

BOOK REVIEWS

'THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF MAN'

Edited by Sir Alister Hardy. O.U.P. 1980 £6.95

This book has already attracted a good deal of attention, having been mentioned on TV and then Bernard Levin devoted two articles in 'The Times' to it, and this elicited comment in the correspondence columns of that newspaper. It is a book ministers should read, and no doubt most libraries will obtain it on request, as did mine in West Sussex. It is a book of encouragements and discouragements. The former because it gives evidence for our Biblical doctrine of man, showing he has a spiritual nature, being made in the likeness of God in order to commune with and worship Him. However, and here is the discouraging part, the book does not draw this conclusion, but explains the phenomenon in terms of humanistic evolution!

The author, Sir Alister Hardy, began to collect material as long ago as 1925, although his Religious Experience Research Unit was not set up until 1969. Books based on the researches have already appeared, but this is the fullest so far, reporting the findings from three out of the four thousand contributions received from the general public. These have been classified and categorized, and we are given statistics as to how many fall into each category, with examples from the actual accounts received. The classification is done very much on psychological lines, using the terminology of that discipline. In fact the author regards his work as a development of the work of the pioneers of the psychology of religion such as James and Starbuck. Experiences are classified as "Sensory and Behavioural" or "Cognitive and Effective". This simply means that some people have experiences through seeing visions, feeling touches, hearing voices, etc., whereas others feel an inward sense of joy, peace, awe, love, hope and so on. The causes that trigger off these experiences are also examined, and these cover an astonishingly wide range - from prayer and participation in worship, via music, drama, art and literature, to such things as sexual relations and childbirth! The place of drugs as a stimulant is also examined.

Some of the statistics which emerge are interesting and even surprising. Out of the 3000 replies no less than 544 claimed some kind of visual experience, and 431 heard voices, which included certain forms of tongue-speaking. A questionnaire seeking to discover how many have ever had a sense of a "supernatural presence" revealed 65%. This questionnaire was separate from the 3000 voluntary contributions and was done on a group of students. But when it came to the circumstances of this awareness only 13% connected it with prayer and only 12% experienced it in a church service. There would seem here to be some sort of challenge to our present evangelical public and private devotion, and one is caused to wonder whether these have become mechanical and devoid of almost all truly spiritual experience.

But the biggest challenge comes from the philosophy underlying this whole research programme. Although a scientist, the author is critical of the trends in modern science which seek to explain everything in terms of molecular biology and ignore the whole realm of consciousness, especially in relation to religious experience.

"Without this being taken into consideration, there is a danger of man falling into a fantasy equal to the one he has escaped of mediaeval theology based on Adam, the Fall, the Devil and Hell" (p15).

He believes passionately in recovering a recognition of the reality of religious experience, lest the scientific revolution should lead to a situation in which the last stage is worse than the first:

"The bringing of the elements of religion into the realm of scientific thought may prove to be a vital issue: unless this can be done, religion as a moral force may disappear and we cannot be sure that our civilization will survive without it" (p8).

Unfortunately, what he regards as "mediaeval" is in essence if not in detail also Biblical - the ideas of "Adam and his Fall, a personal devil and a localized hell".

The alternative explanation of man's religious nature which he offers us is in fact worse than the one he rejects. For instead of

querying the whole basis of humanistic evolution he actually applies its methods to religious experience! There is a kind of natural selection, he holds, in the spiritual evolution of man. This is not explicable in purely biological terms, for DNA only controls physical evolution. But there is a mental evolution in which non-genetical factors play a part. Ideas are handed on from one generation to another (termed "memes" as opposed to "genes"!) some of which have better "survival value" than others. Thus the idea of God has persisted and developed because of its "great psychological appeal". It answers the deepest questions of existence - how injustices in this world are corrected in the next, and idea which is "none the less effective for being imaginary" (!). These ideas affect behaviour which itself affects physical evolution.

With this apologetic in the introduction we are the less surprised to find at the end his answer to the question "What is spirituality?" It is not apparently what you and I thought - a divine gift, a built-in faculty which after the Fall remains in a weakened form, but can be recovered through faith. It is part of our evolutionary development and appears most strongly in childhood. Later experiences are the afterglow of our childhood visions. We can cultivate these by attending more to our inner psychology. For this is the source of it all. There is no such thing as "answered prayer" in the old evangelical sense. The answer to our problems lies within our own selves. When we pray it is simply a way of probing the depths until the answer emerges.

Thus what we are presented with here is an array of evidence on which to base a plea for a fresh development in science. He admits that scientific theories are always changing - including those connected with Darwinianism. The next change must be to accommodate human spirituality within the theory of evolution. We have here then a great challenge. The evidence favours Biblical theology, but is interpreted in such a way as to deny that theology in support of humanistic evolution. But who among us will answer this challenge? Here is a modern Goliath defying the armies of the living God. But where is the David who walks so closely with his God and so trusts the God he serves that he knows how to overthrow him? What has happened to genuine Biblical religious experience? Biblical theology is obviously not enough.

