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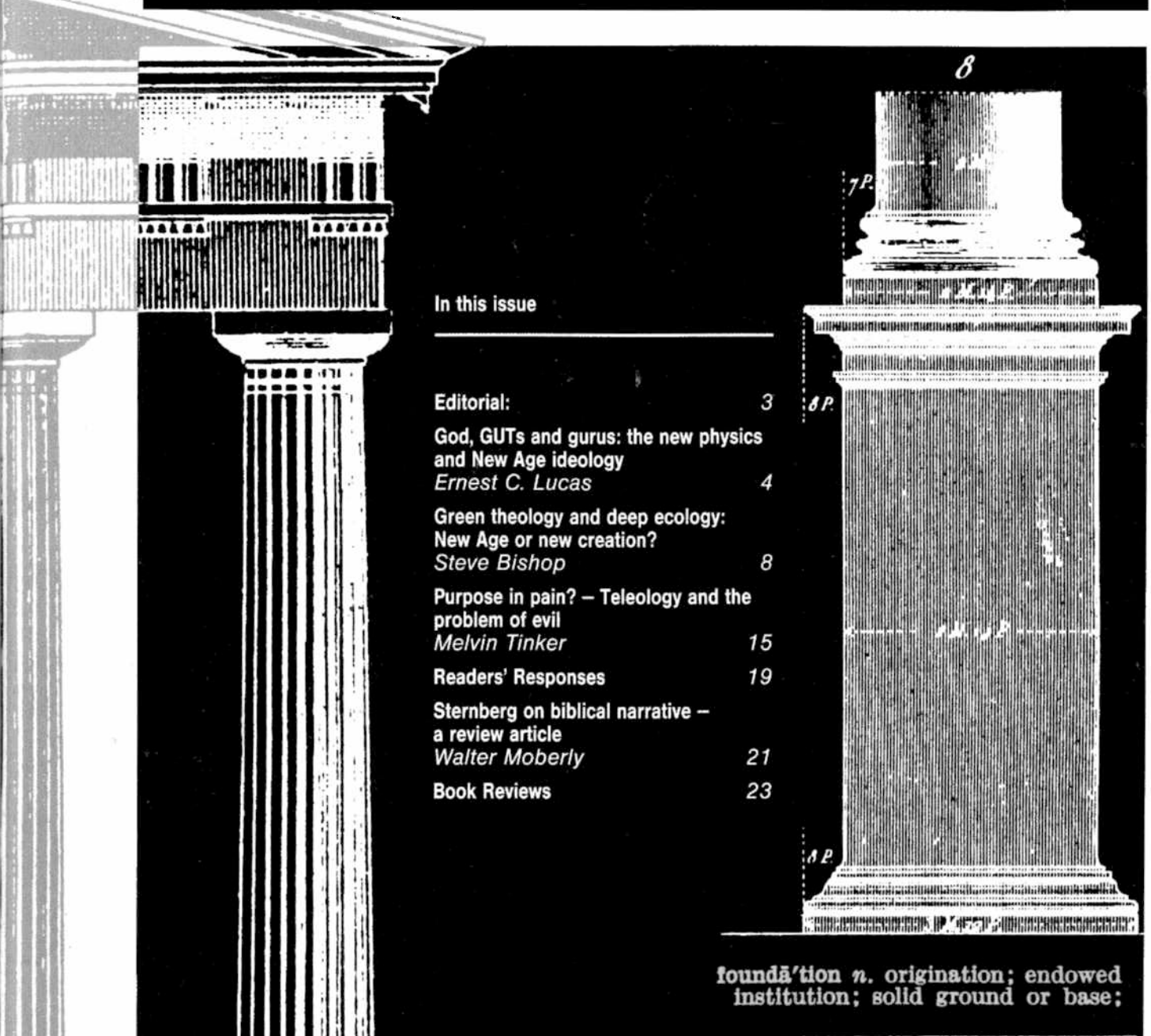

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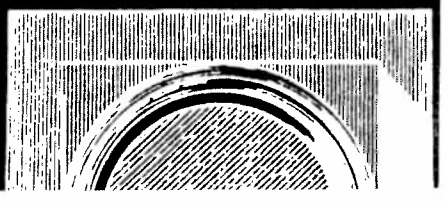

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Contributors

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Editorial: And who is my neighbour?

'Say NO to strangers!' That is the message on numerous stickers and posters issued by the local police to homes, schools and children in our area. What a tragic commentary on our society that the horrific abuse of children by a very few has made it necessary for us to instil suspicion and fear into tender minds, urging them for their own protection to treat all strangers alike with rejection. Children can no longer be seen as a blessing to the whole community, bringing pleasure to unrelated adults or a ray of cheer and company to the elderly or lonely. They must be confined to the narrowing circles of the inner family and known neighbours. The isolationism of our fragmented society bites deeper and deeper. Even children become private property to be jealously guarded by suspicion of every unknown other person. My own teenage son was the butt of hostility and suspicion for playing with the child of a customer in the garden centre where he works. There was a time he might have received gratitude.

The Bible is, of course, concerned for the health and safety of children. The Torah protects them in various ways and the vision of the age to come explicitly includes children as proof of environmental safety (Isa. 11:6-9; 65:20-23, Zech. 8:4-5). But the Bible also has a concern for strangers. What struck me about the posters was the cold reversal of the biblical command to 'Love the stranger as yourself' (Lev. 19:34). The stranger ('alien' in recent translations) was the outsider, the person who was not part of the ethnic Israelite community, but who resided and worked among the Israelite households. He was one of a category of people regularly included among those most vulnerable to exploitation and oppression — the landless poor, the widow and orphan, the Levites, etc. Such groups are frequently commended to the practical social care and support of the community in the Torah. The invisible posters in Israelite villages imbued with the ethos of the Torah, read, 'Say YES to strangers'. Now of course the context and the circumstances are very different. The point is, however, that Israelites were encouraged to see the stranger as a fellow human being whose needs must be attended to in the name of the God of saving compassion. Our society drills us to see the stranger as a dangerous unknown, to be treated with suspicion and kept at arm's length. I remember a poster I saw in an Indian hotel once, 'There are no strangers here; only friends you haven't met yet.' We warn our children to see all strangers as enemies they mustn't meet at all.

Rejection of the stranger cuts deeper still than the instinct to protect our children. Biblically, the stranger is included among those in greatest need in society: the refugees and captives of war, the stateless, the landless, the homeless, the debtor, the bonded worker and day labourer. These are the same great swathe of humanity that we habitually say NO to. The urban and rural poor in the Two Thirds World are strangers to western Christians. So are the economic migrants that are driven like driftwood around the war-torn parts of the world. But then, so too are the homeless in our own lands. It is still disconcerting (to say the least) to come face to face in London's Underground with sights one took for granted in Bombay — homeless people of all ages begging. But beggars are strangers too, and you say NO to strangers, don't you? Anything else is awkward, time consuming, embarrassing and possibly (thought the priest and Levite on the Jericho road) dangerous. It was the hated stranger himself, in Jesus' story, who proved neighbour to the one who was a stranger to him. Took the risk. Paid the cost.

The British television *News at Ten* recently carried two stories in the same programme. One was the harrowing and heart-rending suffering of the Kurdish people in northern Iraq. Here is a people already accustomed to generations of oppression and abandonment, in their latest agony trapped between the bombing, burning and torture of 'their' government, and the snows and starvation of their mountains. A people suffering the vengeful aftermath of a war they didn't start, a war fought by the wealthy for the wealthy, whose cost is measured in the shattered lives of millions of the world's poorest and most powerless. All it seems to have achieved is a ghastly reversed Magnificat. It has left the mighty on their thrones and devastated those of low degrees; it has restored the rich to rebuild their wealth, but the hungry it has sent empty away into even greater hopelessness. For in international politics, it seems that whether you say NO or YES to strangers depends entirely on your own interests, not theirs.

The other story in the same programme was a report on the evangelical gatherings at Spring Harvest — a British event which attracts almost 100,000 people of all ages to four holiday venues around the country over the Easter vacation, for worship and teaching. It appeared, however, that the event was newsworthy because it coincided with the installation of Dr George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury. Already the media have made much of Dr Carey's evangelical and charismatic background, with some pundits warning the nation that the Church of England will be reduced to simplistic, happy-clappy, aisle-dancing triviality. A clip of Spring Harvest worship was presumably intended to reinforce that caricature.

The news editor explained that evangelicals 'believe in a literal Gospel' and go in for informal styles of worship. My heart sank. First, because it was unfair to George Carey, whose faith means a lot more than that. He has demonstrated his commitment to the growth of the local church as a parish minister, to theological training for practical ministry as the principal of a theological college, and to the wider mission of the church as a member of the council of the missionary society which supported my family in India.

But secondly, it was depressing to realize that evangelicals are notorious these days in Britain only for their informal and enthusiastic worship. A hundred years ago evangelicals were equallly mocked for their beliefs, but even their detractors acknowledged their indefatigable labours in costly involvement with the poor in the appalling slums of Victorian England. A *critic* of evangelicals had this to say about them in 1860:

> The Evangelical party is redeemed by its . . . manifold labours of Christian love. . . . When the history of the Evangelical party is written, it will be told of them, that with narrow-mindedness and mistaken traditions, with little intellectual acquirements and ill-directed zeal against their brothers in the Church, they yet worked manfully in the pestilent and heathen by-ways of our cities, and preached the gospel to the poor.[1]

This was not what *News at Ten* noticed about modern evangelicalism. There are, of course many evangelicals committed to social action among the poor, the homeless and deprived. But they do not seem to have registered on the public image of evangelicalism. Nor, more sadly, does such concern seem to have penetrated deeply into the growing ranks of evangelicals at large. For I too was at Spring Harvest and greatly enjoyed the power and joy of the worship. But whereas a seminar on healing is packed to standing room only, those on the homeless, or on the poor, or on overseas mission, draw relatively few. Say YES to all that God has to give you. Say NO to strangers. Such a discrepancy cannot be blamed on Spring Harvest itself. It is merely symptomatic of the virus of self-indulgence to which western evangelicalism puts up little resistance. Our religion is as much infected by the *'I want it all and I want it now'* idolatry as the world around us. We just spiritually rephrase it. Jesus is the friend who meets all your needs. The Christ who calls for practical obedience, for costly discipleship, for a self-denying, cross-bearing commitment to mission, has become a stranger. Say NO to strangers?

[1]Quoted in a fascinating book on the amazing variety of evangelical urban mission strategies in the 19th century: Donald M. Lewis, *Lighten their Darkness: The Evangelical Mission to Working-class London, 1828-1860* (New York and London: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 276.

Chris Wright.

God, GUTs and gurus: the new physics and New Age ideology

Ernest C. Lucas

Rev. Dr Ernest Lucas is Director of Christian Impact, which incorporates the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity. He contributed an article on 'Some scientific issues related to the understanding of Genesis 1–3' in Themelios *12.2 (Jan. 1987).*

Introduction

In 1975 the physicist Fritjof Capra wrote,

> Although we are still lacking a complete quantum-relativistic theory of the sub-atomic world, several partial theories and models have been developed which describe some aspects of this world very successfully. A discussion of the most important of these models and theories will show that they all involve philosophical conceptions which are in striking agreement with those in Eastern mysticism (Capra 1986, p. 227).

He was not the first physicist to say this kind of thing, but his book struck a chord with a generation which had lived through the counter-culture of the 1960s with its turning to the East for spiritual inspiration. Soon more popular books were being written expounding the same theme, one of the better known being *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* written by a non-physicist, Gary Zukav. This claimed link between what is called 'the new physics' and eastern mysticism is appealed to by exponents of New Age ideology as evidence in favour of their world-view. One example is the New Age popularizer Shirley MacLaine, who refers to it in her spiritual autobiographies.

> Quantum physics was saying that what we perceive to be physical reality was actually our cognitive construction of it. Hence reality was only what each of us decided it was (MacLaine 1986, p. 337).

> As the new physics and the ancient mystics now seemed to agree — when one observes the world and the beings within it, one sees that we are in fact only dancing with our own consciousness. Everything we feel, think and act upon is interrelated with everything everyone else feels, thinks, and acts upon. We are *all* participating in the dance (p. 420).

So, what is the new physics? In what ways is it supposed to support New Age ideology? How valid are the claims that it does so? What implications does this have for Christian theology? These are questions I will try to deal with in this paper in what can be only a brief and introductory way.

The new physics

The early decades of this century saw a revolution taking place in physics. To a large degree the foundation and inspiration of physics from 1700-1900, what is now called 'classical physics', was provided by the work of Isaac Newton. This produced the 'mechanistic paradigm' in which the universe was viewed as one vast mechanical system operating according to exact laws capable of mathematical expression. Two theories which were formulated around 1900 shattered this paradigm — the theory of relativity and quantum theory — and gave rise to the new physics.

Relativity

Albert Einstein put forward the theory of relativity because of a strange observation made by physicists when measuring the speed of light. When driving on a road where everyone is travelling at 60-70 mph, a car coming up from behind to overtake us appears to be travelling much more slowly than one which is approaching us at the same speed. This is because the speeds at which the two cars are travelling *relative to us* are very different. The one overtaking us is approaching us at only a few mph whereas the other one is approaching us at a relative speed of over 120 mph. Since the earth is travelling rapidly through space as it revolves around the sun, physicists expected that the speed of light would appear to vary according to the direction in which it was measured relative to the direction of the earth's motion. However, they consistently failed to detect any such apparent variation. This led Einstein to propose that the speed of light is always the same *relative to any and every 'frame of reference' used for the measurement.* He also proposed that nothing can travel faster than light.

These two seemingly simple propositions have some very profound and surprising implications. We will consider only two. The first is the understanding of space and time. According to the theory of relativity time can no longer be regarded as an independent entity separate from the three spatial dimensions of length, depth and height. Instead we have to think in terms of a unified, four-dimensional space-time. According to the classical view events *happen* in three-dimensional space and *develop* with the passage of time, which flows in one direction. According to the theory of relativity, says Zukav,

> it is preferable, and more useful, to think in terms of a *static*, non-moving picture of space-time. . . . In this static picture, the space-time continuum, events do not develop, they just are. If we could view our reality in a four-dimensional way, we would see that everything that now seems to unfold before us with the passing of time, already exists *in toto*, painted, as it were, on the fabric of space-time (1982, p. 172).

