by Timothy George - 'The Role of John Robinson (1575-1625) in the English Separatist Tradition' will interest some of our readers. It is an attempt to assess the significance of 'JR' (not to be confused with the T.V. one!) as a second generation separatist and pastor of the Pilgrims, within the context of early Stuart Nonconformity.

If I was asked to select the journal I enjoyed reading the most in terms of interest and importance then it is just possible that **THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR** might be singled out. It is published by the United Bible Societies in America and edited by Paul Ellingworth with the long-range goal of providing information, help and guidance to translators working in Bible translation around the world. I am under no illusion as to its pre-suppositions and methods but because of the importance of the subject for the world-wide church and the information conveyed alternately in technical and practical issues, I throw out the challenge that

more of our readers who are competent in this field should read this publication regularly and keep abreast of developments.

Some of the articles I found both absorbing and provocative. The interesting study on 'The Use and limitations of linear editions' (April '80) by John Ellington encouraged me if only for the reason that even some translators need help in checking translations against the original language. To those who wish to use interlinear editions, the writer offers advice and suggestions covering four basic areas, namely, introductory material, textual basis, interpretation and expression of meaning.

The January number carried major articles on 'The majority text and the original text of the New Testament' and 'Discourse analysis and Bible translation', while in July there was a most fascinating and disturbing article by Siegfried Meurer on 'Theological Considerations about the Distribution of Selections'. Did you know, for example, that it was only a few years ago that Bible Societies began to distribute selections of Scripture and the only areas where this is not done are Iceland and Eastern Europe? By 1978, for example, over forty-three times as many selections as Bibles and over thirty-two times as many selections as New Testaments were distributed. This is an astonishing development and the publishing of selections has been described as one of the most significant steps taken by Bible Societies in the last hundred years. Meurer gives two reasons to substantiate his claim. Firstly, less than 50% of the population of Western Europe buy and read books so there is, he says, "no point in giving everyone a Bible, which is a difficult book ..." (p306). Secondly, although the Bible is distributed it is not being read, so in introducing selections Bible societies have entered the realm of mission. But choosing and publishing texts and portions is of great significance requiring considerable deliberation and both theologians and biblical experts need to have a role in the producing of selections. In the selections they do suggest that the entire Bible be read, but is this enough?

Allow me to stay a little longer with the 'Bible Translator' and this time the October issue, for here there are two articles you should be acquainted with. One is 'The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Translator' in which the writer appeals to the United Bible Societies to provide as a matter of urgency direct informative material concerning the Qumran Bible scrolls. It is thirty years since the Qumran or Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and some of the Qumran Bible scrolls are at least a thousand years older than the oldest Hebrew manuscripts upon which modern versions of the Old Testament are based, offering a number of variants that may represent better readings in certain passages than those of the Massoretic Text which is the standard text at present for translating the Old Testament. Most Jewish and Christian scholars agree that in general Qumran texts support the Massoretic text and they also seem to agree that not all Qumran variants should be accepted as genuine readings of earlier Hebrew texts.

The second article is 'Readability and the NIV of the New Testament' by Dr. Barclay Newman. The content of this article will evoke a strong response from some of you but listen, first of all, to his case. He says there are two basic criteria for evaluating any translation of the Scriptures - reliability and readability. Concerning the former the NIV is to be commended for its "overall faithfulness to the meaning of the original Greek" (p325), but on readability it "fails miserably". "Actually", writes the author, "it is a 'patchwork' translation which oscillates eclectically between direct dependence on this tradition and the use of new and contemporary style with considerable unevenness as a result" (p326). Reasons for the lack of readableness are then suggested. For example, sentence length in the American edition is disappointing, (e.g. 2 Peter 2:4-9, Rom 1:1-4, and 2:14-21); other criticisms include embedding and apposition, distance between subject and predicate (e.g. Luke 11:38, 23:47-49), inverted and/or unnatural sentence order (Matthew 10:5, 18:20, 23:25, 26:11 Philippians 2:25, etc) and lack of continuity within a discourse unit (e.g. there is no hint regarding the intended antecedent of 'these things' in Matthew 11:25 or 'them'

in 14:6 and in 18:23 'therefore' does not indicate a logical relationship with what precedes as the reader expects). There are also, claims Newman, problems with prepositions (Romans 4:16, 1 Corinthians 10:2, Hebrews 10:19-20, etc), an inconsistency of language development and footnotes "do not meet the needs of the average reader" (p332) with the exception of "very useful footnotes" on Luke 19:13, Acts 1:12 and 7:36. While the 1973 edition was revised for the 1978 edition of the NIV Bible he cites verses like Matthew 27:63, Acts 2:27, 7:51, 13:36 where words changed for the 1978 edition are actually "a retrogressive revision" (p335) His conclusion is that while the NIV translation is generally "faithful and dependable ... it reveals glaring weaknesses in the area of translation theory" (p336).

Now for a complete change of topic. Some of our Congregational brethren are no doubt familiar with **THE JOURNAL** of the United Reformed Church History Society which incorporates the Congregational Historical Society (founded 1899) and the Presbyterian Historical Society of England (founded 1913). Subjects dealt with in October were 'Robert Browne and the Dilemma of Religious Dissent', 'Separatists in Prison' and then a valuable article by Robert Norris on 'Some Dutch Influences upon the Independents at the Westminster Assembly' followed by a review article on 'The World of Philip Doddridge' by Tudor Jones.

Even more fascinating and rewarding was the reading of **CHURCH HISTORY**, a quarterly journal published by the American Society of Church History. Articles like 'Schleiermacher and the Reformation: a question of Doctrinal Development' (June), 'Moses Mather (Old Calvinist) and the Evolution of Edwardseanism' and 'Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Record of the Causes of Kirtland Dissent' (September) I found absorbing, but it was the March issue that appealed to me the most. Those of you interested in Zinzendorf or Gilbert Tennent should read 'Radical Pietism of Count Zinzendorf as a Conservative Influence on the Awakener Gilbert Tennent'. After reading Iain Murray's excellent biography of A.W.Pink in the 'Banner of Truth' (August-December '80) I found it most

helpful to understand the 'Fundamentalist' situation in America (and from which, theologically, Pink became increasingly more detached and disillusioned) through reading 'A shelter in the Time of Storm: Fundamentalist Institutions and the Rise of Evangelical Protestantism, 1929-1942 in America'. The article is full of useful and detailed information. Certainly one of the most important focal points of 'Fundamentalist' activity in the USA in the 1930s was the Bible Institute, the pioneers of which were A.B. Simpson (founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance who in 1882 established the Missionary Training Institute in New York city) and D.L.Moody who founded in 1886 the Moody B.I. of Chicago. By 1930, for example, the Fundamentalist weekly 'Sunday School Times' endorsed over fifty Bible schools, most of which were in major cities and by the 1930's the Bible Institute became the major co-ordinating agency of the movement as popular fundamentalist alienation toward old denominations reached new heights.

The Moody Bible Institute had an enormous influence with its Bible conferences, staff evangelists, guest preachers for churches, publicity (the 'Moody Monthly' had 40,000 subscribers by 1940!), Correspondence School with an enrolment of 15,000, a mammoth Colportage Association and after installing radio at Moody in 1925 this Institute (WMBI) was releasing transcribed programmes to 187 different stations by 1942. The conclusion that MBI became "the national giant of institutional Fundamentalism" does not appear to be an exaggeration.

Turning to other journals, I continue to find the **JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES** published half-yearly at Oxford by Clarendon Press remote and excessively 'academic', but surprisingly **RELIGIOUS STUDIES** published by Cambridge University Press was more useful last year. The articles here are specialised, of course, and particularly helpful to those grappling with philosophical theology. I, for one, want to re-read some of the articles such as 'Language, Logic and Reason in Calvin's Institutes', 'Re-interpreting the Proofs of the Existence of God' (September) and Professor Basil Mitchell's 'Faith and Reason: a false

antithesis' (June).

I was also more favourably impressed by THE SCOTTISH JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY last year. Two articles at least made fascinating reading, the first being Dr Bryan Gray's 'Towards Better Ways of Reading the Bible' in which he rightly maintains that the growing rift between biblical scholarship and the dogmatic and moral theologians of the churches is a challenge to us all. He underlines the need to examine the presuppositions of the biblical scholars and at the same time to investigate the questions raised by their critics (vol 33, No.4, p301). The other article that interested me was by Thorwald Lorenzen of the Baptist Theological Seminary in RUSchlikon, Switzerland, entitled 'Responsible Preaching' (vol 33, No.5). Referring to bored congregations, discouraged ministers and the many attempts to discover new forms of communicating the gospel, he says that these features signal a crisis of preaching, a crisis which is theological in nature because preachers themselves have become uncertain as to who God is and unsure whether or not their preaching corresponds to His will. This decline in authentic and responsible preaching is indicated by the fact, says Lorenzen, that many ministers lack an interest in serious theological study. I believe that what he says here is relevant to many Evangelical pastors. There is an obvious lack of responsible theological study amongst us so that the writer's stricture is applicable to us: "they often take more time for the social side of the work and also read more popular books and other people's sermons!" All the emphasis on counselling, visitation, evangelism, social action and administration will ultimately not build proper churches "if the minister's work is not undergirded by a serious and continuous study of theology" (p453). Most dissatisfyingly and expressing his own critical position, the writer then offers some reflections on how to rediscover responsible preaching. Quoting Bultmann approvingly, he criticises the traditional understanding of God as 'up there' or 'out there' and speaks of the need to go to the biblical text without theological pre-commitments and in radical openness to the Bible so that the sermon is not just a proclamation 'of'

or 'about' God but a participation in God's coming to man. For such preaching and exegesis, the historical critical method, he argues, is an indispensable tool! We have heard all this before and seen the sad results of such an approach; it is the Word alone God deigns to bless and use.

During 1980 several journals occupied themselves with questions about the Bible. The SPCK publication, *THEOLOGY*, included an article on 'Revelation Revisited' in its September issue. Supporting Basil Mitchell's contention that the notion of revelation demands more than mere human conjecture, discovery or theological interpretation, but that there must be "some communication between creator and the creature" (p339), Jeff Astley expresses his dissatisfaction with the popular 'non-propositional' view of revelation, describing it as "a rather vacuous one" (p341). He feels that religious epistemology has suffered from the predominance of a 'visual' understanding of sensing, that is, a 'vision' or 'glimpse' of the unseen, yet it is through words people intentionally disclose their characters or wishes and it is through the ears we receive such disclosures. We learn very little about people just by looking at them. Astley acknowledges that one attraction of the visual model for theology is that it avoids the embarrassment of an infallible revelation yet - in a conclusion we strongly disagree with - he suggests that propositional revelation does not entail infallibility. Concerning the mechanism of revelation he finds it surprising that theologians have so rarely suggested telepathy as the mode of revelation between God and man!

