

6. Quoted in 'The Minister and his Greek New Testament' by A.T. Robertson, p15.
7. op.cit. p21.
8. R.C.Sproul 'Knowing God's Word'.
9. D.M.Lloyd-Jones, Romans 8:5-17 'The Sons of God' p172f.
10. Quoted in 'The Rev Thomas Charles of Bala' Vol.I by D.E.Jenkins, p55f.

REVIEWS IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

The Editor

"Here is John Robinson at his brilliant and provocative best, as he looks back, primarily over the 1970s, but at the same time over the wider formative influences which have led to his own distinctive approach to theology and to wider social issues", so reads the publisher's blurb to the book, **THE ROOTS OF A RADICAL** (SCM Press, 1980, pp168, £3.50). Despite the author's unorthodox theology, this is a most readable and informative book.

Robinson's first firing shot needs to be heeded by all ministers! While working hard as a bishop in the seventies, he claims to have read and written more during those ten years than at any other stage of his career, "which to me is some answer to the excuse that busy bishops or ministers are far too preoccupied to read, let alone to write" (p.vii)!

His opening chapter is entitled, 'A tale of two decades' and in a lively and, at times, an amusing manner, he surveys the sixties and seventies. He describes the sixties as "a time for being out on the edges" (p2) beginning with President Kennedy, race marches, student demonstrations, the curtailing of the Lord Chamberlain's powers of censorship and the development of the 'permissive society'. It was also the period of radical Christianity expressed in phrases such as 'Religionless Christianity', 'Honest to God', 'Death of God', the 'New Morality', 'Situation Ethics' and the 'New Reformation', etc. By contrast, Robinson describes the seventies as a 'Return to the Centre', epitomised "by the withdrawal from Vietnam, the energy crisis and conservation ... a time for turning east and turning in, for the search of self and the exploration of inner space, for the recovery of mysticism and meditation, integration and wholeness" (p3) as well as a

retreat to a new conservatism and quest for security. "The student world", he says, "is a much quieter and duller place" and the religious world was made more aware of "the new fundamentalisms, the strength of the conservative churches, the charismatic revival, the fascination with exorcism and the occult and the widely publicised attacks on the politicization of the World Council of Churches. Ecumenically we appear to have become more rather than less turned in upon ourselves ... Divisions too seem to be hardening between parties in the church. The going (or at any rate the shouting) is at the moment being made by those who would resist further erosion to faith or order, liturgy or morals, and in the Roman Catholic Church theologians are again having their wings clipped" (p4).

What about Robinson himself? He thinks of himself as a radical, that is, someone with "deep roots, with the freedom and courage ... to go to source and speak from the centre ... Over the years I find I have been driven back more and more upon the strength of the Christian centre. In fact some people think that I have become distressingly conservative in my old age! It may look like it with books like REDATING THE NEW TESTAMENT, in which I want to push back all the New Testament documents before AD70 and CAN WE TRUST THE NEW TESTAMENT? to which the answer is, if we know what we are trusting it for ... Yes indeed. On the Fourth Gospel I am so square as to be almost indecent among my fellow academics. I actually do think that it may be ... A first Gospel, and written by John son of Zebedee ... I remember being sent an off-print, at the height of the HONEST TO GOD furore, by a Southern Baptist from the United States who was using me and my writings on the Fourth Gospel as a stick with which to beat the liberals!" (p5). Unlike that Southern Baptist, we should not be misled for while Robinson claims to "believe in the centre, both biblically and doctrinally", he does so "on CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL GROUNDS" and has not recanted of anything he wrote in 'Honest to God' nor of his stands in the sixties on Lady Chatterley or capital punishment, homosexuality or abortion, etc. "We have got to strengthen the centre, to be grounded in the Incarnation, which for me is the heart of anything distinctively Christian we have to say to the world" (p6) yet, he warns, "we must remain totally uncommitted, not constantly trembling for the superstructure of doctrine or morals or organisation, or worrying about the dotted or dotty lines which divide us from other Christians and those of other religions ... As I urged in my TRUTH IS TWO-EYED ... I want to see strong centres and soft edges, not soft centres and hard edges" (p6). You have been warned!

Against the background of a Christian family (his grandfather was involved in the 1859 revival in Belfast) he describes the Anglican ethos as essentially catholic rather than sectarian (p13), a flock rather than a fold (p14), and a communion in which the rule of prayer has shaped the rule of faith (p21) thus creating a distinctive and broad view of authority with "its supple combination of scripture, tradition and reason. We have declined to isolate the infallible man or the infallible book or the eponymous founder. The 'Complete Church of England man' has always been a composite and a rounded character ... a both-and man rather than either-or, Catholic and Reformed, priestly and prophetic, profound and simple, inclusive by temperament rather than exclusive" (idem). Incidentally, Robinson's comprehensivist doctrine of the church - supported by the majority now in the Church of England - makes separatists wonder with amazement how so many evangelicals today can remain within the Anglican communion.

