

of the Spirit of God in spite of unfortunate tendencies and excesses that came in during the course of the Revival. Let us be careful not to develop this 'one track mind' type of thinking and pounce on details which we do not like and because of that condemn the whole. Nothing is perfect in this world; so let us look for the big things and excuse the excesses and the errors and try to correct them in a spirit of love. Above all let us be careful, that we do not condemn a work of God because in certain aspects of it the devil has seen his opportunity and has come in. Let us try to preserve this large, whole, balanced view. That, I think, is to be obtained ultimately by the right kind of reading and studying which I have suggested to you, and which is made possible by an institution such as this Evangelical Library.

We strongly urge readers to use the facilities of the Evangelical Library. For those unable to visit the library, books can be obtained by post. Further details are available from the Librarian, The Evangelical Library, 78a Chiltern Street, London W1M 2HB. Tel. 01-935 6997.

BOOK REVIEWS

RELIGION IN THE U.K.

The Editor

Great Britain may not be a 'Christian' country but according to recent research it is at least a 'religious' country with 74% of the population claiming a firm religious affiliation. This is the surprising statistic highlighted in the 'U.K. CHRISTIAN HANDBOOK - 1983 EDITION' and published jointly by the Evangelical Alliance, the Bible Society and Marc Europe (430pp £9.95).

After a brief introduction by the editor, Peter Brierley, there follow four interesting articles on Building up the Body of Christ, Religion in the U.K. Today, The Mission of the Church from Britain and, finally, The Sexual Division of Labour in Missionary Societies. The book is then divided unequally into three main sections, namely, the statistical, directory and the index. The directory section is the longest (pp41-321) and includes almost anything you may want to know about in church

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life ranging from adoption agencies and animal welfare organisations to theological colleges and Bible schools! Some of the other organisations included are Art and Layout Services, Audio-Visual/Video Services and Producers, Book Publishers, an exhaustive list of all 'Christian' bookshops in Britain, Conference Centres, Hotels and Guest Houses, Conventions, Denominational Churches and their headquarters, Evangelical Agencies, Film/Filmstrip Hire Libraries, Missionary Societies, Periodicals, Poster Producers, Public Address Equipment Supplies and Youth Organisations. Do you know, for example, which are the most expensive theological colleges in Britain? In 1981 Salisbury and Wells Theological College topped the league with fees of £2802 with St. John's, Nottingham a close second (£2790) followed by Trinity College, Bristol (£2619), and fees for the Church Army College of Evangelism were only £50 cheaper. This directory section is a veritable mine of information which will prove invaluable for churches.

The value of the book is then enhanced by a useful Index section. Allow me, however, to concentrate this review on the statistical section which is divided into two main parts; firstly, religion in the U.K. and, secondly, overseas missionary work from Britain.

In the first section there is an absorbing and detailed account of the total U.K. 'church' memberships together with details of the number of ministers, churches and their comparative decline/growth. Out of every thousand adults in the U.K., only 174 belong to 'Christian Churches' (a broad term including all denominations, Protestant, Catholic and Russian/Greek Orthodox etc) and 136 attend at least once a month. The highest percentage is in Northern Ireland where eighty per cent of the population are Church members, followed by thirty-seven per cent in Scotland, twenty-three per cent in Wales and only thirteen per cent in England. There is one full-time minister for every one thousand adults (which is twice the number of medical G.Ps) and there are over fifty-one thousand churches where people are welcome (twice the number of Post Offices!). These figures mean that less than one-fifth (17.4%) of the adult U.K. population are members of a Church. The decline in overall membership averaging just over one per cent has continued since 1970 but the decline was less sharp in the latter half of the decade. Growth, however, was seen amongst immigrant groups (African and West Indian churches), Pentecostal and independent evangelical churches as well as the cults. The most spectacular growth was in the house-church movement which developed from practically nothing in 1970 to an estimated sixty thousand in 1980. The Brethren membership

fell at the rate of 1.4% per annum to 68,000 in 1980, Quakers decreased by 1.9% to under eighteen thousand and the Salvation Army fell by 4.3% to seventy-four thousand.