Therefore, some argue, ultimate reality is a timeless unity, as eastern mystics have always claimed.

Moreover, if the speed of light is the same whether measured when travelling at one-tenth or at half the speed of light the difference must lie in the measuring instruments. Put crudely, the ruler must change its length and the clock must run at different rates at the two speeds. This leads to the 'twin paradox'. If one of a pair of twins leaves the earth in a rocket and travels at close to the speed of light for some months, when he returns to earth his twin will be several years older than he is, since time passes more slowly when measured on the faster-moving frame of reference. This variability of the dimensions of space-time with the motion of the frame of reference leads Capra to conclude that there is no such thing as absolute space and time, rather space and time 'are nothing but names, forms of thought, words of common use' so that they 'are now reduced to the subjective role of the elements of the language a particular observer uses for his or her description of natural phenomena' (1986, p. 183). Capra considers that there is a striking similarity between this relativistic notion of space-time and reality experienced by eastern mystics when they attain 'non-ordinary states of consciousness in which they transcend the three-dimensional world of everyday life to experience a higher, multidimensional reality'. In these states they are aware, he says, of the interpenetration of space and time (1986, p. 189).

What are we to make of this claimed coincidence between the relativistic and mystical views of reality? The following points need careful consideration.

1. It is, to say the least, over-simplistic to equate the relativistic space-time continuum with the timeless unity experienced by the mystic. Space-time, as Zukav notes (p. 172), is a mathematical construct. All scientific concepts like this are only 'models' of physical reality. One hopes that, as one model replaces another, we are progressing towards a better understanding of the reality we are studying. But is the physical reality which is represented by the model of space-time the same as the spiritual reality experienced

by the mystic? Capra, and others, simply assume that it is. To do this is to make a jump from physics to metaphysics without giving any justification for the move, or even explicitly admitting that this is what is being done.

2. Capra's view that the theory of relativity requires a subjectivist interpretation of space and time is not universally accepted. The philosophical implications of the theory are still very much a matter of debate.[1] There are those who argue that absolute space-time does exist independently of any observer. His assertion (1986, p. 205) that 'space and time are fully equivalent' is particularly open to question. The fact is that we can move freely in space but not in time. Direction in time does not seem purely subjective or conventional.

3. Richard Jones, among others, has criticized the way Capra appeals to eastern mysticism (Jones 1986, pp. 201-204). He draws selectively on those concepts which suit his purpose but ignores others, equally important to a proper understanding of eastern mysticism, which do not fit the scheme he wants to portray. He may also be open to the criticisms that he too readily finds modern concepts in eastern mysticism. Jones asserts that 'there is no conception in classical India of space and time combined or of either time or space as an especially fundamental reality' (p. 184). One would never guess this reading Capra!

It is over-simplistic to equate the relativistic space-time continuum with the timeless unity experienced by the mystic.

So, Capra is taking a disputed metaphysical interpretation of the implications of the theory of relativity and equating it with a selective, and therefore questionable, reconstruction of the eastern mystical world-view in modern terms. We shall see that much the same can be said of the other examples we shall look at of claimed coincidence between the new physics and eastern mysticism.

The second implication of the theory of relativity with which we shall deal is summed up in what is probably one of the best known scientific equations:

$$E = mc^2$$

E stands for energy, m for mass and c is the speed of light. The equation states that mass and energy are inter-convertible. It was the key which unlocked the door to the use of nuclear power. Experiments in high-energy particle physics have verified this equation. The physicists who study sub-atomic particles have got used to the fact that not only can particles be converted into, or created from, energy but also one kind of particle can be converted into another with the absorption or emission of energy.

Both Zukav and Capra make much of this equivalence of matter and energy.

> In the East, however, there never has been much philosophical or religious (only in the West are these two separate) confusion about matter and energy. The world of matter is a relative world, and an illusory one: illusory not in the sense that it does not exist, but illusory in the sense that we do not see it as it really is. The way it really is cannot be communicated verbally, but in the attempt to talk around it, eastern literature speaks repeatedly of dancing energy and transient, impermanent forms. This is strikingly similar to the picture of physical reality emerging from high-energy particle physics (Zukav 1982, p. 177).

> Like modern physicists, Buddhists see all objects as processes in a universal flux and deny the existence of any material substance (Capra 1986, p. 226).

Here again we are faced with a simplistic shift from physics to metaphysics. Both writers imply that matter is somehow unreal, and indeed at times refer to matter as 'nothing but' or 'only' energy. However, this is not implied in Einstein's equation, which says nothing more than that matter can be converted to energy and *vice versa*. It is true that one leading theory in particle physics, quantum field theory, describes sub-atomic particles in terms of the interaction of energy fields. This does not mean that material particles are unreal. Rather, the theory shows that *both* the energy field and particle interpretations of sub-atomic reality are valid. Which is appropriate depends on the kind of question one wants to ask about that reality (Polkinghorne 1986, pp. 84, 108). In any case, why should matter, seen as a form of 'frozen' energy, be any less real than energy? Also, energy can be seen as 'nothing but' matter which is 'unfrozen'. Which is more real or more fundamental, ice or water? All in all, it is claiming too much to say that modern physics necessarily leads to the denial of the existence of material substance.

The claim that eastern mysticism and the new physics support each other because both tell us that we do not see the material world 'as it really is' is a trivial one. The pertinent point to consider is whether the mystic and the physicist agree about 'how it really is'. Jones denies that this is the case (Jones 1986, pp. 185f.). Among other things, he points out that mystics do not see energy fields but experience 'a blending of objects in the sense that boundaries are less noticed in the light of impermanence and the common experienced being-ness'. Moreover, this being-ness is something that is *felt* as a change in experience, not an abstract concept neutral to experience which can be expressed mathematically.

Quantum theory

Like the theory of relativity, quantum theory arose out of an attempt to explain experimental results which did not accord with the predictions of classical physics. In this case it was the distribution of energy radiated (*e.g.* as heat and light) by hot objects. There was always far less high-energy radiation than predicted. Max Planck found that this could be explained if energy is not emitted in just any quantity but in 'packets' (later called *quanta*) of specific amounts. The amount in a particular quantum depends on the wave length at which the energy is emitted. Once again, an apparently simple proposal had far-reaching implications. We will restrict our discussion to two of them.

Werner Heisenberg showed that the quantization of energy puts limits on what we can know about atoms and sub-atomic particles. For example, we cannot know at one and the same time both the exact position of a particle and its exact momentum (a measure of its velocity). The more accurately we know one, the less accurate is our knowledge of the other. This is Heisenberg's 'Uncertainty Principle'. As a result we can talk about such things as the position or velocity of such particles only in terms of probabilities. Erwin Schrödinger developed a form of quantum theory called 'wave mechanics' which treats all sub-atomic phenomena in terms of the mathematics of waves, in this case waves of 'probability'.

Wave mechanics fitted in with another physical puzzle. By the end of the nineteenth century light had come to be thought of as a wave of energy because this seemed the best way to explain its properties. Quantization of energy into discrete 'packets', however, suggested that it should have particle-like properties. Soon this was shown to be the case in certain situations. The light particles were named 'photons'. To add to this puzzle it was found that electrons, initially regarded as particles, sometimes behave as if they are waves of energy! Wave mechanics (and, even more so, quantum field theory) provided a mathematical way of describing this dual wave/particle behaviour. However, physicists had to accept that some phenomena can be understood adequately only in terms of mutually exclusive but complementary 'models' — in this case the models of particles and waves. Because they are mutually exclusive both pictures cannot be applied at one and the same time.

What determines whether an electron behaves like a wave or a particle? One answer is that the experimental set-up we use to observe it determines this. In other words, *how* we look at it determines *what* we see. A similar question applies to its position, given the Uncertainty Principle. If there are finite probabilities of it being in several different positions, what determines the fact that we see it at one particular position? Again, some suggest that the very act of observing it 'fixes' it at that position. It is argued from this that since it is humans who decide what to observe and how to observe it, human consciousness plays a part in determining how the world is. As Capra puts it, 'The electron does not *have* properties independent of my mind' (Capra 1985, p. 77). Humans are participators in the creation of reality. This leads Michael Talbot to claim,

> For centuries the mystic has asserted that matter and consciousness are different aspects of the same *something*. For all those who

> have spent their lives trying to penetrate the secrets of matter, the new physics has a message, not a new one, but one that may well turn out to be the most important rediscovery humankind has ever made . . . the message of the new physics is that we are *participators* in a universe of increasing wonder (Talbot 1981, p. 42).

There are various difficulties in the position adopted by Capra and Talbot. One is that it is only one of several possible interpretations of the implications of quantum theory.[2] In particular, it can be argued that they have confused *the act of observation* with *the consciousness of the observer* and that it is the influence of the measuring apparatus, not the mind of the observer, that affects the result obtained. For example, it is argued, is it really credible that a photographic plate exposed and then put away uninspected does not have a definite image on it until someone looks at it? It is possible to explain on quantum mechanical terms how and why the apparatus should have an effect on the measurement, without involving the consciousness of the observer.

Secondly, this position faces all the problems of an idealist philosophy. In particular it is solipsistic. The only world I can know about is the one I experience/create. Yet one of the characteristics of science is that experimental results are only acceptable if they can be repeated by any experimenter anywhere who follows the set experimental procedure. For the 'participator' view this would have to include the consciousness of the original experimenter!

Once again there is the question whether the kind of interaction between consciousness and matter posited on the basis of quantum theory is really the same kind of thing the eastern mystics talk about. Jones concludes that it is not. He finds that none of the ideas based on quantum theory of how consciousness affects what is observed can be compared with the mystical concept of creation by awareness. Also he points out that causing a world (which is the mystical view) is different from causing only a limited number of events within a world (which, strictly, is what is proposed in relation to observing quantum events) (Jones 1986, pp. 192-194).

Pantheistic monism removes any basis for giving special value to humans as against any other forms of life, or indeed non-life.

The second implication of quantum theory with which we shall deal is often called 'Bell's theorem', after one of the physicists who has studied it, although it was in fact Einstein and some of his co-workers, Podolsky and Rosen, who first raised the matter. The essence of the matter can be understood by considering the behaviour of snooker balls. When the cue ball strikes another the two balls move off in different directions. Their motion is not random, but obeys the laws of action and reaction. If the momentum of the cue ball before the collision is known, then measurement of the momentum of either ball after it enables the momentum of the other to be calculated without it needing to be observed. The laws of action and reaction apply to quantum particles. This ought to mean that if, after two particles have interacted, the momentum of particle 1 is measured, that of particle 2 can be deduced. This measurement will render the position of particle 1 uncertain but, since the momentum of particle 2 has not been measured directly, its position can be measured accurately. If this is done at the same time that the momentum of particle 1 is measured, both the position and momentum of particle 2 have been measured accurately, so circumventing the Uncertainty Principle. However, this argument makes two assumptions.

1. First, it assumes that a measurement made on a particle in one place cannot instantaneously affect a particle in another relatively distant place. This is called *the locality principle.* One reason for assuming this is that all normal physical effects are brought about by transfer of energy or information in some form and, according to the theory of relativity, this cannot happen at a speed faster than that of light. Though large, this is finite.

2. Second, it assumes that such things as 'position' and 'momentum' have an objective existence even when not observed. This is called *the reality principle.*

What Bell did was carry out the mathematical analysis which provided the basis for an experimental test of whether or not these two assumptions hold true for sub-atomic particles. The answer is that they do not. The results of the experiment mean that one of the assumptions must be invalid. Most physicists prefer to dispense with the locality principle, at least with regard to quantum systems. This means that once two sub-atomic particles have interacted with one another they are ever afterwards part of a single quantum system. As a result if, for example, the momentum of one of them is changed, the momentum of the other will change also *instantaneously.* This will happen even if they are at opposite ends of the galaxy. The shocking thing about this is that it means that something other than normal 'cause and effect' is operating in quantum systems, though we cannot (yet) describe or define just what it is.[3]

Zukav concludes that Bell's theorem shows that,

> what happens here is intimately and immediately connected to what happens elsewhere in the universe, which in turn, is intimately and immediately connected to what happens elsewhere in the universe, and so on, simply because the 'separate parts' of the universe are not separate parts (Zukav 1982, p. 315).

In other words, the universe is one single, interconnected wholeness and the 'separate parts' into which we divide it are unreal — as the eastern mystics have told us all along.

The existence of instantaneous action at a distance is not the only possible interpretation of Bell's theorem,[4] though it is the most widely accepted. A more fundamental criticism of the claim that the theorem, and other aspects of quantum theory, validate the mystical world-view is made by Jones.

> There is a fundamental difference of scope: mystical wholeness involves all of reality, especially the experiential level, while scientific theories deal only with very limited specified ranges of phenomena on subatomic levels. Expanding the scientific theories into metaphysics by means of analogies (with its accompanying problems) would cost at least the mathematical refinement of science, if not more (Jones 1986, pp. 190f.).

The same point is made by Clifton and Regehr when, after pointing out that Capra's appeal to the Bell theorem involves a jump from what happens in sub-atomic physics to the whole of reality, they comment that,

> There are a number of problems with this mixing of micro- and macroscopic levels of physical reality portraying them as bearing essentially the same features. . . . Clearly on a macroscopic level objects remain separate for physicists and, if anything, this is an argument against what mystics claim (Clifton and Regehr 1989, p. 71).

Jones refers to the use of analogies by those who claim that the new physics supports the mystical view of reality. One analogy which is often appealed to in tandem with Bell's theorem is that of the hologram. A hologram is produced by two beams of laser light, one striking a photographic film directly, the other being bounced off a three-dimensional object. When the developed film is illuminated by the same type of laser light an image of the original object in three dimensions is produced. Moreover, only a small part of the film needs to be illuminated, showing that this small part contains the information of the whole. This, it is argued, supports the mystical view that the totality of reality is 'in' each part and that everything is intimately interconnected. There are a number of weaknesses in this analogy.

1. As a hologram is cut into smaller and smaller fragments there is a loss of clarity of the image. Eventually no image can be produced at all. According to the mystics the whole of reality is fully 'encoded' in each fragment, however small.

