
Book Reviews

New Testament Commentary Survey

D A Carson

IVP/Baker, Fourth Edition, 1993, pb, 92pp, £4.99

Here is a must for all preachers and serious students of the New Testament. Three earlier editions have been issued over the past twenty four years but this fourth edition has been recast with the purpose of providing 'theological students and ministers with a handy survey of the resources, especially commentaries, that are available in English to facilitate an understanding of the New Testament' (p 8). Dr Carson emphasises that he is an evangelical but 'many of the positive assessments offered... are in connection with books written from the vantage point of some other theological tradition...' He justifies this by declaring that the usefulness of a commentary, providing it is read critically, 'often turns on something other than the theological stance of its author'. An evangelical commentary, too, may be 'poorly written, or misinformed, or quick to import from other biblical passages truths that cannot rightly be found in the texts on which comment is being offered'. This survey, therefore, is a 'guide to commentaries, not orthodox'; it needs to be used with care.

The twelve pages of 'Introductory Notes' (pp 15-27) are helpful in dealing with the need for several types of commentary; individual commentaries or series, older commentaries, one-author sets. Preachers should particularly note that our main need is to establish and understand meanings

accurately. 'The issue at stake', insists Carson, 'is that of sheer faithfulness to the biblical message, rather than smuggling one's own ideas into the interpretation under the cover of the authoritative text'. This type of commentary is further distinguished in several ways. There are those which seek to establish the text and translation, choosing between variant readings and helps with Greek syntax and semantics. Then there are grammatical, linguistic commentaries which help to establish the meaning of words and phrases in their literary context. Theological commentaries 'set words and phrases in the wider context of chapters, books, corpora and canon'. Historical commentaries have their usefulness, too, as well as their dangers whereas other commentaries provide responsible guidance and stimulus in the area of practical application. 'Some of the older commentaries are exemplary in their concern to apply the Scriptures', but Carson warns, 'these hints and helps must be reviewed in the light of strictly exegetical considerations, for practical concerns can so control the text that no one hears the Word of God. Worse, the search for relevance frequently degenerates into the trite or the trivial' (p 17).

Should one buy individual commentaries or a whole series? Carson's advice is to go for individual ones on their merit because series are 'almost always uneven' whereas an author writes an individual volume because 'he or she has something to say that is worth saying'. Among the more substantial series, Carson singles out the IVP New Testament commentaries

(‘brief, simple and designed to be immediately nurturing... Howard Marshall on 1 Peter deserves special praise’, p 21), NEW CENTURY BIBLE (‘a few volumes offer excellent value for the money... some are dry’), NEW INTERNATIONAL BIBLICAL COMMENTARY (‘on the whole competent without being technical or overly long’), NEW INTERNATIONAL GREEK TESTAMENT COMMENTARY by Paternoster /Eerdmans (‘up-to-date, bibliographically almost exhaustive, exegetical and broadly within the evangelical tradition... for clergy and others well trained in Greek and exegesis, the series is one to watch’, p 22), PELICAN series (‘generally undistinguished.. a few quite outstanding’, e g Sweet on the Apocalypse), TYNDALE NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES (‘...many pastors profit... conservative, focuses most attention on explaining the meaning of the text... several of the volumes of this new edition, based on RSV or NIV are... outstanding’, pp 22-23). Concerning the WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY series, Carson sounds a necessary warning: ‘Do not let the “evangelical” label fool you: although some of the contributors sit comfortably within that tradition, in other cases the label applies only by the most generous extension’, (p 23).

With regard to one-volume multi-author commentaries, Carson reports that the well used but now ‘seriously dated’ (1970) NEW BIBLE COMMENTARY (IVP) will be replaced very shortly by ‘a new, completely rewritten edition based on the NIV’. Supplements to commentaries are also important. Guthrie’s NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION (IVP) is commended, as is the more recent

and compact AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT by Carson, Moo and Leon Morris. I have used the latter extensively in recent months and am impressed by its overall usefulness. For New Testament theology, among the books recommended are Gerhard Hasel’s NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY; BASIC ISSUES IN THE CURRENT DEBATE (Eerdmans), Guthrie’s NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY (IVP) and Leon Morris’s NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY (Zondervan: ‘... much briefer and more elementary’ p 33).

