
Book Reviews

Eryl Davies

The New Testament is where I commence this extended and wide-ranging review of new publications. An interesting, though technical, book was recently authored by Professor Sang Bok Kim in Seoul, Korea, on *THE SOURCES OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS: THE PRIORITY OF MARK: FACT OR FICTION?* (Torch Publishers, 55 Yang Jae-Dong, Sucho-ku, Seoul, 137-130, hdbk, 375pp). Researched over many years, mostly in the United States, the author concludes "from the evidence that the priority of Mark in terms of its composition and importance is generally accepted today by liberal as well as conservative scholars within Protestantism and Roman Catholicism". Evangelical scholars like Everett F Harrison and Ned B Stonehouse led the way for evangelicals in defending the hypothesis although Donald Guthrie, in accepting the Two-source Theory with regard to the Synoptic Problem, had reservations about it.

In this book, Professor Kim gives some interesting and persuasive reasons why such importance is attached to the theory of the priority of Mark before looking at the presuppositions in the Synoptic debate then examining the Patristic evidence and the Synoptic phenomena. A competent and detailed examination is undertaken of the internal evidence, redaction critical evidence, archaeology, Old Testament quotation evidence and the Textual Critical evidence. He then looks at Mt 28:1-10 and the parallels as well as the "Q" document (he "underscores the obvious uncertainty of the alleged document", p 334) and argues that "the Synoptic debate on source criticism should be reopened to search for

a new direction (p 340). The bibliography is extensive and useful. Having known the author for five years and come to respect him for his scholarship which is wedded to an uncompromising fidelity to the Word of God, I commend the book to those who want to explore the subject further. Academics may not agree but Professor Kim's fair and thorough examination of the subject at least warrants their careful consideration of his arguments and conclusions.

By contrast, *DELIGHT FOR A WRETCHED MAN* is a popular, readable study by Benjamin Clark of Romans 7 and the doctrine of sanctification (Evangelical Press, pb, pp 160, £4.95). The author examines different interpretations including that of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones but concludes that a regenerate man is described in Romans 7. Paul's argument in the chapter is outlined carefully and without rancour as the author refers to conflicting views. The final chapter pinpoints some important principles relating to sanctification arising from Romans 7. The appendices which summarise and assess briefly three alternative views ("miserable because unbelieving", "the unsanctified Christian", "Barth and the modern liberal approach") are introductory but useful, as is the guidance for further reading. Here is the kind of book pastors can enjoy reading as it provides interaction with other approaches; it is also a book which can be recommended to believers prepared to study this important part of Scripture.

Are you aware of the **CROSSWAY**

CLASSIC COMMENTARIES SERIES under the authorship of Alister McGrath and James Packer? The purpose of the series is "to make some of the most valuable commentaries on the books of the Bible, by some of the greatest Bible teachers and theologians in the last five hundred years, available to a new generation". One advantage of the new series is that the commentaries are abridged and edited in order to simplify the style. With the publication of Hodge on EPHESIANS (£7.99) and PSALMS (vol 2 by Spurgeon, £7.99) the series is now complete. I am delighted that JOHN by Calvin (£9.99) has been included in the series; it was first published in 1553. Packer describes the commentary as "one of the best elucidations of the evangelist's text ever achieved" and which contains "some top-class spelling out of key truths about Jesus Christ" (p x). If you have never used this commentary then you ought to purchase a copy and study it well. Here is excellent value. I commend the series to you.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL DOCTRINE by Wayne Grudem was published during 1994 (IVP, hb, pp 1264, £19.99). It is an easier read than many other books on systematics because it is "written for students" and "also for every Christian who has a hunger to know the central doctrines of the Bible in greater depth". Grudem has attempted to make these chapters understandable "even for Christians who have never studied theology before " (p 15). He generally succeeds in this aim. Grudem defines and explains terms carefully and most chapters can be read separately. The presentation is lucid and fresh; at the end of each chapter there are "Questions for personal application" together with a relevant hymn, bibliography and Scripture memory

passage. "Theology", he insists, "is meant to be *lived* and *prayed* and *sung!*" All of the great doctrinal writings of the Bible... are full of praise to God and personal application to life... theology when studied rightly will lead to growth in our Christian lives, and to worship" (pp 16-17). I heartily agree.