Referring to some of the 'heresy trials' in recent years, the author argues for a theological freedom in which people are free to believe what they wish about the creeds ("no signature is required" p34) and the Bible. In an astonishing statement, he claims that "theological freedom lies at the very heart of the gospel and is an unexpendable part of the birthright I cherish" (p43). This diffused and pluriform model of truth is summarised by Robinson in ten propositions (pp53-58): (1) Integrity is more fundamental than orthodoxy. (2) Love has priority over law, (3) persons over principles, (4) relationships ... existential realities over any abstractions from them. (5) The priority of stands over standards, (6) justice over order, (7) ethos over ethics, (8) function over form, (9) organism over organisation and (10) existence over essence.

'Honest to Christ Today' is the title of the third chapter in which the author discusses the continuing Christological debate. His approach is again disturbing and unbiblical as Robinson underlies four points he regards as relevant to this debate.

His first point is, "Honesty to the irreducibility of incarnation" (p59). He is not sure "which was the worse book, 'THE MYTH OF GOD INCARNATE' or the evangelical reply, 'THE TRUTH OF GOD INCARNATE'! The latter, Robinson argues, "failed to listen seriously to the important questions being raised" (p60) and for this reason was virtually ignored in the third round when Michael Goulder edited 'INCARNATION AND MYTH: THE DEBATE CONTINUED'. I think it is nearer the mark to

reply that it was not our refusal to listen to questions which disturbed these theologians but our insistence on a thoroughly biblical approach; it is this which isolates us from their assumptions, methods and conclusions.

To establish his first point, Robinson - as he so frequently does - misuses statements of Scripture, particularly 2 Corinthians 5:19 ("God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"). "It is notable", he adds, "for what it does not say. It does not say that God was Christ nor in any simplistic sense that Christ was God, but that he represents the definitive act of God, that he is God about his decisive work. What he does God does, so that Christ is not just a man doing human things divinely, like any saint or seer, but a man doing divine things humanly" (p60). The implications of this are frighteningly clear as Robinson himself recognises, for Jesus is not "God dressed up and walking this earth but the Word, God's creative, self-expressive activity from the beginning, fully and finally embodied in THIS MAN, who is COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY A MAN LIKE THE REST OF US, IN ORIGIN, NATURE AND DESTINY" (p61: capitals mine). This doctrine of the Incarnation for Robinson is not then tied to the orthodox doctrine of the two 'natures', divine and human nor to the notion of ANHYPOSTASIA or ENHYPOSTASIA, i.e. that our Lord's divine and human natures are united in his divine person.

Robinson's second point is to stress honesty to the Jesus of history as part of the Christ of faith (p68). Here he rightly stresses the historical nature of many of the New Testament 'events' and questions "the tyranny of unexamined presuppositions in much of the current post-Bultmannian critical orthodoxy ..." (p70).

Thirdly he wants "honesty to the fact that the Christ is bigger than Jesus and God is bigger than Christ. To believe that God is best defined in Christ is not to believe that God is confined to Christ" (p71) and this subtle distinction allows the author to tone down the distinctiveness and uniqueness of Christ in order to accommodate to other religions.

Finally, Robinson demands honesty to the story-line wherever it may lead. His heretical position is illustrated with reference to the ascension story which he views as "essentially the divine, symbolic, mythological story - what Jesus is "according to the Spirit". Similarly he sees the virgin birth as saying of Jesus "exactly what

John is saying of Christians, that as sons of God, as children of a 'heavenly' birth, they are not to be accounted for in terms of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but only of God (John 1:13) - though of course as human beings they are born like everyone else" (p75).

The following chapter entitled, 'What is the Gospel?' is equally disappointing and unbiblical. Criticising evangelicals (mainly because of a negative attitude towards politics with David Sheppard of Liverpool "a notable exception!"), Catholics ("the church is no longer judged by the kingdom, and ecclesiastical absolutism becomes the shadow-image of biblical fundamentalism" p82) and liberals ("at the heart of much they say there is for me not much gospel either", p83), he views the gospel in terms of the kingdom of God which lets "loose God's sovereign righteousness and love into the affairs of men" (p84). Despite the ambiguity of much of what Robinson writes here it is clear that he has his own gospel which is radically different from that of the New Testament. He emphasises its social character and believes it is summed up in the benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14 yet sees little point in asking the question, 'What is the gospel?' for it is, in his view, "impossible to answer in the abstract" (p88). He wants to reword the question in personal, existential terms, "what is the gospel - for you? ... What really makes you tick, both in the flesh and in the Lord?"

The remaining chapters deal with Social Ethics and the Witness of the Church, the Place of Criminal Law in the Field of Sex, Christians and Violence, Nuclear Power Options and brief studies of people like Zacchaeus, the unjust steward, Judas, Julian of Norwich, Richard Jefferies and J.B.Lightfoot.

This is an important book even though its content is disturbingly unorthodox; it is of value to us in the lively way in which it comments upon and illustrates trends in contemporary theology away from a biblical faith. We need to be aware of what other theologians are saying and at the same time contend ourselves for the faith in a more meaningful and responsible manner.

A less readable but equally important book is Donald E.Miller's 'THE CASE FOR LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY (SCM Press, 1981, pp154, £4.50).