THEOLOGY TODAY is an American quarterly launched in 1944 with the purpose of sponsoring a "rebirth of vital Christian theology" and especially a rediscovery of the Bible as the church's "Supreme standard of reference". In his April editorial, 'The Bible in the Church Today', the editor sees signs of a future for biblical theology, even in academic circles. 1978, for example, was a vintage year with an unusual harvest of Old Testament theologies, including works by Zimmerli, Kaiser, Westerman, Terrien and there is also new theological ferment among New

Testament theologians. Although unhappy with the orthodox view of the Bible he says it is "time for pastor and people to come to a clearer theological understanding of the indispensable place of the Bible in the life of the Church" (p6). This editorial is followed by an informative but biased article on 'Scripture: Recent Protestant and Catholic Views'. The author illustrates the paradoxical fact that while the Bible has lost its central position in Christendom it still holds considerable interest for scholars and theologians with at least 450 books in New Testament studies alone per year being published and a thousand more articles in about 400 journals! After referring to post-world war 2 neo-orthodox biblical theology and Karl Rahner's parallel but more ecclesio-centric interpretation of Scripture as well as contemporary Ecumenical Convergences, the writer feels unable to synthesize neatly current trends although in general he describes the mood "as open, inductive and empirical". Many still tend to define revelation in terms of experiencing the transcendent (Schubert Ogden and Schillebeeck) but even though Ogden and Willi Marxsen stress the importance of the New Testament as a source and norm of Christian experience (because it contains the apostolic witness to Jesus) they also stress that the norm is Jesus himself, not a Bible or Church. On the other hand, arguing that the earliest testimony is not necessarily the best, D.E.Nineham says it is providential that the Gospels were written a generation or more after the events to which they refer by "a community which had enjoyed a continuous and deepening experience of him and achieved increasing insight ..." (p18) More writers like James Barr and Gregory Baum use the Bible supremely to find a model or paradigm of specific Jewish and Christian experience of God.

This journal then is certainly liberal yet provocative, informative and contemporary.

For those interested, THE REFORMED THEOLOGICAL REVIEW of Australia for September-December included two main articles entitled 'Marriage Matters in Erasmus and Luther' and 'Attitudes to the Ministry of Women in the Diocese of

Sydney: An Historical Study, 1884-1893'. The review of Hendriksen's commentary on Luke in the May-August issue is on the whole favourable, but it is criticised for the bewildering number of sub-divisions, his lack of interest in the Luke-Acts debate and Luke's distinctive theological perspective, his verbose, conversational style, excessive length and free use of imagination, yet his genuine spirituality, orthodoxy and erudition are duly acknowledged (p52). With little enthusiasm, I must confess, I read through the **CHRISTIAN**, an Anglo-Catholic journal offering 'serious reflection on Christian faith and contemporary living'. The editorial for Ascension '80 warned against "swift and neat labelling" (p3) and sees a current swing "to over-definition, over-formalism and over-tidiness which certain events of the late 70's would seem to presage".

Turning to the more evangelical journals, the quarterly **JOURNAL OF THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY** continues to be good value for the \$12.00 annual subscription, especially in view of its aim to "remain rigorously theological" as it develops an "increased sensitivity to the task of making sure that our teaching says the same things as the Bible" (p1, March '80). In this same issue there were helpful articles on 'A Critique of Liberation Theology by a Cross-Culturalized Calvinist', 'Hermeneutical Issues in the Book of Daniel', 'The Sign of Jonah', 'Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology', 'George Whitefield: The Necessary Interdependence of Preaching Style and Sermon Content to Effect Revival' and a review article dealing with Professor F.F.Bruce's contribution to Pauline studies. The June issue was even more absorbing with contributions like 'Fundamentalism and the Jew', 'Tongues Speech: a Patristic Analysis' and 'Limits of Cultural Interpretation'. After defining the terms 'culture' and 'contextualization' in the latter article, J.R.McQuilkin then applies himself to the difficult question of how to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate cultural interpretation and application. He presupposes inerrancy and insists that while cultural understanding may illumine the text, it must not be allowed to contradict or set aside

the plain statement of Scripture. But on what basis does one distinguish between the authoritative and enduring message of the original author and the temporary historical or cultural context? The 'holy kiss', washing each other's feet, women covering their heads are only a few of the questions raised in this context. McQuilkin outlines some of the approaches which have been suggested and then gives brief illustrations of possible ways of handling Scripture passages that seem to present cultural problems for some contemporary societies.

He first of all distinguishes between interpreting and applying Scripture. "What does the passage mean?" is the basic hermeneutical question which must be the basis for application and not vice versa. "To leap dynamically from a perceived cultural pattern underlying the text to some contemporary equivalent undercuts the authority of the inspired words of Scripture" (p121). The command to wives to "be subject to your husbands" cannot be dismissed as culturally conditioned for this would by implication relativize the next command to children to obey parents and the prior one to obey God. In application of the principle, however, a more democratic atmosphere may prevail in the West than in the East, while in both areas the Scripture principle may be honoured.

Another question which should be asked is, "To whom is this teaching addressed?", for not all teaching in the Bible is addressed to all people of all time; it is crucial however, that the Bible itself designates the recipient of its teaching rather than externally imposed criteria. Sometimes the commands of Scripture are presented simply as God's will, so the only proper response is obedience and trust. When another reason is given in support of a command, it is important to determine whether or not the Scripture itself treats the reason and even the command as normative (e.g. women and head covering in 1 Corinthians 11). Furthermore, apparent conflicts should be resolved by using the 'analogy of faith' and greater weight should be given to that which appears (1) more often (2) with greater clarity and (3) with the authority of Christ

and the apostles. A key question to be answered then is this: does Scripture command obedience to the form itself or is the command merely given in the context of an historical or cultural form? It is Scripture alone which must determine whether the context as well as the command is normative.

All this means that in an age when sociological concepts are being increasingly used to interpret and explain away the plain intent of the biblical text, strict limits must be placed on cultural interpretation.

Professor F.F.Bruce has now retired as editor of the **EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY** and has been succeeded by Professor Howard Marshall of Aberdeen University. We extend our good wishes to both men and look forward to reading future issues under the new editor. It was refreshing to see an article by Dr J.I.Packer in the January-March issue called 'Puritanism as a Movement of Revival'. He defines revival "as a work of God by his Spirit through his Word bringing the spiritually dead to living faith in Christ and renewing the inner life of Christians who have grown slack and sleepy. In revival God makes all things new, giving new power to law and gospel and new spiritual awareness to those whose hearts and consciences had been blind, hard and cold. Revival thus animates or re-animates churches ... to make a spiritual and moral impact on communities.

It comprises an initial reviving, followed by a maintained state of revivedness for as long as the visitation lasts" (p3). Relating the subject to the Puritans, Dr Packer argues and illustrates well three main facts. First of all, that spiritual revival was central to what the Puritans professed to be seeking. Secondly, personal revival was the central theme of Puritan devotional literature and, finally the ministry of Puritan pastors under God brought revival.

An average of seventy pages are devoted by the **CALVIN THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL** to book reviews and notices; the reviews are generally helpful. The November issue also included an invaluable and up-dated Calvin bibliography. Penetrating

and competent articles such as 'The Lord's Motivated Concern for the Under-Privileged' and 'The World Council of Churches and Interreligious Dialogue' deserve careful reading. In the latter, Klaas Runia shows how inter-religious dialogue has increasingly obtained a prominent place in the thinking and activities of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Up until Evanston, 1954, the main approach stressed the "full and only-sufficient revelation of Himself" in Christ, but in the mid-fifties a growing interest in other religions suddenly became evident. At first the terminology used was cautious (e.g. 'Non-Christian faiths') but such cautious terms were soon replaced by expression such as 'resurgent non-Christians' or 'the Word of God and the Living Faiths of Men'. The term 'dialogue' also appears in this period so that in 1961 at New Delhi a different emphasis is discernible. In 'The New Delhi Report' we are told in the section on 'Witness' that "Christ loves the world which he died to save. He is already the light of the world, of which he is Lord and his light has preceded the bearers of the good news into the darkest places ..." We are then told that the Holy Spirit will lead believers to "WHERE CHRIST ALREADY IS" and such believers must be sensitive to "the ceaseless work of the Holy Spirit AMONG MEN" (p77). The concept of 'dialogue' continued to be used and received more attention, for example, at the World Mission Conference at Mexico City in 1963. Here the term is not merely a method or technique in evangelising but rather a description of a BASIC ATTITUDE towards people of other faiths. At Uppsala in 1968 the term was widened again to include the idea that the partners in dialogue have something in common. At the invitation of the Central Committee, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Sikh and Jewish representatives attended the 1975 Assembly in Nairobi and participated in the discussions on the section entitled 'Seeking Community: the common search of people of various faiths, cultures and ideologies'. While bland syncretism was denied, yet some delegates feared that a more refined syncretism (i.e. that Christ is savingly present in other religions as well) was being advocated. The WCC Theological Consultation on 'Dialogue in Community' held at Chiang Mai, Thailand in

April 1977 deemed it wise to avoid the term syncretism because of its negative implications. However, some disturbing statements were made in the official report of these discussions, including the suggestion that Christian worship should include the meditative use of the holy books of other religions.

Syncretistic tendencies are apparent in recent Roman Catholic theology, too, warns Klaas Runia. Karl Rahner's advocacy of 'anonymous Christians' and Raymond Panikkar's (India) view that the good Hindu is saved by Christ not by Hinduism, but it is through the sacraments of Hinduism that Christ normally saves the Hindu. Rather more cautiously, syncretism was officially stated by the Second Vatican Council in its 'CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH'. Protestant theologians also express this view, especially theologians from India and Sri Lanka like Russell Chandran, S.J. Samortha and Wesley Ariarajah. Many Protestant theologians both in the East and in the West regard opposition based on Christ's words in John 14 verse 6 as expressing an outmoded understanding of the Bible. Continuing Bultmann's approach, they argue there is not just one Jesus in the New Testament; rather, we have all kinds of 'faith statements' about him composed at a given time which, while important, have no binding authority, so that no one Scripture is more valid or more true than another and even Hindu scriptures can provide a meaningful context of faith in Christ for an Indian Christian.

To this kind of approach and conclusion, the evangelicals must say a heartfelt NO. Faithfulness to Scripture demands that we firmly adhere, for example, to what the Covenant of Lausanne says on the subject: "We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the Gospel EVERY KIND OF SYNCRETISM AND DIALOGUE which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies ..." (Para 3).

In ETERNITY (January '80), Bernard Ramm attempted to forecast developments in theology and Christendom during the eighties. He predicted that the current evangelical renaissance will continue and that strong, 'fundamentalist'

churches will become increasingly more attractive to people weary of drug abuse, sexual permissiveness and mounting school and family problems. While he thinks the Church of Rome is in for a decade of turmoil he also suggests that the World Council of Churches will face a crisis with many of its supporting denominations. Theology, too, will continue to pursue issues rather than a great systematic theology resulting in a "fragmented" or "mood theology". Ramm anticipates that theological education will become more ecumenical and continue to accept as virtuous a tolerant, theological pluralism. "Somewhere," he adds, "there is going to be a big ethical confrontation with the enormous expansion of computerized knowledge and vast memory banks and the citizens who have come to realize they are totally naked before the computerized world" (p32). Ramm ended his forecast with the hope that a new Jonathan Edwards will emerge in American evangelical theology for "nowhere", he laments, "is there an evangelical giant."