Grudem holds to inerrancy and a "traditional Reformed position" with regard to divine sovereignty/human responsibility, predestination, the extent of the atonement and the perseverance of the saints. He is Baptist, pre-millennial and post-tribulational. In addition, he affirms that *all* the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament "are still valid for today" but the apostolic *office* does not continue. "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" is understood as "best applied to conversion" and subsequent experiences are "better called" fillings.

The opening chapter is particularly useful; Grudem defines systematic theology, discusses its relationship to other disciplines and addresses the question, what are doctrines? In conclusion he provides reasons *why* we should study theology and also *how* we should study systematic theology ("with prayer", "with humility", "with reason", "with help from others", "by collecting and understanding all the relevant passages of Scripture on any topic", "with rejoicing and praise"). There are some places where I strongly disagree with Grudem and one example is in his chapter on the nature and purpose of the Church, particularly the section where he discusses "True and False Churches Today" (pp 866-867). While conceding that there are still "profound differences with Roman Catholic teaching on some doctrines" yet he argues that some Roman Catholic Churches possess the two vital marks of a true Church, namely, the proper teaching of the Word and the proper administration of the two sacraments: "it

would be hard to deny that it is in fact a true Church". These blemishes should not prevent us from buying and benefiting from what is on the whole a stimulating and useful tool both for preachers and hearers.

I have enjoyed reading THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF WILLIAM STILL. The second volume, STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (ed Sinclair B Ferguson, Rutherford House, 1994, hb, pp 327, £19.90) was published recently. Volume 1 had focused on Christ's work and the ministry of the Holy Spirit whereas the six sections in volume 2 are more practical. The first section, "Towards Spiritual Maturity" is better known to some of us because it had been privately circulated in 1957 and also published in a paper-back edition. The second section develops the theme in more detail under the title "What it is to be Christian" and it includes some helpful chapters and statements. For example, "The Personalness of Salvation" (pp 65-77: "There is no part that is not personal... What is *Theology*? It is the study of God, and God is a Person, who loves us", p 76), "Grace Abounding" (pp 88-98: Still accepts "limited atonement" yet "in another sense I think the truth of the Bible transcends it...", p 94), "Adoption" (pp 140-148 which he describes as "the bridge between Justification and Sanctification", p 140), "Indwelling Christ" (pp 159-168 : "Justification and adoption have to do with our being placed in Christ. But sanctification has to do with Christ being placed in us, which is different. . . , p 159). Another smaller section includes two sermons on morals (pp 237-261) but I was impressed by the next section "The Christian in the Home, Church and World", especially "Primary Evangelism" (pp 273-281) in the home, which deals with headship and love, suffering the moods of others cheerfully, patience, witness by

one's life : "Everyone cannot go everywhere ! But everyone can live the life where they are" (p 231). The concluding section, "Rhythms of rest and work" (pp 295-327) is stimulating and interesting; it is "A consideration of rhythms of rest and work in alternate and simultaneous combinations, as applied to physical, psychological and spiritual health" (p 295). There is some helpful advice in these pages concerning relaxing! You can read this whole volume only with profit.