The increase in the number of cult adherents could be misleading. Mormons, for example, have more than a 5% rate of growth worldwide, but in the U.K. the rate is only 2.7% per annum. The Jehovah Witnesses have only a one per cent annual increase yet statistical caution is required. A one per cent increase in the membership of the Roman Catholic church would involve an additional twenty thousand while a similar percentage could be achieved by only two people joining the Rumanian Orthodox Church! In other words, small groups fare better statistically. Again, the Unification Church had an increase of 30% in 1980 but it had very few members in 1975 and its numbers were boosted by several hundred members from Japan and various parts of Europe, but most of these have now left the U.K. for Germany or the USA.

One interesting fact emerges from all these statistics, namely, there is no evidence at all of a strong anti-Christian or even anti-clerical sentiment in the U.K. as is found in other areas of Europe. Dis-interestedness rather than antagonism prevails in Britain.

What of the mission of the Church from Britain?

More than 7500 men and women from Britain serve with nearly two hundred different missionary societies in one hundred and fifty countries; short-termers have dramatically risen from five per cent in 1976 to over thirty per cent in 1980. Support, however, for Christian work generally works out at only sixty-seven pence per week per church member, one fifth of it is given to overseas work. Out of 5.1 million Protestant Church members, 5804 missionaries are currently serving with Protestant missions and the Brethren and Baptists have more missionaries per church member than other groups. Protestant missionary societies have an increase of 58% in administration costs which is partly due to factors such as the increase in short-term workers (up to 31%), more care in selection and pastoral care and improved literature and deputation. There are now 250 fewer U.K. Protestant missionaries working in Africa than in 1972 and now 415 more serving in Europe. Financially there is an average annual contribution of £8 by Protestants to overseas work, or 15p per week per member.

What basis is there then for claiming that the U.K. population is
50.

religious rather than Christian? The Muslim faith is growing at a rate of 8.4% and now has over a million adherents here. The actual total of people who claim allegiance to Christianity and other world religions as well as new religious movements in the U.K. is a surprising 74% of the population.

This is a fascinating handbook which, despite its comprehensiveness and ecumenicity in ecclesiology, can be a useful source of information for churches and pastors.

AN OVER-VIEW OF SOME RECENT OLD TESTAMENT PUBLICATIONS

Rev Stephen Dray, MA BD (London)

The Old Testament remains a growth industry for Christian publishers, and this article seeks to keep abreast of some of the more significant recent contributions.

COMMENTARIES

An increasing number of commentary series on Old Testament books are now becoming available. Some of these series have already been mentioned in these reviews. However, several recent additions ought also to be mentioned.

Of greatest significance will probably be the publication by Zondervan of the 'Bible Students' Commentary'.¹ These volumes are translations of the Dutch series entitled 'Korte Verklaring', and it is hoped that a subsequent copy of the Journal will be able to give detailed attention to some of these volumes.

The 'Daily Study Bible' series undertaken by William Barclay for the New Testament has now been extended to include the Old Testament under the general editorship of J.C.L.Gibson.² The series is projected to include volumes by a variety of scholars (both conservative and liberal) and six such volumes are currently available. In the three volumes seen by the reviewer the Leviticus volume by G.A.F.Knight is undoubtedly the best. George Knight is one of those liberal theologians on its more conservative wing who preserves an evangelical piety amid critical presuppositions. Typically, he is more concerned with theology than criticism in this commentary, and the volume is only occasionally flawed by his liberalism. As a result, this over-small commentary reflects the mature meditation of a formidable Old Testament scholar on

a portion of scripture which he has clearly frequently preached and greatly loves - a love instilled in him because in Leviticus is the theology of the cross; in Leviticus we see Christ in all the glory of his work. There is much that is highly suggestive in this volume and which makes it a useful supplement to those commentaries reviewed in Foundations No.6. It should, however, be used with a degree of care and, unfortunately, cannot be whole-heartedly recommended to our congregations because of its liberal tendencies.