After a lecture tour in England in the early weeks of 1980, Carl Henry attempted an assessment of the contemporary evangelical scene in England ('Eternity', March '80). "The Christian prospect is increasingly blurred ... and in some respects worsening ... The institutional church continues to decay ... the overall ecumenical trend continues to provoke the evangelical scene" are some of his observations.

Henry does see some promising signs, notably the evangelical impact in the student world and the desire of believers and some churches to evangelise. He also draws attention to the decline in the number of British evangelical scholars pursuing advanced biblical research. For example, for the first time in years Tyndale House, Cambridge is occupied mainly by Americans.

Only a month later, CHRISTIANITY TODAY in a news feature, entitled 'Britons Wed Baptist Ecclesiology with Reformed Theology', focussed attention on the Baptist resurgence in Britain. The enormous influence of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones (whom we miss greatly), the origin in 1970 and subsequent influence of the Carey Conference and the monthly Westminster Pastors' meeting - 90% of whom, suggests Errol

Hulse, hold a baptistic theology - are key factors which have contributed to the rise of reformed baptists. "The key to Reformed Baptist survival and success," adds Wayne Detzler, "seems to be believing like the Puritans and preaching like the Wesleyans" (p52, 4 April).

Several other articles in this journal deserve mention including an interview with F.F.Bruce. This distinguished New Testament scholar denies that his theology has "essentially changed" and, he adds, "I am not sure about my 'changing view' on scriptural authority. For 40 years I have signed the Inter-Varsity doctrinal basis. That includes a rather strong assertion of biblical infallibility. And I still hold that the first chapter of the Westminster Confession is the finest statement on the doctrine of Scripture ever published" (p17, 10 October). Despite these statements, in a later issue Harold Lindsell wrote to say that "Dr Bruce does not hold to biblical inerrancy, so that his contribution to evangelical life has been seriously undermined ... While some may agree that biblical inerrancy should not be the primary thing that should be said about Dr Bruce, yet it is something that a full-scale review of his life should have mentioned". (p8, 21 November). But Bruce's contribution to New Testament studies has been both significant and phenomenal, rivalling the German Adolph Harnack who averaged one significant work per week during his active life. In the last ten years, for example, Professor Bruce has published about 500 separate articles or volumes.

In an article, 'Charting New Directions for New Testament Studies', Dr Bruce reports the conclusion of some scholars that Gospel criticism has reached an impasse. Source criticism, form criticism, tradition criticism and redaction criticism "have all been pursued as far as they are likely to take us and the situation in which we now find ourselves is not encouraging" (p19, 10 October). The main purpose of Gospel study has been to establish the life and teaching of the historical Jesus but one of the exponents of "the criteria of authenticity" by which the sayings of Jesus are to be assessed remarked to Bruce that he thought

only six, or at the most eight, of the sayings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels were authentic! In Bruce's opinion it is not Gospel criticism which has led people astray, but rather the attempts to force criticism to do more than it is capable of doing by its very nature.

Bruce makes some suggestions for redirecting New Testament scholarship. Individual scholars should take particular limited areas of Gospel study and explore them in depth; they should also stand back and contemplate the figure that dominates all strands of the Gospel tradition. The chronological gap between Jesus and Paul can be partly filled by the Acts of the Apostles despite the Tübingen heritage. There are still questions, however, which remain unanswered in this area. What, e.g., was Paul's relation to those who were 'in Christ' before him? What was the composition and outlook of the church at Damascus where Paul first found Christian fellowship? What can be discovered about the spread of non-Pauline Christianity in Paul's lifetime, even in the lands of his own Gentile mission? What is the significance of Apollos? Can we reconstruct the early history of the community to which the letter to the Hebrews was addressed?

Dr Bruce also suggests that our knowledge of Palestinian Judaism, (before A.D.70), partly due to the research of Jacob Neusner, should be applied to New Testament exegesis. The significance of the Qumran texts on the New Testament has not yet been exhausted. Many commentary fragments from Cave 4 at Qumran still await publication - a delay which Bruce describes as 'disgraceful'. By contrast the Coptic texts from Nag Hammadi were published promptly and provide us with a wealth of Gnostic literature of an earlier age. These documents are in Coptic belonging in the main to the fourth century A.D. but many of them are translations from Greek originals to be dated two centuries earlier. Do they bear witness to a pre-Christian Gnostic system or myth? If so, did this system exercise any influence on the New Testament writers or the teachings they criticised in Colossians or 1 John or Pastorals? In addition to these approaches and questions, Bruce emphasises the value of

the sociological approach to the New Testament. The study, he argues, of the social culture of the N.T. will enrich our understanding of the N.T. text and message.

In an earlier issue, Dr J.I.Packer scrutinized the charismatic renewal and felt encouraged after the exercise. Charismatics "strive to realize the ideals of totality in worship, ministry, communication and community" (p17, 7 March); "surely," continues Packer, "we see divine strategy here" in a "movement which by its very existence reminds both the world and the church that Christianity in essence is not words but a Person and a power ... we shall all do well to try and learn the lessons spelled out here" (p20).

Dr R.T.Kendall's research thesis, published by Oxford University Press, entitled 'Calvin and English Calvinism', was reviewed by Carl Henry in 'C.T.' (21 March). Tracing Calvin's doctrine of faith, Kendall argues that the Westminster Confession and catechisms really represent a revision of Calvin's thought; in addition, Kendall claims that Beza's theology, not Calvin's, was the decisive influence, e.g., on William Perkins. While careful not to take sides in this debate, Henry writes that Kendall's "claims should serve to stimulate an illuminating new era of Calvin studies" (p38). We hope to return to this subject in a future issue of 'Foundations' but in the meantime I express the hope that the debate will proceed in a responsible and charitable manner.

In view of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones's death on the 1st March 1981, I must draw attention to the absorbing 'C.T.' interview with him a year earlier (8 February). Concerning his 'call' to the ministry, the 'Doctor' speaks of his "very great struggle" during his last eighteen months in medicine in which he lost over twenty pounds in weight facing up to an irresistible call from God to preach. Explaining his refusal to co-operate in the Billy Graham crusades, the 'Doctor' said, "I have always believed that nothing but a revival, a visitation of the Holy Spirit, in distinction from an evangelistic campaign, can deal with the situation of the church and the world ... I have never been

happy about organized campaigns. In the 1820's a very subtle and unfortunate change took place, especially in the United States, from Azahel Nettleton's emphasis on revival to Charles Finney's on evangelism. There are two positions. When things are not going well, the old approach was for ministers and deacons to call a day of fasting and prayer and to plead with God to visit them with power. Today's alternative is an evangelistic campaign: ministers ask, 'whom shall we get as evangelist?' Then they organize and ask God's blessing on this. I belong to the old school".

How did the 'Doctor' see the immediate future? "I see nothing but collapse ... beyond democracy there now looms either dictatorship or complete chaos. The end is more likely ... I'm not sure at all that we have 20 years ... Civilization is collapsing."

This prediction may or may not be correct but we need to recapture for ourselves the 'Doctor's' sense of urgency and his unshakeable conviction concerning the importance of biblical doctrine as well as the necessity of the Holy Spirit's working. Meanwhile we thank God for his powerful and faithful ministry.

+ + + + + + +

TRANSLATING SCRIPTURE -

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Rev Philip H. Eveson, MA MTh London

In the first issue of this journal, we included a Study on Modern Bible Translations with special reference to the NIV New Testament. A most helpful feature of that article was the discussion of basic issues raised by modern translations.

What light can be thrown on this controversial subject by

a study of the very early transmitting and translating, for example, of the Old Testament? Here the Rev Philip Eveson addresses himself to this important question. In the next issue, the writer will deal with the LXX in relation to the New Testament, the early church fathers and translation work, as well as textual tradition including, for example, the LXX versus the Massoretic Text, etc.

Mr Eveson is Principal of the Kensit Memorial Bible College and Resident Tutor at the London Theological Seminary.

The subject of Bible translating has aroused a great deal of heated discussion and the evangelical press is constantly producing literature arguing the pros and cons. My only plea for entering the debate is to redress the balance somewhat and from a study of the very early history in transmitting and translating Scripture, particularly the Old Testament, to emphasise the amazing providence of God in preserving the text and to appeal for an approach to translating which is less governed by linguistic science and the craving to be popular.

There are a number of reasons why it is helpful to tackle the subject from an historical angle and to concentrate attention on the Old Testament:

a) History is meant to teach us lessons. It helps to place our present concerns against a larger background. The problems and tensions we face over these issues are not new ones. Jewish rabbis and the leaders of the Early Christian Church wrestled with the same matters, and it is useful to consider how they grappled with the areas of difficulty.

b) We hear a good deal about New Testament textual problems and there is a tendency, in some quarters at least, to dismiss the Old Testament as presenting no problems of a textual nature. Well, that is not quite the case and the Rev John Waite in Issue No.2 of Foundations argues that the Hebrew text has not been preserved entirely errorless.

c) The New Testament often quotes from the Old Testament, not in the original Hebrew or in Greek transliteration of

the Hebrew, but in Greek translation form. What translation or translations did they use and what can we learn from them?

Before proceeding further, we should perhaps draw attention to some of the considerations to be taken into account in Bible translation work.

1) It is the Word of God which is being translated and not just any piece of literature. The uniqueness of the Book as the 'God-breathed' Scriptures demands a humble, reverent approach.

2) True scholarship is important in such work. It requires expert knowledge in the biblical languages, particularly in the way these languages are used by the various writers of the biblical books. Again, a very good grasp of the language into which the Bible is being translated is essential.

3) The need for honesty and integrity is vital in translating Scripture. Theological bias must be scrupulously avoided. Sectarian interests and emphases have no place in Bible translation work whether they be 'Fundamentalist', 'Romanist', Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, etc.

4) Then there is the necessity for the translators to possess not only an intellectual appreciation of the contents but also a biblical understanding of the text, i.e. men who are taught by the Spirit and have 'the mind of Christ' (1 Cor.2:9-16).

5) The considerations in Bible translating are different in a country which already possesses vernacular Scriptures and a long history of biblical study and knowledge than in an area of the world where the Bible is being translated into a new language for the first time. Translating into a new language can involve very acute problems, especially when that language does not seem to possess the corresponding words and ideas of the original. Often new words have to be formed (Cf. Tyndale's inventions: 'scapegoat', 'Pass-over', 'mercy-seat'). On the other hand, in translating the Scriptures into a new language for the first time, there are no complications as to whether the aim is to

prepare a translation primarily for Christians or for reaching non-Christians. There are no sacred traditions to maintain. But when a revision of existing versions takes place or the bold step is taken to re-translate, it is necessary to bear in mind the long history of ecclesiastical and personal use as well as the missionary interest.