More briefly, it is worth noting 20th CENTURY THEOLOGY : GOD AND THE WORLD IN A TRANSITIONAL AGE written by Stanley J Grenz and Roger E Olson (Paternoster, 1992, pb, pp 393, £11.99). The book is a survey of modern theology, focusing on the doctrine of God and the way prominent theologians have understood the doctrine. Transcendence and immanence become the key for interpreting and assessing the contributions of a wide range of theologies such as neo-orthodoxy, "the deepening of immanence" in the liberal tradition (Tillich as well as Process Theology), "immanence within the secular" (Bonhoeffer, secular theology), "transcendence of the future" (Moltmann, Pannenberg), "the renewal of immanence in the experience of oppression" (Black, Latin American Liberation and Feminist theologies), "the transcendence of the human spirit" (Rahner and Küng). Chapter 10 is entitled "Re-affirming the Balance : Evangelical Theology coming of Age" and provides an examination of the thought of Carl Henry and Bernard Ramm. The former is discussed sympathetically but, sadly, less favourably than the latter who "was able to move beyond the backward-looking approach of Carl Henry. In so doing", it is claimed, "he provided the foundation for a generation of younger evangelical thinkers who would build on the freedom to think

critically and engage in positive dialogue with modern culture. Evangelical theology had begun to come of age" (p 309). Thankfully, other academics, both liberal and evangelical, disagree with this assessment. Gabriel Fackre, for example, views Henry as a "Michelangelo", "premier theologian, key figure", "... Henry has no peer" while another scholar claims that Henry is "the maker of the modern theological mind". I would urge the editors of this volume to reconsider their assessment of both Ramm and Henry. On the whole, however, this is a technical book which dips helpfully into contrasting contemporary theologies.

The next book is quite different but important because of its subject, stable and message. I refer to *ECOTHEOLOGY: VOICES FROM SOUTH AND NORTH*, (David G Hallman, ed, WCC Publications/Orbis, 1994, pb, pp 317, £11.50). There are twenty six essays by international writers of different backgrounds and convictions. The essays are divided into five main sections: biblical witness, theological challenges, insights from ecofeminism, insights from indigenous people and, finally, ethical implications. Some essays are pioneering as well as radical in tone and perspective yet all of them express a passionate concern for God's world in the face of threats to the survival of mankind and planet Earth. An attempt is made to provide a firm biblical base in section 1 but it is an inadequate, highly selective and, in places, misleading summary and assessment of biblical teaching. The theological challenges highlighted in the second section demand careful consideration. For example, how does "justice" relate to the ecological crisis? What are the ethics of care and the alleviation of poverty? How does the model of mutual interdependence provide a new orientation for us in ethics? To what

extent, if any, should ecological concerns be pursued on a formal inter-religions basis? These are only a few of the theological questions raised and discussed in the section. An illuminating but disturbing third section covers Ecology, Feminism and African and Asian Spirituality. "Feminist movements all over the world", we are told, "have also raised a radical cultural critique of our way of living" (p 175). The next section includes insights from Indigenous Peoples while the final section deals with the crucial area of Ethical Implications. One writer uses the principle of "participatory democracy" to develop a general exposure of how many popular environmental theories and practices have failed to involve indigenous peoples in the design and execution of environmental projects. Social ecology ("the study of human systems in interaction with environmental systems", p 239) is discussed in another essay: the basic issues are highlighted before outlining the need for a social-environmental ethic that "restricts not only the behaviour of human beings among themselves, but also their relationship with the environment" (p 242). We are informed by another writer of the way in which African independent churches face the challenge of Environmental Ethics (pp 248-263) and David Hallman then provides a competent essay on the important subject of Ethics and Sustainable Development in the light of the 1992 "Rio Declaration" and the ONE EARTH COMMUNITY document reworked and written by the United Church of Canada. Climate changes and the role of transnational corporations are also considered in some detail.

I do not agree with some of the underlying assumptions or implications of the essays but I value this publication as a stimulus and challenge to reflect even more biblically on a subject of growing importance. An index, however, and an

extended bibliography would have enhanced the usefulness of the book.