Pages 35-89 provide a survey of individual commentaries. I intend only to sample the survey by referring to four New Testament books which I have myself worked through and preached over the last three years.

Acts

I agree with Carson that ‘Acts is still not particularly well served by commentaries’ (p 51). For Carson, E Haenchen is ‘important for the really serious student... but an unsuitable starting-point for most preachers’. F F Bruce has written two commentaries on Acts but the one (NL/NIC, Eerdmans) ‘generally more useful to the preacher’ is out of print but the recently revised and enlarged one (IVP) on the Greek text ‘offers substantial technical information!’ Howard Marshall’s TNTC (IVP) is regarded by Carson as ‘very useful’, replacing the one by E M Blaiklock who is ‘amazingly thin on theology, for which coins and inscriptions are no substitute!’ R N Longenecker’s Expositor commentary is also given a high rating (‘quite excellent’) and J Alexander’s (BOT) is ‘a practical supplement’ (p 52) while Stott’s

volume on Acts is 'one of the best in the BST series' (IVP). However, a warning! 'Numerous thin expositions flood the market, but need take up no space on the preacher's shelf'.

Philippians

Carson has no hesitation in describing Peter T O'Brien's NIGTC (Paternoster) volume as 'by far the best commentary on the Greek text of Philippians... theologically rich... treatment of ... 2: 5-11 is superb' (p 68) while Moisés Silva's BECNT work is 'excellent for its relative brevity and especially strong in tracing the flow of the argument...' R P Martin's earlier work in the TNTC series is no longer available but is 'still worth obtaining' (p 69) and better than his most recent edition. Hendriksen is 'a solid, verbose and unexciting treatment'. Among the more popular studies, the best for Carson included Motyer's THE MESSAGE OF PHILIPPIANS (BST), James Boice's PHILIPPIANS (Zondervan) and John Gwyn-Thomas' REJOICE... ALWAYS! (BOT), a study in Philippians 4.

James

This epistle has captivated me again during the past months. Like Carson, R P Martin's WORD commentary would not be my 'first choice' (p 80) but I found Peter David's (NIGTC) work on the Greek text helpful in parts. Moo's TNTC is rightly praised but I still like to refer to the earlier edition written by R V G Tasker. I am grateful to Carson for alerting us to the UBS HELPS FOR TRANSLATORS by Robert G Bratcher on James, Peter and Jude which 'offers good value for money' (p 81). Popular commentaries on this epistle abound. Curtis Vaughan (Zondervan) 'is worth scanning' and Alec Motyer (BST) 'displays the strengths we have come to

expect from this series'. (What about Gordon Keddie's work, too, in the Welwyn series?) 'Useful' reprints include those by Robert Johnstone (BOT), Rudolf Stier (Kregel) and Thomas Manton's classic (BOT).

1 Peter

At the exegetical level, Carson regards J Ramsey Michaels (WBC) as 'the fullest commentary in English' while Peter David's is 'competent and clear' (p 82). For the Greek text, Carson maintains that E G Selwyn (1946: o/p) is still the standard work and 'most later commentaries have depended heavily on Selwyn'. J N D Kelly (BNTC/HNTC) on Peter and Jude 'is very useful... thoughtful and sensitive in elucidating the thought of the epistles ...' A M Stibbs (TNTC, 1959 and o/p) 'is full of practical insights' now replaced by Wayne Grudem who is 'always worth consulting' and his lengthy appendix on the 'spirits in prison' passage warrants the price of the book! I am glad Carson concurs with me that the 'best by far' of the popular commentaries is the BST one by Edmund P Clowney. Did you know that Martin Luther's commentary on the epistles of Peter/Jude has been reprinted by Kregel?