David Russell's contribution in the same series on the book of Daniel is written against an extensive knowledge of the inter-testamental apocalyptic writings (see, for example, his 'The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic' published by the Student Christian Movement Press). Russell presupposes that the book of Daniel was written in the second century before Christ. Nevertheless, the particular strength of his book is that each section of the text is divided into a three-fold commentary in which basic exegesis is followed by interpretation and then a Christian application. In a book like Daniel this is a necessary but much neglected procedure. Russell's emphasis on the practical application rather than eschatological speculation is a lesson for us all.

John Gibson's own volume on Genesis 1-11 is written in the light of his presupposition that the material is mythological. Nevertheless, much of his theological interpretation of these chapters is of enduring value, although, for example, on chapter 6 he opts for the popular liberal interpretation that the 'sons of God' are angels (a view also, of course, still found in many conservative circles).

A particularly valuable series of books is to be found in the recent republication of C.R.Erdman's Volumes on the Old Testament.³ Described as 'expositions' the earlier volumes, especially up to and including the book of Numbers, do include expository material. However, all the volumes (and especially the later ones) are given over more especially to producing a detailed survey of the contents of each book. The reviewer has already found the Isaiah volume of considerable value in giving a quick, bird's eye view of the prophet's message.

The most valuable recent commentaries seen by the reviewer are, however, undoubtedly the two volumes by Victor Hamilton and David Atkinson respectively. The former volume is an extensively researched attempt to view the pentateuch against its Biblical - theological background.

As such, it is not a detailed commentary although its particular orientation makes it more valuable than many commentaries. This volume is highly recommended and should serve as a most fruitful and suggestive tool for the preacher.⁴

David Atkinson's volume is a further contribution to the 'Bible Speaks Today' series published by the IVP. It is the first attempt in that series to deal with a portion of Old Testament narrative - a task which Atkinson performs with the utmost skill. The author views the book as a story which emphasises the providence of God at work in the individual lives of His people. In addition, he suggests that the book is set against a background in which Old Testament spirituality is found in its highest expression. With this in mind (and by the use of extensive cross-referencing, especially with reference to the cultural/theological context) Atkinson uses a restrained typology to apply the intensely pastoral lessons of the book to the modern reader. Reading this commentary has stirred up the reviewer to want to preach on Ruth! It has also suggested some of the principles which should be employed in preaching Biblical narrative and it, therefore, has a wider value for all those who are seeking to preach such material. All preachers should study this volume.⁵

ARCHEOLOGY

Baker Bookhouse are to be commended for their series 'Baker Studies in Biblical Archeology'. Two volumes in this series are under review here. The book entitled 'Egypt and Bible History'⁶ provides archeological background material to the Bible which is written up in such a way as to be accessible to the non-specialist and the non-academic. Thoroughly conservative (the early date for the Exodus being preferred) and interestingly written and illustrated this small book ought to commend itself to a wide readership.

The other volume is that by Edwin Yamauchi entitled 'Foes from the Northern Frontier'. This is a more technical work and is a comprehensive account of the background to all the prophetic references to foes from Israel's northern frontier.⁷ As such its special value will be to the preacher who is dealing with passages in which such references occur. However it is a must for all students of prophecy who are inclined to make much of such references without the adequate background knowledge which alone can justify or refute their arguments.

SPECIAL STUDIES

We begin this section by referring to the book entitled 'Old Testament Wisdom; an Introduction' by James L.Crenshaw.⁸ This volume will probably soon establish itself alongside von Rad ('Wisdom in Israel') and R.B.Y.Scott ('The Way of Wisdom') as one of the standard texts on the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. A general discussion of the issues raised by the concept 'wisdom' is followed by a survey of the Biblical wisdom books (Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes) and the non-canonical material (Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, etc). Finally a discussion of the legacy of wisdom is followed by a useful chapter on Egyptian and Mesopotamian wisdom literature. The value of the book is, however, sadly weakened as far as the conservative reader is concerned by an almost reactionary liberalism which pervades the book and which, for example, refuses to attribute hardly any of the Proverbs to Solomon.

An interesting study which has come to the reviewer's attention is the book entitled 'The Hiding God' by Raymond L.Scott.⁹ This volume is sub-titled 'Jesus in the Old Testament' and is a complete and well argued statement of the viewpoint that the Old Testament theophanies of God are, in fact, pre-incarnate visitations from the second person of the trinity. The reviewer remains unconvinced of Scott's final position but commends this book to those who wish to give consideration to this popular conservative viewpoint.