Writing as a sociologist and a liberal Christian, Professor Miller

suggests how 'liberals' can think about the 'truth' of their faith and commitment. Having abandoned the basic tenets of the Christian faith, the author nevertheless continued to participate regularly in Communion as an expression of his desire to pursue the journey of faith. "Regular attendance at worship services," he declares, "was a highly tangible way of indicating to myself the seriousness of my own engagement with the questions of ultimate meaning" (p4). He now finds himself committed to the "Christian community, its heritage and the Spirit that energizes it" (p5); although he still remains agnostic on issues of faith, his change of attitude is due to the discovery that meaning can function on more than one level. On this approach the creeds and the Bible are only "landmarks representing how those within the community of faith have reflected on the meaning of Christ FOR THEM and how THEY have struggled through the issues of community in their own time. They are statements of our past, of our forebears, of our roots. To recite the creed is to affirm one's tradition. Regularly reading the Scriptures reminds us whence we have come. These acts serve to keep alive the tradition. Why? Because it is in the tradition that we find the SYMBOLIC forms, the collective sentiments, which bind us together as a distinctive community that offers one a unique identity" (p7: capitals mine). Openness to other religions, an identity with transcendent and metaphysical overtones, a point of stability and permanence, Durkheim's view of the community as well as the emptiness of the alternatives all helped to influence Miller and bring him back into the American, Episcopalian Church as an agnostic but enthusiastic member of its community.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are entitled 'Commitment Beyond Belief', and "articulate the reasonableness of a thoroughly liberal option" (p14). He distinguishes between the form and substance (relegating the Scripture and all doctrinal statements to the level of mere social constructions), fiction and myth arguing that "the liberal or radical Christian may be as devoted to the Church, to Christ, to the importance of worship, as the evangelical who takes a more literal view of the symbols ..." (p21).

Employing the story of the analogy of the cave in Plato's Republic and the parable of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's classic novel, 'The Brothers Karamazov', Miller puts forward the familiar argument in chapter three that reality exceeds human form and conceptualization. Some of the distinctive characteristics of the liberal perspective are outlined briefly in chapter four. These characteristics

include an accommodative attitude towards culture, emphasis upon the moral witness of their faith, the basepoint of reason, a critical and sociological interpretation of the Bible, and symbolic realism (i.e. "meaning is always a product of the interaction between subject and object", p39). Professor Miller believes what is needed in the churches today "is a wide-scale recovery of the liberal spirit ... our social situation is ripe for the rebirth of Christian liberalism. But the ethical perspective of liberalism is only one reason for the return. Even more persuasive ... is the fact that in the last decade Christendom has become polarized" (pp41,42) between evangelicals (including the cults) and radical secularists. The concluding sections are devoted to the construction of a liberal Christian identity both in the church and in society.

This is a remarkably honest book, self-critical and provocative in its approach. Basically its message is an old one but the author's personal experience, professional qualifications and deep concern for the 'liberal' cause in Christendom make it a useful and interesting book. Certainly the failure and emptiness of theological liberalism is all too apparent within its pages.

'LIVING THEOLOGY IN ASIA', edited by John C. England is another absorbing publication by the SCM Press (1981, pp242, £4.95). Contemporary theology is not the exclusive concern of the West, of course, but what do we know as evangelicals of the theological reflections and tensions taking place in Asia? This book is a useful introduction to the subject and will repay careful study.

The necessary research for the material was made possible through a fellowship awarded by the World Council of Churches to the editor in 1975-77. In his introduction, the editor reminds us that these Asian theologians are writing in practical situations in which their main concern is "first of all pastoral and missional, in the sense that the present dilemmas facing prophetic and embattled minorities are what determine their response" (p1). They also have a concern for indigenous culture and religion but are "people-centred and radical in concern" (p7). What of the theological method employed by these theologians? Most frequently they blend inductive and deductive elements, individual and co-operative reflection, writing and living. While various sequences and combinations are discernible in the book, the principle elements are: (1) "An involvement in, and exposure to, actual life-conditions of suffering and of struggle. (2) A

contemplation, and receiving, of this reality, which includes both meditative and analytical processes in the attempt to see the whole picture and the larger human perspectives. (3) Reflection, which relates the life and teaching of Jesus and of the Hebrew prophets, to concrete incident and local community. This interprets and clarifies, interconnects and evaluates the 'stories' being told, and the larger affirmations. (4) Engagement, once more, within the situation; in co-operative planning, working, writing. Motivation and understanding are again tested and refined" (pp7,8).

As one might expect, the selected writings from twenty-four theologians representing eight Asian countries vary in quality, orthodoxy and emphases yet all express a serious attempt to relate and interpret Scripture in the light of considerable suffering and anguish.