Pages 91-92 of this book indicate some 'Best Buys', that is, commentaries which may not be the 'best' but are 'good value for money...'

Carson's choice of commentaries is of course personal and we will not always agree either with his choice or rating of some works. However, this survey by an internationally respected New Testament scholar is competent; the coverage is both extensive and illuminating. Details of publishers, price and availability are also provided together with Carson's evaluation.

Carson's survey and analysis raise questions for us, too. How do we *choose* our commentaries? How well-equipped are preachers to launch into the exegesis of a New Testament book? Do we see the need for various types of commentaries? Are we endeavouring to read seriously about New Testament theology and background thus enriching our study and application of individual New Testament books? Again, do we know how to *use* commentaries? Or are we uncritical and governed by one commentary? Then there is the even more practical question. How can pastors, especially those on very low salaries, obtain some of these essential tools? Churches need to be imaginative and thoughtful here in giving generous book allowances to their pastors and ministerial students. Some of the books could also be bought by churches for their own libraries. By reading this book, churches as well as pastors may see afresh the importance of providing preachers with the tools and stimulus they need to preach the New Testament in all its richness, profundity and relevance. It is as an indispensable aid for New Testament studies.

Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell

edited by Nigel M de S Cameron

Paternoster/Baker, 1992, pb, 317pp, £7.99

'The creeping paralysis of universalism is rapidly gaining ground...' is the first statement in Trevor Hart's opening chapter, 'Universalism: Two distinct Types' and sets the tone for what follows in later chapters. This is an extremely important book but the chapter by John Wenham, 'The Case for Conditional Immortality' (chapter five) is disturbing while Kendall S Harmon's, 'The Case Against

Conditionalists: a response to E W Fudge' (chapter six) is timely. Chapters two, three and four are useful but mainly historical in character. For example, chapter two deals with 'Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus' while chapter three concentrates on 'Descensus and Universalism: Some Historical Patterns of Interpretation'. Although concentrating on early church history, both chapters contain valuable historical material relevant to the present debate concerning universalism and hell. Chapter four is an intriguing and even more relevant survey of 'The Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Debates about Hell and Universalism', especially in Britain, by David Powys. The usual range of positions advanced by theologians concerning the fate of the unrighteous is usually classified in three ways, namely, unending punishment, conditional immortality and universal salvation. Powys, on the other hand, insists that at least twelve modern positions should be acknowledged (p 95). Writers who are considered in some detail include Dean Farrar, Edward White and Henry Constable. In this account of the early challenge to the doctrine of eternal, conscious punishment, Powys illustrates 'the preponderance of broad theological and philosophical arguments and the minimal reference to biblical material' (p 128). The challenge and the positions derived from these arguments are traced by Powys to issues like:

- 'whether or not humanity is universally immortal;
- how human free will and divine sovereignty may both be protected;
- whether or not there is scope for post-mortem conversion;

the nature of divine response to the refusal of divine initiatives' (p 129).

Powys attempts to prove that this divergence is grounded in 'divergent presuppositions' with regard to these four issues. 'Presuppositions', he adds, 'had the capacity to determine whether and how the traditional doctrine was challenged and hence the way in which it was subjected to modification' (p 131). On this basis, he commends his hypothesis: 'the great majority of modern positions on the fate of the unrighteous may be classified and largely explicated in terms of presuppositionally-determined reactions against "traditional orthodoxy"' (p 131). As a way forward, he urges the elimination of all unjustified presuppositions, a new openness to the biblical data, a willingness to embrace and apply biblical convictions and presuppositions to the question, and if necessary, a willingness to move freely away from the traditional orthodoxy (p 135). Powys's personal position becomes clear at the end of the chapter when he laments the way in which 'the debate has been constrained by a pervasive though perverse allegiance to a questionable "orthodoxy"'. In chapter five, John Colwell offers Reflections on Barth's Denial of "Universalism" under the title, 'The Contemporaneity of the Divine Decision'. Colwell's aim is to review certain key elements in Barth's theology rather than defend them against the charge of universalism. Barth, he insists, 'both continually rejected the charge in relation to his own teaching and criticized universalism as taught by others' (p 139). The chapter is provocative, well-argued and informative; the now long-standing debate, as to whether

Barth was a universalist or not, continues.