6) In areas where there are translations of the Scriptures there is the fundamental question of whether it is necessary to attempt a revision or re-translation when existing versions have served the needs of Christians so well for many generations. Various reasons are given for attempting such work including,

- (i) where there has been a multiplicity of versions, Christians have felt the need of one authoritative, generally-accepted translation. Cf. the background to Jerome's Latin version and our own King James version. In the preface to the A.V. the translators tell the reader that their aim has been "out of many good ones to make one principal good one".

- (ii) advance in knowledge. The meaning of the original languages has become better known over the years. This is particularly true of Hebrew and Aramaic. The A.V. translators admit "There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once (having neither brother nor neighbour, as the Hebrews speak), so that we cannot be holpen by conference of places." Ugaritic, Akkadian and Aramaic texts recently found can be of some help here. Then, again, more ancient Hebrew and Greek texts of the Scriptures have come to light which are sometimes of aid in deciding what the original texts should be.

- (iii) language is always changing. Words and phrases become obsolete or change their meaning over the years.

7) Finally there is the matter of the method of translating. Long ago Alfred the Great wrestled with the two opposing principles in translation work, i.e. the word for word method and the meaning for meaning. The early Wyclif translations of the Vulgate were word for word which often

did not make much sense in English besides being quite unhelpful in conveying the meaning of the original. If the method of 'meaning for meaning' is adopted, the problem then is of how far to go in this direction. Are we to translate the words of the original as literally as possible provided that no violence is done, let us say, to English or Welsh or Gaelic usage and that the sense of the original is not impaired, or are we to convey the meaning of the original in free, idiomatic language without much regard for the exact wording of the original but at the same time avoiding the danger of producing a paraphrase? The jargon now used by linguistic experts for these two latter approaches is 'formal correspondence' or 'formal equivalence' (as witnessed in the A.V. and R.S.V.) over against 'equivalent effect' or 'dynamic equivalence' (as, for example, in the Good News Bible).

In this study we shall concentrate on the Hebrew, Greek and Latin versions of the Old Testament Text.

THE HEBREW BIBLE

Most of the Old Testament is written in 'the language of Canaan' (Is.19:18), the language spoken by the Israelites in Canaan and through which they worshipped God. It is also designated 'Jewish' in II Kings 18:26, Is.36:11, etc. Despite its presence in modern English versions, the term 'Hebrew' is not used of the Israelite language within the Old Testament literature. The first known occurrence of the word with this meaning appears in the Apocrypha (Prologue to Ecclesiastes). Aramaic passages in the Old Testament are to be found in four places: (i) Dan.2:4 - 7:28; (ii) Ezra 4:8 - 6:18; 7:12-26; (iii) Jer.10:11; (iv) in Gen.31:42 two Aramaic words for a place-name.

Both Hebrew and Aramaic belong to the same broad branch of Semitic languages, known as North-West Semitic and cover the area of Syria and Palestine. Canaanite, Aramaic, Ugaritic and possibly Eblaite belong to this branch. Within the Canaanite group can be placed Hebrew, Moabite and Phoenician. They could almost be described as different

dialects of the language of Canaan. But Aramaic was a separate division within the main branch so that the ordinary citizens and soldiers in the days of Hezekiah would not have been able to understand 'Imperial' Aramaic, which had become the common language of diplomacy (II Kgs.18:26).

Syriac is a later development within the Aramaic grouping, arising in the first century B.C. The A.V. in line with Christian writers stretching back to the Early Church uses this word 'Syriac' to refer to the Aramaic of Bible days (cf. Dan.2:4, etc). To confuse matters even more, until the end of the nineteenth century A.D. Aramaic was also called Chaldean (cf. Baxter's 'Analytical Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon').

The script used to write down the words of the OT deserves some comment. When Moses and the early prophets wrote the Word of God they would have used an early Hebrew script, different from the Hebrew characters we are used to in our Bibles. All the books of the OT written before the Babylonian exile would have been written in this Old-Hebrew or Phoenician script. This was an alphabetical script in contrast to the cuneiform (wedge-shaped) writing and the Egyptian hieroglyphics. From this script most of the alphabets of the world, including Greek and Latin, are derived. The origins of this alphabetical script are unknown but it may have been developed in the south of Palestine or the Sinai peninsula around 16th century B.C. In the amazing providence of God a script emerged just prior to the giving of the law at Sinai and the writing of the Books of Moses which was 'easy to learn and required hardly any improvement'.¹ Some biblical fragments of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, among the Dead Sea Scrolls, are written in this early script and Jewish coins issued during the times of independence and revolt from 1st century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. bear this Old Hebrew script. A direct descendent of the early alphabet is the Samaritan script still in use today among the surviving Samaritan families who live in Israel.

The Square Hebrew alphabet familiar to us (cf. Ps.119) began to supersede the old script soon after the Jews

returned from the Babylonian exile. According to Jewish tradition Ezra brought it back with him from Babylon. This Square script, also called 'Aramaic' or 'Assyrian', is a development from an Aramean form of the Old Hebrew script and began to be fashionable in Assyrian and Babylonian commercial circles from the 8th century B.C. As the Aramaic language became more popular, familiarity with the Aramaic script naturally spread.

Here then, we have an interesting development. From about the time of Ezra, the Jews gradually took over this 'Aramaic' script to write the Hebrew language and to copy out the OT scriptures, and the majority of the Hebrew texts found at Qumran are in varieties of this 'Aramaic' or 'Square' script. This situation is not surprising when we remember that the Jews began conversing in the Aramaic tongue from the Persian period onwards and all the officials and men of ability were corresponding in it and thus using the 'Aramaic' script. It is important to appreciate that the use of the 'Aramaic' characters to produce fresh copies of the Hebrew text of Scripture did not involve translating into the Aramaic language. They simply transliterated the Hebrew using the new script. It is also clear from the Qumran scrolls that, for a long time, the two scripts were in use side by side and some traditionalists, even though they accepted the 'Square' script, could not bring themselves to use it for the divine name YHWH (cf. Habakkuk commentary and the Psalm scroll from Cave 11). It is possible that the Samaritans kept their scriptures in the old script for the same traditional reasons and also to give the appearance of orthodoxy and sanctity.

Hebrew, in common with Aramaic and other Semitic languages, has twenty-two letters all of which are consonants. But four of them were introduced at a fairly early date to serve a dual role. Not only were they consonants but they were sometimes used to represent vowels. In early Hebrew documents these consonants used as vowels are rarely found but they become very common in the Qumran texts. Our Hebrew Bibles today also possess a fair number of these vocalic consonants to aid pronunciation, and for many centuries

the OT text existed in this way as a consonantal text. When Hebrew and Aramaic were spoken every day it presented no problems to read and write using only consonants. But when the languages passed out of daily usage the need for helps in the pronunciation of the OT grew.

Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, as we have noted above, bear witness to a stage when vocalic consonants were added to the text in great abundance to facilitate accuracy in pronunciation. This practice was soon abandoned in the 2nd century A.D. because of the danger of adding to the text. When Greek was widely spoken among the Jews during the early Christian centuries, transliterations of the OT Text using Greek characters became popular but later rabbinical authorities considered it quite improper and unacceptable. The well-established oral tradition of the Jewish rabbis for reading the Scriptures also had its limitations. There thus emerged from about the 5th century A.D. various vowel systems invented by the rabbis, but the one which gained general acceptance was the Tiberian system of vocalization consisting of dots and dashes to denote various vowel sounds. This system was not completed until the 10th century A.D. The advantage of the dots and dashes, called 'pointing', lay in the fact that it enabled the Jewish scribes to write the vowels over, under and within the consonantal text without in any way altering or disturbing it.

In all this activity the rabbis were seeking to preserve the right pronunciation and meaning of the consonantal text as it had been handed down to them orally. The form of the Hebrew text which we now possess, consonants and vowel points, is known as the Massoretic Text (Massora = tradition), the textual tradition of the Jewish scholars called Massoretes. These are the men who gave themselves to the task of carefully transmitting a text which has remained, with very minor exceptions, constant from at least the early 2nd century A.D., and who eventually worked out the vowel system for preserving the traditional pronunciation and removing ambiguity in the reading and interpretation of the text.

The Massoretic scheme of pronunciation, in the nature of the case, presents a stylized system and from early Greek and Latin transliterations of the Hebrew text as well as from other sources, it is clear that we cannot regard it as authoritative. In other words, we cannot say that in every case the Massoretic system gives us evidence of the exact pronunciation of the Hebrew and Aramaic as they were spoken by the rabbis of Old and New Testament times. Almost a thousand years, in fact, separates the time when Hebrew was a generally spoken language and the completed Massoretic work of pointing the text. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable system and along with the Massorites' other careful work it has greatly assisted in our understanding of the text.

Turning, finally, to the type of Hebrew language used in the Bible, scholars are not sure what Biblical Hebrew really was as a language. Does it represent the language spoken by the Israelite tribes in Canaan and by the Jews in post-exilic times or was it more of an ecclesiastical language? Now this is a very complex subject and we can only briefly refer to tentative conclusions but it does raise some interesting points. Granted that the Massoretic system of pronunciation is late and artificial, the actual language which we find in the consonantal text seems not to have reflected the full range of contemporary Hebrew usage during the biblical period. The later Mishnaic Hebrew (i.e. the Hebrew of the rabbinic oral teaching - 'the teaching of the elders'), on the other hand, bears witness to a more developed colloquial type of Hebrew. Ullendorff ² suggests that Mishnaic Hebrew "is perhaps the vernacular so rarely encountered in the predominantly (though not exclusively) formal language of the OT". He compares the language of the Quran which is a more literary type and 'a supra-tribal koine' with the various popular and tribal Arabic dialects and he concludes that in like manner Biblical Hebrew may well be a kind of "compromise language of the tribal confederation, Israel and Judah, while the Mishnaic was the colloquial".

The suggestions of Ullendorff are certainly interesting

and thought-provoking but does not the OT itself provide us with clues to establish our thinking in the right direction? The Bible informs us that Moses was the first to give Israel an authoritative body of literature (cf. Ex.24:4; Deut.31:9,24-26), presumably in the Old Hebrew alphabetical script and in the language of Canaan (Ex.34:27f; 40:20; I Kgs.8:9; Deut.31:10-13,22). The language of the Mosaic Law has influenced the language used in the worship of God in Tabernacle and Temple (cf. many of the psalms and prayers of the OT) and both in turn have helped shape the OT literature produced in the Davidic court and by the prophetic movement. From the beginning, then, it would appear that the language of the OT has transcended the colloquial and tribal dialects. The evidence seems to be pointing us in the direction of saying that Biblical Hebrew was in many respects a special 'koine' Hebrew set apart from the very first when the law was given to Moses.