It may be profitable for our readers to learn of the way in which liberal theology has developed in Asia. Do we naively assume that all 'Christian' theology in Asia or Africa is sound? Consider, for example, the position in South Korea. While Protestantism was established in the country in 1884, it was not until the second and third decades of this century that evangelical teaching in the churches was seriously challenged and this was due largely to the exposure of some Presbyterian pastors and theological teachers to Japanese theological thinking. Eventually in 1953 the Presbyterian Church, Republic of Korea, was founded on the principles of freedom for theological scholarship and an ecumenical pattern of mission. The most prominent leader in this development was an Old Testament scholar, Kim Jai-Jun, who "vigorously focussed attention upon critical biblical studies, upon explosive social and political issues, and upon the formation of a Korean theology" (p10). More recently he has moved his attention from the person of Christ, "whose deeds the Christian must now do in Korean history, to Christ's suffering servanthood. Suffering is necessary for any real revolution, spiritual or social. Whatever the cost, evil must be declared to be evil and resisted, as part of the original mission of the church" (idem). The 1960s and 1970s have seen a strengthening of the ecumenical and critical/political approach encouraged by the National Christian Council of Korea. May, 1973 saw the issuing of the Theological Declaration of Korean Christians in which members stressed their allegiance to the Lord of History, "the ultimate vindicator of the oppressed, the weak and the poor" and reminiscent of South American liberation theology the signatories declared their determination "by the Spirit to participate in

the transformation" of society, history and people and they then list their government's "diabolical acts against humanity" (p11). Due to increased suffering including arrests, torture and executions in the early seventies the cross of Christ has moved "steadily to the centre of theological concern" although the treatment is existential and political rather than biblical.

It was not until the mid-1920s, again, that some churches in CHINA began to develop a contextual theology in a deep concern for indigenisation and the grappling with urgent social and national issues (p58).

India, by contrast, has had a 'Christian' (Syrian Nestorians in South India) presence since the fourth century. Roman Catholicism and then Protestantism (initially through the work of the East India Company Chaplains) were established in the country in the seventeenth century but theological developments in the earlier parts of this present century were influenced by the struggle for independence, religious pluralism, desperate social needs, universalism and liberal theology. By today the YMCA, SCM, the Christian Ashram Movement, the Christian Institute for Study of Religion and Society and some of the Roman Catholic seminaries and institutes in Delhi and Bangalore have all contributed significantly to the shaping of Indian theology.

If you want to read of these developments and influences in Asiatic countries then this book will serve as a useful introduction, and the detailed Notes, the Short Bibliography of national and church histories for each country as well as the Biographical Notes concerning the twenty-four contributors are invaluable. All in all, this is a key book. However, the message to evangelicals here is loud and clear. Christians and Pastors overseas, as here, must be trained to think theologically and biblically. The World Council of Churches and related organisations are giving priority (and considerable sums of money in scholarships) to the development of a very different theology, one which is contextual, political and unorthodox. What are we doing to help our brethren in the Third World to "contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3)?

Another important book is **CHRIST'S LORDSHIP AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM**, edited by Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (published by ORBIS and distributed in Britain by SPCK, 1983, pp209, £5.50).

A Consultation on Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism was held

at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia from 24-27 October 1979 with theologians and Church leaders, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, conservative evangelical and ecumenical Protestant, men and women including Third World representatives all engaging in frank discussions on the relationship of Christianity to other religions. For this reason it is claimed that the conference that this book represents "marks ... a milestone in historical development ... Not long ago THIS sort of conference just would not have happened" (p.vii).

"In this latter part of the twentieth century," declares Donald G. Dawe in his introduction, "Christians are facing in a new way the continuing and seemingly incurable religious pluralism of the world ... other religions have not disappeared but have taken on new vitality and in some areas have expanded their influence. Ancient religions faced the challenge of Western Christianity and culture and have renewed themselves, not by rejecting but by reappropriating their own traditions. And in other places, secular ideologies and Marxism have reshaped whole nations. A renewed Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam have started small but highly visible countermissionary movements. How are we to understand these facts in the light of the Lordship of Christ?" (p3). Expressing the question biblically, the challenge is to interpret Acts 4:12 in the light of Acts 14:17 - "yet he did not leave himself without witness ..."

The opening chapter is entitled 'Notes for Three Bible Studies' and the contributor, Krister Stendahl, radically removes the distinctive character of the Christian gospel by driving a wedge between Jesus's preaching of the kingdom and the Church's preaching of Jesus ("thus we are faced with a danger: we may so preach Jesus that we lose the vision of the kingdom, the mended creation," (p10) and then by interpreting Acts 4:12 as an inter-Jewish debate between the Establishment and the people containing no "good basis for an absolute claim in an absolute sense" (p15)! In a concluding section of this chapter, Stendahl refers to Romans 10:18-11:36 and observes how "Paul writes this whole section without mentioning the name of Jesus Christ, and his final doxology is not - as is his usual style - in Christ-language but in God-language (11:33-36). It is as if Paul did not want them to have the Christ-flag to wave ... They did not understand their mission as a particular witness of THEIR peculiar community in a WORLD of communities" (p18: capitals mine). This astonishing inference is only one of many examples of atrocious hermeneutics in the book.

The next five chapters each contain a main article followed immediately by two responses from people of differing views and traditions; each chapter then ends with a reply by the author of the main articles to these responses. This kind of approach is particularly helpful for, besides facilitating discussion, it quickly exposes weaknesses and pinpoints areas of disagreement.