Thomas F Torrance writes in chapter eight on 'The Singularity of Christ and the Finality of the Cross: The Atonement and the Moral Order' (pp 225-256). By 'singularity' Torrance understands 'the one unrepeatable particularity of his incarnate reality as God and man, Creator and creature, indivisibly united once and for all in one Person' (p 226). After discussing four implications of the singularity of Christ, the finality of the Cross is explored. Torrance strongly objects to any restriction concerning the extent of the atonement: '...universalism and limited atonement', he insists, 'are twin heresies which rest on a deeper heresy, the recourse to a logico-causal explanation of why the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ avails or does not avail for all people' (p 248).

'Are They Few That Be Saved?' is the question Paul Helm addresses in chapter nine. Assuming that not all will be saved, the author refers to aspects of the biblical teaching about hell which make it difficult for some people to accept. These aspects have to do with the *particularism* of heaven and hell. In the rest of the paper, Paul Helm examines some of the more interesting arguments which, 'if successful, serve to weaken the exclusivism and hence the particularism of the gospel' (p 259). John Hick's case against exclusivism is first considered before examining Scriptural teaching in the light of the views of Warfield and Shedd. In sketching 'Calvinistic universalism' with particular reference to Warfield, Professor Helm tries to demonstrate that 'historic, biblical Calvinism has on occasion felt the pull of universalism while not advancing so far as to embrace total universalism'. Before

concluding the chapter, Helm offers a 'defence and further elaboration' of Shedd's view that the Holy Spirit may use means other than Scripture in converting adults who remain ignorant of Jesus Christ (p 275) and anticipates six objections (pp 279-281). This chapter demands careful study and a detailed consideration both of the arguments Helm uses and the Scriptures he endeavours responsibly to understand and relate.

The final contribution is by Henri Blocher under the title, 'Everlasting Punishment and the Problem of Evil' (pp 283-312). Professor Blocher wrestles here with the charge that the doctrine of hell seems to aggravate the problem of evil. I am pleased that concerning hell, he sees 'no escape from the main tenets of traditional orthodoxy' (p 286); he further states that annihilationist arguments, set out recently by E W Fudge, 'come short of the proof needed' (p 287). Blocher insists: 'It remains unlikely that "death" and "destruction" in Biblical parlance should be construed as the extinction of existence, the adjective *aiionios* taken to mean only "final", or to apply to the effect of retribution rather than to the act, not to "*the punishing*" but to "*the punishment*". The language of Scripture, with its stereotyped metaphors, seems to insist on the durational, permanent character of the state of torment, and to exclude any later change, anything beyond the outcome of the last judgement. One can sense a paradox in the concept of permanence in destruction which the Bible "itself expresses when it speaks of "second death", "undying worm";' (pp 287-288).

A major part of this chapter is devoted to an examination of the way in which traditionalists defend the dogma of

hell. While the older emphasis fell on the claims of justice, one of the most modern popular arguments refers to human freedom. Interestingly, Blocher concludes that the thesis of sin continuing in hell 'is found nowhere in Scripture' and 'supporting reasons' are 'so weak'. This is altogether an extremely valuable chapter which touches in depth on some of the theological objections to the traditional doctrine of hell.

Finally, I want to refer to, and contrast, John Wenham's chapter (5), 'The Case for Conditional Immortality' and Kendall Harmon's, 'The Case Against Conditionalists: a response to E W Fudge' (chapter 6).