The Lachish Letters are of some interest in this connection. They present us with one of four examples to date of ancient extra-biblical Hebrew. These letters were written at the time when Judah was defeated by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. and reveal the distressed state of the land. They are written in a very neat Old Hebrew script and although there are certain stylistic differences, overall, they bear testimony to the language of Biblical Hebrew and scholars have commented on certain similarities with the books of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. E.Wurthwein³ is of the opinion that the Lachish Letters confirm the fact that the language of the biblical books preserved in the Massoretic Text is "predominantly that of pre-exilic Judah" and that the writing is "the product of a literary tradition centuries old".

By way of summary, we have noticed that while it was necessary to transliterate the OT Scriptures from the Old Hebrew script into the Square script, the language and style in which the Scriptures were originally written were not altered. There is movement with the times to preserve pronunciation and to clarify the text but again the language remains constant. Here is a clear indication of

the providence of God preserving the language and literary style as originally given. The Biblical literature is neither allowed to become colloquial nor permitted to be passed on in contemporary speech.

TO BE CONTINUED

REFERENCES

1. E. Würthwein, The Text of the Old Testament, translated by E.F.Rhodes, 1979, p5
2. E. Ullendorff, Is Biblical Hebrew a Language? Studies in Semitic Languages and Civilizations, 1977, pp 3-16
3. op. cit. p128

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORK?

REFLECTIONS FROM CHURCH HISTORY

Dr. Ian Shaw, Cardiff

This is the fourth article we have published on the subject of social action. In Issue 2, Alan Gibson provided us with an agenda for evangelical discussion and in the following issue Ian Stringer argued convincingly that it is through the responsible exegesis of the Bible that our attitude to social action should be formed and developed. "Exegesis", he warned, "is hard work. There are no valid short cuts" (p30, Issue 3). 'Issues in Social Ethics' was the title of an article by Peter Milsom in Issue 5 in which he summarized papers given at the 1980 B.E.C. Study Conference.

In this article, Dr. Shaw, Lecturer in Sociology in University College, Cardiff, provides us with an historical perspective on the subject.

In what ways ought Christians to consider and act upon their responsibility to demonstrate concern for the social welfare of their fellow human beings? One approach to this question is to ask how Christians in previous generations tried to find an answer.

Church History should not be looked to as a store of blue-prints which simply require copying in our own day. Our predecessors may have made mistakes. Moreover, there are special characteristics in our own situation. The whole state welfare apparatus will inevitably influence the way we work out applications of biblical principles which we share with earlier generations.

Having acknowledged these limitations, there remain good reasons for trying to outline the qualities of evangelical social concern in earlier years. It is too easy to assume that Christians today are wrestling with the relationship between social concern and the gospel for the first time. A realisation that this is not the case will safeguard against the opposite pitfalls of heady optimism and conservative negativism. These extremes probably represent the twin dangers facing evangelical believers in negotiating this question. On the one hand there is a tendency to loosen the biblical moorings, evidenced in some of the neo-evangelical writings on social issues. On the other hand, there is still in evidence a fundamental mistrust of expressions of social concern, by those who "would have it believed that zeal and public spirit cannot be indulged without vital and practical religion suffering and dying away" (Archibald Bruce, 1746-1816). Both attitudes spring from a lack of biblical realism, and are uninformed by the invigorating, yet cautionary stimulus of church history.

The aim of this article is to differentiate and do justice to the attempts of Christians, with greater or lesser success, and with more or less conscious intent, to wrestle

with their responsibilities to evidence concern for the social welfare of others. In particular, we are concerned to identify the various ways in which they struggled to elucidate the sense and extent to which a distinct Christian approach to the problem was needed.

Optional Extra?

Evangelical Christians of previous centuries typically worked on the assumption that being a Christian entailed a more or less distinct Christian approach to the care of the needy. More precisely, it was not to be regarded as an optional extra or fringe activity for those who had the time, inclination and means. Such activity as they engaged in was characterised by a belief that specifically Christian and biblical justifications could be offered for Christian social concern. Arising out of this, they generally believed that their social work practice was or ought to be distinctively Christian in some way, with regard both to the objectives, and, in some cases, the specific methods adopted. Though they did not always regard social intervention as a necessarily controversial activity, in the same sense as preaching the gospel, they typically were aware of important differences between themselves and some other broadly Christian patterns of social intervention.

Auguste Francke was the founder, in the late seventeenth century, of an institution for the residential care of children, which was to be admired and imitated for the next two hundred years. The following quotation from a sermon illustrates the centrality of social concern for Christians of his generation.

"If I find my mind never so well disposed to relieve the wants of the poor and necessitous; yet in all this, I do no more than barely answer my duty. I own God almighty to be my Lord, and my Sovereign, and the supreme disposer of all that I have. And since He hath commanded me to exercise charity to the poor; why should I be so bold as to rebel against His holy will, by withdrawing that from the poor, which He will have

bestowed upon them? God forbid!"

(Francke)

The example of Francke particularly influenced Jonathan Edwards in the following century. Edwards, not a man to use words lightly, wrote as follows:

"It is ... our bounden duty, as much a duty as it is to pray, or to attend public worship, or anything else whatever ... I know of scarce any duty which is so much insisted on, so pressed and urged upon us, both in the Old Testament and New, as this duty of charity to the poor"

(Edwards)

'Grounds Peculiarly Christian'

Not only was such responsibility regarded as a focal one for the Christian, it was believed that it could and should be justified on specifically Christian grounds.

Recent attempts to find grounds for a Christian involvement in society have centred on the doctrines of creation and common grace, in the hope that they will provide a basis for expression of concern which is not restricted to narrowly 'spiritual' issues, but which finds its impetus from characteristics which are common to Christians and non-Christians. This is a comparatively new avenue of thought, and for those who are accustomed to think in such terms, we find ourselves in strange territory when we look at the way Christians of previous generations accounted for their social involvement. While one occasionally comes across references to the 'manishness' of humanity as a justification, few attempted to work out a biblical doctrine.¹

Far more common were justifications of social concern grounded in the work of Christ, and the effect they thought this ought to have on their lives. Needless to say, there are sharp limitations on the extent to which such grounds could be shared with unbelievers.

Christ's Example

II Corinthians 8:9 was a favourite text in the argument. If Christ loved us and died for us when we were poor, and did so ungrudgingly, then we are to pattern ourselves on his example. We are to love one another as Christ has loved us. This is a new commandment, a distinctively Christian one. Christ's love involved self demand, to people far below him, who could offer no recompense, when they were opposed to him. Our social concern should exhibit the same qualities. It was, to use Charles Hodge's words on "grounds peculiarly Christian" that such concern was to be enforced.

Proof of New Life

While the example of Christ was the major justification, it was not the only one. Although it figured much less largely than we might anticipate, social concern was regarded as one evidence of regeneration. Thus, speaking from James 1:27, Charles Spurgeon insisted that "this charity ... must be manifested if we would have 'pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father'".

Christian Ties

Most earlier writers insisted also on the special responsibility which exists between fellow Christians. While related to all, there was a special relation to other Christians. So, in response to a social gospel it could be argued, "the true brotherhood, according to Christian teaching, is the brotherhood of the redeemed" (Machen).

Christian Social Work

Those holding such views believed also that their social work practice was, or ought to be, distinctively Christian in some way. Thus, George Muller, who made residential provision for children left with neither parent in 19th century Bristol was always ready to insist that

"The chief and primary object of the work was not the temporal welfare of the children, nor even their spiritual welfare, but to show before the whole world

and the whole church of Christ that ... God is ready to prove Himself as the living God ... so that we need not go away from Him to our fellow men."

(Muller, a)

To state the position more formally, it was believed that Christian ethics were not entirely congruous with systems of social welfare current at any given time. Neither was it regarded as satisfactory to view Christian values as supplying a topping up operation for basic human values. Because Christian ethics have their own distinct source, they would, it was believed, produce their own independent results.²

Consistent with these views, people like Muller and Spurgeon were prepared to stand aside from others when necessary. It was not that they saw themselves as having nothing in common with other groups. They were ready to be influenced by patterns of care then current in society, and, at the laying of the foundation stone for Stockwell in 1867, Spurgeon declared that "On these occasions we do not meet either as Church-people or as Dissenters. When we have to help orphans, or to take care of the poor, we lay aside all that." (Spurgeon). They were well aware that the offence of the cross was not a matter which primarily applied to this sphere.

Yet apart from the need "to show our love of truth by truthful love" (Spurgeon) in situations when the gospel is under fire, there does occur an occasional example where practice is positively influenced by a specifically Christian frame of reference. A significant example of this occurs in George Muller's handling of discipline problems at Ashley Down - significant because almost certainly unconscious. Various accounts in the Dismissals Book kept by Muller illustrate his patience in an age of severe discipline, and suggest by the phraseology that Muller is drawing on the biblical model of excommunication. One boy was dismissed five years after entering the home. Despite delinquency, boasted activities with a gang of thieves and absconding on two previous occasions, he had until then been received back, "hoping that by bearing with him,

admonishing him, speaking to him privately, praying with him, and using a variety of other means, he might be reclaimed". Then, "solemnly, with prayer, before the whole establishment (he was) expelled, if by any means this last painful remedy might be blessed to him. Yet we follow even this poor young sinner with our prayers". (Muller, b)

The reason for relating the foregoing is not to suggest that Christians should opt out of social work in favour of private, independent Christian social work practice. Though there is clearly a case for healthy Christian activity within the voluntary sector, such a conclusion would be a far too simplistic transfer to the 1980's of forms of activity born in very different circumstances. Yet this glance at evangelical involvement demonstrates the close intertwining that ought to exist between practice and purposes.

Social Work and the Gospel

What is the relation between social concern and preaching the gospel? How does social work relate to 'good works', and what are legitimate motives for engaging in it? Again, should help be given entirely indiscriminately, without regard for the character, attitude or religion of the recipient, or are some more 'deserving' than others?

These are live issues throughout the field of social welfare. To many, the answers given by Christians, at least until recently, seem at once obvious, worthy of little attention and, on the whole, thoroughly disagreeable. It is widely assumed that social concern was demonstrated, if at all, only as a bait for preaching the gospel. Worse still, it is believed that 'good works' were the result of morbid introspection, and a desire to prove eligibility for eternal bliss.

Demarcation Disputes

Without doubt, a close relationship was envisaged between social involvement and Christian witness, and the former was often made subordinate to the latter. This is plain

enough from the earlier part of this article, yet it does not tell the whole story. In the work of Thomas Chalmers, for example, there was a somewhat different emphasis. Chalmers, an important formative influence on the early development of social work, established a series of schemes for the relief and education of the poor of Glasgow and Edinburgh from 1819 onwards. He was acutely conscious of the abdication of Christian responsibility to the state poor law machinery, and the failure of the church to reach the working classes. In the 1840's he selected an area of about two thousand population in the worst part of Edinburgh. He divided the 411 families into twenty districts, and appointed a home visitor for each district. The significant point for our purposes is the insistence of Chalmers that the visitors were not to regard their activities as a kind of undercover evangelism. "You ladies", he remarks on one occasion,

"go about among the poor with a tract in one hand, and a shilling in the other. How can the eye be single? - it will keep veering from the tract to the shilling".