What does it mean to affirm that Jesus Christ is Lord? Does mission mean the conquest of other religions or 'lords'? Does universality mean simply the extension of Christian particularity? These are the questions raised by Stanley J. Samartha in the second chapter entitled 'The Lordship of Jesus Christ and Religious Pluralism'. The chapter contains a radical re-interpretation of Christianity involving the rejection of some foundational biblical doctrines. Predictably he concludes that "there are different faiths, ... alternative ways of salvation ... different hopes about human destiny ... In the last analysis, religions should be recognised as having responded differently to the mystery of the Ultimate. While recognising the plurality of these answers, Christians believe that in Jesus Christ the Ultimate has become intimate with humanity, that nowhere else is the victory over suffering and death manifested so decisively as in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that they are called upon to share this good news humbly with their neighbours" (p36). By way of response, the evangelical Arthur F. Glasser of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena criticises Samartha's understanding of Christ's lordship arguing that in the gospels "Christ's lordship is inseparably linked with the issue of truth ... Throughout the Gospels he unabashedly and with self-conscious authority claimed to be THE Teacher and THE Lord of all mankind. Hence, the test of one's submission to his Lordship is the acceptance of his teaching" (p41). However, Dr Samartha was still unrepentant in his reply and in disagreement concerning the nature of the Bible's authority. "I find it difficult", he adds, "to accept the view which limits the ground of religious authority to the Bible alone" (p54). He continues, "Is any exegesis by itself sufficient basis to conclude that the entire religious life of Hindus and Buddhists extending to more than three thousand years of spiritual struggle and devotion has no share in the struggle for truth at all or is wrong or quite wrong? The limitation is surely not in the Word of God, but in the historical and cultural circumstances, which inevitably change from time to time ... The question of truth is indeed important, but God's love is even more important" (idem).

Chapter Three is a detailed evangelical statement under the title, 'No Other Name' and written by Waldron Scott the former general secretary of the World Evangelical Fellowship. "Evangelicals", he warns, "are a biblically oriented people. Precisely because the theme of Christ's lordship is biblically grounded, it becomes inescapable to evangelicals" (p58). Quoting the Lausanne Covenant he insists that we cannot separate the lordship of Christ from the historical figure of Jesus nor from the historic name of Jesus: "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 theologies" (p59). Another aspect of Christ's lordship is the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18,19. "The missionary movement - traditionally focused on cross-cultural evangelism, conversion, church-planting, discipling, and service - has been and continues to be for evangelicals an authentic expression of the lordship of Christ in a religiously pluralistic world" (p61) where an estimated 16,750 cultural units are still unreached by any Christian witness.

Jesus is also the lord of justice so that Christians will respond to his lordship by working for justice in the world. In this respect "Christians must be prepared to cooperate with people of other faiths in rectifying situations inimical to human welfare and promoting activities that aim at establishing justice".

Referring to the important distinction between general and special revelation, Scott declares that "evangelicals see in the biblical testimony a low view, not a high view, of people's religions" (p65). Scott then quotes David Hesselgrave's call to evangelicals to "review their attitude of disinterest and non-participation in dialogue" (p67) that is, dialogue on the nature of dialogue, interreligious dialogue to promote freedom of worship and witness, dialogue concerned with meeting human need, dialogue designed to break down barriers of distrust within the religious world, and dialogue that has as its objective mutual comprehension of conflicting truth claims. Some evangelicals are currently engaged in interreligious dialogue. For example, the Overseas Ministries Study Centre at Ventnor, New Jersey arranges regular dialogue between evangelicals, ecumenical Protestants and Roman Catholics. Eight evangelical leaders met in Venice in 1978 with an equal number of Catholic theologians to discuss 'signs of convergence' in their understandings of mission. Waldron Scott himself is in frequent contact with the Catholic charismatic office in Brussels while evangelical and Jewish leaders have also met together to discuss

issues of theology and history. Nearer home, the Evangelical Alliance of Great Britain has authorised a special commission "to clarify the issues of inter-faith dialogue" (p68). Two years ago the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians emphasised the necessity of dialogue between evangelicals and non-Christians, including Marxists. In addition, a call to "faith missions to get better acquainted with the psychological and religious sources of non-Christian religions" was made recently by Ernest Oliver. Since 1963 some evangelicals have been engaged in dialogue with Muslims in India.

Amongst the contributions evangelicals can offer in dialogue, Scott pinpoints a positive biblical witness in relation to dialogue, the possibility of losing sight of the very real phenomenon of conversion and the necessity of keeping alert to the demonic in religion (pp71-73).

Margrethe B.J. Brown in her response is extremely unhappy with the basic evangelical position adopted by Scott. She sees an unhealthy preoccupation on our part with Matthew 28:18,19 as well as an immature approach when we ask whether natural revelation in other religions measures up to Christian standards. That kind of approach, she claims, "misses the contemporary key issue for an understanding of the Lordship of Christ vis-à-vis religious pluralism, which calls us first to re-examine our culturally biased understanding of Lordship ..." (p77). Quite discerningly, Thomas Stransky (Roman Catholic) in his response sees the contemporary cleavage not between Rome and Protestantism but between the mainstream Protestant/RC/Orthodox and the conservative evangelicals (p79).