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THEOLOGICAL WORDBOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Edited by R.Larrd Harris,
Gleason L.Archer Jr., and Bruce K.Waltke
Published in two volumes by Moody Press.
Vol.I Aleph - Mem, Pages 1-538. Vol.II Nun - Tan, Pages 539-1124

These two volumes provide a monumental and excellent dictionary of O.T. words. The forty-six contributors include such respected scholars as the late J.Bartom Payne, Walter C.Kaiser, E.A.Martens, D.J.Wiseman and Edwin Yamauchi, producing a thoroughly conservative evangelical work.

As the titles indicate the work is based on Hebrew words and articles are arranged by Hebrew roots, analogously to the Brown, Driver and Briggs Lexicon. However, each Hebrew vocable is cited in alphabetical order (as in Koehler - Baumgartner) and indexed by means of a numerical system which facilitates the finding of references. All words are given a basic definition and the more significant are given an article varying from a few sentences to several thousand words. An Aramaic lexicon and brief notes are provided at the end of each work together with an extensive numerical index which codes each reference to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. This last feature enables usage by the student without Hebrew, although an elementary knowledge of Hebrew Grammar would be decidedly useful in order to understand reference to e.g. Qal, Niphal, Infinitive Absolute. Each article is followed by a Bibliography which in places is very inadequate but especially useful are the many (usually) English journal articles which are appended.

Evaluation of such a work is not easy. However, the combination of evangelical piety and scholarship has produced a work which ought to be of immense value to the student and especially the hard-pressed Pastor. The Introduction says (p.iv) "The contributors were asked to study their words from the viewpoint of biblical usage, etymological background, comparison with cognate languages, translations in the ancient versions, synonyms, antonyms, and theological significance. Also they were to consider the use of their words in passages of special difficulty." The editors add, "Naturally, not all of those items were applicable to every word. And the writers felt the pressure of fitting their study into the narrow limitation

of a two-volume book of this nature. Many things they would like to include could not be worked in." There is considerable variation as to the success of the respective authors in meeting these requirements. Many succeed admirably; of special note (in addition to those already named) are the excellent contributions of Victor Hamilton, John Hartley and John Oswalt. Larrd Harris' studies on the various Hebrew 'death' words are stimulating. However, especially in some of the earlier contributions there is a failure to deal with "theological significance" and this is particularly apparent in words which have an eschatological importance.

Finally, it might be asked whether "Theological Wordbook" is an adequate title. In fact, the work is more extensive than the title suggests and is really an Old Testament Dictionary involving as it does studies on places, things etc., without 'theological' significance, e.g. the first article is on 'barley'.

Altogether to be highly recommended.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA by M.H.Woudstra

The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
(Eerdmans) 396pp

JUDGES by J.Alberto Soggin

S.C.M. O.T. Library, 305pp £8.50 (limp)

THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH by J.A.Thompson

The New International Commentary on the Old Testament
(Eerdmans) 819pp

The O.T. is currently a "growth industry" in theological circles and nowhere is this better illustrated than in the two commentary series whose newest volumes are under review here. Such a development is especially encouraging to the preacher when it is the "neglected" books of the O.T. canon which are being commented on, as here, since there is an urgent need to be brought up to date on modern archaeological and philological studies. Only when this has been done to illuminate the text can the preacher be confident that he has begun to grasp the heart of God's message in these books of Holy Scripture.

It is the purpose of this review to begin by reviewing together the books by Woudstra and Soggin since Joshua and Judges are so

intimately related to one another and a useful comparison between the approaches of the respective commentators can be helpfully outlined. Both volumes share the following procedures: i) they are exegetical studies. They are therefore an attempt to tell us what the text actually says (not what the student thinks they ought to say!). Consequently, Soggin (Professor of Old Testament Theology at the Waldensian Faculty in Rome and Lecturer at the University of Rome) divides each section of commentary on the text into three: His own translation from the Hebrew; textual and philological comments and, finally, theological and critical discussion on the basis of the foregoing textual work. Similarly Woudstra, who is Professor of O.T. Studies at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, also provides his own translation which is followed by a commentary incorporating the features of Soggin's final two sections. Woudstra tends to be the more thorough and extensive of the two but each provide much valuable exegetical material. ii) both commentators are concerned to uncover the underlying "editorial" purpose of the human authors of these two books in the Divine Library. They share, therefore, a conviction that the narrative portions of O.T. literature provide a theologically interpreted presentation of the material they are dealing with. O.T. history is not mere chronicling. Each commentator draws attention, therefore, to the main theological themes that are discernible in the respective books - the real, if partial, fulfilment of the patriarchal promises in Joshua and the "Deuteronomic" framework of blessing and curse in response to obedience and disobedience in Judges. These themes are traced, with others, in their development. Such material gives clear guidance to the expositor.