Three books are especially recommended in this section. The first is entitled 'Tradition and Testament' and is a collection of essays written in honour of C.L.Feinberg.¹⁰ Eleven essays are included in this volume which will be of considerable interest to the Old Testament specialist and, indeed, to others. Of value to students in particular is the essay by C.L.Feinberg himself on the uses and abuses of archaeological data in the study of the Bible. For the pastor the short final article by W.A.Criswell encouraging preaching of the Old Testament is a heart-warming challenge which is also stimulated by the remaining essays. Gleason Archer has written an essay on the Masoretic Text of 1 Samuel, arguing (against F.M.Cross) its reliability. Thomas J.Finley provides an important contribution to discussion on the Hebrew system of tenses and especially the waw-consecutive imperfect. Richard D. Patterson, Donald Glenn and P.D.Feinberg provide detailed exegetical studies of the Song of Deborah, Psalm 139 and Daniel 9 verses 24 to 27 and in so doing provide excellent examples of how we should do our

exegesis prior to the proclamation of God's word.

Of considerable value is Bruce K. Waltke's article entitled 'A Canonical Process Approach to the Psalms' in which the author seeks to develop a legitimate 'Messianic' exegesis of the Psalms. He eschews uncontrolled allegory and the restrictive hermeneutic which only commits as 'Messianic' those Psalms so used in the New Testament. Waltke proposes that the majority of the Psalms are to be seen as 'Messianic' in the sense that they are the Psalms of the king who bears a typical relationship to 'great David's greater son'. This is a most suggestive method and rewards careful examination.

Walter Kaiser follows this by conducting an excellent study in the relationship between Psalm 40 vv 6-8 and Hebrews 10 vv 5-10. In a detailed analysis he argues for the absolute legitimacy of the New Testament author's use of the Psalm and indicates the hermeneutical principles he used.

Two final essays deal with the theology of the Balaam oracles and with the nature and content of salvation in the Old Testament. The former article is by Ronald B. Allen and the latter, is an interesting attempt by a dispensationalist to argue that there is only one way of salvation throughout the Bible. This article is by J.S. Feinberg.

One final comment. Here is evangelical academic study at its best. Practical, edifying and scholarly the work is not vitiated (as so much evangelical scholarship in England) by the constant preoccupation with seeking to be 'respectable' in the eyes of liberal scholars.

The second book, which is of the highest possible value, is entitled 'Jesus and the Old Testament' and is written by R.T. France.¹¹ This volume was originally published by the Inter Varsity Press but has been out of print for some time and is, therefore, a welcome reprint and addition to Baker Bookhouse's 'Twin Books Series'. Basic to the interpretation of the Old Testament is the question, 'How did Jesus understand the Old Testament in the light of Himself and His gospel?' Detailed exegesis of all the major passages in which Jesus refers to the Old Testament are included in this thoroughly indexed and most carefully argued work. This volume should be obtained and constantly referred to by all preachers of the gospel.

The final book requiring a special mention at this point is the very

valuable 'Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties' by Gleason Archer.¹² Archer is a thoroughly conservative Old Testament scholar of the highest calibre who is committed to the inerrancy of the Bible. This book has arisen out of that conviction and the experience of thirty years' seminary teaching. Covering the whole Bible, Archer seeks to deal with the whole gamut of alleged Biblical discrepancies. He is particularly skilled in his discussion of textual difficulties and in the reconciling of historical data although his theological harmonisations reflect an Arminian theology and a somewhat fundamentalist approach to Biblical interpretation. Nevertheless, since the intellectual assaults on the believer are often very considerable this volume will go a long, long way to resolving many of the difficulties. This book will be of special value to all students (especially of theology) and pastors.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Of considerable value, especially in introducing the young believer to the Old Testament, is Geoff Treasure's book 'The Book that Jesus Read'.¹³ In a racy style the main features of the Old Testament story are outlined and placed in their proper redemptive perspective. This book should encourage the reader to study the Old Testament for himself.