The Roman Catholic perspective is given by Pietro Rossano in chapter four. Relating his comments to the relevant statements in Vatican Council II and in the subsequent documents of the RC church from Paul VI's 1975 Exhortation on Evangelisation to John Paul II's 1979 Encyclical on the Redemption of Man, Rossano warns that the problem of religious pluralism must not be minimised (p98). Acknowledging that "for the Christian, Christ is the religious truth" (p99), the author proceeds to relate this to the "immense problem of the religious pluralism of humankind" (p101). Denying the fact that religions contain different and genuine revelations from God, he quotes the description of religions given by Pope John Paul II as "the marvellous heritage of the human spirit" and of their values as "the work of the Spirit of God who breathes where he will" (p102). The author accounts

for differing religions by insisting that "illumination given by the Word is the same, the responses are different" (idem). Such religions then "are in a continual process of transformation, of progress and reform, of conservation and development, both under the influence of circumstances and, at best, under the action of the Spirit of Christ active in their adherents." He sums up the church's global approach to world religions as that of proclamation and dialogue.

Combining a special blend of liberation theology with an evangelical flavour, Orlando Costas writes in the fifth chapter from a Latin American Christological perspective. He is concerned with the "world of the oppressed and disfranchised ... the struggle ... against social and cultural oppression, economic exploitation and political domination" (p133). He claims that his understanding of the lordship of Christ is derived "from the witness of the canonical Scriptures, through the hermeneutical mediation of exegesis, historical studies, and the social sciences, motivated by a personal encounter with him and verified in a life of radical discipleship amid the struggles of history" (p134).

In the following twenty pages, Costas roots his radical social involvement in the life and ministry of Jesus (e.g. "we have here words IN the deed and a deed IN the words", p138), and the death of Jesus (e.g. "Isaiah's suffering servant situates the cross on the side of the poor and the afflicted, the sick and the oppressed" (p141). Some of his statements are questionable and pressed too far yet this contributor endeavours to be faithful to the biblical doctrines of sin and the person and work of Christ (cf. p144). In relation to world religions, Costas regards the HISTORICAL "name of Jesus" as a criticism of all religions so "it follows that the religions (including Christianity) can mediate God's presence in history only insofar as they are signs and instruments of God's coming kingdom" (p152). For Costas this can occur only under three conditions. First, when religions can "accept the scandal of the cross of Jesus amid the human crosses of the world" and, secondly, if "they lead their adherents to come outside the enclosed circle of their religious interests to the battlefields of life and join the crucified Lord in the struggle for the liberation of the poor and oppressed of the world" (p153). Thirdly, "religions may be signs and instruments of God's kingdom if they are anticipating it in their inner life. This means that their inner structure must be a paradigm of justice, freedom, and hope."

What then, according to Costas, is the challenge to Christians in a

religiously plural world? Certainly not one of accommodation but rather "a challenge to commitment and engagement in the liberating mission of the crucified and risen Lord who is to be found among the disfranchised of society. To the extent that they are influential in enabling religions to follow this path, they will help religions to fulfil an 'infrastructural' (praxial) role that will turn them into signs of a new humanity" (p154).

The book ends with a panel discussion re: models for Christian discipleship amid religious pluralism then an attempt at summation by Wilfred Cantwell Smith. The relation of Christianity to other religions is now a subject receiving considerable attention amongst theologians and churches and some disturbing developments are afoot. This publication will helpfully lead the uninitiated into the current ongoing debate and, hopefully, encourage a more biblical and theological response from evangelicals.

On the subject of pluralism, you may like to read C.A.Lamb's brief study in the LATIMER STUDIES series (14) entitled, 'JESUS THROUGH OTHER EYES: CHRISTOLOGY IN MULTI-FAITH CONTEXT' (Latimer House, Oxford 1982, pp36, £1.25). C.A.Lamb, who is co-ordinator of the BCMS/CMS Other Faiths Theological Project, reminds us of what Islam, Hinduism and Judaism teach concerning the Lord Jesus and after this exercise in comparative theology, he considers - albeit too generally - the significance of other Christologies. He laments the fact, for example, that in Great Britain with at least one million Muslims, theological training for ministers includes little, if any, comparative study of religions. But what of the religious experience of people in other religions? Lamb is hesitant and open-ended in his reply as he quotes the expositions of Jeremiah 20:7-13 by Rabbi Jonathan Magonet. Nevertheless, this is a helpful booklet.

It is a great pleasure for the reviewer to commend unreservedly the 'COLLECTED WRITINGS OF JOHN MURRAY', volumes 1-4, edited by Ian H. Murray and published by the BANNER OF TRUTH (£9.95 per volume). These theological writings are among the most significant to be published within the evangelical constituency in recent years and merit a wide readership.

Volume I, 'THE CLAIMS OF TRUTH' (pp374) contains the most important of John Murray's shorter writings and talks between the years 1935 and 1973. Divided into nine sections and forty-nine chapters, the book

touches on important subjects like the Holy Scriptures, Jesus Christ, the Gospel and its Proclamation, the Church, Issues in the Contemporary World as well as some historical addresses. None of this material has been published previously in book form. Avoiding verbosity and unnecessary technical jargon, Professor Murray's style is consistently lucid and direct. Unlike other reviewers, I think it best to start reading Murray at Volume 1 for the chapters are relatively brief yet foundational and preparatory to some of the material in later volumes. All the chapters will repay careful study and I hope preachers will refer to these writings regularly in sermon preparation.