The major difference between the two volumes, however, lies in the radically different approaches to Hebrew historiography. Both authors are aware of some of the most characteristic features of O.T. narrative as we have it - notably, the repetitive duplication of material and the unchronological nature of some of the accounts. However, Woudstra is able to show that these features can often be explained by seeing them as summaries which are often expanded, or (where there are parallel accounts) as different and complimentary interpretations of the same event. In addition, he is able to show that to take the text as we have it does not leave the reader with a hopelessly contradictory story. Rather, he suggests, the book of Joshua shows evidence of remarkable accuracy and was probably

written shortly after the events that it recounts. In fact it is a real pleasure to read the thoroughly conservative comments of Woudstra. By way of contrast Soggin's work assumes that the only valid approach to the text of Judges is that which depends on the methods of literary and form criticism. As he understands it, this requires the assumption of contradictory elements and discernible "seams" in the text and the likelihood that a long period between event and the final editing of Judges has left us with little certainty as to what actually took place during Israel's early history. Interestingly, when Soggin refers to a recent study by computer which suggests a 99% probability that the main body of Judges is by one author (a fact which raises questions about the possibility of being, therefore, able to discern all the different elements in the text required by Soggin's methodology) he can only conclude that "they show us how thoroughly Dtr. not only collected but also reworked his sources" (p6 footnote 8). The importance of our comments at this point lies in the fact that liberal scholars, like Soggin, seem to be still unaware that there are alternative methodologies to the ones they adopt as fact; that these alternatives are quite as scholarly yet able to treat the text as true until proved otherwise and seem largely free of the alleged contradictions and "problems" raised by liberal methodologies. These alternative approaches must be taken account of in any scholarly work.

Since much of Soggin's work is occupied with discussion of the critical problems thrown up by his own methodology its value is, consequently, reduced for those who do not share those same views. Nevertheless, especially in the present absence of textual and exegetical commentaries on the book of Judges (Cundall excepted) these features of Soggin's work will make this a useful addition to the library of the more scholarly Pastor.

Finally, to return to Woudstra: if his book is to be faulted amid its general excellence it is in his frequent failure to indicate the direction of Christian application in the text. Although there are excellent hints throughout the work they are not as clearly developed as in Wenham's commentary in this same series (see Foundations No.6), nor as regular as the incisive comments so much a characteristic of Derek Kidner's O.T. commentaries. Clearer explanation would have been valuable, not only to aid the Pastor hard-

pressed for time and thought but also since it is surely the responsibility of the Christian exegete to show how an O.T. book acts as authoritative literature in the N.T. community - the Church. Nevertheless, this blemish but little undermines the certainty that Woudstra's commentary will rightly be seen for some time as the standard conservative work on the Book of Joshua, providing a reliable guide through the story of Israel's entry into the Land.

At this point we turn to a consideration of Thompson's work.

This volume is a worthy addition to the NICOT series of commentaries - a series which promises to provide Old Testament commentaries of the highest standard of scholarship from a, basically, conservative theological position. The strength of Thompson's work are both those of the earlier volumes (e.g. the thoroughness of the exegetical work) and others which are special to 'Jeremiah'. The latter includes an extensive discussion of literary critical problems. Moreover the writing of the commentary has clearly been a labour of love in a part of God's Word which is the especial delight of the author. This makes the study always interesting and readable and Thompson seems to bring us unerringly to the heart of both Jeremiah and his message - we feel we stand where Jeremiah stood and we are touched by his anguish of soul in proclaiming God's message of judgement. Finally, there is an apologetic strength to the work as is witnessed by the defence of the authenticity of many passages.

The structure of the commentary is similar to the earlier volumes. An extensive introduction (p 1-136) includes discussions on Jeremiah's relation to the other prophets; an essay on the historical setting of his ministry; the compilation of the book and a discussion of the main exegetical issues in Jeremiah. Of these latter we would mention, the date of Jeremiah's call; the first and second scrolls; Jeremiah and the Covenant; the prophet and the cult; symbolic actions etc. Included in the introductory material is also a section on the message of Jeremiah, on the text (the Septuagint being preferred in the most knotty textual problems in the whole of the Bible) and on the poetic forms of the book. Discussion is often a dialogue with recent studies such as those of E.W.Nicholson. The readability of Thompson's work extends to this introductory material - seldom has the reviewer enjoyed introductory essays in commentaries but this book is a definite exception.

While it will not have escaped the readers' attention that the reviewer found the reading of this book an enjoyable task, nevertheless there are several points of criticism to make in closing: i) there is a tendency to wordiness in places; ii) the incisive contemporary applications of e.g. Leslie Allen in the commentary on Micah are absent. Thompson presumably regards his task as that of an exegete rather than an interpreter. While this is not a serious weakness in a prophetic book help would, nevertheless, have been welcome and its absence will reduce the value of the volume for the busy Pastor; iii) the apologetic purpose of the work has led (as so often with modern conservative studies) to an over-indulgent view of modern, negative criticism. In this respect one sometimes feels that Thompson's insistence that Jeremiah was not a literary prophet is overplayed. If it is an undoubtedly eirenic spirit (which is much appreciated) which was behind this approach it has, at times, led to compromise.

ESSAYS ON THE PATRIARCHAL NARRATIVES

Edited by A.R.Millard and D.J.Wiseman

Published by the Inter-Varsity Press. Hardback £6.95

PLOT AND PURPOSE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT by E.A.Martens

Published by Inter-Varsity Press, Paperback £4.95

also published in America by Baker Book House under the title, 'GOD'S DESIGN: A FOCUS ON OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY'

Inter-Varsity Press are to be congratulated for the publication of these two excellent volumes in the field of O.T. studies.

Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives is, as the title suggests, a collection of papers written by members of the Tyndale Fellowship's O.T. studies group to meet the need for an up-to-date appraisal of recent developments in Patriarchal studies. In particular, they constitute a response to the contemporary swing back to a more sceptical attitude toward the historical existence of the Patriarchs or, at least, much that is said about them. These essays, therefore, are especially concerned to evaluate the two recent studies which mark this shift, viz. I.L.Thompson: "The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives" and John van Seters: "Abraham in History and

Tradition". However, they are of more general usefulness in that they wrestle with the problem, which all theological students are aware of, concerning the relationship between faith and history - a problem which is at its acutest in the Patriarchal narratives.

Seven essays are offered to the reader. The first, entitled "The Patriarchs in Scripture and History" is by John Goldingay and is a study of the theological structure of both the Patriarchal narratives themselves and the wider O.T. narrative structure of which these stories form a part. Goldingay's emphasis is that these stories are to be regarded as "stories" rather than "history". This is indeed a proper emphasis, if we understand this to mean that the Patriarchal narratives are interpretative accounts within a theological structure of events that actually took place in history rather than mere chronicling of those events. However, there is just a hint in Goldingay's paper that he is prepared to be agnostic about the historical reliability of some of the Patriarchal material - either this, or he is too philosophical by half! It is somewhat alarming to find an "evangelical" scholar at least permitting such an interpretation of his words and, in fact, this touches upon the major weakness of the volume. Although it is by no means true of all the contributors to this volume some of the essayists (both in this volume and elsewhere) seem to be prepared to ally a basic conservatism with an uncertain doctrine of Scripture which has led to many concessions being made, in the name of scholarship, to viewpoints which are contrary to the Scripture's own view of itself. Gordon Wenham's essay on "The Religion of the Patriarchs" illustrates this. A useful study is flawed by far too high a regard for the documentary hypothesis which lies behind most O.T. studies of the Pentateuch today. In this vital area, where young students need much help, it is, sadly, the Theological Students Fellowship not the Tyndale Fellowship that is giving the lead.

However, there is much of real value in the book. Millard's essay on "Methods of studying the Patriarchal Narratives as Ancient Texts" is a brilliant expose of the bias found in O.T. studies in the evaluation of the reliability of the Biblical material over against other ancient texts. Consistently, the O.T. Scriptures are treated as incorrect unless proved otherwise in much modern study and Millard shows the hypocrisy of such an attitude allied, as it so often is with the ready acceptance of other material of comparable

antiquity. A student fresh to the debate is given real orientation here!

The middle three essays are by J.J.Bimson, M.J.Selman and D.J.Wiseman and are discussions of the use to which archaeology and comparative anthropology may be made in Patriarchal studies. Pitfalls that conservative students are liable to fall into are outlined (e.g. a too ready identification between extra-biblical and biblical material where it seems to suit, without adequate assessment of the respective data; the assumption that archaeology can prove the Patriarchal narratives correct which is seldom, if ever, possible). However, on the positive side, not only are contemporary sceptical approaches exposed but Bimson's excellent article is able to argue that the narratives are at least at home amid the customs and archaeology of the early second millenium B.C. Wiseman's contribution also provides some useful and thought-provoking material on the question as to whether Abraham was a nomad or not in Canaan. Wiseman concludes that he was not and this leads to some interesting possibilities in the reinterpretation of the Abraham story.

The final essay, which follows that of Wenham, mentioned above, is a rather technical contribution by D.W.Baker entitled, "Diversity and Unity in the literary structure of Genesis". He concludes that Genesis is a well structured literary document which shows no evidence of being an amalgam of originally separate sources and this leads him to make a call for a thorough re-examination of the theory of source documents as advanced in the JEDP schema.

Concluding remarks The student of the early material of the Bible, and Genesis 12-50 in particular will find in this book a comprehensive and generally reliable guide to his or her studies. Make sure that your Theology students are aware of its existence!

Plot and Purpose in the Old Testament Evangelical students of the O.T. have long been awaiting a satisfactory O.T. Theology which: i) seeks a self-generating O.T. structure within which to present its material, rather than depending upon a systematic framework usually derived from the N.T. and which tends, therefore, to neglect those features prominent in the O.T. but which have a lesser emphasis in the N.T. ii) Integrates those discoveries of recent

scholarship which are consistent with a high view of Scripture and in a lively way presents a fresh and readable perspective on O.T. religion. In reading this book I felt that this is the nearest that we have yet attained to that goal. Every pastor should purchase and digest a copy!

Eschewing those approaches to the O.T. which look for a single centre, Martens (who is President and Professor of O.T. at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California) suggests, on an exegesis of Exodus 5:22-6:8; Hosea 2:14-23; and Ezekiel 34:17-31, that a fourfold strand (deliverance, community, knowledge of God and land) runs through the O.T. He traces the development of the theology associated with these motifs through the three major sub-divisions of the O.T. which he distinguishes viz. pre-monarchy, monarchy and post-monarchy. Eventually, he observes that these motifs push forward to their fulfilment in the N.T.

Though the fourfold division is itself somewhat synthetic yet nevertheless its use provides a fairly comprehensive coverage of O.T. theology and it is especially encouraging to see the emphasis which is placed on the land.