(Harvey)

There was, he felt, a want of compatability between the two objects and he kept them separate - not, of course, to shelve evangelism, but rather to strengthen the effectiveness of both his evangelism and his social concern. He may have felt the same misgivings concerning the broad generalisations about 'mission' that are popular in our own day.

Pay Offs

It is a commonplace to play down any personal benefits received by the social worker from his own practice. While a stress on the reciprocal nature of social work help is largely absent from present day thinking, people in earlier periods were less squeamish in recognising such benefits as part of social work. Indeed, Christians often openly used such arguments to encourage others to help the social outcasts of their day.

On the question of benefits in the world to come, they had

little to say, regarding it as self evident on the basis of texts like Matthew 10:42 and Luke 14:13-16. George Whitefield's comment, "I hope to be rich in heaven by taking care of orphans on earth", would have received ready assent, without any thought that motives might be questioned.

Rewards in the present life were a more vexed question. Some, though disclaiming any absolute guarantee, would claim biblical support for the view that we do not ordinarily lose out by giving to others, quoting verses like Proverbs 11:24-25; 28:27, Deuteronomy 15:10 and II Corinthians 9:6-8. Hesitations hedged this assertion. Jonathan Edwards insisted on two reservations. First, it is the inward motive that counts, not the outward act. "A man may give something to the poor, and yet be entitled to no promise, either temporal or spiritual ... What he does may be more a manifestation of his covetousness and closeness, than anything else." Second, the fulfilment of duty is not to be viewed as the way to happiness and prosperity in absolute terms.

"If you expected to meet with no trouble in the world, because you gave to the poor, you mistook the matter. Though there be many and great promises made to the liberal, yet God hath nowhere promised that they shall not find this world a world of trouble" (Edwards)

Other writers expressed still stronger reservations. Francke insisted that, "Whatsoever I do is duty and no merit", and he was anxious that the Christian should not

"rest in these lower motives to the duty of Charity. For these being in some degree bent toward temporal interest they may yield some encouragement to a weak beginner in the Practice of Piety, but ought never to be the only or principal Motive to a more grown Christian"

Some Christians doubtless place too much emphasis on the personal benefit of social service, but a naive altruism is an equally poor guide.

The Deserving Poor

"Something more is necessary than to compassionate the poor - he must also consider them; and let him learn at length that there is indeed a more excellent way of charity than that to which his own headlong sensibilities have impelled him"

This need, in Chalmers' words, to 'consider' the poor was argued urgently in the latter part of the last century. Indiscriminate charity was denounced and 'disinterested social service' replaced it. However, criticism of indiscriminate almsgiving is older than the Reformation. Lollards, the Reformers, Puritans and the founders of the SPCK all made appeal to similar motives.

Throughout this century, however, this position has been roundly criticised as little more than a rationalisation for tightfisted self interest. A brief review, however, of the evidence demonstrates readily that Christians have rarely, if ever, conformed to the stereotype of limiting social concern to those who on moralistic criteria are judged to be deserving - despite widely held opinions to the contrary.

Edwards, because of his characteristically thorough treatment of the question, must serve as our example.' Having argued the case for Christian charity, and encouraged his hearers to implement it, he deals with a number of hypothetical objections, one of which is that "he is an ill sort of person; he deserves not that people should be kind to him". He disagrees. We are to love our neighbour as ourself, and our enemy counts as our neighbour. He refers to his favourite justification, in reminding them to love as Christ has loved.

He then anticipates the further objection that they are not obliged to give until they know that the poverty is not due to idleness or prodigality. This replies Edwards, was the excuse that Nabal used for not showing hospitality to David. "There be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master" (I Samuel 25:10). This should "discountenance too great a scrupulosity as to the object on whom we bestow our charity, and the making of this merely an objection against charity to others, that we do

not certainly know their circumstances". While we are not to be naive, yet "it is better to give to several that are not objects of charity, than to send away empty one that is". Edwards would probably favour some sort of means test in our present system, but he is no advocate of repressiveness. Neither would he have countenanced a laissez-faire approach. "It is not to devise liberal things if we neglect all liberality till the poor come a begging to us".

But suppose, his imaginary questioner asks, that we have good evidence for idleness or prodigality. Even here, Edwards argues, the Christian is left with room to manoeuvre. There may be physical or mental handicap ('want of a natural faculty to manage affairs to advantage') and 'that is to be considered as his calamity' and not his fault. Furthermore, if there is a fault, it is not our responsibility to punish by withholding help. We are to apply the principle, "as Christ hath loved us" once more. This applies even in extreme cases of "vicious idleness and prodigality" over a long period prior to our intervention. If there is hope that the attitude of the recipient may change, then the customary analogy still holds good - "We foolishly and perversely threw away those riches with which we were provided". And in the most pessimistic situations, where help is thought certain to be of no avail, we still have responsibility to the family members. To those who argue that this is only a backdoor way to benefiting the offending family member, Edwards says that the command to help is 'positive and absolute', and we still are to relieve family members.

Edwards clearly rejects the use of the 'deserving' principle in determining help given. While he retains the belief that individuals may be responsible for their hardship, pronouncement or even the ratification of deserts is not the job of fellow members of society.

Evangelical Retrenchment

The more pervasive concern of earlier Christians with the social dimensions of their faith serves to illustrate and confirm a recurrent theme of criticism, to the effect that twentieth century evangelicalism has been marked by a

negative and defensive attitude to social involvement. We have become so far cut off from earlier Christian activity and thinking in this sphere - partial and incomplete as it was - that some have reached the altogether false conclusion that evangelicalism never has had anything distinctive to offer. It is not a big step from that position to conclude that there is something in the heart of evangelicalism which makes it impossible to develop a basis for social action. Hence the implication in much writing that evangelical social involvement has an 'in spite of' quality, carried out in the face of fundamental doctrines which tend to lead elsewhere.

That the fundamental thrust of such a conclusion is untenable should by this point have become clear. Christians have worked out biblically based rationales for social action, and have derived such rationales directly from the heart of their understanding of scripture.

Why did such thinking come to a halt? The question is complex, and lies beyond our scope. However, as a corrective to some common criticisms, we should observe that the evangelical response to the preaching of a social gospel was, if not excusable, more understandable than frequently implied. The criticism is commonplace. In rejecting the totality of liberal theology, evangelicals lost the liberal emphasis on social issues, thus throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Typical of the targets of such complaints were the immediate forerunners of the IVF who, against the spread of higher criticism reasserted the central features of the gospel and added,

"we can see nothing in scripture or in history to lead us to believe that social work on any other foundation lasts to eternity, or is to the glory of God" (Johnson)

In an interesting article, Walter argues that, because of these deficiencies, evangelicalism drifted towards conservatism, secularism and theological liberalism. The suggested sequence of events is significant. However, much of the available evidence suggests the reverse order of events - the decline of evangelicalism preceded rather than followed the rising stress on social issues from the mid

nineteenth century onwards. Rather than seeing a lack of theological framework for social involvement as an occasion of drift, we should start by observing the consequences of a failing grip by Christians on doctrines at the heart of the gospel. To adopt the unintended euphemisms of one writer, it was the 'mellowing' of evangelicalism, and the emergence of theologically more 'progressive' evangelicals that heralded an extension of certain kinds of social work.
(Heasman)

Present day analyses of social work motivations need to take greater account of social service as an alternative to, and perhaps a form of rejection of Christian faith. In the light of such developments it was more than understandable that evangelicals should look askance at substantial elements of emerging social work - it was virtually inevitable. Having admitted as much, the precise character of this negative reaction so far has been inadequately documented, and may well have been overstated. There were Christians around in the inter-war period who were careful to assert that the biblical stress on the worship of God as the chief end of man, "does not mean that in the Christian view the worship of God is ever to be carried on to the neglect of service rendered to one's fellow-men"
(Machen)

Conclusion

Most of the illustrative material on Christian social involvement in this article has been drawn from periods when evangelicalism was a powerful force in society. The Christian response to issues of social concern, contrary to much opinion, appears to have been at its strongest in periods when a thoroughgoing, conservative evangelicalism was in evidence. To state the principle more generally, the Christian response to social welfare reflects the general condition of evangelicalism at a given time. Likewise, divisions in evangelical attitudes to social issues need to be seen in the context of more general divisions between evangelicals. The coherent evangelicalism of the earlier part of this century bred a certain stance on welfare issues. Evangelicalism in the last decade has fragmented into charismatic, neo-evangelical and reformed

groups, thus producing a corresponding division over the Christian response to social involvement.

This historical survey of Christian writing and action should not lead us to the conclusion that no common ground exists between Christians and unbelievers. Indeed, we should be prepared to look for common cause in unexpected places. Yet some of the people mentioned in this chapter have a lot to teach us, at points where the present renaissance of evangelical interest is weakest. Their argument from scripture is strong. While God's creatorship is used in the Bible as a motive to helping the poor (Proverbs 14:31; 17:5. Job 31:13-23), it is not put forward as the sole or even predominant motive for the Christian. Christ's humanity, God's sovereign election, the evidence of sanctification and, perhaps most of all, the example of God's grace in sending Christ, are all present (Matthew 25:40, James 2:5, I John 3:17,18, II Corinthians 8:9, John 13:24; 15:17). Neither are we to make a strong disjunction between the two, as if God's creation and redemption are two parallel purposes that co-exist but never coincide.

While earlier Christians have attempted biblical justifications for their activities, their emphasis was first and foremost, on the importance of living as a Christian. Christians engaged in social work are too prone to regard themselves as falling into a special category, and having special problems which the local church is ill-equipped to deal with. Alternatively, it is implied that they have something special to offer the church. In either case there is a danger of inflated notions of what the Christian social worker can offer, and the risk of injured self pity at not being appreciated.

In conclusion, we should reiterate the danger of lifting the specific form of earlier Christian solutions wholesale into the late twentieth century. Changing patterns of welfare provision in our society mean that, while voluntary social work plays a large and even increasing part, many Christians wishing to practice social work are likely to train on government sponsored courses for employment in local authority agencies. I would guess that a high proportion of churches known to readers of this magazine have

at least one of their members with social work experience in the public sector.

Second, there is always the danger of investing the predominant attitudes of the day with Christian sanction. We have indicated as much in earlier discussion. In our own day there is a too ready use by Christians of terms like 'deserving' and 'undeserving'. How many of us would be willing to work out the principles stated by Edwards? Further, there is a related tendency to regard official decisions as always right, and to suspect that interest in social reform springs from a basic questioning of God ordained state authority.