The second volume 'SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY' (pp417) represents John Murray's own selection from his articles and lectures in systematic theology. The subjects are arranged in seven sections and thirty-six chapters under the themes of Man, Common Grace, Christ, Redemption, Sanctification, Church and Sacraments, the Last Things. "His self-judgment on his long teaching ministry", remarks the editor Ian H. Murray, "was that it had been given to him to make some contributions to the understanding of Scripture on relatively few subjects. It was THESE subjects, rather than Systematic Theology as a whole, which received most of his attention in the latter part of his life and happily they figure prominently in the manuscripts which he prepared ..." (p.vii).

Volume 3 (pp389) has been well received by readers for two important reasons. One is the excellent biography of John Murray by the editor (pp3-158) which is absorbing and challenging. After outlining his background and education, the biographer details carefully the steps leading to John Murray's appointment in Princeton as assistant in Systematic Theology to Caspar Wistar Hodge (1929) then as Professor of Systematic Theology in the new Westminster Seminary at Philadelphia. Once in Westminster we see Murray alongside men of the calibre of Gresham Machen, helping Machen on intricate theological questions as well as encouraging and supporting him in the doctrinal cleavage with the Presbyterian Church in America then in the establishing of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936. Chapter five provides a good insight into the struggles of the later thirties while the next chapter introduces us to the war years when John Murray continued his seminary teaching. His friendship with, and later marriage to Valerie Knowles and his wider ministry in Britain dominate the final chapters. Retiring from the seminary in 1966, Murray returned home immediately to his native Scotland and married a year later. He eventually died in 1975. Another reason why this third volume has been singled out

for praise is the section of nineteen sermons, sermons which contain rich spiritual understanding and application. This volume ends with a section of reviews written by Professor Murray in the period 1939-1953.

'STUDIES IN THEOLOGY' is the title of the final volume (pp390). Almost a hundred pages are allocated to reviews. The remainder of the book contains six historical studies (four, for example, on Calvin's teaching concerning Scripture, the Sovereignty of God and Predestination) and ten articles on such important subjects as Inspiration and Inerrancy, Jesus the Son of God, Who Raised up Jesus?, the Reconciliation, Paul's use of 'Nomos', the Weak and the Strong. All in all this is another substantial volume although some readers may be unwilling for so many reviews to appear in one volume. Let me assure you, however, that these reviews are far from being irrelevant or unimportant. Murray's reviews of G.C.Berkouwer's books ('Faith and Justification', 'The Work of Christ'), Karl Barth's 'Christ and Adam', Emil Brunner's 'Eternal Hope' or Bernard Ramm's writings on The Witness of the Spirit then Special Revelation and the Word of God are invaluable.

Allow me to conclude this review by referring in more detail to some of the more important features of Professor John Murray's writings in these volumes.

First of all, one is impressed by the Professor's graciousness and humility in contending for, and expounding, the Scriptures. Consider, for example, the way in which he reviews Steven Barabas's book, 'The History and Message of the Keswick Convention' (Vol.4, pp281-6). Although he pulls no punches in his criticism of the Convention yet he graciously acknowledges certain emphases of Keswick which call "for special commendatory mention" (p282). For instance, "Keswick has evinced a renewed appreciation of the implications for SANCTIFICATION of the union of the believer with Christ ... 2. Keswick recognises that sanctification is a process in connection with which the believer's responsibility is to be fully exercised ... 3. There is the recognition of, indeed constant stress upon, the work and presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of the believer; the Spirit-filled life is the central, dominating theme of the Convention ... Furthermore, when we think of the honoured names which have been associated with Keswick ... we have to reckon with a movement which enlisted the support of cultured and devoted servants of Christ and one hesitates to embark upon criticism ..." Earlier he commends certain features of the book before he exposes the Keswick claim that

Christians need not be "CONSCIOUS of the tendency' to sin. "To have sin in us and not to be conscious of it", warns Professor Murray, "is itself grave sin; it is culpable ignorance or culpable ignoring" (p283). He certainly spoke the truth - in love!

Furthermore, he remained humble and self-effacing throughout his Christian life and Seminary teaching. When, for example, he looked back over the first ten years of Westminster Seminary, he wrote we "have to confess that we have come far short of our profession and aim. Indeed, when we think of our own sins and shortcomings, we are amazed that God in his displeasure has not wrenched this banner out of our hands and given it to others more worthy than we ..." (Vol.3, p78). Many other examples of his graciousness and humility appear in these volumes and it behoves us to follow his example.