Wenham's chapter provides details of the way in which he himself was influenced by Basil Atkinson to accept conditionalism (pp 162-164) and he explains the background to his *THE GOODNESS OF GOD* (1973). Wenham is outspoken, strongly committed to his position but in places unfair. For example, he obviously regards E W Fudge's work, *THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES* as convincing and, almost it seems, unanswerable. One can go further. To what extent can Wenham be reasonably objective in his research of this subject when he insists that 'endless torment is a hideous and unscriptural doctrine which has been a terrible burden on the mind of the church for many centuries and a terrible blot on her presentation of the gospel. I should indeed be happy if, before I die, I could help in sweeping it away' (p 190). Most of Wenham's chapter is devoted to a classification and interpretation of the biblical data, an examination of passages relied on for endlessness of punishment together with a consideration of some objections to conditionalism. He states that 'the

nub of the whole debate is the question of the natural meaning of the texts...' (p 181). However, Wenham's treatment is brief and questionable; Revelation 14:11 'is the most difficult passage that the conditionalist has to deal with' (p179). The tone of the chapter, however, is one of contempt for the traditional teaching: for example, 'unending torment speaks to me of sadism, not justice... From the days of Tertullian it has frequently been the emphasis of fanatics. It is a doctrine which makes the Inquisition look reasonable. It all seems a flight from reality and common sense' (pp 187-188). Such sentiments, however, apply to conditionalism!

It is with relief and thankfulness that one reads Harmon's 'Case Against Conditionalism' in which he interacts with E W Fudge and his 1982 book, *THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES*. Kenneth Harman is currently completing his doctoral studies in Oxford on the recent history of the doctrine of hell and I have appreciated corresponding with him in recent months and sharing resources.

After dealing with the problem of definition (pp196-199), Harman turns to the problem of perspective. He suggests our attitude 'should be one of reverent scepticism about the validity of eventual annihilationism' (p 199) and that for two reasons. One is that 'many unbelievers have come to the conclusion that Jesus taught eternal punishment' and, two, that 'the great majority of the finest theologians in the church for the last twenty centuries have held to the traditional view' (p 200).

Harmon then divides Fudge's arguments concerning the biblical material, the intertestamental literature and the witness of Christian history

into four propositions which he helpfully assesses and criticises. Some of Harmon's conclusions are devastating. For example, 'Fudge's book is methodologically flawed since, when interpreting the New Testament passages, he over-emphasises the Old Testament background at the expense of the intertestamental literature. Fudge's thesis that the New Testament language shares the background of apocalyptic writings, but not its ideas, will not stand scholarly scrutiny' (pp206-207). Another weakness of Fudge's work, he claims, is exegetical: 'he often introduces a chronological lapse of time in New Testament passages which is not there in the texts themselves' (p210). Also, 'he fails to understand that the apocalyptic images used for the final doom of the ungodly have a single referent, and instead claims that different images refer to differing aspects of the wicked's final fate' (p 213). His conclusion is that 'more than anything else, conditionalism looks like an attempt to evade difficulties in the apostolic witness by wrapping up these problems in a neater package than that in which they came' (p 215).

In conclusion, Kendall Harmon discusses the question of what 'a proper understanding of hell should be' (p 215) and insists that a 'fully biblical theology of hell must do justice to 3 images of hell...' punishment, destruction and exclusion (p 216). The chapter is a valuable contribution to the present debate. One thing is clear. A lot of basic, competent work is still required on our part at methodological, exegetical and theological levels if we are to defend and also commend the traditional doctrine of hell against a growing number of evangelical critics.