Complementing this volume is Cyril Bridgland's book 'Pocket Guide to the Old Testament'.¹⁴ Aimed at providing the basic help needed to study Old Testament books Bridgland achieves his purpose admirably in providing short summaries, Biblical background, basic introduction and applications stimulated by the questions he appends at the end of each chapter. There are, however, two small criticisms (apart from the complaint that the cover is so drab). The first is that there ought to have been more emphasis on theological content and application than is actually found in the book. Secondly, this could have been done at the expense of the sometimes unduly detailed discussion of critical issues. These latter have a strange feel in the book - there is often a far greater concession to more liberal viewpoints in discussing such critical issues than seems consistent with Mr Bridgland's views expressed elsewhere in the book. Do we detect a second-hand work?

The major study under this section, however, is the book entitled 'Old Testament Survey' produced by the three Old Testament staff at Fuller Theological Seminary.¹⁵ The purpose of this volume is to encompass in

one cover all the basic material required in the study of the Old Testament. This includes, for example, Biblical introduction, theology, geography and archeology, etc. This purpose is admirably achieved without making the material over basic and general, and is accomplished by means of a highly readable style. The stance of this book is basically conservative. However, the following footnote found on page 353, in discussing the book of Jonah, reveals the tendency of the book. The authors say 'Paul described inspired scripture as "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3 v 16). In the context, there can be no doubt that he meant only religious or spiritual teaching'. The implications of such a radical reunderstanding of the traditional evangelical view of scripture is particularly marked in the handling of the material on the pentateuch and makes the reviewer feel that the authors are at best to be described as liberal evangelicals. Nevertheless, it would be wrong not to say that this volume will probably quickly, and rightly, become regarded as the best currently available conservative introduction to the Old Testament.

REFERENCES

1. Three volumes are currently available in this series. The first two volumes are on the book of Genesis and are by G.C.Aalders. The third volume is on Exodus by W.H.Gispen.
2. Genesis Volume 1 by John C.L.Gibson, 214pp. paperback, £2.95.
Leviticus by G.A.F.Knight, 173pp. paperback, £2.95
Daniel by D.S.Russell, 234pp. paperback, £2.95
All three volumes are published by the Saint Andrew Press of Edinburgh. Volumes on Exodus, the books of Samuel and on the first fifty Psalms are also now available.
3. The Eerdman volumes are
The book of Genesis, 124pp. paperback. The book of Exodus, 144pp. paperback. The book of Leviticus, 144pp. paperback. The book of Numbers, 142pp. paperback. The book of Deuteronomy, 95pp. paperback
The book of Isaiah, 160pp. paperback. The books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, 126pp. paperback.
All these volumes are published by Baker Bookhouse.
4. Handbook on the Pentateuch by Victor P.Hamilton. Published by Baker Bookhouse. 496pp. hardback.
5. The Wings of Refuge by David Atkinson, published by Inter Varsity Press, 128pp. paperback.

6. Egypt and Bible History from Earliest Times to 1000 BC by Charles F. Aling. Published by Baker Bookhouse, 145pp. paperback.
7. Foes from the Northern Frontier by Edwin M. Yamauchi. Published by Baker Bookhouse, 148pp. paperback.
8. Old Testament Wisdom: an Introduction, by James L. Crenshaw. Published by the SCM Press, 286pp. paperback, £5.95
9. The Hiding God by Raymond L. Scott. Published by Baker Bookhouse, 176pp. paperback.
10. Tradition and Testament: Essays in honour of Charles Lee Feinberg. Edited by John S. and Paul D. Feinberg. Published by Moody Press, 325pp. hardback.
11. Jesus and the Old Testament by R. T. France. Published by Baker Bookhouse, 286pp. paperback.
12. Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties by Gleason L. Archer. Published by Zondervan, 476pp. hardback.
13. The Book that Jesus Read by Geoff Treasure. Published by the Inter Varsity Press, 128pp. paperback. £1.75
14. Pocket Guide to the Old Testament by Cyril Bridgland. Published by Inter Varsity Press, 240pp. paperback. £2.75
15. Old Testament Survey by William Sanford La Sor, David Allan Hubbard and Fredric William Bush. Published by Eerdmans. 696pp. hardback.