2. What corresponds to reality in the analogy is not really the photographic plate but the plate plus the necessary apparatus to reproduce the image, which has no parallel in the mystical view.

3. The hologram does not contain information about itself but about a separate objective reality. For a strict analogy to hold the reality experienced by the mystic as 'in' each fragment of reality would have to be the copy of another real universe.

Some theological reflections

The concept of God held by advocates of the New Age and which, it is claimed, the new physics supports is a pantheistic monism.

Ultimate reality is taken to be a unified, undifferentiated consciousness. This, of course, stands in total contrast to the Christian trinitarian monotheism. The Christian doctrine was formulated in a religious *milieu* which included pantheism, *e.g.* in Stoicism. Insistence on the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* was one way of ruling out pantheism, since it asserts that God exists separately from the world, which is his creation and exists only because he wills it to, and is not dependent on it for his existence. Although we must be as firm in opposing New Age pantheism as the early church was, we must be careful not to overreact. There has frequently been a deistic tendency in orthodox Christianity which has led to a greater stress on God's transcendence than his immanence. This is not biblical, and we need to have effective ways of holding together and expressing the two truths of God's separateness from his creation and his intimate and continuing involvement with it.

The main concern of the New Age thinkers, however, seems not to be theology but anthropology. What attracts them to pantheistic monism is that they find in it a basis for asserting the dignity and value of human beings because, since everyone is an expression of the ultimate reality, each individual is divine. As one of Shirley MacLaine's gurus put it, the truth which she needed to grasp was that of 'each soul's responsibility for its own behaviour in the realization of its own divinity' (MacLaine 1983, p. 205). There are some inconsistencies in this position which its advocates seem to ignore. One is that, taken to its logical conclusion, pantheistic monism removes any basis for giving special value to humans as against any other forms of life, or indeed non-life. All are either expressions of the one ultimate reality, or else unreal creations of my mind. Secondly, for some, the quest to realize their own divinity leads to a narcissism which results in a lack of concern about the well-being of others.[5] The biblical teaching that humans are special because made in the image of God provides a much more coherent basis for a true 'humanism' than does New Age ideology.

Capra *et al.* who appeal to the new physics to support New Age ideology claim that it reasserts the human dignity which the 'Newtonian paradigm' destroyed by its clockwork view of the universe. This made humans nothing but robots programmed by the impersonal laws of physics. The idea that the consciousness of the observer affects the matter which is observed (at least at the atomic level), they claim, provides a way out of the mechanistic straitjacket. It reinstates consciousness as something 'real' and suggests a basis for the idea of freewill. This, however, is not at all clear. If, as they at least imply, the energy fields of quantum theory are the ultimate reality, consciousness is still determined by the laws of physics. If appeal is made to the probabilistic nature of these laws as understood in quantum theory, it must be pointed out that this does not provide a basis for belief in free, rational behaviour. Instead, it suggests random, irrational behaviour. The early modern scientists had a more coherent basis for their belief in human rationality and ability to understand the physical world in Christian theology, which led them to the conviction that they could, and did, think the creator God's thoughts after him as they did their science.[6]

New Age ideology, like all pantheistic monism, concludes that evil is illusory. The real problem is *ignorance* of our innate divinity. What we need is not a moral transformation but an alerted state of consciousness. It is probably at this point that evangelicals will have most difficulty in dialogue with New Age adherents. Evangelicalism has not been strong on mystical experience or theologizing about it. What are we to make of the mystical experience of oneness? I can only make some tentative suggestions.

It is tempting to dismiss it as illusory, either self-induced or a demonic deception. This may indeed be the explanation of it in some cases. Another possibility is that the mystic is experiencing the unity of God's creation, of which humans are a part. I do not think that the interrelated oneness of all (physical) things which does seem to be demonstrated by the new physics is at all surprising for a Christian. If the universe is the creation of the one and only Creator, who is both wise and faithful, and is constantly kept in being by him, I would expect there to be a fundamental coherence and unity about it. Moreover, the Christian concept of God as trinity asserts that God is in himself a harmonious interrelationship of persons. Surely his creation will reflect something of this as it reflects his glory? The whole scientific endeavour is based on the assumption of a harmonious unity in the physical world. In each discipline there is a search for over-arching unifying concepts and theories. Historically, it has been when such concepts and theories have been found that science has developed most rapidly. That is why today some physicists are busy trying to develop a Grand Universal Theory (GUT) which will unite quantum theory and the theory of relativity and be, as some put it, 'a theory of everything'. If the mystic is experiencing the harmony and unity of God's creation this can rightly lead to a sense of awe and wonder which stimulates worship of God. However, to go on seeking this experience of oneness *for itself* is to take the road to idolatry, to put the creation in the place due to the Creator.

New Age ideology concludes that evil is illusory. The real problem is ignorance of our innate divinity. What we need is not a moral transformation but an altered state of consciousness.

Finally, the mystic may have a genuine experience of God, who is one. However, I question whether this is so when the experience is said to lead to a loss of personal identity. The biblical picture of God is of trinity – diversity in unity – not undifferentiated oneness. One biblical picture of our relationship with God is that of human lovers, husband and wife. In such a relationship there is a unity which comes from each giving themselves to the other. But there is also an individuality which results from each accepting and affirming the other's worth. Indeed, as beings made in the image of God we only truly find ourselves in finding a personal relationship of love and obedience towards God. In this we are affirmed in our individuality because we discover how much we are worth to God. His valuation of us has been declared by the sacrifice at Calvary.

[1]See the brief discussion and bibliography in R.K. Clifton and M.G. Regehr, 'Capra on Eastern Mysticism and Modern Physics', *Science and Christian Belief*, 1(1989), pp. 53-74.

[2]For a fairly simple discussion of these see J. Polkinghorne, *The Quantum World* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1986), pp. 60-69.

[3]For a popular discussion of the Bell effect see J. Gribben, 'The man who proved Einstein was wrong', *New Scientist*, 24 November 1990, pp. 43-45.

[4]See the discussion in J. Polkinghorne, *The Quantum World*, pp. 70-77.

[5]See, for example, MacLaine's explanation of why she gave up socio-political activism in *Dancing*, p. 109.

[6]On this see S. Jaki, *Science and Creation* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974); C. Russell, *Cross-Currents* (Leicester: IVP, 1985).

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Green theology and deep ecology: New Age or new creation?

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Christianity has often been a scapegoat for the environmental crisis. The most influential proponent of this view is the much quoted Lynn White, Jr.[1] In a lecture given on 26 December 1966 at the Washington meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), he put forward the thesis that the Judaeo-Christian view of the physical creation paved the way for the science and technology that created the environmental crisis. (This thesis has been adequately refuted elsewhere.[2]) Along the way he makes the following statements about the Christian view of the creation:[3] (i) it established a dualism of humanity and nature; (ii) it is anthropocentric: no item in the physical creation has any purpose save to serve humanity's purpose; (iii) humanity is not simply part of nature; (iv) it insisted that it is God's will that humanity exploit nature for its own ends.

This article tries to provide a foundation for a distinctively Christian approach to environmental care, and to develop an understanding of the green movement from a Christian perspective. In doing so four great movements in 'salvation history' are considered as a framework: creation, fall, redemption and new creation.[4] In using this framework, we shall be able to critique White's four points in what follows.

A. A BIBLICAL ENVIRONMENTAL THEOLOGY

1. Creation

The whole bedrock of environmental care is that God is the creator of heaven and earth (Gn. 1:1). The whole creation is an *expression* of God, so as we begin to understand the creation we can begin to get an idea of the creator; that is why the apostle Paul declares that God's eternal qualities can be understood from what he has made (Rom. 1:20). However, God is not to be identified with his creation: God is distinct from, and yet involved in, his creation.

Two theological points need to be stated: the Christian concept of creation is (i) theistic and (ii) *ex nihilo*. It is these two important points that undermine pantheism (God exists in everything) and the closely related panentheism (everything exists in God) of process theology, both of which have been used to construct environmental ethics. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary pantheistic framework has been adopted by some theologians in an attempt to provide an environmental ethic: see, for example, the work of Conrad Bonifazi[5] and Sean McDonagh.[6]

A Whiteheadean 'ecological understanding of nature' has been developed by L. Charles Birch and John B. Cobb, Jr.[7] This ecological model depicts entities as events rather than objects. Reality is best thought of as organisms rather than material or mental substances,[8] hence the interest of environmentalists. There are several problems that lie at the heart of process theology;[9] two in particular make it unsuitable as a foundation for a biblical environmental ethic:

(i) God is not distinguished from his creation. Traditional Christian theism is displaced by panentheism: all matter/events are in God, he is not external to them.

(ii) It is a denial of *creatio ex nihilo*. Creation is, for the process theologian, *ex materia* and out of God. This then leaves us with the conclusion that matter/event is pre-existent, eternal; it has become as God: the picture has become the artist.

The goodness of creation

Five times in the first chapter of Genesis we have the refrain 'And God saw that it was good' (vv. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), and once at the end of God's work of creation, 'it was *very* good' (v. 31). This affirmation undermines any potential spiritual/material dualism. By virtue of his creating it, the earth *and* everything in it (*i.e.* all its contents)[10] belongs to God (*cf.* Jb. 41:11; Pss. 24:1; 50:12).

The role of humanity: dominion or domination?

On the sixth day of creation God created the living creatures. The culmination of this activity was the creation of humanity and their subsequent mandate to rule over the animals and to subdue the earth. This concept of dominion has opened up Christianity to accusations of being anthropocentric, and hence being able to dispense with and dispose of nature as it sees fit.

The radical eco-feminist Andree Collard, echoing Lynn White, Jr, suggests that:

> Genesis presents the view that God created everything and gave it to man (and not just in the generic sense!) to dominate. . . .[11]

Ian McHarg, likewise, states that the Bible

> in its insistence upon dominion and subjugation of nature, encourages the most exploitative and destructive instincts in man. . . . Here can be found the sanction and injunction to conquer nature. . . .[12]

To assess Collard and McHarg's claims we need to examine the biblical idea of dominion.

Dominion is based on Genesis 1:28, where two Hebrew words lie at the heart of the problem: *radah* and *kabas*. *Kabas* (subdue) is a very strong word, even translated in one place as 'rape' (Est. 7:8); *radah* (rule over) is also a strong word. Westermann translates it as 'to tread the wine press' and von Rad as 'trample'.

Yet, despite the strength of these words they do not provide humanity with a mandate to dominate or conquer nature. The meaning of these two words is best seen, not in their derivations, but in their context. This of course has several different aspects: the cultural mandate; the creation story; and the cultural milieu.

(i) *The cultural mandate.* The immediate context is that of the 'cultural mandate' (Gn. 1:26-28): the call for humanity to develop and unfold the creation as the image-bearers of God.[13]

If we compare the mandate given to humanity with that given to the rest of the animals (Gn. 1:22), it is clear that subduing and ruling are one facet of being the image of God, and thus an essential part of what it means to be human. Subduing and ruling the creation, then, are to be done as God's representatives: he is our role model.

Barr suggests that humanity's role is 'less exploitation and more leadership'[14]; this, however, is only satisfactory if we see (with Houston[15]) leadership as servanthood, as exemplified by Jesus the Shepherd-King (*cf.* Phil. 2).

(ii) *The creation story.* Opening up the context a little more places the subduing and ruling in the Hebrew record of creation. One thing is immediately obvious: creation is not merely for humanity. The world exists for the glory of God: creation is not anthropocentric, it is theocentric. All things exist for and have their meaning in God.

The earth is not humanity's to do with as it sees fit. It is God's creation, and as God's delegates we are to take care of it on his behalf; humanity is accountable to God for its treatment of the earth (*cf.* Pss. 115:6; 8:4-6).

It is not rulership without limits. God follows on from the cultural mandate to place immediate constraints on dominion: men are not to kill for food (vv. 29-30). F.W. Welbourn identifies the other limitations that God placed on Israel's use of nature:[16]

- ★ No blood of any animal may be eaten (Lv. 17:10-14).
- ★ Fields are not to be reaped to the border (Lv. 19:9).
- ★ The grower may only harvest from trees five years old (Lv. 19:23).
- ★ Fruit trees may not be used for siege works (Dt. 20:19).
- ★ A kid is not to be boiled in its mother's milk (Dt. 14:21).
- ★ An ox is not to be muzzled when treading corn (Dt. 25:4).
- ★ A mother bird is not to be taken with her young (Dt. 22:6).
- ★ The land is to lie fallow regularly (Lv. 25:1-12).
- ★ All the tithe of the land is the Lord's (Lv. 27:30-33).

It is evident, then, that it is not, as White contends, 'God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends'.

(iii) *The cultural milieu.* Another important context is that of culture. Whatever the concept of dominion conjured up in the time of its writing, it could only have had a fairly restricted meaning (*cf.* Jb. 38:33; 41:9): there was no potential for world destruction. Most likely they would have understood dominion in terms of animal husbandry, cultivating the ground and developing culture. Genesis 2:15 contains an amplification of what it means to subdue and rule, and here the context is that of a garden. This twofold commission echoes the cultural mandate of 1:26-28: they are to work (*abad* implies work as a slave) and take care *(shamar)* of the garden. There is no sense of dominion being exploitative. McHarg and Collard's interpretation owes more to their own cultural perspectives than it does to the biblical account.

Stewards of the earth

The opening chapters of Genesis show that humanity's relationship with the rest of creation is ambiguous: we are part of it *and* we are above it. We are part of the earth *and* we are to rule over it. We are creatures of God *and* made in the image of God. It is these truths held in tension that keep Christianity free of the extremes of biocentrism and anthropocentrism (*i.e.* the reducing of humanity to grass and the deification of humanity). Christianity, contrary to Lynn White, Jr, is neither anthropocentric nor biocentric: it is theocentric. Our solidarity with the rest of the creation should serve to keep us from an oppressive rulership. Dominion is not a dictatorial rulership, we are not to lord it over creation: it is a delegated rulership, a rulership that is accountable. As God's stewards of creation we will be called to account for how we have treated his earth.

The biblical concept of stewardship is not without its objectors. Two of these are the philosopher John Passmore[17] and the Eastern Orthodox Paulos Mar Gregorios.[18] Passmore raises two objections, and claims that there is 'very little' evidence in support of stewardship.