As was noted above an adequate O.T. theology must begin with the O.T. itself. However, a Christian O.T. theology must then take the further step and relate the material to those N.T. Scriptures that faith believes are the fulfilment of all that was before. At this point the reviewer discovered a weakness in Martens' work, since he spends little time in tracing that relationship or providing such hermeneutical procedures which enable the reader to make the O.T. Scriptures the word of God to the contemporary situation but these matters may have been seen as outside the scope of the work. It would, however, have greatly facilitated the use of his book and without adequate development of this sort the student is driven elsewhere for guidance on the how of application - guidance which is scarce. In fact, the reviewer is left with the feeling that Martens himself is not altogether clear as to how the connection is made since he is hesitant to use typology and tends to be superficial when any attempt at application is made.

These matters apart, (together with a tendency to rather overdo the point that prophets were, above all, preachers to their own

generation) this is an excellent volume which provides not only a basic orientation to O.T. theology for the beginner but also much thought-provoking material for the more experienced student and in a highly readable form.

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Having reviewed Jensen's "Survey of the Old Testament" in Issue No. 5, readers may like to know that his "Survey of the New Testament" has just been published by Moody Press

THE GREAT ACQUITTAL

Justification by Faith and Current Christian Thought

by Tony Baker, George Carey, John Tiller, Tom Wright
Collins, 1980 125pp £1.50

This small paperback merits a review in our Journal for numerous reasons. First of all, it is an attempt by some Evangelical Anglicans to expound and clarify the crucial doctrine of Justification by Faith and for this reason alone the book deserves to be studied by us. The opening section by Tom Wright entitled, "Justification: The Biblical Basis and its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism" is both penetrating and provocative and it is well written. Another reason for drawing attention to the book is that it relates the doctrine of Justification by Faith to the contemporary English situation in the Anglican Church and, at the same time, to the more general situation within Christendom and Evangelicalism so that the book is contemporary and practical. Furthermore, the writers of this book are convinced of the great importance of doctrine and in the existentialist climate of thought now prevailing such a book is invaluable. For example, in the introduction Gavin Reid suggests several reasons why doctrine is so unpopular today.

In recent decades he observes there has been a shift by even intelligent people into emotive rather than descriptive thinking so that we tend to think more in stereotypes and caricatures. The word 'doctrine' also conveys a negative image and tends to be

associated with bigotry and unloving attitudes. In our multi-racial society, too, there are new currents of thought which are challenging not only orthodox doctrines but doctrine itself on the assumption that it is unhelpful to be dogmatic. Doctrinal viewpoints anyway are regarded only as personal opinions which need to be balanced by other opinions. Within the Church of England, also, there have appeared recently 'bureaucratic pressures' intent on organizing and curbing the conflicting traditions within its ranks and the voluntary societies working from clear theological positions so as to "run a tidy ecclesiastical ship" (p9).

Reid's attitude is refreshingly clear and uncompromising. "If doctrine divides then that is a cost that has to be paid. To avoid paying such a price could mean that people are led into erroneous views about God ... To settle for a uniting message that is misleading about God and his will, is not a way open to the Christian ... Doctrine matters and this doctrine (Justification by Faith) matters most ... A Church that ignores doctrine will die. A Church that ignores its central doctrine will die in agony" (p10-11). We applaud this healthy approach to doctrine and the book is likely to make a significant contribution to the contemporary theological scene in England.

In his first section, Tom Wright argues for the 'forensic' view of Justification, defining it as "the declaration that somebody is in the right" (p14); this is more than 'forgiveness' or even 'acquittal' for Justification indicates a positive standing in the right as well as the absence or removal of guilt. After surveying and summarizing the biblical material the writer concludes that Justification is an aspect of a larger subject, namely, God's covenant purposes for his people including Jews and Gentiles. He describes Justification as "essentially a polemical doctrine" (p19) as in Romans and Galatians; "it is not a fiction", he adds, "a pretence or a process; it is God's righteous declaration in the present that the person who believes in the risen Lord Jesus Christ is a member of the covenant family, whose sins have been dealt with on the cross and who is therefore assured of eternal life" (p18). The Roman Catholic failure to distinguish Regeneration from Justification, the wedge driven between Justification and the idea of the historical covenant people of God by Radical Protestantism and the

existentialism even of contemporary Evangelicalism leading to the cult of sincerity over against objective truth and an anti-church attitude are matters briefly touched upon in conclusion. His identification of the Reformed School with Barth and Torrance is unfortunate (pp30 and 117) but his challenge is a powerful one and must be faced by all Evangelicals; "the real test for Evangelicalism today is this; are we prepared to be reformed under the Word of God, as we traditionally insist that everyone else ought to be? Or have our traditional ways of thinking become the norm into which the Bible must be made to fit?" (p34).