THE DIVINE INSPIRATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

William J. Abraham. Oxford University Press 1982. £9.50

When I opened this book I was led to believe that here I would find some new and exciting fare in the debate over biblical inerrancy. The author, associate professor of theology in Seattle Pacific University and formerly a Methodist minister in Northern Ireland, led me to expect he had discovered an interesting menu that would satisfy the tensions raised by biblical inerrancy. Sadly I found myself, instead, sitting in the theological works canteen and ruminating upon the same food that is served there regularly.

In his introduction Abraham reminds us that 'there is a serious crisis among evangelicals regarding the doctrine of inspiration'. He recognises that the evangelical doctrine of Scripture is rarely understood by its critics and therefore the author sets out to make that doctrine clear. Abraham considers himself in the evangelical tradition and certainly in many ways understands the evangelical position clearly. He identifies three central ingredients: 1. the nature of inspiration - a unique act of God whereby scripture is breathed out. 2. the locus

of inspiration - as originally given or written. 3. the implications of inspiration - the Bible is inerrant.

However, 'despite its simplicity and sophistication' this view has failed to win full support from those who would otherwise embrace evangelical doctrine. Abraham laments that many consider inerrancy a *sine qua non* of evangelical belief and anything else is 'too vague, ad hoc and obscurantist'. It is this position that Abraham sets out to challenge. He claims for his book 'a modest attempt to offer a positive account of inspiration which is contemporary, coherent and credible' (p.7). Rather presumptuously perhaps the writer claims 'there can be no blurring of the fact that evangelicals cannot remain satisfied with the views of such key figures as Warfield and Packer'. For this reason a new departure is both essential and possible.

In chapter 1 Abraham recognises the enormous debt of conservative evangelicals to B.B.Warfield. But concludes that this position involves 'substantial innovations in theology'. It was this 'disturbing revelation' that set Abraham on a new course. B.B.Warfield's approach is described as a deductive approach, that is, they begin with very firm convictions about the meaning of inspiration and from this deduce by normal rules of inference what this entailed for the content and character of the Bible (p.16).

It is a main part of Abraham's claim that the theory of inspiration outlined by Warfield and modern conservative evangelicals is an innovation which does not reflect either the Apostolic or the Reformers view. He maintains that the dictation theory was once held by evangelicals and that dictation and inspiration, as understood by conservative evangelicals, are inseparable. When dictation goes, inerrancy goes: 'they are linked by way of logical inference'. Perhaps this is the first great weakness of Abraham throughout the book. He fails completely to understand that in the minds of many inerrancy and dictation are not inseparably linked. God's method of inspiration can produce an inerrant result without resorting in every case to dictation.

Having outlined what he calls the deductive approach of Warfield, Abraham continues in his second chapter to decry the inductive approach of men like William Sandy in his 1893 Bampton Lectures, and Wheeler Robinson and James Barr. We can agree with Abraham when he informs us that Barr does not inspire confidence. After offering his understanding of Barr's theology on Scripture, he admits that it is hard to understand! Even if conservative evangelicals are wrong, claims Abraham, at least everyone knows what they believe; 'the fundamental problem

with Barr's proposal is that it is still too vague and obscure'.

Chapter three is entitled the 'Concept of Inspiration' and this chapter is the heart of the author's theory. He begins with the following criticism: 'Evangelical theologians have built their theories around the idea of divine speaking. This is simply a basic category mistake'. Since all statements about God are analagous to the same statement used of men (eg. father, love, forgive), we must ask in what sense the word inspiration is used of men. This will show us how it is to be predicated of God. Abraham claims that theologians have failed to attend to the root meaning of the word 'inspire'. This, together with Abraham's eleven line exegesis of the word 'theopneustos', and his conclusion that 'inspire' is 'entirely correct' as a translation, is written almost as if B.B.Warfield had never published a detailed study of the use of the word in ancient literature and arrived at a completely opposite conclusion! Abraham's whole argument is that our concept of inspiration is based upon God speaking rather than God inspiring. He insists that we must ask how inspiration is used by men. But here is a fatal error. Because the author fails to recognise that how we use the word today and how 'theopneustos' was used by the ancients, may be very different, as Warfield has clearly demonstrated.