The first British edition of Peter Jensen's **AT THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSE : WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE** was published by IVP during 1994 (pb, pp 176, £5.99). The book is aimed at three types of person; firstly, the Christian who needs to grasp an outline of revealed truth in order to understand God. Secondly, the student called to preach the Word who is in need of appreciating "its coherence and inner relationships" as well as thinking about its application. Thirdly, unbelievers can profit from the book if they "wish to explore the essentials of Christian truth" (p 10). Important questions are posed and Christian answers are then provided by Jensen, the Principal of Moore College, Sydney, which are approached from an eschatological perspective. Some chapters include questions for further reflection and discussion. I am unsure of the extent of the book's usefulness and feel that the author's aim is too ambitious for it requires careful reading and reflection.

Hot from the press is the **NEW DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY** (IVP, David J Atkinson & David H Field, editors, pp 918, introductory offer £27.99 until 30th June 1995; normal price £29.99). This major resource is welcomed as it meets a need in providing useful, often urgent, material on Christian Ethics and pastoral Theology. It is an ideal resource for "pastors, social workers, doctors and counsellors working in a Christian context... ordinands, teachers", students and other interested lay people. Eighteen major "keynote" articles in theological order are provided in Part One introducing the main themes of Christian ethics and pastoral theology. The theological arrangement in the order of these articles

also illustrates the methodology adopted within the dictionary. Beginning with God, the implications of his love and justice are then explored before proceeding to a discussion of the nature of the human moral agent, the gospel themes of sin and salvation, general historical surveys of Christian ethics and practical, pastoral theology, Old Testament and New Testament ethics. Specific themes such as sexuality, pastoral care, life, health and death, ethics of medical care, global ethics, community ethics and economic ethics are examined in detail. Professor O'Donovan concludes the section with a competent article on "Christian Moral Reasoning" (pp 122-127). Part Two includes over 700 articles, arranged alphabetically and varying in length from 250 to 2,000 words. Cross-references are included with most of the articles and the bibliographies are indispensable. The subjects covered are wide-ranging from the Kinsey or Brandt Reports to a Christian leisure ethic, childlessness, rape and signs and wonders. It will be convenient to have so many subjects included within one volume for easy reference and providing a competent summary and introduction. Liberation Theology, Reproductive Technologies, Human Experimentation, Singleness, Euthanasia, Burial and Cremation, Alcoholism, Aids and Animal and Human Rights are only a few of the many contemporary subjects covered in Part Two.

Contributors are not afraid to be self-critical with regard to evangelicalism or to point challenges and suggest areas where new work is required. Concerning Homosexuality, for example, we are told that "Conservative scholars have sometimes been guilty of dodging the hermeneutical issues" yet it is a relief to read that "the case in favour of applying the Bible's veto to homosexual behaviour today retains its cogency (p 451). On

Feminism, the challenge is given : "If the church is to be relevant, a range of issues must be addressed". Some of the issues include "being open to the feminist critique" and evaluate feminist hermeneutics; the "church's teaching must engage with the real issue in women's lives". Women need help "to recognize their spiritual gifts" and to be encouraged to "play an active part in the Christian community" (p 381). Churches also need to be more vocal in objecting to the ways in which women are used in advertising, pornography and media violence.

The contributors to this volume will certainly not please us all with regard to their coverage, sympathies and conclusions but nevertheless the Dictionary will serve as a useful reference and resource book; hopefully, it will stimulate us to think even more biblically in many areas of Christian ethics and pastoral theology.

Now I turn to a popular biography : T C HAMMOND : HIS LIFE AND LEGACY IN IRELAND AND AUSTRALIA (Banner of Truth, pb, pp 178, £4.95). The biographer, Warren Nelson, has provided us with an interesting and useful account of Hammond's life and ministry; it is informative and encouraging in many ways.