The second section deals with the relationship of Justification by Faith to the Sacraments, a subject which bristles with all kinds of contemporary as well as historical and theological questions. The writer, John Tiller, shows the inadequacy of a creation-gospel explanation of this relationship and then stresses that baptism and the Lord's Supper are "inescapably associated with an ATONEMENT-GOSPEL. They are like two great beacons set up to keep the Church living in the light of justification by faith in Christ alone for salvation" (p42). He then proceeds to develop an answer using the basic theological idea underlying baptism and the eucharist, namely, union with Christ. In this context some of his statements are ambiguous and open to misunderstanding. While, for example, he rejects baptismal regeneration, he nevertheless affirms that "it is by means of the sacraments that we are incorporated in Christ ..." (p44) and again he writes, "The New Testament views the sacraments as effectively conveying what God promises in the Gospel" (p45). I am also unhappy with his exegesis and use of passages like Colossians 2 verse 12 and Titus 3 verses 4-7. Furthermore, the question posed on page 45, "are we brought into union with Christ by our faith, or by the sacraments" and his answer "Undoubtedly, St Paul says both" reveals the writers lack of acquaintance or disagreement with the Reformed biblical position at this point. It is neither our faith initially nor the sacraments which bring us into union with Christ. Rather it is by the effectual call of God that the sinner is ushered into fellowship and union with the Lord Jesus Christ (see e.g. I Cor 1 verse 9 and Romans 8 verse 30). In the words of the late Professor John Murray, "the application of redemption begins with the sovereign and efficacious summons by which the people of God are ushered into the fellowship of Christ and union with him to the end that they may become partakers of all the grace and

virtue which reside in him as Redeemer, Saviour and Lord" (Redemption Accomplished and Applied, p94 B.O.T).

Identifying sacramental and justifying faith, he goes on to argue that those who have believed in Christ are immediately qualified and indeed summoned to baptism. Here his position is inconsistent and needs to be thought through even more as he tries to allow for both infant baptism and the participation of some uncommitted as well as the seeking and the committed to the Parish Communion (p58). This section ends with a brief discussion of Faith and Knowledge and The Justified Community, stressing the point that the theological concept of being 'in Christ' is essentially a corporate one. "By extension, therefore, justification by faith is not, as it has sometimes been caricatured, an individualistic doctrine" (p59). My impression is that this is one of the weakest and most disappointing sections in the book and the writer appears to be struggling at times to understand and express this important relationship between justification and the sacraments.

In section Three, George Carey discusses the doctrine of Justification by Faith in Recent Roman Catholic Theology. Over the past 450 years this doctrine has been at the centre of the controversy between Rome and Protestantism and it is refreshing to find Carey writing, "It is the view of the Evangelical Anglican that the doctrine of justification by faith is still the central issue, although to date it has been ignored in recent discussions between Anglicans and Catholics. It is central because it goes to the very heart of the Gospel and how it is made available to man" (p62). I am not sure that all Evangelicals within the Church of England would subscribe to Carey's statement but I am inclined to agree with him that creative dialogue between Rome and Protestantism only began seriously in 1957 with the publication of Hans Kung's doctoral dissertation, "The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection". The questions raised by Barth in his Church Dogmatics were here taken up by Kung. Three questions were raised by Barth.

First of all, does Rome take God seriously in its doctrine of sin because it views sin only as a secondary, though important, 'accident'? Secondly, Barth asks whether Rome takes its doctrine of grace seriously for it views grace as a state rather than God's act in Christ. He finally questioned the relationship between faith

and works in the Roman system where good works are made co-ordinate with faith thus placing human merit as an element within justification.

Kung agreed with Barth that Justification was first of all a forensic declaration of a man's status before God and he argued that there was a great deal of common ground between the two sides. These important questions, however, in Kung's view, "will always remain polemical questions ... unless sufficient consideration is given to differences of expression and the theological cultures in which they are posed" (p64).

Karl Rahner regards Kung's contribution as representing an "important theological breakthrough" but Carey remarks that the doctrine still does not figure prominently in ecumenical debate "and is often treated as somewhat of a theological irrelevancy or embarrassment to modern Christians. However, evangelicals within all churches will contend with both Kung and Barth that this doctrine of justification is of crucial significance for ecumenism. Indeed they will tell other Christians bluntly that there can be no true unity worthy of the name until the heart of faith is shared. 'How is a man saved?' is hardly an abstract, irrelevant question. It is the crucial question which makes a man what he is, and churches what they are" (p66)

Carey proceeds in this section to survey the theological discussion concerning the nature of Justification which has continued in the Roman Church since 1957. The discussion is necessarily brief and sketchy but generally helpful. It is in the doctrine of grace that some of the greatest difficulties between Catholics and Protestants are encountered while Rome has also a defective doctrine of sin and of man's condition as a result of the Fall. Catholic theologians like Karl Rahner and Charles Meyer affirm that the Protestant doctrine of Justification by Faith leaves a man where it found him, namely, in his sin. Rahner writes, "The Catholic doctrine of Justification will always emphasise that we become God's children through God's grace and that in justification the Holy Spirit is given to us ..." (p73). In other words, while Protestants with their forensic view of Justification speak of an 'imputed righteousness', Catholics speak of an 'imparted righteousness' and thus confuse Justification with Sanctification. Other differences such as Assurance, Works, and the Church are touched upon by the writer but I regard his concluding statement with mixed feelings: "Evangelical Anglicans wish

to play a full part in ecumenical discussion; we concede that we have much to learn as well as something to give; we trust that, given the great deal of unity which already exists between Protestant and Catholic, earnest efforts will be made by us all to bring the whole Church into the unity of faith which is the will of God." (p88). There is clearly a renewed commitment on the part of the authors of this book to ecumenism despite the apostasy of many of the churches participating in dialogue.

