
Editor's Notes

As I have an article this issue I will keep my notes brief and to the point. For various reasons this issue has only a few articles, two of which are longer than is usual. I decided to include a Mark Karlberg's review article of Robert Reymond's *Systematic Theology* because of the way it gives not only an assessment of this important work, but also because of the way it is something of a refresher course on systematic theology. While readers will not agree with everything Karlberg says, they will find his overview stimulating and thought provoking.

Philip Eveson again gives us his survey of Old Testament literature. From the responses I have had, readers find these surveys very helpful. I have decided to include two more in future issues. In addition to the Old Testament and New Testament surveys there will also be surveys of systematic and historical theology. These surveys will each appear on a biennial basis and will cover the literature appearing in that two year period. Books reviews have always been a problem for *Foundations* since the journal contains relatively few pages and appears only twice a year. It is difficult to review the range of theological books adequately. I have opted for this survey approach as a way of highlighting key works that ministers and others should know about and to leave reviewing of specific books to journals such as *Themelios*, *Churchman* and *Evangelical Quarterly*.

Finally let me draw a few books to your attention. In the last issue I highlighted a number of books related to pastoral ministry. One that arrived too late to be included was **Peter Hicks's** *What could I say?* (IVP 2000). This book is a simple handbook for those who seek to help others facing difficult problems. It is aimed at ordinary church members, but I am sure that, like me, many ministers will find it an invaluable resource. Part 1 is an introduction to caring for each other in the body of Christ and part 2 is a series of short chapters covering everything from abortion to work issues. I recommend this book very highly.

All of us need to stay close to the Lord. The second volume of **Don Carson's** *For the Love of God* (IVP 1999) is just as good as the first volume. In this volume he takes the second series of readings in Robert Murray M'Cheyne's Bible Reading Calendar and gives a meditation for each day of the year. Some of the meditations are superb, others less so, but all are refreshing and stimulating. As well as helping us meditate on Scripture for ourselves these pieces are also very suggestive for sermons. Of a similar nature, although from an earlier generation, is **Robert Law's** *Daily Prayer and Praise* (Two volumes, Banner of Truth 2000). Each short chapter takes us through the psalms and helps us to meditate upon them. For devotional reading I would recommend **Octavius Winslow's** *Help Heavenward* (Banner of Truth 2000). I am a great fan of Winslow. Winslow was a well-known minister in the 19th century who was able to distil Puritan theology and spirituality in his books. This one, which is subtitled 'Guidance and strength for the Christian's life-journey', is a series of meditations on the Christian life as it makes its way to heaven. This is a real tonic for the soul. Also helpful is **D.M. Lloyd-Jones's** *Heirs of Salvation – studies in biblical assurance* (Bryntirion Press 2000). These sermons on several key figures in Hebrews 11 are most encouraging.

A brief but very stimulating book is Carl Trueman's *Reformation: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (Bryntirion 2000). Originally delivered as lectures at the Evangelical Theological College of Wales, this book reminds us of what the Reformation was essentially about and its relevance for us today. The lessons that Trueman highlights – among them the necessity of doctrine and the centrality of the cross – need to be reaffirmed by evangelicals today. A far bigger book, but one that also addresses some key issues facing evangelicals today, is **Douglas Groothuis's *Truth Decay*** (IVP 2000). Groothuis looks at the post-modern challenge to the very idea of truth and how this is affecting evangelicalism. As well as engaging a number of theologians such as Alister McGrath, Stanley Grenz and Leslie Newbiggin, Groothuis also makes a good case for the historic evangelical understanding of propositional truth. This is where some evangelicals are weak as they try to take account of the post-modern challenge. If you want a book that will give you a good overview of one of the key theological battlefields today then this is it.

Finally I would like to recommend two books on revival. Recently some healthy, biblical thinking has been undertaken in relation to the biblical basis for revival. Much writing on revival is of an historical nature and begs the question of its biblical basis. **Ian Murray** has made a significant contribution to this debate in his fine book *Pentecost Today?* (Banner of Truth) which I mentioned in a previous issue. In *Can We Pray for Revival?* (Evangelical Press 2001) **Brian Edwards** continues to explore the biblical basis of revival. He questions Murray's thesis that strictly speaking revival has only happened after Pentecost and seeks to establish that revival also happened in all its essentials in the Old Testament. If it didn't then a number of key passages that have been understood to warrant an expectation of revival would be taken away. After exploring what revival is, Edwards considers whether it happened in the Old Testament. He looks at the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament as well as examples of revival, the experience of revival and the expectation of revival. Finally he looks at the New Testament and answers the question of whether we should pray for revival. His answer is yes. Edwards doesn't see the difference between the Old and New Testament experiences of revival as 'one of kind or quality or, strictly speaking, of degree and measure', but rather of 'extent and purpose' (p. 67). In particular Edwards sees revival in the New Testament for the purpose of witness and extending to all God's people. Edwards makes a good case that revival happened in the Old Testament, but I am not convinced that he has sufficiently taken into account the discontinuity between the covenants and the significance of Pentecost. In spite of acknowledging the danger of flattening out the contours of redemptive history I think Edwards has a tendency to do just that. Surely a passage such as John 7:37-39 indicates that the experience of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant is one of quality, degree and measure and not only of extent and purpose. The same can be said for passages in Paul's letters that describe Christian experience. While revival in the sense of a significant advance of God's kingdom happened in the Old Testament there was something deeper and richer that happened after Pentecost. I have no difficulty in finding revival in the Old Testament, but I think what God's people experience under the new covenant is something greater and better.

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