Editor

Judgement and Promise

An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah

J G McConville

Apollos/Eisenbrauns, 1993, 208pp, £17.95

The deceptively simple title should not mislead readers into thinking that this book is a warm exposition of the message of Jeremiah. Although the author hopes that his book might help others to enjoy Jeremiah and to be confronted by the passion of the prophet, it is in fact a scholarly volume written by a professional Old Testament scholar for fellow academics. It is tightly argued and densely written, suitable at its lowest level for third years honours Biblical Studies students wrestling with modern critical studies in Jeremiah. McConville plunges straight into Redaction Criticism and theories of Deuteronomistic editorial activity. He interacts with recent scholarly opinion on Jeremiah at every level (Holladay, Thomson, Carrol, McKane, Nicholson etc). He compares the book of Jeremiah with Hosea and Deuteronomy, and contrasts it with the approach of the Deuteronomistic Historian. He cautiously argues that the book is in some sense a redaction of material originating in very different contexts, and yet brought together under a unifying theological principle. McConville deals with the whole range of Jeremiah topics, including oracles of judgment, oracles of salvation, the oracles against the nations, the "confessions" of Jeremiah, Jeremiah as author and Jeremiah in the prophetic tradition. This brief review cannot interact with the author's arguments: let it be said, however that this book is not an easy read. It would have been more user-friendly if the actual text of Jeremiah under discussion had been quoted more often, rather than giving

only references to chapter and verse. Whole blocks of material are compared and contrasted, which is a difficult exercise unless the reader has the text at his fingertips. Altogether, a demanding book, very useful for the student determined to work hard at the academic study of the theology and formation of the book of Jeremiah.

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Cranmer in Context

P N Brooks

Lutterworth, 1989, 134pp, £8.95

Dr Peter Newman Brooks is a fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge and University Lecturer in Divinity (Reformation Studies). He seems to have spent his life between two academic loves: the German reformer-professor, Martin Luther, who helped mould modern Europe; and the English reformer-primate, Thomas Cranmer, martyr and shaper of the English language. In 1965 he had published THOMAS CRANMER'S DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST (Mcmillan, 1965 and recently reprinted) and in the year marking the quincentenary of Cranmer's birth (Cranmer was born at Aslockton in Nottinghamshire on 2nd July 1489) Brooks turned his attention back to Cranmer. I have noticed three pieces from Dr Brooks' pen: an article, a sermon and a book.

The article entitled *No doubting Cranmer* appeared in THE TIMES on Monday August 14th, 1989. In the context of Cranmer's apologia to Mary Tudor and his apparent equivocation in Oxford gaol, Brooks invites us to consider what motivated Cranmer. Grounded in biblical and patristic learning which had received such a revival under Erasmus, Cranmer was a

man "deferential to *auctoritas*". He was a man under authority whose early questioning of the papal supremacy made him a sure candidate for the primacy in the Henrician church when Henry was in trouble in his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Cranmer, like his fellow reformers in Europe, held to the doctrine of the godly prince. Here is the key to his dilemma as he wrestled with loyalty to the Word of God and loyalty to his king. Like the continentals he also broke with the Latin Mass in making it a communion of the people and believing it to be a symbolic spiritual feast to be held in the language of the common people. By scriptural standards he is to be seen as a "rare and principled" man, a scholar who sought to see different sides to a question, a sensitive soul described by Sir Geoffrey Elton (who until recently was Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge) and quoted by Dr Brooks thus: "the old archbishop had ever been a man who met crisis with perplexity; neither coward nor time-server, he always saw too many sides to every question to enjoy the single-minded confidence that inspired" men like Ridley, Hooper and Latimer. Dr Brooks' article, which includes some pertinent quotations from Cranmer, introduces us to the central issues in any study of the great man.

"It is a sad fact that increasing numbers of otherwise intelligent Christians neither have nor seek a sense of their own history as members of the Church of God." With this justifiable lament Dr Brooks began his sermon to commemorate the Cranmer quincentenary, preached at Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge on Sunday 2nd July 1989. He claims that Cranmer exemplified the Anglican emphasis on scripture, reason and tradition.