The final section by Tony Baker tackles the implications of this doctrine of Justification Faith for pastoral and evangelistic ministry. In the context of proclaiming the gospel, the doctrine of Justification by Faith demands that the holiness and righteousness of God as well as the call to repentance be regularly preached. "It is this sort of content", writes Baker, "that paves the way for a clear understanding and awareness of justification. The wonder of acquittal will pass us by if we have known little or nothing about the condemnation we deserve and of personal conviction of sin" (p90) This is an important point and, again, he challengingly asks, "Have Anglican evangelicals of our generation too often given the impression of presenting the Gospel as though its ESSENTIAL purpose were to meet points of personal need such as loneliness, lack of aim in life, etc. rather than to put sinners right with God? Such a presentation is bound to pander to superficial professions and yet we wonder at the high 'drop-out' rate amongst those who profess conversion. Compare the size of so many apparently flourishing youth groups with the number still moving forward spiritually twenty years later" (p91). Again he writes, "It is time to go back to examine the Gospel we proclaim - and the books and booklets we write on evangelism and the training schemes we evolve to help in witness - and ask whether we are preaching it in full biblical proportions. We must preach the biblical categories, but in the setting of the 1980s" (p93). He argues that the doctrine of Justification by Faith also has implications for co-operation in evangelism. Without agreement on this doctrine, he affirms, "to go ahead in mission is surely hypocrisy before God and man, and not something which we can expect the Spirit of God to own. We forget we are limping along spiritually in this country because the Spirit of truth is grieved. Often we have not heeded that which the Spirit has made clear in the Scriptures, his written testimony to the living Christ. Our first concern must, therefore, be to do that which the Spirit will honour. It is not enough to say that all professing Christians are preaching the

Gospel of Christ. The question is: 'What is the Gospel and the nature of our response?' and also 'Who is the Christ and what has he accomplished?'" (p97).

Under the heading of pastoral care, the writer also shows the importance of preaching Justification by Faith for conversion, assurance, edification, suffering, satanic assaults and death. "There is no phase or crisis throughout Christian discipleship where justification by faith is not relevant" (p101). He warns us again, "Neglect this and we shall run round in decreasing circles supporting Christians whose prime need may be for a good dose of the implications of justification!" (p102). This is a most refreshing section and we would do well as Non-Comformists to heed its warnings and challenge.

While the book is written for Anglicans, therefore, and has many inherent weaknesses and inconsistencies yet it is a book with a message for all Churches.

Eryl Davies (Bangor)

MATTHEW by David Dickson

Banner of Truth 416pp £5.95

Many of our readers will already be familiar with the author's commentaries on the Psalms (reprinted in 1959) and Hebrews which was re-published alongside Ferguson's 'Epistles of Paul' in 1978 by the Banner. Surprisingly enough, this is the first reprint of his commentary on Matthew since 1651 and we are again indebted to the Banner for providing us with another valuable classic. Spurgeon described this commentary as "a perfect gem" and claimed "it is more suggestive of sermons than almost any other we have met with" and after reading the commentary, I could not disagree with Spurgeon!

Dickson's aim in writing the commentary is stated clearly in the Introduction: "some have written large commentaries upon sundry books and parcels of Scripture, others have translated out of Latin the commentaries of others. But of those worthy men's labours only such as have much leisure and patience to read can make use. Others have written short paraphrases of harder places; others, expositions of hard words; others have minded herewith some sweet notes and

observations, all of them contributing one with another unto the common good ... Yet ... these dangerous times call for such an explanation of the whole Bible as might not only show the scope of each book and chapter ... but also propone the special heads of doctrine in each place, whereby people might see the whole grounds of religion in the text and be guarded against all damnable errors ... and all this to be in such brevity and clearness that men in their daily set reading of the Lord's Word might in the space of half an hour peruse a competent portion of Scripture thus explained"(p.vi).

What is so refreshing about this commentary is the clarity and simplicity with which biblical truth is faithfully expressed and applied. After a brief explanation he proceeds to draw out the doctrine from each verse in a most helpful way. Commenting on chapter 4 verses 23-25 he speaks, for example, of the diligence of the Lord in his office "with the great power of the Godhead manifesting itself"(p41). Dickson then proceeds to apply eight points of doctrine from the three verses and in application of verses 17-18 in chapter 16 another nine points of doctrine are underlined briefly and practically.

The style of the book is readable, warm and practical. Pastors can recommend this book to their churches for use, not only in the Church library but for the purpose of aiding believers in their personal and daily reading of the Bible. Alongside Hendrikson and Calvin, Dickson's commentary provides a rich and balanced source of help for the preacher. The book is reasonably priced and deserves to be widely used both by Pastors and members of our churches.