For Passmore biblical stewardship 'relates to the Church, not to nature'.[19] In making this accusation Passmore is guilty of spiritualizing the Scriptures. Passmore is correct in one sense, in that there is little *explicit* evidence in the Scriptures (there is though much implicit evidence). Black comments that this concept of humanity as God's steward of the earth is 'too central in the way of life, too obvious to require any precise statement or reiteration'.[20]

Passmore's second objection is that if humanity is to image God, then humanity is to nature as God is to humanity. This suggests that nature is humanity's servant as humanity is God's servant, thus leaving Christianity open to White's accusation that nature is at humanity's disposal. The argument is however wrongheaded. Even if (as Black contends)

God : Humanity : Nature

it does not imply

Nature : Humanity : God.

There is no evidence to suggest that the relationship is commutative. In fact the non-commutativity of the relationship renders impotent Passmore's argument.

A more serious accusation comes from Bishop Gregorios, who suggests that the idea of stewardship reduces nature to 'nothing but an object given into our hands for safe keeping and good management'.[21] This demands refutation.

Stewardship brings liberation for nature and humanity because in it they are both fulfilling their God-given roles. There is nothing reductionistic about stewardship.

First, stewardship, rather than reducing nature, opens it up to new possibilities. Stewardship brings liberation for nature and humanity because in it they are both fulfilling their God-given roles. Secondly, there is no evidence whatsoever that nature should be treated as an object in a pejorative sense; the whole premise of stewardship is that the earth has been given to humanity because of God's love and concern for nature: it is his and he made it. There is therefore nothing reductionistic about stewardship.

2. Fall

The task of imaging God as stewards, however, becomes deformed. Humankind disobeyed God in an attempt to become autonomous (Gn. 3:17); this sin, to use Calvin's phrase, 'perverted the whole order of nature in heaven and earth'.[22] The whole of creation was disrupted. The shalom that existed in the Garden between God, humanity and nature was ruptured. It is in the fall that the roots of our ecological crisis lie.[23]

Paul interprets this as a cosmic fall: the whole of creation was subjected to frustration (Rom. 8:20). However, others have suggested that there is little evidence to 'suggest that the realm of nature has been altered in a fundamental way'.[24] The approach we take seems to depend on whether or not we take scientific issues into account when we interpret the Scriptures.[25]

One thing is clear: the task of fulfilling the cultural mandate becomes all the more arduous. Being fruitful, increasing in number and filling the earth becomes a painful task (Gn. 3:16); subduing the earth becomes a painful toil (3:17-18); rulership becomes misdirected (3:16);[26] and there is a clear reminder of the creatureliness of humanity: *adam* is *adamah* — we are dust.

This struggle with nature is taken up in the following chapters of Genesis. Cain's murder of his brother means that the ground will no longer yield its crop, and he will be homeless, driven from the land (Gn. 4:10-14). The prophet Hosea takes up the same theme (*cf.* Ho. 4:1-3): sin results in the land mourning and even in a reversal of creation.[27]

Throughout the OT we can see examples of God's concern for the whole of the non-human creation. The story of Noah is a case in point: Noah was perhaps the first conservationist.[28] The flood was a direct consequence of human rebellion which caused the earth to be corrupt in God's sight (Gn. 6:11). The ark, and the subsequent covenant that God made with Noah, his descendants and with *every living creature on earth* (Gn. 9:10), is testimony to God's concern for non-human life;[29] his promise that 'never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth' illustrates his concern for the earth.[30]

The sabbath year and jubilee are two further examples of God's care and concern for creation.

The sabbath year

The whole purpose behind the concept of sabbath was rest. The seventh day of creation, the sabbath, was a day when God 'rested from all the work of creating that he had done' (Gn. 2:3). In the same way the sabbath year was to be a sabbath of rest for the *land* (Lv. 25:2, 4-5): 'The land is to have a year of rest'.[31]

The year of jubilee

The jubilee year was the sabbath year of sabbath years and it meant an extra year of rest for the Jews.[32] Several environmental and ecological considerations underlie jubilee:

(i) It constantly reminded the Jews that 'the earth is the Lord's'. The land was not theirs to do with as they pleased (*cf.* Lv. 25:23): they were stewards and tenants but not owners.

(ii) It confirms God's care for the land and for animals.

(iii) God demands that we treat his earth and his animals with respect; failure to do so by neglecting jubilee and the sabbath year brought God's judgment (2 Chr. 36:21).

Despite the all-embracing and all-encompassing effects of the fall, God still cares for the earth. He has not washed his hands of it, in fact the care that he has for the earth is ultimately shown in sending Jesus.

3. Redemption

Jesus' incarnation displays the love and concern of God for his creation (*cf.* Jn. 3:16). Jesus came to save not only humanity, but the whole earth. Humanity and the earth are inextricably bound together: we are to care for the earth; our fall resulted in the earth's fall; and now our redemption results in the redemption of the earth, hence we have the onerous task of fulfilling the cultural mandate by proclaiming the gospel to all of creation.

Jesus on the cross redeemed the whole of creation: the cross has global effects. The cross lies at the heart of Christianity; it follows, then, that it must be central to a Christian environmental ethic.

The imagery of the cross represents all that Jesus has done: the cross is Paul's unique shorthand means of referring to Jesus' death, resurrection and all that it has accomplished. There are, particularly in the Pauline passages, several ecological implications of the cross: it affirms that the earth is the Lord's.

(i) *The cross is cosmic in scope.* This is particularly apparent in Colossians 1:20:[33] the work of Jesus reconciles all things *(ta panta). Ta panta* cannot be restricted to the human creation alone; this is unjustifiable for two reasons: (a) *ta panta* is defined in this section as 'things on earth and things in heaven' — there are more things in heaven and earth than humanity! (b) the use of *ta panta* elsewhere indicates that it means all things without restriction. Hence, nothing is exempt from the reconciling power of the cross: there is the potential of reconciliation for all the orders of creation.

God is, in his Son, reconciling the cosmos; and we are to continue this ministry (2 Cor. 5:18-19). Jesus commanded his disciples to take the gospel to all of creation *(ktsis)* (Mk. 16:15). The word *ktsis* here includes both the act and product of creation. Again, we are confronted with the fact that we cannot limit it to the human. The whole earth, because it has been affected by the fall, needs the gospel of reconciliation.

(ii) *The cross vindicates creation.* Jesus' work on the cross undermines any matter/spirit or nature/grace dualism: it declares that creation is worth dying for. Humanity is to be redeemed *with* creation not *apart from* it. This theme is taken up in Romans 8. The creation that has been subjected to futility, presumably through humanity's sin, is to be liberated by the children of God becoming the sons of God. It is the sons of God who will be given the privilege of releasing the fallen creation into the liberty that they experience because of Jesus' work on the cross.[34]

> ***Nothing is exempt from the reconciling power of the cross. There is the potential of reconciliation for all the orders of creation.***

(iii) *The cross dethrones the powers.* The powers that lie behind the orders, structures and institutions of society, which were originally created by and for Jesus (Col. 1:16), were in some way corrupted through sin and became demonized.[35] Now, however, through the cross he stripped them, exposed them to ridicule and led them out as a conquered enemy in a victory parade (Col. 2:15).[36] They now have the potential to be transformed to the order they were intended to have. These powers which contribute to the pollution and rape of the earth no longer have to do so — the cross has dethroned them.[37]

The work that Jesus began in redemption on the cross, he will finish at his *parousia*. The earth is involved in redemption, and it too will be involved in the consummation. The earth is never seen as a machine or as raw material, but as the scene of God's redemptive action, and as such it will be renewed at the parousia: redemption includes a transformation of the earth.

4. New or renewed earth?

If the earth is to be destroyed at the parousia, as many popular commentators have suggested — notably those of a dispensational persuasion[38] — then environmental action is at best 'patching up a dying man's coat' and a waste of time. The question of the fate of the earth, then, needs to be addressed.[39]

There appear to be two conflicting views in Scripture: a renewal of the earth and a destruction of the earth. The *crux interpretum* is 2 Peter 3:10-13.[40] There is ample textual and contextual evidence to translate verse 10 as 'the earth and all its works *will be found*', not *'burned up'*. Critical editions of the NT, including Tischendorf and Westcott and Hort, all have *heurethēsetai* (will be found) rather than the Textus Receptus version *katakaēsetai* (shall be burned up).

There are several other passages (notably Mt. 24:35 and parallels, and Heb. 1:12) which seem to suggest destruction rather than a transformation. However, Matthew 24:35 could be translated 'heaven and earth will be *transformed* but my word never changes'; *parerchomai* also occurs in 2 Corinthians 5:17 where the emphasis is on transformation rather than destruction.

In Hebrews 1:12 earth and heavens are 'like a garment [which] will be changed'. *Allagēsontai* here is also used in the context of the resurrection of believers: 'we will all be changed', so yet again this can be understood in the context of transformation. *Cf.* 1 Enoch 45:5 where he describes the new heaven and the new earth: '. . . I will transform the earth and make it a blessing: And I will cause Mine elect ones to dwell upon it.'

The OT prophets also held out hope for a transformed heaven and earth. Passages in Isaiah expound environmental harmony: the environmental destruction caused by war will be no more (Is. 2:4); order and harmony (shalom) will once more exist between the animals (Is. 11:6a), and between animals and humanity (Is. 11:8); the desert will bloom and water will gush forth in the wilderness (Is. 35:6).

Environmental theology: a summary

(i) God is the source of all things.
(ii) God as creator is separate and distinct from his creation.
(iii) All of creation belongs to God.
(iv) All of creation is good.
(v) Humanity is inextricably linked to the earth:
  (a) humanity is created from the earth
  (b) humanity is to steward the earth
  (c) humanity's fall results in the earth's fall
  (d) humanity is to take the gospel to all of creation
  (e) humanity's manifestation as the sons of God results in the earth's redemption.
(vi) Jesus' work of redemption accomplished by the cross includes the non-human creation.
(vii) Humanity is redeemed with, not out of, nature.
(viii) At the parousia the earth will be liberated and transformed, not destroyed.
(ix) The new (*i.e.* transformed) earth will experience environmental harmony.

Having examined the basis of a Christian environmental ethic we will now turn to look at the green movement, to compare and contrast the two distinctive world-views.

B. THE GREEN MOVEMENT

What does it mean to be green? What is a green world-view? These are two important questions that need to be addressed.

Green is one of those 'slippery' words that have an elastic definition; it can be stretched to mean what we want. For the majority it is erroneously seen as a synonym for 'environmental'; however, it means much more than that. Jonathon Porritt, until recently director of Friends of the Earth, states that 'Whereas concern for the environment is an essential part of being green, it is . . . by no means the same as being green'.[41]

Central to green thinking and politics are what Capra and Spretnak call the 'four pillars':[42] ecology, social responsibility, grassroots democracy and non-violence.

Ecology

The term ecology is understood in a wider sense than its strict scientific definition; it means 'understanding ourselves and our environment as part of nature'.[43] Underlying the concept of

ecology is the need to find our place in the ecosystem. Porritt sums it up as the need to 'remind people of the inseparable links between ourselves and the planet on which we depend'.[44]

Social responsibility
This is understood to mean 'social justice and an assurance that the poor and working class will not get hurt by programmes to restructure the economy and our consumer society ecologically'.[45]

Grassroots democracy
This is the concept that democracy should be decentralized and direct, *i.e.* it takes into account the 'wishes and opinions of everybody affected by political and social economic policies, especially those who currently have very little say . . .'.[46]

Non-violence
According to Petra Kelly of Die Grünen, the German green party, non-violence is 'the essential ingredient in an ecological society'.[47] Non-violence is the abolition of both personal and structural oppression: 'humane goals cannot be achieved by inhumane means'.[48]

One prominent green thinker, John Button, describes 'green' as:

> A set of beliefs and concomitant lifestyle that stresses the importance of respect for the earth and all its inhabitants, using only what resources are necessary and appropriate, acknowledging the rights of all forms of life, and recognising that all that exists is part of one interconnected whole.[49]

The two keywords are *beliefs* and *lifestyle*. As with all world-views, the green world-view rests on a set of beliefs, which are inherently religious, about the universe and humanity.[50] These beliefs are the set of hinges on which all our thinking and doing turns.[51] They are like the roots of a tree, hidden, but without them the tree would not be a tree.

To understand the green world-view we need to examine the underlying faith-questions that shape all world-views:[52]

1. What is the nature of the universe?
2. What does it mean to be human?
3. What is wrong with life as it stands?
4. What is the remedy? How can we put it right?

Each of the answers outlined below provides a marked contrast to the Christian world-view.

It should be stressed from the outset that the discussion that follows is, and can only be, a generalization. The green movement is extremely diverse: it contains atheists, agnostics, Buddhists, Marxists (and even some Christians) . . . and not all of them would respond in the same way to these four questions, though the majority of greens would concur with the answers outlined below.

1. What is the nature of the universe?
Chief Seattle, a Dwarmish Red Indian chief, in a letter to the US government in the 1850s, succinctly defined the green view: 'All things are connected, whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the children of the Earth.'

The greens would see the earth as a single self-regulating organism; the term Gaia, first coined by Jim Lovelock, is often used to describe this concept. Gaia has, over 3½ billion years, 'created the conditions which are now vitally necessary for life'.

The greens see the earth as a single self-regulating organism, often called Gaia.

2 What is humanity?
It is easier to answer this question negatively: humans are not the centre of the universe — indeed, as we shall see below, anthropocentricity (the view that the universe exists for man) is named as one of the causes of the problems that the earth faces.

Humanity, for the greens, is part of, not distinct from, nature; but because human beings have greater power to 'control' nature, they have a greater responsibility for it. Chief Seattle, writing a century before the green movement, also summed up the green view of humanity: 'Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it.'

3. What is wrong?
For the greens the source of contemporary alienation is that we have become estranged from nature. Man (and not just in the generic sense) has become too central, dominating nature and disturbing the natural order: he is upsetting Gaia's balance. This anthropocentricity results in too much growth, both in population and in economic terms, hence the earth's resources are rapidly depleting.

4. What is the remedy?
Most greens would agree that what is needed is a total change in the structure of society. Growth needs to be drastically cut. Sustainable development, *i.e.* one that can be sustained without using up the earth's resources, and the need to get back into harmony with nature by having a reverence and respect for the earth and its ecosystem, are for the greens their means of salvation.

Having presented a general summary of the green world-view, I want to examine one specific green group — the 'deep ecologists'.

Deep ecology

Arne Naess, the founder of the philosophical journal *Inquiry*, was one of the first to articulate the green philosophy that is known as 'deep ecology'.[53] Naess has even been called the pontiff of deep ecology.

Deep ecology is often contrasted with 'shallow' or 'cosmetic' ecology; deep ecology, as the name suggests, attempts to ask more profound questions about the underlying assumptions of society that lie at the heart of the environmental crisis. 'Shallow' ecology, on the other hand (they maintain), tends to place a veneer over the problems. In his 1987 Schumacher lecture Naess explains the deep ecology approach by saying: 'When we, in the Deep Ecology Movement, talk about pollution, we ask "Pollution for whom? There are so many living beings. Are you talking about pollution for humans? What about pollution for others? . . ." We always go on from discussing the sphere of human life, which is important for us, to life in general. . . . For us it's the ecosphere, the whole planet, Gaia, that's the basic unit and every living being has an intrinsic value.'[54]

Deep ecology presents a marked contrast to the 'Dominant world-view of technocratic-industrial societies'.[55] We can summarize this contrast in the table below.[56]

Dominant Western world-view	Deep ecology
1. Dominance over nature	Harmony with nature
2. Nature as a resource	Nature has intrinsic value
3. Economic growth necessary for increasing population	Simple material needs
4. Belief in unlimited resources	Earth's resources limited
5. High technological progress	Appropriate technology
6. Consumerism	Reducing consumption and recycling

Points 3-6 are important correctives to contemporary idolatry of scientism, technicism and economic growth.[57] The theological concept of stewardship arrives at the same, or at least similar, conclusions. It is in the first two points that we see not only a marked contrast to the dominant world-view but also to Christianity.

At one level points 1 and 2 of deep ecology are true; however, they are not the whole truth.

Harmony with nature
In one sense humanity is in harmony with nature[58] — we are all part of nature (*i.e.* the created). We are *creatures*, made from the dust of the earth. Genesis 2:5 affirms our solidarity with the non-human creation; and yet we are also distinct from the rest of creation: humanity alone is created in the image of God.

All nature has intrinsic value
Christians too can affirm that nature has intrinsic value. The non-human creation does not exist merely for humanity; its value is not dependent on how useful it is for humanity (see *e.g.* Jb. 40–41; Ps.

104). Attfield[59] claims, with justification, that the notion that creation has no value except in its instrumental value for humanity is a Greek rather than a Hebrew concept, and as such is nowhere to be found in the Scriptures. All of creation has rights: the right to be what God intended it to be.[60]

Though all of nature has value, not all of nature has *equal* value. It is this point that is inherent in Jesus' claim that humanity (in the form of his disciples) is different/superior to the birds (Mt. 6:26). This is further exemplified by Jesus *permitting* the demons to go into the Gadarene swine after he had cast them out of the demoniac(s) (Mt. 8:28-34 and par.).

A green creed

Fifteen years' thinking on the principles of deep ecology has been summarized by Naess and George Sessions in eight basic principles, elucidated in the book *Deep Ecology*.[61]

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman Life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.

2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.

3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy *vital* needs.

4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.

5. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

7. The ideological change is mainly of appreciating *life quality* (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.

It is these principles that are the foundation of deep ecology, its creed. They have been left deliberately vague and 'somewhat neutral' so that they can 'be understood and accepted by persons coming from different philosophical and religious positions'.[62]

It is worth commenting on these points to draw out some of their inconsistencies.

> ***The main problem for deep ecologists is how to define 'life forms' that have intrinsic value. Do they include the HIV virus?***

Deep ecology is not without its critics. The most trenchant of these is Murray Bookchim, who claims that:

> 'Deep ecology' is so much of a 'blackhole' of half-digested ill-formed and half-baked ideas . . . the very words, 'deep ecology', in fact, clue us to the fact that we are not dealing with a body of clear ideas but with a bottomless pit in which vague notions and moods of all kinds can be sucked into the depths of an ideological toxic dump.[63]

The main problem for deep ecologists is how to define 'life forms' (principle 2). Do these include the HIV virus? To be consistent with their biocentric premise that all of nature has an *equal* inherent value they would have to welcome the HIV virus: not only does it represent another diverse life form, it is also instrumental in furthering the aims of principle 4, *i.e.* it decreases the human population. In fact David Foreman, one of the more extreme (consistent?) deep ecologists, suggested that smallpox should be reintroduced.[64]

Principle 4 declares that a decrease in population is necessary for the flourishing of life and culture (but flourishing for whom? — Definitely not for those who have to 'decrease'); however, this cannot be achieved without violating Principle 5. How can the population be decreased if we do not interfere by euthanasia, abortion, restricting the size of the family, *etc.*? Perhaps AIDS, the reintroduction of smallpox or famine are expected to do the task.

Principle 5 describes the human interference as excessive. This would then mean that we do not interfere with the famine in Ethiopia, rather we let 'nature' take its course and thus fulfil Principle 4. In fact Principle 5 is incompatible with Christianity. The cultural mandate (Gn. 1:27) is a mandate to subdue and rule, *i.e.* to interfere. The problem is not interference but *how* we interfere. Interference is necessary for the responsible stewardship of creation; but it has two opposing directions: it can be done obediently *or* disobediently. It is disobedient interference that has resulted in the crisis we face today (Is. 24:1ff.).

> ***Deep ecology is not only a biocentric philosophy; it is anti-human and even misanthropic.***

Deep ecology is not only a biocentric philosophy, it is anti-human and even misanthropic. According to Bookchim, for deep ecology, 'Humanity is essentially seen as an ugly "anthropocentric" thing — presumably a malignant product of natural evolution — that is "overpopulating" the planet, "devouring" its resources, destroying its wildlife and the biosphere'.[65]

Green spirituality

'My own working definition of spirituality is that it is the focusing of human awareness on the subtle aspects of existence, a practice that reveals to us profound interconnectedness', writes Charlene Spretnak.[66]

It is this interconnectedness with nature that provides the basis of green spirituality. John Seed, a deep ecologist and rain forest activist, says that 'I find the idea that I am a part of nature, I'm not separate from it, I'm not different from it, I'm not alienated or isolated from it, to be an incredibly mystical thought'.[67]

According to Porritt, the spiritual dimension of the green movement consists of two essential components: (i) 'The endeavour to promote ecological wisdom in *all* existing religious and spiritual traditions', and (ii) 'the need to find ways of letting people reconnect with the Earth'.[68]

The first concept is unashamedly pluralistic and syncretistic: most green thinkers draw upon Eastern mysticism, Celtic Christianity or pre-Christian Celtic paganism, the new physics and process theology. The second component again emphasizes the interconnectedness with nature, and in this sense is no different from the pantheism and monism of the so-called New Age movement: All is one, one is God, the earth/nature is God.

Wanted: Daniels in a New Age Babylon

It is evident that the green movement is immersed in New Age ideas. Consequently, Christians need to be on their guard if they are to play a part in the environmental movement; what is needed is an understanding of the New Age and a well thought-out Christian response to it. There is no need to become paranoid as some commentators have.

One such commentator is Constance Cumbey, a Detroit lawyer. She claims that the New Age movement is a 'worldwide coalition of networking organisations', of which there are over 10,000, ranging (alphabetically) from Amnesty International to Zero Population Growth. They include 'many "appropriate technology", environmental, and ecological organizations . . . such as Camshell Alliance, Sierra Club . . . [and] Friends of the Earth'.[69]

> ***Christians need to be on their guard. But there is no need to become paranoid.***

Cumbey stands in a long tradition of conspiracy hunters.[70] It is Cumbey's contention that 'for the first time in history there is a

viable movement – the New Age movement – that truly meets all the scriptural requirements for the antichrist and the political movement that will bring him on the world scene'.[71]

She presents a good critique of theosophy, but lets her conspiracy thesis run away with her, and in doing so trivializes biblical prophecy and history. Loren Wilkinson, whose book *Earthkeeping*, according to Cumbey, lays out a New Age political programme (!), describes Cumbey's book as 'an odd mixture of innuendoes, half-truths, and guilt by association'[72] – and in my view, Wilkinson is right.

Although environmental action is not synonymous with New Age ideas, it still leaves an important question unanswered: if the green movement does embrace some New Age ideas and concepts, should Christians be involved in it? The situation is in many ways analogous to that during the Second World War when the Kuyperian Calvinists and Marxists joined forces in the Dutch underground.[73] Two distinct groups, two distinct world-views, and yet because of a common aim – to resist the Nazis and help the Jews escape – they were able to work together; as in fact do Christians and Marxists today in South Africa fighting against the injustices of apartheid. Most Christians work 'nine-'till-five' rubbing shoulders with secular humanists and materialists – so why should working with the greens, even if they are New Agers, provide us with problems? We are called to transform all of culture with the gospel of the kingdom.

If Christians are to be involved they need to be able to articulate a coherent Christian world-view and to critique the greens, but, perhaps most of all, to know the call of God. Then with the greens we will be able to confront the idols of technicism, scientism and economicism, and fight against the rape of the earth. The earth, after all, is not Gaia's, but the Lord's.

[1]Lynn White, Jr, 'The historical roots of our ecologic(al) crisis', *Science* 155 (10 March 1967) (reprinted in F.A. Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1974), pp. 70-81; and more recently in *Thinking Green: An Anthology of Essential Writing*, ed. Michael Allaby (Barrie & Jenkins, 1989)).

[2]See, for example, Robin Attfield, *The Ethics of Environmental Concern* (Basil Blackwell, 1983), ch. 2; James Barr, 'Man and nature – The ecological controversy in the Old Testament', *BJRL* 55 (1972), pp. 9-32; Stephen V. Monsma (ed.), *Responsible Technology* (Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 40-44; A.R. Peacocke, 'On "The historical roots of our ecological crisis" ', in *Man and Nature* (Collins, 1975), pp. 155-158; F. B. Welbourn,'Man's dominion', *Theology* Vol. 78 (1975), pp. 561-568.

[3]Throughout this article I use creation and nature as synonyms. See Richard Bauckham, 'First steps to a theology of nature', *EQ* Vol. 58, pp. 229-244.

[4]See Christopher J.H. Wright, 'The use of the Bible in social ethics: paradigms, types and eschatology', *Transformation* Vol. 1 No. 1 (Jan/March 1984), pp. 11-14, about the use of this framework. *Cf.* also Rowland Moss, *The Earth in Our Hands* (IVP, 1982), who uses a similar framework, as does Keith Innes, *Caring for the Earth* (Grove Ethical Booklets, 1988). For a full discussion of the creation, fall and redemption framework see Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained* (IVP, 1986); and Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton, *The Transforming Vision* (IVP USA, 1984).

[5]Conrad Bonifazi, 'Teilhard and the natural environment' in *Cry of the Environment*, ed. P.N. Joranson and K. Butigan (Bear, 1984), ch. 15.

[6]Sean McDonagh, *To Care for the Earth* (Geoffrey Chapman, 1986), relies heavily on Teilhard de Chardin: 'only in the past thirty years, due mainly to the impetus which Teilhard's writings have given to the Christian world, have theologians once again begun to search for and discover a new theology of creation' (p. 108). See also Mathew Fox, *Original Blessing* (Bear, 1983).

[7]See, for example, Birch and Cobb, *The Liberation of Life* (CUP, 1981).

[8]John B. Cobb, Jr, 'Process Theology and an ecological model', in *Cry of the Environment*, ch. 17.

[9]For a critique of process theology see Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, 'Process theology: a survey and an appraisal', *Themelios* 12.1 (1986), pp. 15-22. See also Paulos Mar Gregorios, *The Human Presence* (Amity House, 1987), ch. 4.

[10]Following P.G. Craigie's translation in *Psalms 1–50*, Word Biblical Commentaries 19 (Word, 1983).

[11]Andree Collard, *Rape of the Wild* (The Women's Press, 1989), p. 17.

[12]Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (Natural History Press, 1989), p. 26.

[13]Man's rule over nature, the direct consequence of his creation in the image of God, is for the sake of the non-human creation': J.S. Hurst, 'Towards a theology of conservation', *Theology* 75 (1972), p. 201. For a discussion on the image of God see, for example, Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (SPCK, 1974), pp. 142-157; David J.A. Clines, 'The image of God', *Tyn. Bull.* 19(1968); Douglas J. Hall, *Imaging God* (Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 61-112; Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis* (SCM, 1972), pp. 60f.; S.G. Wilson, 'New wine in old wineskins: IX. Image of God', *Exp. T.* 85(1974), p. 356; and at a more popular level, Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning* (IVP, 1984), ch. 4.

[14]Barr, 'Man and nature'.

[15]Walter Houston, '"And let them have dominion ..." Biblical views of man in relation to the environmental crisis', *Studia Biblica* I (1978), pp. 161-184 (JSOT, 1979).

[16]F.B. Welbourn, 'Man's dominion', *Theology* 78(1975), pp. 561-567.

[17]John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature* (Duckworth, 1974).

[18]Mar Gregorios, *The Human Presence* (Amity House, 1987).

[19]Passmore, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[20]John Black, *The Dominion of Man* (Edinburgh University Press, 1970), p. 52. See also the rest of his chapter 14.

[21]Gregorios, *op. cit.*, p. 88. For further discussion on stewardship see Robin Attfield, *The Ethics of Environmental Concern*; Doug Hall, *Imaging God*, pp. 193-205; William Dyrness, 'Stewardship of the earth in the Old Testament', in *Tending the Garden*, ed. Wesley Grandberg-Michaelson (Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 50-65; Loren Wilkinson (ed.), *Earthkeeping* (Eerdmans, 1980), ch. 14.

[22]*Institutes* II.i.5 (cited in *Man and Nature*, p. 35.)

[23]One of the defects of the Anglican Symposium *Man and Nature* is that it fails to take the fall seriously – it is dismissed almost out of hand: 'The more extreme forms of a doctrine of a cosmic fall, though they might claim some support from the Bible, are too speculative to command assent and involve ideas that are not readily harmonized with modern conceptions of the world' (p. 35). *Cf.* also *Man in his Living Environment* (CIO, 1970): 'Man loses proper control over nature by losing control of his own morality' (# 132 p. 63). This is to some extent remedied in the later Anglican report *Our Responsibility for the Living Environment* (Church House Publishing, 1986): '... the Fall was regarded as cosmic and not only affecting the human race, the whole of unredeemed nature as well as unredeemed humanity was regarded *in some circles* as totally depraved' (p. 22, *my italics).*

In passing, Jonathon Porritt's (until recently Director of Friends of the Earth) comments on this report are worth noting: 'Despite several pointers in the right direction, this again is a bland insular document that only scratches at the surface of the problem', *Two Lectures* (The David Thompson Trust, 1988), p. 29.

[24]A. Lewis, 'The localisation of the Garden of Eden', *BETS* 11 (1968), p. 174 (cited in Lucas and Blocher, see n. 25).

[25]See E.C. Lucas, 'Some scientific issues related to the understanding of Genesis 1–3', *Themelios* 12.2 (1987), pp. 46-51, who thinks we do, and Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning* (IVP, 1984), who thinks not. See also D. Keith Innes, *Resources for a Green Theology*, Science and Technology Papers No. 2 (Framlington Institute, 1987).

[26]See my 'Towards a biblical view of environmental care', *Evangel* 7(2) (1989), p. 8.

[27]Michael Deroche, 'The reversal of creation in Hosea', *VT* 31(1981), comparing Gn. 1 with Ho. 4:3: 'Thus, Hosea is not merely employing the image of a drought to illustrate Israel's punishment; he is announcing the reversal of creation' (p. 403). *Cf.* also his 'Zephaniah 1:2-3: the "sweeping" of creation', *VT* 30 (1980), pp. 104-109.

[28]Richard Bauckham, *The Bible and Politics* (SPCK, 1989): 'I am surprised that Noah has not become, as he deserves to be, a model for Christian conservationists!' (p. 16).

[29]Bernard W. Anderson, 'Creation and the Noahic covenant', in *Cry of the Environment*, pp. 45-61; see also his 'Creation and Ecology' in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. B.W. Anderson (SPCK, 1984): 'This Noahic covenant opens up the horizon of the future by predicating the hope of the human and nonhuman creation on the unconditional commitment of the creator to humankind, to nonhuman creatures, and to the order and regularity of "nature" ' (p. 169).

[30]Bauckham, *The Bible and Politics*, p. 132: 'the message of the story [of the flood] is not so much that God once brought a universal deluge on the earth, but rather that he will never do so again'.

[31]Andrew Linzey, *Christianity and the Right of Animals* (SPCK, 1987), commenting on the sabbath, states: '... it is quite impossible to articulate the meaning of Sabbath except in inclusivist terms, that is, in terms which include the whole created order' (p. 31).

[32]For a full discussion of the socio-economic implications of the jubilee see R. North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee*, Analecta Biblica IV (Pontifical Biblical Inst., 1954), and R.B. Sloan, Jr, *The Favourable Year of the Lord* (Scholar Press, 1977); see also the more popular discussion in John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Eerdmans, 1972), ch. 3. Also C.J.H. Wright, *Living as the People of God* (IVP, 1983), pp. 101-102; Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Academie, 1983), pp. 217-221, where he summarizes the work of Martin H. Woudstra, 'The year of the Jubilee and related Old Testament laws – can they be "translated" for today?', *Theological Forum* 5 (1977), pp. 1-21.

[33]For a full discussion of Col. 1:15-20 see Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentaries 44 (Word, 1982), pp. 31-57 and references therein; Ralph P. Martin, *Reconciliation*, Marshalls Theological Library (Marshalls, 1981), pp. 114-126; and Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Fortress, 1971), p. 59.

[34]Commenting on Rom. 8:18-25, Paulos Mar Gregorios states: 'Human redemption can be understood only as an integral part of the redemption of the whole creation', in 'New Testament foundations for understanding the creation', *Tending the Garden*, pp. 83-92.

[35]For literature on the powers see Hendrik Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers* (Herald Press, 1962); G.B. Caird, *Principalities and Powers* (Clarendon, 1956); Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time* (SCM, 1951), pp. 191-210; *The State in the New Testament* (Scribners, 1956); John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Eerdmans, 1972); Walter Wink, *Interpreting the Powers* (Marshalls, 1987).

[36]P.T. O'Brien, *Colossians*, pp. 127, 133.

[37]Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, p. 34, suggests that the best translation of *katarchein* is 'dethrone'.

[38]*Cf., e.g.*, R.G. Gromacki, *Are These the Last Days?* (Walter, 1970), ch. 10, and Erich Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity* (Paternoster, 1954), p. 54.

[39]For a discussion see Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal*, Marshalls Theological Library (Marshalls, 1983), pp. 168-170, who thinks that an attempt at reconciling the apparent ambiguity 'is perhaps not necessary' (p. 170).

[40]Richard Bauckham, *Jude and 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentaries 50 (Word, 1985), p. 316. For a full discussion see Al Wolters, 'World view and textual criticism in 2 Peter 3:10', *WTJ* 49 (1987), pp. 405-413. Wolter argues that the author of 2 Peter sees the day of judgment as 'a smelting process from which the world will emerge purified', and he suggests that *heurethesetai* 'is a metallurgical term appropriate to smelting and refining' (p. 408).

[41]J. Porritt, *Seeing Green* (Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 5. Porritt also lists 14 points which *he* sees as the minimum criteria for being green.

[42]Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak, *Green Politics* (Hutchinson, 1984), p. 30. *Cf. Programme of the German Green Party* (Heretic, 1983), p. 17.

[43]*Programme*, p. 7.

[44]*Seeing Green*, p. 19.

[45]Capra and Spretnak, *Green Politics*, p. 35.

[46]John Button, *A Dictionary of Green Ideas* (Routledge, 1988), p. 190.

[47]Quoted in *Green Politics*, p. 43.

[48]*Programme*, p. 9.

[49]*Dictionary of Green Ideas*, p. 190.

[50]For a full discussion of the nature of world-views see James H. Olthuis, 'On Worldviews', *Christian Scholars Review* Vol. XIV (2) (1985), pp. 153-164. *Cf.* also *Transforming Vision*, chs. 1 and 2.

[51]Olthuis, p. 155.

[52]*Cf.* the questions listed in *Transforming Vision*, p. 35; see also Leslie Stevenson, *Seven Theories of Human Nature* (OUP, 1974), who uses similar questions to analyse seven theories of human nature.

[53]'The shallow and deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary', *Inquiry* Vol. 16 (1973), pp. 95-100; this is a summary of a lecture given at the Third World Future Research Conference, Bucharest, 3-10 September 1972.

[54]'The basics of deep ecology', *Resurgence* No. 126 (Jan-Feb 1988), p. 7.

[55]Bill Deval and George Sessions, *Deep Ecology* (Peregrine Smith, 1985).

[56]Based on fig. 5-1 in *Deep Ecology*, p. 69.

[57]For a Christian critique of these idols see the work of Bob Goudzwaard, *e.g. Idols of our Time* (IVP, 1984).

[58]See, *e.g.*, *Man and Nature*, p. 67; Linzey, *Christianity and the Rights of Animals* (SCM, 1987), p. 17.

[59]Attfield, *The Ethics of Environmental Concern*, p. 26.

[60]For a full discussion on how this relates to animals see Linzey, ch. 5.

[61]P. 70; see also Naess' Schumacher lecture, *Resurgence, op. cit.*, and a similar list of principles in Peter Bunyard and Fern Morgan-Grenville (eds.), *The Green Alternative* (Methuen, 1987), pp. 281-283.

[62]*Deep Ecology*, p. 70.

[63]M. Bookchim, 'Social ecology versus "Deep ecology" ', *The Raven Anarchist Quarterly* Vol. I No. 3 (1987), p. 222.

[64]*Guardian*, 13 July 1988.

[65]*Raven*, p. 221.

[66]C. Spretnak, *The Spiritual Dimension of Green Politics* (Bear and Co., 1986), p. 41.

[67]J. Seed, *Green Line* No. 73 (June 1989), p. 12.

[68]J. Porritt, *Two Lectures* (The David Thompson Trust, 1988), p. 26.

[69]C. Cumbey, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* (Huntingdon House, 1983), pp. 247f.

[70]For a useful critique of Cumbey and other American conspiracy hunters see James Alan Patterson, 'Changing images of the beast: apocalyptic conspiracy theories in American history', *JETS* Vol. 31 (1988), pp. 443-452.

[71]Cumbey, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

[72]Loren Wilkinson, 'New age, new consciousness, and the new creation', *Tending the Garden*, p. 26.

[73]I am indebted to Dr Brian Walsh for this illustration.

Purpose in pain? – Teleology and the problem of evil

Melvin Tinker

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In his *A Preface to Christian Theology*, John Mackay illustrates two distinct, though not entirely unrelated, kinds of approach to Christian matters by picturing a group of people sitting on the high balcony of a Spanish house watching travellers pass by on the road below. Those on the balcony can overhear the travellers' talk and often chat with them. They comment critically upon the way the travellers walk, discuss questions about the road – how it can exist and where it might lead. By way of contrast, the travellers face problems which are essentially of a practical nature, although they too have a theoretical aspect to them. Thus while both the 'observers' and the 'travellers' might express interest over areas of common concern, the immediate nature of their problems differs. On the question of evil for instance, one can envisage the observers wrestling with the theoretical problem of how to reconcile a belief in an omnipotent God who has loving purposes with the existence of evil (the Philosopher?); while the travellers grapple with the existential problem of trying to overcome evil by bringing good out of it (the Pilgrim?). Now clearly the Scriptures were written primarily for the latter, a book for travellers composed by fellow travellers under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[1] But while the manner of approach and the overall intention of the biblical writers may be described as 'practical', they are nevertheless set within a framework of belief grounded in God's revelation. As traditionally expressed this means that practice is wedded to doctrine – works proceed from faith. In short, the 'conceptual' and the 'existential' belong together, each needing the other to prevent undue abstraction on the one hand, and an unhealthy subjectivism on the other. Accordingly an attempt will be made to give due consideration to both aspects throughout this discussion.

The paper's main locus of concern is with the question of how we are to begin to understand the place of suffering in God's world with a view to formulating a Christian response. One deliberately says *a* Christian response since no single response will be sufficient and any so-called Christian theodicy must of necessity be composite in nature if it is going to be even remotely comprehensive and coherent. D.M. Ahern is therefore probably not all that wide of the mark when he concludes that because our knowledge of particular evils and their various connections is so limited, it will never be possible to devise a theodicy which accounts for every type of evil situation. Although each theodicy proposed might contain a number of valuable insights, simply in and of themselves they are unable to perform the function they are intended to perform, *i.e.* to provide a wholly convincing reasoned defence of the goodness of God in the face of evil. Thus even when a number of approaches have been adduced which might be said to complement each other, the irreducible mystery of the problem of evil remains, and like Job[2] we are forced to place our hands over our mouths. This, however, does not preclude legitimate and fruitful enquiry, but it does sound a note of caution against claiming too much as well as underscoring the humble spirit in which the enquiry should be pursued.

With this proviso in place, the aim of this paper is to consider why suffering constitutes a problem for Christian belief, to survey a number of simple 'solutions' to the problem, and then to propose a way of approaching the question of suffering which, it is believed, best accords with the NT revelation as it centres upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is to developing this approach that the greater part of our discussion will be devoted.

The problem stated

We often speak of the *problem* of evil or the *problem* of suffering; why describe evil and suffering as problems? It is generally acknowledged that evil, and suffering which is perceived as evil, is a problem for the Christian because of what he or she *believes*. McClosky writes: 'Evil is a problem for the theist in that a contradiction is involved in the fact of evil, on the one hand, and the belief in the omnipotence of God on the other'.[3] Although one may wish to qualify what he says by speaking of a conflict which is apparent rather than real, as McClosky implies, the force of what he is saying is all too readily felt by believers and non-believers alike. What is more, the 'problem' seems to gain greater poignancy when it is formulated as a sharp dilemma *pace* Hick: 'If God is perfectly loving and good he must wish to abolish evil; if God is all powerful he must be able to abolish evil. But evil exists. Therefore God cannot be both perfectly good and almighty'.[4] Certainly as it stands the dilemma does beg a number of questions, not least those of how one is to conceive the notions of 'perfectly loving' and 'all-powerful'. But even when such terms are carefully qualified (*e.g.* holy love as distinct from bland self-indulgence, and omnipotence which does not involve the ability to do that which is self-contradictory as distinct from antinomies), one may still grant that *prima facie* there is a dilemma which needs to be addressed.

Therefore, while appearing to adopt the stance of a 'balconeer' for a moment, how might one proceed to deal with this particular dilemma? It is proposed that the first step is to identify two of the main presuppositions which underlie the formulation of the dilemma and upon which the force of the dilemma is largely dependent, *viz.* if God is perfectly good and all-powerful this will of necessity be reflected in the removal of all evil *now* (or at least it raises the questions as to why it was not removed at an earlier moment in time or why it was allowed to come into being in the first place). In other words, there is both a *temporal* and a *means* condition built into the very formulation of the dilemma – the removal of evil at a particular time (present or past) in an immediate and total way (presumably by divine fiat).

The second step in our handling of the dilemma follows on quite naturally from the first, for what if it could be demonstrated, however tentatively, that God will not only remove all evil at some point in the future, but will actually redeem evil in such a way that it is transfigured into that which is good? What if the goodness and omnipotence of God were to be worked out in a way that is altogether different from that which is normally envisaged? Then much, although by no means all, of the force would be taken out of this particular dilemma. The tension would be relieved but not entirely removed. It is to this possibility, based upon the conviction that *the* decisive event in which the power and goodness of God is demonstrated in redeeming evil has already taken place, that the greater part of this paper will be devoted.

Simple solutions

There are of course a number of simple solutions to the dilemma posed above which essentially involve the removal of one or more of the three elements which make up the triad so that it ceases to be a dilemma at all. Thus one could deny that evil or suffering exists, viewing them instead as some form of 'illusion'. Christian Science and Therevada Buddhism might qualify as amongst those beliefs which take this particular route. Alternatively, one might deny the omnipotence of God as does the process theologian David Griffin, who states quite unequivocally that his solution to the problem of evil is 'by denying the doctrine of omnipotence fundamental to it'.[5] However, the theological price paid is rather high in that we are in effect left with a 'God' who is trying to do his best in bringing good

out of evil, and with a little luck he might (but only might) succeed in the end. The other way out of the apparent impasse is to deny the goodness of God as expressed in Baudelaire's celebrated statement that: 'If there is a God he is the very devil'. The writer Archibald MacLeish conveys the same sentiment in his play 'J.B.', which is a reworking of the story of Job, with the refrain: 'If he is God he is not good, if he is good he is not God'. Nevertheless, the traditional Christian claim is that God is good, that he is almighty and that evil and suffering are realities to be reckoned with. The 'problem' therefore turns on how to relate these two articles of faith (the goodness and omnipotence of God) to the fact of suffering which is deemed evil, without compromising either of these tenets of faith or trivializing human suffering.

The immorality of suffering

In turning to consider the question: 'What makes suffering morally unacceptable?', a prior question needs to be addressed, *viz.* 'Is all suffering evil or only in certain forms?' Now, while psychologically most, if not all, pain may be considered to be objectionable, it is not necessarily the case that it is morally so, especially if the pain endured is part of a means to a recognized good. Thus from a purely biological point of view, pain can serve as part of the body's defence mechanism preventing further injury by means, say, of a reflex action (*e.g.* removing a hand from a hot plate). Certainly it could be objected that this simply pushes the 'problem' one stage further back, for one could ask, why the 'more serious injury'? Could God not have created a world in which there would be no need of such a defence mechanism for there would be nothing which needed defending against? But even if one were to grant that such objections have force (and I believe they do), the point being maintained here would remain, namely that pain, in and of itself, is not necessarily evil. Indeed in some contexts it could be considered morally neutral (as is the 'healthy' pain after long exercise) or morally good (as in the case of corrective punishment).

Surely, what makes suffering so morally objectionable is when it is encountered in a form which is wholly negative, tending towards destruction and devoid of any positive significance. Is it not this that lies at the root of so many tormented human cries? – 'Why should my three-year-old child die on the road?' – 'Why the intolerable pain of the cancer victim?' What is more, the evil of suffering is given an additional grotesque twist when it cannot be placed within any meaningful coherent context understood teleologically, that is as having a creative purpose. This dysteleological aspect, which can be so often attendant upon suffering, adds to its distorting, disorientating effect. In other words, it is when suffering is manifest in human experience as that which is on the whole negative, anti-purposive and dysteleological, that it is appropriately recognized as evil and so calls for active moral resistance and opposition.

Perhaps no one has engaged in a more penetrating analysis of evil in terms of that which is negative and ultimately meaningless than Karl Barth.[6] Following through Augustine's contention of evil as 'privatio boni' (the deprivation of the good which has no independent existence itself), Barth conceives of evil as 'das Nichtige' – 'nothingness', and 'impossible possibility', an 'ontological impossibility', that which God saw fit to pass over. Such categories of description are used in order to convey the essential negative nature of evil, and of course immediately introduce us to the inevitable paradox and limitations in the use of language to describe that which is the metaphysical equivalent to 'anti-matter', without at the same time giving the false impression that evil is an illusion. In spite of claims to the contrary, this analysis maintains that evil *is* a reality, albeit a negative reality, the 'surd', that which has no creative purpose and therefore often appears meaningless. And so when suffering acquires these 'anti-qualities', it is rightly deemed evil.

To summarize: it is being suggested that suffering 'becomes' morally unacceptable when within a limited temporal context it exhibits those features commonly recognized as standing in direct opposition to that which is good (*i.e.* evil = disintegration, destruction, dysteleology. Good = wholeness, creativity, purpose.)

The 'why' of suffering

In asking the question 'Why is there suffering?', one could be straining towards one of two directions. One could be looking for some sort of cause – 'What is the cause of suffering?' This may involve a consideration of an ultimate cause – the origin of evil, or a more proximal cause – the cause of this particular suffering, with 'cause' being understood metaphysically rather than biologically. Of course this line of approach has a most distinguished pedigree with advocates such as Augustine,[7] C.S. Lewis,[8] and more recently Stephen T. Davis.[9] Here explanations are sought in terms of free will defence, the fall, the activity of fallen angels, and so on. One may also wish to include within this category of explanation the idea of 'Vergeltung' – the operation of some form of moral 'cause and effect' built into the fabric of the world, a view as championed for instance by C.H. Dodd.[10] Certainly such approaches have strong biblical warrants in support[11] and play an essential role in any composite Christian theodicy, but for the traveller they will not constitute the primary category of understanding. For that he will look in another direction.

Beneath the heartfelt cry 'Why this suffering?' often lies the longing for a purpose. 'What is the point in all this?' is a cry in which the tension is heightened when, as we have seen, meaning and creative purpose seem to be absent from the situation and we are apparently left with 'meaningless suffering' or 'senseless violence'. Thus rather than looking back for an explanation in terms of causation, here one looks forward for an explanation in terms of purpose (teleology). This line of approach too is not without its prestigious proponents, for example Irenaeus,[12] Schleiermacher[13] and John Hick.[14]

Now although 'cause' and 'purpose' have here been distinguished as essentially providing two distinct approaches to the problem of pain, they are not mutually exclusive and have been brought together both philosophically and theologically. Philosophically they are drawn into a unity by Aristotle and his idea of a 'final cause' – the end towards which something moves, its goal, its 'telos'. Theologically, both cause and purpose are embraced by the over-arching doctrine of providence, of which the problem of suffering is but one aspect. This is most clearly seen in Calvin's treatment of the subject.[15] But even within Augustine's work on the matter, purpose plays a major role as encapsulated in his now famous doctrine of 'O felix culpa', such that 'God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil at all'.[16] The redemption of sinners for Augustine is a far greater good than there being no sin at all.

> ***In John 9 Jesus alters the perspective from the cause of suffering by focusing upon the divine purpose behind the situation, linking it to the creative-redeeming activity of God.***

Although upon close analysis any hard and fast distinction between explanations sought in terms of cause and purpose may be difficult to maintain, it still provides us with a useful working distinction in approaching the problem of suffering. Such a difference in approach is brought out most vividly in the gospel study of the healing of the man born blind (Jn. 9). As Jesus and his disciples came across the man, it was the disciples who raised the question 'Who sinned, this man or his parents?'; they were looking for an answer to this particular tragic state of affairs primarily in terms of causation – 'Who sinned?' Jesus, however, replied, 'Neither, but this happened *so that* [the purposive clause *hina*] the work of God may be displayed in his life'. Jesus alters the perspective by focusing upon the divine purpose behind the situation, linking it to the creative-redeeming activity of God.[17] Although both the cause of suffering, in terms of sin, and the purpose of suffering, in terms of God's glory and man's well-being, can also be expressly linked, as another story of healing in the gospels shows,[18] it would appear that it is upon God's purpose that the NT's theological centre of gravity rests, and it is to this that we now turn.

Teleology and suffering

The overriding concern of the NT writers is the pastoral one of enabling God's people to see that the suffering and persecution which they may be undergoing or are likely to face, when considered against the backcloth of God's eternal purpose, have a

creative significance. This is a theme which is reiterated time and time again.[19] Sometimes 'cause' and 'purpose' in suffering are displayed before the sufferer on the cosmic canvas, as in the Apocalypse of John. At other times, suffering itself is seen as an instrumental means whereby God in his sovereignty creates 'goods' in the life of the believer, some of which may be seen in this life, others only to be revealed in the next.[20] But wherever this theme is touched upon – God working good out of evil – the theological basis remains the same, namely the empty cross of Jesus Christ.[21] It is at Calvary and the empty tomb that the NT's theodicy is writ large.

It is in the cross of Christ and his consequent resurrection that God demonstrates his justice and so is seen to be both just and the justifier of him who has faith (Rom. 3:26). Indeed, a strong case can be made out for the thesis that the whole of the epistle to the Romans is a reasoned defence of the righteousness of God which appears to be impugned on several grounds.[22] Whether it is as a basis for hope[23] or as an example to follow,[24] it is the empty cross which is foundational.

If the key to the mystery of suffering is to be found anywhere, then it is to be found here where we come face to face with the 'God who is hidden in suffering' (Luther); the God who in Christ Jesus absorbs the evil of the world, disarms the principalities and powers and reacts re-creatively to transform the evil into a greater good.[25] Furthermore, it is at the cross that we are presented with the paradox running throughout the mysterious relationship between the evil of suffering and God's good purposes, for from one point of view, the cross was the worst thing that could have happened (the murder of the divine Son), but from another perspective it was also the best thing that could ever happen (the means of man's salvation).

The cross shows how that which is correctly perceived within a limited context as being evil is, within a much broader context, transfigured into that which is good.

The centrality of the cross and resurrection of Christ in a Christian theodicy is to be seen in such disparate writers as P.T. Forsyth[26] and Jurgen Moltmann,[27] and their insights deserve serious consideration.

Written at the height of the carnage of the First World War, Forsyth's *The Justification of God* represents a passionate attempt to develop a radical thoroughgoing Christocentric and crucicentric teleology as the heart of the biblical response to the problem of evil. Forsyth thus writes: 'God so died as to be the death of death. He commands his own negation, even when it pierces as deep within himself as his Son. He surmounts the last, the most limiting phase of finitude – evil. He could so identify himself with sin and death. His absolute antithesis, that he conquered and abolished both, in an act which brings to the point the constant victory of his moral being. The destiny of the world is whatever does most justice to the nature of God, and most glorifies it. And that is, of all things in the world, the atoning Cross of Christ – where therefore the teleology and the theodicy of the world lies'.[28] Herein lies the basis for hope that what was achieved by the cross and resurrection will be reworked on a cosmic scale. This is not to say that the cross and resurrection are to be seen simply as patterns to be recapitulated by God (although they may be that), but rather as the primary means by which God overcomes evil and suffering: 'If the greatest act in the world, and the greatest crime there, became by the moral, holy victory of the son of God, the source not only of endless blessing to man, but of perfect satisfaction and delight to a Holy God; then there is no crime, not even this war, that is outside his control or impossible for his purpose. There is none that should destroy a faith which is Christian faith, *i.e.* that which has its object, source and sustenance in that Cross and its victory. . . . In the Cross of Christ we learn the faith that things not willed by God are yet worked up by God. In a divine irony, man's greatest crime turns God's greatest boon. O Felix Culpa! The riddle is insoluble but the fact sure.'[29]

Moltmann's treatment of the subject is no less cross-centred and teleological than Forsyth, although it may be said to be more explicitly trinitarian: 'God is vulnerable, takes suffering and death on himself in order to heal, to liberate and to confer new life. The history of God's suffering in the passion of the Son and the sighings of the Spirit serves the history of God's joy in the Spirit and his completed felicity at the end. That is the ultimate goal of God's history of suffering in the world'.[30]

Both theologians are in line with the NT's dominant approach to the question of evil and suffering in placing it within the primary context of God's creative-redeeming purpose centred upon the death, resurrection, ascension and return of Christ, four 'moments' in the unitary action of the triune God. However, no conceptual framework is established by either writer to enable one to consider how the goodness of God and his power in overcoming suffering and evil at the cross might be related. Certainly the biblical emphasis is upon the significance that evil is overcome by the atonement rather than on the *how*, although this concern is not entirely absent from the NT.[31] But given, at the very least, the paradigmatic nature of the cross in providing some understanding of the *way* God deals with suffering and evil, particularly if this is combined with our earlier analysis of the nature of evil, might it not be suggested that the *modus operandi* whereby evil is overcome is by the transformation of that which is negative, meaningless and bordering on the abyss into that which is positive and meaningful by placing it within a wider context of God's design? Thus, what is currently perceived within a limited context as being evil is, within a much broader context, transfigured into that which is good. In order to see more clearly how this might be so, it is necessary to consider the relation between 'means' and 'ends'.[32]

Means and ends

It is generally held by the proponents of 'vulnerable divine love'[33] that it is not possible to conceive of a specific end intended by God related to all those in an event in all circumstances. Here we have a model in which some events in life are ends in themselves, but which may *also* be a means to some further end. But, when certain situations arise which are deemed evil, being part of the 'risk' God took in creating a world such as this, God's response is to redeem it by transposing the event into a means to some further end. Here such events can never be ends in themselves, but can only be related externally to some further good, for example an earthquake in which people are killed can become a means to further ends which are 'goods', such as illiciting care, patience and fortitude in the survivors and helpers.

However, with such a conceptual framework the 'goodness and power of God' dilemma still remains. On the one hand God's goodness is impugned, for while it is acknowledged that some good may have been brought out of an unfortunate event, as far as the individuals who have suffered in the event are concerned they have been reduced to the category of means, which at least according to the second formulation of Kant's categorical imperative is morally suspect. On the other hand, if it is retorted that the event was not intended by God but that he was simply responding to the event, then his omnipotence is seriously brought into question – God *could not* bring about intended ends in relation to each individual.[34] An alternative model would be to conceive of ends as *always* being related internally to the event itself. This does not rule out the possibility (and probability) that the event may also be a means to some further end, but ultimately it is the wider context of God's design which provides the event with meaning.

It is proposed that from God's eternal perspective – the Author of the drama who sees 'the end from the beginning' – all creaturely decisions and responses freely made are woven in with all other events to serve his purpose. The individual actions made do have significance in that they go towards making up patterns within the drama of lasting importance; *but* they do not exert an *ultimate* significance: that is provided by the Sovereign God who places the decisions and actions of his creatures into an eternal context which alone affords ultimate meaning. Therefore the dualism being advocated here is of a limited kind.

Whether the analogy is an accurate one is questionable, but the well-known illustration of the making of a Persian carpet may be helpful at this point. It is said that Persian carpets are made on a large frame. On one side of the frame stands the family placing the threads into the framework, sometimes randomly, sometimes thoughtfully. On the other side of the frame stands the father, the

master weaver, who takes all of these threads and weaves them into a rich pattern of his design. When the carpet is completed the frame is then turned around for all to see and hopefully receives the approval of the participants. Now, God may be likened to the master weaver who takes each thread (action and event) and weaves them into a pattern which affords the threads significance, the main difference being, of course, that from the 'beginning' God knows what those 'threads' are and where they are to be placed on 'this side' of the frame. However, it is the 'other side' of the frame which provides the lasting context in which ultimate significance is derived.

Relating this to our earlier discussion about the nature of evil, this means that within the immediate context of our experience some events *are* evil, including certain forms of suffering. But this is not the whole context for another perspective is available. It is when the evil event is related to the wider context of God's eternal purposes for his creation in general and each individual in particular that evil is transfigured and can be said to be redeemed. It is within that wider perspective – the primary context of God's action – that evil events are seen to contain good ends. The upshot of this argument is that evil has a real but temporary hold on reality. This does not take 'the evil out of evil' as might appear at first sight, but it does limit the significance of evil, assigning to it a certain relativity.

While it is important to stress that not all of these goods will be evidenced in this life, an eschatological dimension being essential, nevertheless with the interpenetration of the eternal and the temporal to which Scripture and experience bear ample witness, one would expect *some* manifestation of good ends now. Some of these may rightly be construed in terms of 'soul-making' – a creative formation of character, the end of which is holiness without which 'no man shall see God'.[35] Therefore, although the Irenaean theodicy is seriously weak at several points,[36] there is still much within it which is commendable and wholly compatible with what is being proposed here.

But just in case it seems that we have now firmly occupied the place of the 'balconeers' mentioned at the beginning of the paper, let us relate our discussion to the events of the crucifixion and resurrection themselves. In terms of the betrayal, the trial, the scourging and the torture of the cross, the configuration of events is formed. Within this context such events are properly deemed evil. But this is not the final, nor even the primary, context from which the events derive their full significance (*cf.* 1 Cor. 2:7f.): that is provided by God's action of redemption in which each event is a constituent part. Here one is not saying that the event of the cross is transposed *into* something good by virtue of the resurrection, rather that the good (*i.e.* man's redemption) is *already* being wrought in and through the event of the cross itself with the resurrection being but one vital aspect of the divine activity whereby evil is conquered.

Back to the cross

'If God is good and almighty, then why doesn't he do something about the fact of evil?' The Christian reply to this is that he has and he will. The goodness of God is maintained by relating each event to an intended good end by placing it within the context of his own design, to be revealed at the end of time. The omnipotence of God is upheld by his weaving of all events into his eternal purpose, leaving nothing outside his ultimate control, with, as it were, each note as well as the whole symphony being known to him, and in a deeply significant sense being created by him. But right at the centre lies *the* event which forms the divine integration point to which all other events are related and through which they are somehow transfigured – the cross and resurrection of Christ. Therefore with the apostle Paul we can summarily conclude that in Christ 'God was pleased to have all his fulness dwell . . . and through him to reconcile all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross'.[37]

[1]2 Tim. 3:16ff.
[2]Jb. 40:4.
[3]In *God and Evil*, ed. N. Pike (Prentice Hall, 1964).
[4]John Hick, 'An Irenaean Theodicy', in *Encountering Evil*, ed. S.T. Davis (T. & T. Clark, 1981), pp. 38-52.
[5]David Griffin, 'Creation out of Chaos and the Problem of Evil', in *Encountering Evil*, pp. 100-119.
[6]See especially *Church Dogmatics*, III:3, ff. 289-363 (T. & T. Clark). Dorothy L. Sayers also undertakes an analysis of the nature of evil which is not wholly dissimilar from that of Barth. Fruitfully exploring the analogy of a creative writer as one who passes over the 'wrong' words in choosing the 'right' words, she concludes that 'wrongness' is of necessity contingent upon 'rightness', not-being is contingent upon being (*The Mind of the Maker*, Methuen, London, 1941, p. 75).
[7]'On Free Will' and 'Confessions' VIII, and 'Enchiridion' ch. IV.
[8]C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (Fountain, 1976).
[9]S.T. Davis, 'Free Will and Evil', in *Encountering Evil*, pp. 69-73.
[10]C.H.Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Fontana, 1968), pp. 47-50.
[11]*Cf.* Pr. 10; Ps. 73; Rom. 1:18ff.; Gal. 6:7f.
[12]Irenaeus, *Against Heresies.*
[13]F.W. Schleiermacher, *The History of the Christian Church.*
[14]John Hick, *Evil and a God of Love* (Fontana, 1979).
[15]John Calvin, *Institutes*, Book One Chapter 17 (Eerdmans, 1983), in which he writes: '. . . Although the paternal favour and beneficence, as well as the judicial severity of God, is often conspicuous in the whole course of his Providence, yet occasionally as the causes of events are concealed, the thought is apt to rise, that human affairs are whirled about by blind impulse of Fortune. . . . It is true, indeed, that if with sedate and quiet minds we were disposed to learn, the issue would at length make if manifest that the counsel of God was in accordance with the highest reason, that his purpose was either to train his people patience, correct their depraved affections, tame their wantonness, insure them to self-denial; or on the other hand to cast down the proud, defeat the craftiness of the ungodly, and frustrate all their schemes.'
[16]*Ench* XXVII.
[17]Calvin draws upon this story as an example of the need to exercise humility of faith in acknowledging that God's hidden purposes are for the best (*op. cit.*, p. 184).
[18]Mk. 2:1-12, the healing of the paralytic.
[19]*Cf.* Rom. 8:28ff.; 2 Cor. 12:7ff.; Heb. 12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7.
[20]*Cf.* Rom. 5:3-5; 2 Cor. 4:17.
[21]Throughout the letter to the Hebrews the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of his people are closely juxtaposed and linked to the theme of achieving their God-intended goal (perfection = telos) through suffering – *cf.* 5:8.
[22]This thesis has been set out by the late Professor George Caird in a personal communication in 1981. He argued that in the epistle Paul faces and counters the possibility that God's righteousness could be impugned on four grounds: 1. Not all evil men are brought to account for their actions now (ch. 3 shows that God does take sin seriously); 2. In the OT God is seen as the champion of the helpless and demonstrates his righteousness in rescuing those who cannot save themselves (chs. 1–2 demonstrate that all are in a state of helplessness and that the divine rescue has already been executed in Jesus Christ); 3. God seems to exhibit favouritism to the Jews (but God is one, also all have sinned, therefore the Jew is in no special vantage position vis-à-vis salvation because he possesses the law – ch. 2:17ff.; 4); 4. Does (3) mean that God has forsaken his people and abandoned his covenant? (Paul answers No – chs. 9–11).
[23]1 Thes. 4:13ff.
[24]1 Pet. 2:23ff.
[25]This line of thought is again suggested by Sayers who in referring to evil writes: 'We can redeem it. That is to say, it is possible to take its evil power and turn it into active good. . . . In so doing we, as it were, absorb the Evil in the anti-Hamlet and transform it into an extremely new form of Good. This is a creative act, and it is the only kind of act that will actually turn positive Evil into positive Good' (*op. cit.*, p. 85).
[26]P.T. Forsyth, *The Justification of God* (Duckworth, 1916).
[27]J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London, 1975). See also A.E. McGrath's *The Enigma of the Cross* (Hodder, 1987), ch. 5.
[28]*Op. cit.*, p. 153.
[29]*Op. cit.*, pp. 157, 159.
[30]J. Moltman, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (ET London, 1977).
[31]See John Stott's *The Cross of Christ* (IVP, 1986), ch. 6, for an excellent discussion of this in terms of substitutionary atonement.
[32]What follows owes much to V.P. White's thesis in *The Fall of a Sparrow* (Paternoster, 1985).
[33]*Cf.* W.H. Vanstone's *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense* (London, 1977).
[34]This has been traditionally expressed in terms of the distinction between God's antecedent will and his consequent will.
[35]Heb. 12:14.
[36]See White, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-176.
[37]Col. 1:15ff.

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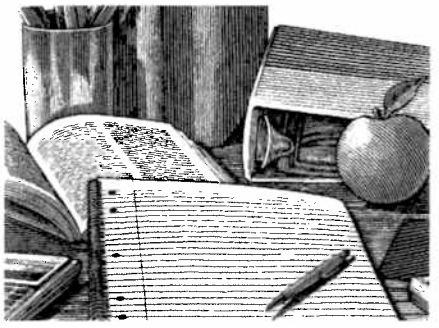

RESPONSES

In vol. 16.1 we invited readers' responses to articles. The following were received in response to the issue of church and state. Please do write in response to articles, remembering that the shorter your letter the more chance it has of being printed! If you wish to respond at greater length than 500 words, please write to the General Editor first with an indication of your intention. Publication of any correspondence is, of course, at the discretion of the Editor, where a letter is deemed to make relevant or alternative points of view that are significant.

N.T. Wright – 'The NT and the "state" '

By way of both the written and the spoken word, many of us are deeply indebted to the teaching given by Tom Wright in the past. It is therefore with some reluctance that one is forced to express a fair degree of disappointment and disagreement with Tom in his article 'The NT and the state' (*Themelios* 16.1).

It would seem that Dr Wright assumes that to a large degree the *interpretation* of certain acts of Jesus as being overtly political can be co-ordinated with Jesus' *intention* – the meeting at the Jordan, the calling of followers on the hill, the entry into Jerusalem, *etc.* These would, quite rightly, claims Wright, be interpreted within a political matrix. But this still leaves a gulf which has to be bridged (and demonstrated) between the fact of Jesus' actions being understood politically on the one hand, and Jesus intending such acts to be political on the other. While Jesus may have sailed very close to the wind by engaging in actions and using terms with political associations, it does not follow that he affirmed such associations; indeed, it would seem that such 'forms' were given new content by Jesus. So the 'political interpretation' placed upon the feeding of the 5,000 by the crowds in John 6 is repudiated by Jesus, while his 'spiritual' message was decisively rejected (things don't change much!). Historically, what other option was open to Jesus than an accommodation to the concepts and mental furniture of his fellow Jews (concepts rooted in the OT) and to modify them so that he might say something distinctive in order to bring them into line with his own intentions? This is a point well made by John Riches: 'Putting it simply, Jesus had to use terms which were understood by his contemporaries or they would not have understood him at all; but he had to use them differently if he was to say something new' (*Jesus and the Transformation of Judaism*). The same principle applies to actions as well as words.

This consideration seems to weaken Wright's case for his understanding of Jesus' 'double meaning' which, it is claimed, is 'inescapably political' (p. 12). While not wishing to minimize the strong religio-political associations of the temple, surely what we are confronted with in Jesus' teaching about the temple in relation to himself is its relativization and replacement, so that he becomes the focus of previous aspirations which are to be worked out in a way altogether different from that commonly, but diversely, envisaged at the time.

This has bearing on Wright's amazing contention that Jesus' statement before Pilate that 'my kingdom is not of this world' (Jn. 18:36) is really a reference to the methods by which it is established ('if my kingdom were of this world my followers would fight to prevent me being handed over', p. 13). But this is to reverse the function of this statement in the text. In the passage the latter acts as a qualifying sub-clause to the main statement about the nature of Christ's kingship 'not being of this world', an observation reinforced by the next statement, 'my kingdom is of another place'. In other words, the different method whereby this kingdom is established is indicative that this kingdom is of a different nature to earthly political kingdoms. It is the mode of being and not simply the modus operandi, as Wright suggests, that this verse is concerned with.

While one follows Dr Wright in Jesus' interpretation of Israel's destiny as his destiny leading to the cross, one still finds oneself at a loss in trying to discern the meaning of the statement: 'Only so can the kingdom come to earth (in socio-political reality) as it is in heaven'. Without making the error of equating the church with the kingdom of God, is it not the community of the redeemed which in the 'between times' is a socio-political reality, and will be so in greater fulness at the consummation (here the imagery of Revelation, especially chapter 21, is suggestive)? In this sense (although I am not sure that Wright would agree with this), the gospel in producing the new covenant community which exhibits the values of the kingdom will impact the world in every sphere, including that designated the 'political'. So Dick France writes: 'Such an alternative society will inevitably have its effect on the life and values of the rest of society, not so much by campaigning for a predetermined blueprint for social reform to be implemented, but by bringing the revolutionary values of the divine government to bear on the context in which they find themselves in whatever way may best suit their particular context' (*The Divine Government*). Independently, the Australian scholar David Peterson concludes, 'Jesus does not provide a pattern for transforming society *per se*, but intends that the lifestyle of the disciples, individually and collectively, should be both the judgement on fallen humanity and a pointer to the possibility of renewal and change under the rule of God' ('Jesus and Social Ethics' in *Explorations* 3).

In turning to Dr Wright's treatment of Paul, we are left in a similar state of bewilderment regarding the implications of what is being proposed. It is maintained that Paul's teaching on 'powers' should be put back within the 'main lines of his world view' (p. 14). Fair enough. But we are still left in some considerable doubt as to what those powers *are*. We are given hints that they are 'territorial gods', 'forces' which worked through Pilate, and that they 'become demons' when worshipped. The problem with such a lack of precision is that such a concept can be taken and applied to any governmental or economic system of which one happens to disapprove. One is also left wondering what to make of the statement 'Apparently with the reaffirmation of creation in the resurrection of Jesus there goes the reaffirmation of the essential goodness even of the "powers" that had rebelled' (p. 14). This really does not get us very far in assessing such 'powers', any more than the resurrection of Jesus affirms the 'essential goodness' of one such as Adolf Hitler!

Finally, one is left pondering the actual 'cash value' of what Wright is proposing for today, as well as with more than a few reservations about the hermeneutic he is urging us to employ. Very few evangelicals would argue with Dr Wright's final statement that 'I must be envisaging and working and praying for a state of affairs in which the world of the "state", of society and politics, no less than the world of my private "religious" or "spiritual" life, is brought under the Lordship of Christ' (p. 16). Fine, but how do we decide what specific direction this should take? What is more, we might well ask what sort of 'working' are we to be engaged in to bring this 'Lordship' about *de facto*? If it were to be asked, 'Did Paul envisage the Roman society of his day to be brought "under the Lordship of Christ"?', many would answer 'yes'. But the rider to this would be that the primary means whereby this was sought was through evangelism, so that, given the opportunity, Paul would have tried to persuade one such as King Agrippa to become a believer (Acts 26:29). How else is one to 'call the world to a new way of being human' (p. 16) other than by people being made new creatures in Christ?

In summary, Dr Wright seems to take a long time in arguing that the gospel and politics should not be separated, but gives insufficient guidance on how they might be related in a manner sufficiently true to the data of the NT.

Melvin Tinker, Cheadle, