

A REVIEW OF THEOLOGICAL JOURNALS 1980

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

antithesis' (June).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Professor F.F.Bruce has now retired as editor of the **EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY** and has been succeeded by Professor Howard Marshall of Aberdeen University. We extend our good wishes to both men and look forward to reading future issues under the new editor. It was refreshing to see an article by Dr J.I.Packer in the January-March issue called 'Puritanism as a Movement of Revival'. He defines revival "as a work of God by his Spirit through his Word bringing the spiritually dead to living faith in Christ and renewing the inner life of Christians who have grown slack and sleepy. In revival God makes all things new, giving new power to law and gospel and new spiritual awareness to those whose hearts and consciences had been blind, hard and cold. Revival thus animates or re-animates churches ... to make a spiritual and moral impact on communities. It comprises an initial reviving, followed by a maintained state of revivedness for as long as the visitation lasts" (p3). Relating the subject to the Puritans, Dr Packer argues and illustrates well three main facts. First of all, that spiritual revival was central to what the Puritans professed to be seeking. Secondly, personal revival was the central theme of Puritan devotional literature and, finally the ministry of Puritan pastors under God brought revival.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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TRANSLATING SCRIPTURE -

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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

What light can be thrown on this controversial subject by