Eryl Davies (Bangor)

GOD'S PEOPLE IN GOD'S WORLD

Biblical motives for social involvement

by John Gladwin

Published by IVP 191pp £2.95

The author of this book is currently Director of the Shaftesbury Project, who commissioned him to write it. Mr Gladwin is very much aware of, and involved in contemporary thinking about Christian involvement in the social and political realms. The book reflects

his consciousness of the wider world situation, as well as the challenges facing Christians in the Western world.

Despite the rather wordy style of long and complex sentences, (including one sentence I noticed of 80 words) the book presents a clear challenge to Christians to think out their position in this subject. Mr Gladwin writes with warmth and firm convictions. He is plain and outspoken in some of his statements. For example, "Failure to enter political commitments, due to fear, is the compromise of disobedience."(p123) And, "It is only the naive who think of social compassion without seeking to understand the political demands of such action."(p185) These quotations also illustrate his insistence that true social concern and action must be political in nature, though he believes that politics cannot offer final solutions or bring in the kingdom of God.

On the cover the book is described as "a wide-ranging discussion of the relevance of the doctrines of revelation, creation and the kingdom; the nature of man in a fallen world; the implications of Jesus' incarnation and crucifixion; Christian and Marxist visions of society; church-state relationships; and the place of God's law in present-day life." This is a good summary of the chapter divisions and subjects.

The book needs to be read with discernment. In many ways Mr Gladwin holds to clear biblical principles, and applies them in a helpful and instructive way. However, he also explains and applies some biblical teaching in a way which needs to be carefully examined. His general method is to develop themes such as 'incarnation' in a fairly free way which seems to sometimes strain legitimate principles of biblical interpretation. For example, "He (Jesus) came to reconcile and redeem the whole world for God. He represents the destruction of the old fallen order and the beginning of the new re-created order. That could only be achieved through his identification with the world, its guilt and condemnation, so that in him the world might be transformed and restored to a living, worshipping relationship with God."(p109) There is a great need to establish clear principles of biblical interpretation in the field of social and political action.

Mr Gladwin also avoids a clear statement on biblical authority. In

one frustrating paragraph he writes, "The Word of God is complete and has reached its fulfilment in Jesus Christ. This unique Word of God coming to us in human life and thought and history, centring on the living Word in Jesus Christ, is kept for us in Scripture. The Bible is the God-given and trustworthy witness to the Good News of what God has done for us and said to us. Because the Bible is about what God and said and done, it lives and speaks to man for all time. Because it leads to Jesus Christ as the perfect meeting-place of God and man, it is a Word which speaks to us as human beings caught in the dimensions of time and space. We find our human living addressed by God's Word and led to freedom in the Good News which it brings."(p41) Whilst there is much that is true in this, one is left with the impression that he is trying to avoid something.

His views of salvation, the church, and the kingdom of God also deserve careful scrutiny. What is the church's message and task in the world? What is the present implication of the kingdom? Mr Gladwin says, "Christian salvation into the kingdom is not about how 'souls' are saved out of the world of human life. It is about how people are brought to know God as King in Jesus and how their human living is changed and renewed as it is brought into the experience of the rule of God in God's kingdom."(p108)

Though there may be grounds for critically assessing the biblical and doctrinal grounds for some of Mr Gladwin's contentions we need to beware of feeling satisfied with that, and avoiding the need to positively state our own convictions on the grounds of scripture. "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power."

We need to face the challenges in the field of social responsibility seriously. Mr Gladwin is right when he says, "The debate about the relationship between evangelism and social action is an important one. Faith and works, theology and ethics, can never be torn asunder. For this reason, evangelism and Christian life, the proclamation of the Good News and the loving action for our neighbour in the world, must never be separated. A church which is busy in evangelism, without any concern or desire to respond to the social pressures upon human life in society, is a church which has misunderstood the life-transforming thrust of the gospel itself. For the church, evangelism and social action are not in tension with

each other; they actually feed each other."(p181)

Rev Peter Milsom BD (Deeside)

INERRANCY

Readers may not be aware of the fact that the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy publish a quarterly newsletter entitled 'UPDATE' which includes news items, book reviews, brief articles and an exposition of the Council's Articles of Faith.

The Spring '81 number, for example, included a review of Stephen Davis's book, 'The Debate about the Bible' in which he defends his acceptance of infallibility without inerrancy. He describes Warfield's doctrine of inerrancy as 'divisible sectarianism' and also criticises the positions of Harold Lindsell and Francis Schaeffer for implying that a true evangelical always believes in inerrancy.

The reviewer, Dr Norman Geisler of Dallas Theological Seminary, accuses Davis of frequently attacking straw men and failing at times to reason logically. He also fails to make important distinctions in some crucial instances. Davis's most fundamental mistake, in the view of Geisler, "is not understanding that the Bible does claim to be wholly true and without falsehood because God uttered it". Geisler insists that "Inerrancy does follow logically from inspiration as follows: (1) The Bible is the utterance of God; (2) God cannot utter any falsehood; (3) therefore the Bible is free from all falsehood or error." The reviewer also accuses Davis of sidestepping the strength of the historical argument for inerrancy for it was believed by Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther and virtually all the great theologians till modern times. One positive use of the book is that it clarifies the logic of a number of arguments used by some defenders of inerrancy and makes some valid points in places. The book was published in 1977.

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