Abraham suggests there are two concepts of inspiration. First what he calls polymorphous in the teacher. That is, the teacher inspires through teaching, lecturing, discussing, publishing and so on. Secondly, polymorphous in the student. That is, we see the effects of inspiration in the varied aspects of student thought, activity and so on. There is, of course, nothing new in this distinction by Abraham. Both concepts, though not under these pretentious titles, were faced in 'God inspired Scripture' when B.B.Warfield criticised Dr Cremer. Abraham finds it perfectly legitimate to speak of degrees of inspiration in the Bible and recognises that the human agent, even when inspired, can make mistakes. However, when confronted with the problem how we can then believe that the Bible gives us a reliable account of God's saving acts, his answer is simple: it is based upon the status of God as omniscient and infallible; 'therefore what he inspires will bear significant marks of truth and reliability'. A statement vague enough to mean anything or nothing! The key to Abraham's whole argument is that divine inspiration does not depend upon divine speaking and he believes that once this has been grasped it is 'a liberating experience' (p.67). His view he believes to be in line with the differences of style and culture and also allows for the critical historical investigation. This is needed, he believes, to 'fill out the

degree to which this or that part of the Bible can be historically reliable'. For example we cannot answer in advance whether Jonah was a historical figure or not, and it is an open question as to how far the Gospel of John is chronologically accurate. Both these examples, however, beg the issue. After all 2 Kings 14:25 should settle the first question for Abraham and the second question (problem of John's chronology) has nothing whatsoever to do with inspiration unless John claimed to be chronologically exact, which he did not.

Again and again Abraham falls back on the dictation theory and fails to see that God can inspire words without dictating them. He never answers the challenge that if you reduce Biblical infallibility at one point you cannot rely upon it anywhere. Admittedly he raises this issue and then dismisses it as if it were an argument of straw. But it is not straw. On page 71 this author, 'within the evangelical tradition', concedes that his view of inspiration allows inspiration to continue even outside the Bible. Thus even the ordinary in the writings of men can be inspired. This is the inevitable conclusion and weakness of his theory.

In the fourth chapter under the title 'Divine Speaking and the Authority of Scripture', Abraham criticises the view of G.Ernest Wright (1952) and others that revelation is only seen in action. He defends the view that revelation must be in speaking as well as action. If we can only know about God by his actions then we know nothing of causes or reasons, only events. He rightly argued that we need 'not just a revelation in history but also a revelation about history' (p.86).

Chapter five brings us to Abraham's 'Exegetical Considerations', and he sets out his claim at the beginning. 'Here I ... intend to show that my position does full justice to the classical texts of the Bible on inspiration'. He refers to 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21 claiming that 'of these two texts only the first deals directly with the topic of inspiration'(!) Following this rather enigmatic statement Abraham casts himself even more in the liberal mould when he claims 'furthermore, 2 Timothy cannot on any account be considered a central book in the Bible. Important as it is in certain respects it cannot stand on a par with Romans, Galatians or Hebrews, not to speak of the Gospels'. This is surely a strange stance for anyone who claims to be in the evangelical tradition. Abraham divides the Scriptures into three categories on the subject of inspiration. First the classical texts. On 2 Timothy 3:16, 'leaving aside the irrelevant issue of how to