Secondly, his writings are thoroughly biblical. As a student in Princeton (1924-27), teachers like Geerhardus Vos "instilled in him the conviction that doctrine must be arrived at through a painstaking examination of the Scriptures in their original languages ... Murray's commitment to the Reformed Faith was not changed, but it became in a new way, rooted in the Bible itself" (Vol.3:p29). In his lectures he never started by quoting or reproducing Hodge or Calvin, etc. His starting point was always the text of Scripture. "This careful scrutiny of the text of Scripture was never hurried over, and if, sometimes, the examination of the biblical language seemed as dry as dust, he would tell his hearers 'to remember that we are dealing with gold dust!'" (Vol.3:p93). Such an approach proved beneficial to the church for he gave us a more thorough and biblical understanding of certain doctrines (e.g. 'Adamic Administration' and 'Definitive Sanctification' in volume 2; 'The High-Priestly Ministry of Christ' in volume 1, etc) and, at the same time, he challenged cherished reformed traditions or teachings which he deemed to be insufficiently biblical. "However much assistance we may derive from formulations and expositions of Scripture truth ... yet, after all, the Bible is the only SUFFICIENT rule of faith and life as well as the only infallible rule. We must betake ourselves anew, day by day, with humble and submissive minds to the law and to the testimony so that our minds may be illumined, replenished, refreshed, renewed and reinvigorated by the pure light that shines in the pages of God's inerrant Word ... Our devotion to a tradition is wholesome only when we recognise in that tradition, not the authority of the fathers, but the authority of God's Word. Apart from the recognition of divine authority, all our religious

devotion is abomination in the sight of God" (Vol.1:p7). One example of Professor Murray's commitment to Scripture over and above tradition is his excellent treatment of Common Grace where he rightly credits Calvin for opening up "a new vista" and a "new era in theological formulation of this doctrine" but he criticises the definitions of the subject given by C.Hodge then A.A.Hodge as "rather restricted". Murray then broadens the word 'grace' (p96) and proceeds to give a satisfyingly biblical formulation of common grace. One can safely turn to Murray for a faithful exegesis of Scripture and a competent formulation of biblical doctrine.

Another important feature of Murray's Collected Writings is that they are contemporary. He faced many of our problems and speaks in a relevant way to us in the eighties. For example, "Co-operation in Evangelism" is one of our contemporary problems. "The God of the evangelical", he warns, "is not the God of the modernist. The Christ of the evangelical is not the Christ of the modernist. Revelation, as the source and norm of all faith and worship, is conceived of in radically different ways" (Vol.1:p157). The following sections are sub-titled, 'Did Paul Co-operate?', 'Are John's Injunctions Relevant?', 'Preach to All', 'Co-operate with Believers Only', 'God's Revealed Will Versus the Pragmatic Test'. His addresses on, 'Some Necessary Emphases in Preaching', the 'Power of the Holy Spirit', the 'Church and Mission' or 'The Gospel and its Proclamation' are pertinent to our situation. Dealing with the finality and sufficiency of Scripture, John Murray observes: "As we read a great deal of the theological output of the present day ... one of its most striking features is the well-nigh total absence of any attempt to expound or be regulated in thought by the Scripture itself. This is because the regulative principle of the Reformation, especially of its Reformed exponents, has been abandoned, and with it, by necessity, the finality of Scripture" (Vol.1: p.17). He then rebukes evangelicals for failing "to assess the significance of what has been going on for a hundred years or more within the Protestant camp. We are suddenly awakened by the outspokenness of John Robinson. But all of this and more is implicit in seeds sown long before we were born, when the axe was laid at the root of the tree in the denial of the veracity of Scripture ... the fruit is now being borne, and we can see it not only in the realm of doctrine and faith but in the staggering proportions of moral disintegration". Murray is convinced that the leading exponents of contemporary Protestantism are reconstructing the gospel so that it will be relevant. "This", he warns, "is the capital sin of our generation. Taking

their starting point from the modern man's mentality they have revised the gospel to meet the dilemmas in which the church has found itself in the face of wholesale indifference and hostility". Once again these are challenging words of rebuke for evangelicals: "we have not esteemed and prized the perfection of Scripture and its finality ... we have resorted to other techniques, expedients, and methods of dealing with the dilemma that confronts us ..." (p21). Here then are the words and concerns of a theologian rooted in the Word of God and concerned that the message of God should not be "derived FROM the modern mentality, but declared TO the modern mentality in all the desperateness of its anxiety and misery" (p22).

These four volumes then are refreshingly contemporary, outstandingly biblical and profoundly practical. The reviewer heartily concurs with the statement by Ian H. Murray, the editor, in his Preface to Volume 2 (p.ix): "The twentieth century may be remembered by the church of the future as an age in which theology and Christianity, learning and piety, had parted company, save in the testimony of a few. Prominent among the few was the author of these pages and we do not doubt that they will be read with deep enrichment by the redeemed until the Advent of the Saviour." Buy and then read these volumes soon!

'MEMOIR OF THE WESTMINSTER DIVINES'

Review by Rev Gilbert Evans, (Flint, Clwyd)

James Reid. Banner of Truth. 2 volumes in one binding. pp768.
published January 1983. £7.95

Another considerable work from the Banner of Truth has been published containing valuable historical and theological material concerned with the individuals who took part in the Westminster Assembly.

For those familiar with Puritan literature a mere glance at the index of names reveals a galaxy of stars in the firmament, some more luminous than others, perhaps because their writings have prevented distance making dim? This book rescues many great and good men from unmerited oblivion. (p24 preface).

James Reid evidently held these divines in the highest admiration and spent much time and energy on collecting information about them in