Although recent scholarship has stressed the element of diversity in sixteenth century Anglican apologetic, we believe Dr Brooks to be right and we can trace this underlying unity in the concern for scripture, reason and tradition from Cranmer and the early English reformers through to Whitgift and Hooker at the end of the century. (Copies of the sermon are available from the Vicar's Secretary, Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge).

If Dr Brooks' article casts him as a protagonist, the sermon as the preacher, his book presents us with the scholar. Without providing a critical book-review as such, I can confirm that the book is an elemental tool for any modern study of Cranmer. The method of the book is to begin each chapter with careful historical and theological discussion of the successive periods of Cranmer's life and work. At the appropriate point in the text, reference is made to the printed extracts of the relevant sources provided at the end of each chapter. Some of these sources are rare. There is also an up-to-date bibliography consisting of books, articles and unpublished theses.

The book deals with issues similar to those raised in the article and the sermon but in much more detail and at times, as we would expect, in a more balanced way. Nonetheless there is no doubting Dr Brooks' rightful high regard for Cranmer. So the themes will be familiar: the influence of Renaissance learning on Cranmer; Cranmer as courtier and ambassador plucked out by Henry from obscurity because of his industry in promoting the doctrine of the godly prince, (a doctrine of which Henry himself heartily approved!) which Cranmer sincerely believed to be biblical. Brooks

describes something of Cranmer's involvement with the Great Bible, with the Henrician formularies of the faith and he examines his early liturgical work leading to his BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER of 1549 with its revision of 1552.

In seeking to overthrow mediaeval traditions none of the reformers could avoid controversy. "Cranmer was widely respected for his irenicism, but it was a quality his enemies could confuse with ambiguity. The primate's moderation certainly set him poles apart from men like Bishop Hooper and John Knox. Nevertheless, he was no exception to the general rule, and when pastoral priorities demanded commitment, the archbishop could prove a formidable opponent" (p 69). Brooks supplies evidence to support these points.

Details are provided of Cranmer's equivocation and humiliation in his final tribulation: "By a charade of counter liturgy, England's liturgical genius was thus repudiated" (p 96). The authorities were bent on his destruction; recantations could not save him; his opponents would use his weakness to promote "the old religion". but his brilliance re-emerged at the end when he devastated his enemies by recanting his very recantation (p 100). Brooks justifies A F Pollard's scepticism of Cranmer's RECANTATIONS, "with its terrible dream sequence" (p 98), as a source for his last days.

Since the publication of Brooks' important book, four further works on Cranmer have also come to my notice. David Loades (professor of history at the University College of North Wales, Bangor) has written CRANMER AND

THE REFORMATION (Headstart History Papers, 1991). This is very good: Professor Loades concludes, "Thomas Cranmer therefore died as a martyr, not for the royal supremacy but for protestant doctrine, and the legacy which he bequeathed to the English church was both Erastian and evangelical." Even so, "he was not a saint, or a hero, and was a martyr very much against his will, but he was a man of faith and integrity... and that extraordinarily durable amalgam of protestant nationalism was one of the most significant legacies of the period to subsequent English history" (pp 39-40). Then there is Margot Johnson (ed), THOMAS CRANMER (Turnstone Ventures, Durham, 1990), a *pot-pourri* with essays of varying significance, including a biographical chapter by Professor Loades. The Brynmill Press have reprinted THOMAS CRANMER: TWO STUDIES by Charles Smyth and Colin Dunlop (SPCK, 1956, 1989). Perhaps one of the shrewdest assessments of Cranmer is to be found in Professor Patrick Collinson's chapter 'Thomas Cranmer', in Geoffrey Rowell (ed), THE ENGLISH RELIGIOUS TRADITION AND THE GENIUS OF ANGLICANISM (Ikon Productions, 1992). Collinson sees Cranmer as essentially Lutheran in his clear grasp of the gospel; many of his inconsistencies are to be explained by the fact that Cranmer's privately developed convictions were not publicly revealed in the face of "fluctuating, unstable public policy" (p 91).

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