Finally, there is a need for Christians to work at the positive aspects of present day secular social work, and to imitate where appropriate. Cause for Concern (Christian Concern for the Mentally Handicapped) is a case in point, where Christians have rightly benefitted from the movement towards care of the mentally handicapped in the community. (Indeed, in the writer's estimation they might carry the principle still further).

To refuse to take this line cannot be defended on the grounds of preserving Christian principle. We have argued more than once that the form in which Christian principles are to be expressed in the area of social concern needs freshly working out in every generation. There is a regulative principle governing church order, but not one for our social responsibilities.

Failure to recognise the manifestations of common grace in the welfare activities of unbelievers can have detrimental effects on Christian work and witness. There have been periods in the present century when, to a greater or lesser extent, the successors of George Muller and Charles Spurgeon have allowed loyalty to what they believed to be a founding ideal to blind them to a hardening of the arteries of Christian social outreach.

Yet, while we cannot copy in our own day the answers given by earlier Christians, they do provide sufficient stimulus both to warn us off wholesale disregard, and to strive to emulate their sensitivity to biblical demands.

Notes

1. Edwards himself is a partial exception: "Men are made in the image of our God, and on this account are worthy of our love". Deuteronomy 15:7 and Leviticus 25:35 was his biblical basis. (Edwards)
2. I have tried elsewhere, through a discussion of the idea of vocation, to illustrate that this approach is not barren. (Shaw)
3. Others could be cited. Francke urged contemporaries to "more regard the present want of the poor than be overnice about enquiring into their worth and dignity" Chalmers warned his elders "to be in the ready attitude of prepared and immediate service for all cases and for all applicants in the first instance".

References

- J Edwards, Christian Charity, in Works, Vol II, Banner of Truth, 1974
- A H Francke, Charity to the Poor, in Sermons
- C Harvey, Church Social Work, Heatherbank Press, 1974
- K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, Bles, 1962
- D Johnson, Contending for the Faith, Inter-Varsity Press, 1979
- J G Machen, Christianity and Liberalism, Victory Press, n.d.
- G Muller (a), Annual Report of Scripture Knowledge Institution, 1842
- G Muller (b), Register of Dismissals, Ashley Down Orphanage
- I Shaw, Justifying Social Concern, Christian Graduate, 1974, 27
- C H Spurgeon, Report of Laying of Foundation Stone at Stockwell Orphanage, 1867
- J A Walter, Social Concern, Christian Graduate, 1975, 28

* * * * *

BOOK REVIEWS

JAMES BARR AND THE BIBLE - CRITIQUE OF A

NEW LIBERALISM

by Dr Paul Wells.

Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co. 1980. 406pp \$12.00

This is the book to which Dr Wells referred in his article entitled 'Perspectives on Barr's Theology' in issue No.4 of this journal, and that article should have created an eager anticipation for this book. If that was your response to what Dr Wells wrote last year, then, to say the least, this book will not disappoint you. It will however, make demands of every reader. This is only to be expected from what is part of a doctoral research programme but careful attentiveness will be more than repaid.

The importance of this book arises from two facts. First, and most obviously, it is a book about the Bible i.e. its nature, status and meaning. The cruciality of Scripture in preserving and promoting genuine Christianity in every age needs no emphasising in this journal, and Dr Wells is fully aware of this. Secondly, and this is the distinctiveness of this book about Scripture, the subject is dealt with in a truly contemporary setting i.e. in terms of the writings of a living and influential theologian. Professor Barr has for thirty years given attention to the interpretation of the Bible and its status. As a result Dr Wells has supplied us with a theological study on the current doctrine(s) about Holy Scripture, complete with bibliographies.

Professor Barr has become known again among evangelicals for his attempted demolition job on 'Fundamentalism' (cf. the review of his book by the Editor in issue No.2 of this journal). What is not as widely known about him, however, is that in his various writings over the years Barr has criticised other approaches to the Bible. In fact, he has subjected the two major "Biblical" theological movements of the century viz. Neo-Orthodoxy and the Biblical Theology Movement (BTM hereafter) to lengthy and scholarly criti-

cism. Dr Wells presents this material.

The basis of Barr's critique of both Neo-Orthodoxy and the BTM is one and the same as his charge against 'Fundamentalism'. It is his objection to any a priori dogmatic assumption about the nature and status of the Bible being made, and what these three approaches to the Bible do have in common, in spite of the important differences between them, is that they regard the Bible as related to divine revelation. This is anathema to Barr as he regards this association as not only not borne out by exegetical study, but as being the means by which true exegesis is prevented and Scripture not allowed to "speak freely".

BARR and NEO-ORTHODOXY

Barr's evaluation of Barth and J.K.S.Reid is presented in terms of a critique of the Christological analogy. Briefly this refers to the claim that the union between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ provides us with a way of combining a regard for the "revelational" aspect or function of the Bible with a recognition of its limitations and even fallibility of its human recording. Barr rejects this on the ground that any tie-up with revelation depreciates the human element in Scripture, and prevents it from being fully regarded. Indeed Barr claims that there is only one element in Scripture viz. the human, and authority is conveyed through that. He therefore suggests a different analogy for our thinking regarding Scripture:

"the true analogy for the Scripture as the Word of God is not the unity of God and Man in the incarnation; it is the relation of the Spirit of God to the people of God" (p39)

So Barr's analogy is pneumatological-ecclesiological i.e. the Bible in the Church where the Spirit dwells and is active. This has far reaching consequences as Dr Wells indicates.

BARR and THE B.T.M. and 'FUNDAMENTALISM'

Wells gives the major part of his second chapter to a presentation of Barr's negative critique of the BTM but he also includes a reference to his "vigorous polemic" on

'Fundamentalism'. While Barr dislikes the way in which both these approaches appeal to the authority and unity of the Bible as if that were incontrovertible, he unleashes broadsides against both in terms of their hermeneutical methods. Wells summarises Barr's method as follows:

"Firstly, as an implication of the human character of the Bible, a sustained effort is made to align methods of interpretation of this text with those used presently in parallel disciplines. Biblical semantics must learn from modern linguistics; historical research must be practised without according any special privileges to this text. There is an effort here to put biblical research back in contact with other fields of learning. Secondly, there is an equally sustained effort to maintain the freedom of these methods against the entry of considerations of normativity which hamper their efficacy.(!)" (p44)

There is a very illuminating discussion here of the features of the BTM and its links with Neo-Orthodoxy supported by some important and accessible bibliographical references in the footnotes. Barr's critique is based on "the illusion of the distinctiveness of biblical language", "the distinction between Hebrew and Greek thought as used in modern Biblical theology", "the correlation of language and thought patterns", and "the problem of history" i.e. Heilsgeschichte.

With regard to 'Fundamentalism' Barr regards it as a "tradition dominated religion" in spite of all its claims and protestations to the contrary. This is what Barr has argued in 'FUNDAMENTALISM' and Wells' discussion at this point is also a comment on that book. Barr claims that a prior commitment to inerrancy is the fundamentalist's tradition. This belief is the authority not the Bible. The Bible is fitted in to the tradition by whatever method of interpretation yields the desired result. (We do well to examine our interpretation in the light of this charge.) Certainty is therefore not grounded on the Bible much less does it arise out of the Bible. Wells' introduction and use of the doctrine of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit at this point is crucial. This doctrine needs to be understood and re-habilitated today.

The stage is now set for a presentation of Barr's own treatment of Scripture. This appears in the two chapters entitled "Analysis of the Present Status of the Bible", and "Reconstruction: James Barr's Rational View of the Status of the Bible". In the first of these chapters Barr is still depicted in inter-action with the three theological approaches mentioned over their views of the Bible's authority. His attack is directed at the Revelation-Scripture associations of these views. He claims these links are assumed not proven exegetically and not even explained theologically i.e. the relation between the divine and the human especially in terms of words. For Barr, Scripture's authority is relational and hierarchical i.e. "it relates the various sources of authority to each other and orders them in their relation to us", and it is functional i.e. in terms of what impresses the reader. Barr proposes a distinction between "hard" and "soft" views of authority. A hard view regards the Bible as authoritative and generally applicable before interpretation; a soft view withholds such a recognition until such a sense is conveyed after interpretation to a reader.

From pages 159-204 Wells presents Barr's views on a number of important subjects germane to the discussion. This section is illuminating and forceful. Here Barr's views on revelation, personal and propositional; verbal inspiration; the autographs, inerrancy, the unity of the Bible and its theology are all considered, discussed and commented on. Wells sums up Barr's basic approach as follows:

"The tendency in Barr's critique is to detach the human elements of the religious tradition from the continuity with revelation and seek to explain their significance apart from a revelational model." (p159)

This quote supplies the key to the contents of the second of the chapters referred to above where Barr's views of the nature and status of the Bible are presented positively. The cardinal principle is that the Bible is human. How then can the uniqueness of the Bible be explained in a rational way in a secular anti-authoritarian world? Barr's answer is in terms of Tradition - multiplex, developing, continuing; behind, in and beyond Scripture in the Church in each age. This is where his pneumatological-

ecclesiological analogy comes in. (It is also where the ecumenical pre-occupation with Tradition and traditions vis-a-vis sola scripture looms up!)

A good introduction to this chapter is found in Dr Wells' article already referred to. In essence, Barr's position is twofold. First, the Bible points to a historical process of fully human reflection on knowledge about God already possessed and it is not even a witness to a revelation of God in events in time-space history that he might be known, let alone a revelation of God in word as well as deed for the same purpose. This process went on behind the Bible, in and between each Testament, and it goes on beyond the Bible in the Church of succeeding ages. This process of consideration and expression takes place in the context and under the influence of factors of general knowledge existing at any given time. It is fully human. Secondly, the Bible is also a classic example of how faith in the God of Israel and Jesus of Nazareth may (not should) express itself at any time. For the process of reflection goes on in a similar way outside the Bible still. Barr writes in words which could come from a Roman Catholic or an Orthodox -

"The relation of the biblical writers and traditionists to God through the Spirit is thus not basically other than that of the church today in its listening to God." (p233 - underlining mine)

Among the people of God this process is somehow - Barr leaves it quite vague - guided by the Spirit. What can safeguard this against the Roman claim for the development of dogma?

While Wells attributes to Barr as much as possible in terms of a genuine desire to let the Bible speak freely, he does not hesitate to bring some severe criticisms against his position. In conclusion he presents his own exposition of the divine-human inter-relationship in the Bible, and this strong statement is worthy of being meditated on. The subtitle of this book "Critique of a New Liberalism" indicates the nature of Barr's position. Omitting the divine one cannot end anywhere else.