Born in Cork in 1877 into a Protestant family, converted in 1892 and married in 1906, he pursued a three year course with the Irish Church Mission. This course grounded him in the Scripture and also in Anglican Theology. His intention was to seek ordination in the Church of Ireland which, in the nineteenth century, was "largely evangelical" and the Divinity School he attended at Trinity College, Dublin reflected good biblical scholarship. He became a Dublin curate and, in 1910, a rector. Trends in the church such as prayers for the dead and ritualism were opposed by

Hammond but in 1919 he accepted the leadership of the Irish Church Mission. The work of ICM was varied including children's homes, schools and religious instruction by means of the "Hundred Texts", open-air meetings, etc. The work was primarily evangelistic and Hammond vigorously opposed Roman Catholicism.

In 1935 there was a significant change in the location and nature of his ministry when he accepted the invitation to become Principal of Moore College, Sydney and rector of a nearby church. At this time the College was numerically weak, rundown and in debt but under Hammond's leadership there was considerable growth and expansion. He was a conscientious and orthodox tutor, hospitable and a good administrator. There were problems, of course, including tensions within the diocese especially when liberal evangelicals and broad churchmen "had begun to feel themselves squeezed out of power" (p 113) and there was also litigation in Australian courts. Hammond was more than a controversialist. Retiring from his College responsibilities in 1953, he continued as rector of his parish church and he was still in pastoral charge when he died in 1961. Chapters 8 and 9 dealing with Hammond's *Books and Theology and Ireland After Hammond* are absorbing as are the three appendices on the writings of T C Hammond, the *Wit and Wisdom of T C Hammond* as a select bibliography. There are many lessons for us to learn from this biography.

For those of us who have benefited greatly from reading Ian H Murray's two volume authorized biography of the late Dr D Martyn Lloyd-Jones, THE FIRST FORTY YEARS, 1899-1939 and THE FIGHT OF FAITH, 1939-1981, there is appreciation of the recently published D MARTYN LLOYD-JONES: LETTERS 1919-1981, selected with Notes by Iain H Murray

(Banner of Truth, hb, p 248, £11.95). This is a necessary and rich supplement to the biography where the *Doctor* tells his story "from within" in over a hundred personal letters covering areas such as family, fellow ministers, Westminster Chapel and new agencies. Crucial subjects covered in the letters include Evangelical Unity and

the Threat of Ecumenism, Queries and Controversies. There are some fascinating letters here revealing the *Doctor's* spirituality, discernment, concern for the truth as well as his care for people and feelings of unease relating to charismatic developments. Go and buy a copy of the book then ponder its contents prayerfully.

Extract from a letter to the Members of Westminster Chapel, 1 January 1968.

'I find myself greatly encouraged, and thank God for His goodness in calling me to minister to people who are so concerned about His glory and the extension of His Kingdom.

When one turns to the more general position however, the situation is very different. Here, the main impression is one of confusion, uncertainty, and divided opinions. This is true not only in this country but throughout the world. This is something that one expects in 'Christendom', but in the past has not been true of those calling themselves evangelical. This is the new feature which is so disturbing. No longer can it be assumed that to be evangelical means to accept the authority of the Scriptures on matters of history, and on the creation of the world and man, and at the very lowest to be sceptical about the theory of evolution. In the same way there has been a recrudescence of denominationalism and an entirely new attitude to Romanism. Institutions which for almost a hundred years have been regarded as bulwarks of orthodoxy are being divided by what is called 'the new thinking', which in fact, is but some of the old heresies in a new garb.

It is, alas, a time of conflict and of trial, indeed a time of tragedy when old comrades in arms are now in different camps. It is not that one in any way questions the honesty or the sincerity of such friends. There is only one explanation and that is, 'an enemy hath done this'. Never has the enemy been more active or more subtle.

Each one of us has to be loyal to his or her own convictions and conscience, and we must align ourselves with all who are like-minded. To that end, as you will know, we have joined The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches during the past year, and through them The British Evangelical Council.

With them it will be our privilege to continue in the good old fight for The Faith. What the outcome of the present upheaval will be no one can tell. Our duty is to be faithful knowing that the final outcome is sure.'

D M Lloyd-Jones Letters, 1919-1981, pages 177-178