translate the opening phrase' (!). He goes on to claim that there is no mention in this verse of Scripture being word for word the very words of God, thus there is no mention of inerrancy and the inference is not even drawn by the writer. This vital verse on the subject of inspiration is dismissed in one page plus the eleven lines of an earlier chapter. We can only presume that the reason he finds so little value in the verse is because he has not taken the trouble to decide how to translate the opening phrase! It is quite incredible that on this verse you would hardly think that B.B.Warfield had written anything according to Abraham. On 2 Peter 1:21 Abraham claims there is even less to say on inspiration than 2 Timothy 3:16. Once again, because no attempt is made to exegete the Greek words involved, his discussion of this verse is wholly dissatisfying. The second category concerns Jesus' own attitude to the Old Testament and on this subject Abraham claims, 'There is no point in the Gospel where Jesus speaks explicitly of the inspiration of the Bible. Nor is there any reference to the original autographs. Jesus, like Paul, refers to copies and translations, not to original autographs when he comments on Scripture. Nor is there any explicit reference to inerrancy. There is not a single text which speaks plainly and explicitly on these matters. This is surely astonishing'. What is even more astonishing is that Abraham should actually draw our attention to so few verses in the Gospels in which Christ speaks of the Scriptures. It is true that he spends four pages discussing Matthew 5: 17-18 but surely no one would claim this passage to be a key to the whole subject and even Abraham admits that the passage has 'taxed the minds of the great exegetes'. Under this section we are referred to 1 Corinthians 7:10,12, and 25. In a strangely naive misunderstanding of Paul's meaning in these verses the exegesis is dismissed in nine lines with the conclusion that Paul recognised his words were not given by God. It seems hardly to have occurred to Abraham that there could be a more positive understanding of Paul's words which have been traditionally understood by evangelicals. viz. that on these particular issues our Lord in the Gospels had nothing to say. Thirdly, Abraham speaks of the Old Testament quoted in the New Testament as direct utterances from God. Two passages are given as examples, Romans 9:17 and Hebrews 3:7 where Scripture and God are equated. Warfield is accused of failing to recognise that 'to argue that all of the Bible is spoken by God is no different from arguing that it is dictated by God'. His own solution to the constant use in the New Testament of God and Scripture as interchangeable introductions to quotations from the Old Testament is to suggest that this is merely a fitting expression of the deep respect

there is for the canon of the Old Testament' (p.107).

Abraham's Postscript in the final chapter defends his position with evangelicals and attempts to show the shifts in evangelical position through the centuries. Of course evangelicals have changed their language and tightened their grip as inerrancy has been increasingly attacked but this does not mean, as Abraham implies, that evangelicals have changed their position. He includes a brief survey of Wesley's (inconsistent?) view of Scriptural authority, and concludes with an appeal for unity among evangelicals even where they differ on scripture.

Conclusion - Sadly Abraham's work treads not a new path as we are led to believe but an old path which has been resuscitated by evangelicals today. I did not find it helpful in clarifying the issues of Biblical authority. All along I felt that Abraham was avoiding the real issues and he left us with no clear understanding as to where and how we could be sure that scripture was reliable and where errors could be allowed. Without a clear statement of what is and what is not reliable the whole fabric of this argument must fall to the ground. His questioning of the value of 2 Timothy (as compared with other books of the New Testament) shows that our 'slippery slope argument' is not so foolish as many would have us believe today. Without putting too fine a point on it I had expected something a little more valuable and well thought out from Oxford University Press.

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THE WYCLIFFE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF THE CHURCH

by E.S.Moyer (Revised and enlarged by Earle Cairns) and published by Moody Press. 449pp. hardback.

This useful dictionary includes over two thousand thumbnail biographies of leaders of the Christian Church from the immediate post-apostolic period to today. It is important especially for the inclusion of many evangelicals and missionaries - the sort of people often omitted in other works. However, its value is vitiated by the lack of any bibliographic material - a fact which makes it almost valueless

for the researcher. Moreover, it is sometimes lacking in theological data and insight while, for example, educational details are rather over-done. The dictionary, quite properly, reflects its American origin but is also slightly eccentric in its selection and coverage. This last fact is emphasised in the B's by the omission of John Bradford and the John Browns while E.M.Bounds is given more space than Karl Barth and Rudolph Bultmann!

ANALYTICAL GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

by Barbara and Timothy Friberg. Published by Baker Bookhouse.
854pp. hardback.

This book is the first of six projected volumes by the Friberg's on the basis of their research on the computational linguistics of the Greek New Testament. The present volume uses the U.B.S. text and grammatically analyses each word in the New Testament by means of an inter-linear code of symbols. The dust jacket properly claims that 'both beginning and advanced students of Greek will find this an invaluable tool. It enables one to read the text more quickly, seeing at a glance the grammatical relationship between the words. It serves admirably as a reference tool, allowing one to check in a moment the accuracy of his own analysis of a word. And it proves most helpful to those looking for creative ways to review and improve their knowledge of the Greek'.