Hywel R. Jones (Wrexham)

G.W.WENHAM, THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS, Hodder and Stoughton

R.K.Harrison, LEVITICUS, Inter Varsity Press

S.H.Kellogg, THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS, Klock and Klock

For a long time the preacher and student of the book of Leviticus has been severely handicapped by the paucity of commentary volumes. Bonar's somewhat fanciful work (published by the Banner of Truth) and Snaith's unsatisfactory New Century Bible commentary have stood almost alone. However, in the last year a radical change has taken place with the publication of the three volumes under review - the new edition of Kellogg's work (originally produced in 1899 as one of the 'Expositor's Bible' series and still in evidence second hand); the long-awaited book in the New International Commentary Old Testament series by Gordon Wenham and the Tyndale O.T. contribution by R.K.Harrison.

Of these, Wenham's excellent volume is undoubtedly the most useful and all-round contribution. Taking full advantage of much recent research and in an area familiar to him (Wenham did his Ph.D at Kings College, London on Deuteronomy), he leads his reader into the heart of the message of the book without resorting to the allegorical interpretations of many of the earlier commentators. Although he fudges the question of Authorship, arguing for a "mediating position" (c.p. Harrison below), there are several very valuable sections in the introduction, especially that entitled "Leviticus and the Christian" (p32-37). In this he seeks to get to grips with the message of the book for Christians, working out the hermeneutical principles involved. This is a distinct 'plus' since all too often in recent O.T. commentaries no attention is given to this and the student is left uncertain as to the relevance and meaning of the text for today. Especially in view of the freshness of his methodology a brief summary of his argument is probably useful. Wenham begins by observing the difficulties involved in the traditional threefold division of the O.T. legal material. However, he notes:

(1) that the basic principles of behaviour are essentially

the same in both testaments,

(2) that the theological setting (covenant) of the ethical imperatives is similar, viz. a) both covenants were arrangements of Divine grace; b) both involved law; c) both also involved blessing and curse.

(3) that the N.T. not only accepts the "moral law" of the O.T. but it reiterates the basic theology of that covenant of which law forms a part.

(4) that although less often quoted in the N.T. than "moral law", "civil" laws are treated as equally authoritative. Moreover, the distinction between these two types of laws is seen as artificial because of the arrangement of the material. Rather, he says, "instead of distinguishing between moral and civil laws, it would be better to say that some injunctions are broad and generally applicable to most societies, while others are more specific and directed at particular social problems of ancient Israel." These latter laws are not, however, irrelevant to us. He adds, "In this commentary the following position is assumed; the principles underlying the O.T. are valid and authoritative for the Christian, but the particular applications found in the O.T. may not be." (p35)

(5) The Decalogue, he says, "express pure principles in very broad terms without detailed application. They are not laws for judges to administer. Human judges could never enforce the tenth commandment, for example. Rather the ten commandments enshrine the religious and moral principles that should inspire and guide every aspect of Israel's national life." (p36)

(6) The Decalogue does not exhaust the moral and religious principles of the O.T., e.g. the protection of the weakest members of society is not included.

He concludes, therefore, "it is the underlying principles that should bind the Christian, not the specific applications found in the O.T. ... It is misguided to try to apply ... (a) ... law directly to our society."

As to "ceremonial" law, Wenham regards Leviticus as containing "theological models" for the N.T.'s self-under-

standing, "It was established by the same God who sent his Son to die for us; and in re-discovering the principles of O.T. worship written there, we may learn something of the way we should approach a holy God."(p37). This approach enables him to indulge in a restrained and controlled typology.

The present reviewer has been convinced for a number of years that a fresh approach is required to do justice to the legal material of the O.T. and that there is a need for a thorough Christian hermeneutic for all the O.T. laws. Wenham, developing the method of John Bright, (The authority of the O.T., Baker Book House) does seem to provide a methodology which, suitably refined, could well guide towards a resolution of these two needs.

In the main body of the commentary these principles are then applied. Each section of the text is dealt with as a whole (rather than verse by verse), an approach which helps considerably in distinguishing the wood from the trees. Usually each chapter closes with two sections which, a) relate the material to N.T. references and ideas and, b) draw out the Christian significance of the material. This is an excellent method and the book of Leviticus, so often closed to the Christian (except those interested in the sacrificial types) becomes the living word of God - so at least the reviewer found it.

By contrast, the contribution by Harrison is a little disappointing. As general editor of the NICOT he seems, properly, to have deliberately avoided apeing Wenham's work and attempted to provide a complimentary volume. Consequently, he has concentrated on verse by verse exegesis and there is a wealth of material which is supplementary to Wenham, especially on such items as food laws, leprosy, the identification of the various species of animals etc. which are all discussed in considerable detail. There is a somewhat overdone discussion of the hygienic character of the Levitical law which though interesting does not, to the reviewer's satisfaction, adequately explain its *raison d'etre*. Harrison seems uncertain of the hermeneutical principles a believer should bring to a study of Leviticus and consequently he tends only to observe obvious

(and often moralistic) analogies. As a result he tends to lose sight of the theology of the book and whole chapters tend to pass without any guidance for Christian application. There is, however, one feature which almost of itself warrants purchase of the book - a quite brilliant essay on Authorship and Date (p15-25) which comes down firmly for Mosaic authorship and provides the best short critique of liberal methodologies used in Pentateuchal study which the reviewer has ever seen.

Finally, we turn to Kellogg, a very useful contribution after the manner of the older conservative school. Taking a chapter or section at a time like Wenham, Kellogg insists (contra Bonar) that the first task of a commentator is to understand and explain what each passage meant in its original context. With balance and thoroughness he usually spends some considerable space involved in this pursuit. Allied to this is his rejection of allegorical interpretations - the "wax nose" method of interpreting which subjects the Bible to the imaginative whim of the expositor and provides no control. The effect of this is that while Kellogg indulges in extensive typology (much more so than Wenham), it is generally a legitimate deduction from the text, after the example of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Inevitably, the majority of the volume is occupied with the offerings (chapters 1-10, 16) the remainder of the book being dealt with rather superficially. Subject to the restraints of the traditional division of the O.T. legal material he tends to struggle for an application of the matter in the later chapters and in places is trivial and moralistic. Nevertheless, especially for the earlier chapters this book is a reliable and fruitful guide.

CONCLUSIONS

A review such as this has had to compare these three volumes and assess their relative value. However, while Wenham is undoubtedly the best, (unless one takes violent issue with his thoughtful and stimulating methodology) it is the reviewer's conviction that each of them have a distinct and complementary value. If you can only afford one, Wenham is your man. But if you are preaching, all three

together, with their differing strengths, provide almost everything needed for a faithful exposition of God's message to us in Leviticus.

Rev Stephen Dray MA BD (Brockley, London)

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY

Editors: J.D. Douglas and N. Hillyer.

Publisher: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980

3 volumes, 1776 pages, £13.95 per vol.

It is no easy matter to be asked to review 1800 pages in half as many words, particularly when the book is a dictionary of more than 2000 separate articles. All one can hope to do in such a review is to give the reader some idea of the character of the work and to encourage him to examine it more carefully for himself.

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY is a revision of THE NEW BIBLE DICTIONARY which was published by IVF in 1962. The text, though updated and revised is largely unaltered: the present dictionary (as is suggested by its title) is really little more than an illustrated version of its predecessor. It is therefore in the realm of appearance and of presentation that the two works differ most. THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY is printed on good quality paper and abounds in full colour illustrations. There are pictures of archaeological finds, of biblical flora and fauna and of biblical manuscripts. There are maps of the biblical world, plans of ancient cities and many helpful charts outlining biblical chronology or the family trees of Bible characters. It is strongly bound in three volumes and is therefore a lot easier to handle than its single volume predecessor. In short, it is a most attractive work and is a pleasure to use. THE NEW BIBLE DICTIONARY was a reference book which was taken down from the shelf, dusted off, and consulted when needed; THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY, while remaining a valuable reference book, also invites one to browse through its pages.

But, for all the attraction of the illustrations, we are surely far more concerned with the content of the text.

The general tenor of the work is scholarly yet conservative. The article by J C Whitcomb on the book of Daniel, (largely unchanged from 1962) includes an excellent defence of the book's authenticity. In days when the old liberal views concerning the date and authorship of Daniel are being embraced by 'evangelical' theologians the uncompromising article by Dr Whitcomb is heartening and welcome. There are many other excellent articles, both old and new. As an example of the latter I can recommend R J Bauckham's article on Eschatology which replaced the earlier article by G E Ladd.

One question that might be asked concerning THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY is whether the revision of the 1962 text and the replacement articles which appear in the present work represent a theological shift, and if so, in which direction? In my opinion there is some evidence of a theological shift. It is a shift away from biblical study which is pursued within the framework of a pre-established systematic theology. There is a greater desire to let each portion of Scripture speak in its own terms.

To give just one example of this: One of the main revisions in Meredith Kline's article on The Ten Commandments is the deleting of all references to the 'covenant of grace'. Kline is still just as insistent that the ten commandments are part of a covenant document by which God binds himself to his people and his people to him. Kline still believes that this covenant is founded in God's redeeming grace shown in bringing Israel out of Egypt. But he abandons the term 'covenant of grace' because this originated in a particular systematic conception of God's dispensational dealings with his people. This pre-conceived systematic notion of one, perfectly uniform, covenant of grace in Old Testament and New Testament is not particularly helpful in understanding the nature of the Sinaitic covenant. Consequently, the term 'covenant of grace' and its corresponding systematic are dropped in Kline's present article on the Ten Commandments.

The same movement away from the old 'Covenant Theology' approach to the Old Testament can be seen in the replacement of J A Motyer's article on Baptism with one by J Dunn

and the replacement of John Murray's article on Covenant with one by F C Fensham.

Some might fear that this tendency, this movement away from the interpretation of Scripture within the framework of the traditional Reformed systematic, is the first step upon the slippery slope to apostasy. This is a view which I cannot share. We are going through a time when the shape of our traditional Evangelical Theology is being vigorously re-examined and questioned. This, in itself, is no bad thing. Our desire, surely, is not simply to cling to a traditional understanding of the Bible - even if that is an evangelical tradition - but to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the Scriptures. Our theology, then, cannot be static, it needs to develop and to suffer reformation that it may become more thoroughly biblical. THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY may challenge some of our cherished traditional interpretations but it may also prove a most useful tool, by the aid of which we may develop a more profoundly biblical theology. Any book which thus encourages us to a more careful and detailed study of the Scriptures is to be welcomed.

Nevertheless, THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE DICTIONARY is not beyond criticism. For one thing, there is a reluctance to affirm that the Bible teaches anything definite concerning the origin of man. Whether one consults the article on Adam or that on Genesis, one finds the same verdict as that expressed by J A Thompson in his article on Creation when he writes, "The Bible is asserting that, however life came into being, God lay behind the process", it "neither affirms or denies the theory of evolution." This may be one view of the matter but it is by no means the only view. Other evangelical views ought at least to have received some acknowledgement.

More generally, the authors of this work have often avoided advocating views which would be thought beyond the pale in the world of non-evangelical biblical scholarship. In many places this has resulted in less than a militant defence of the distinctively evangelical view of the Scriptures.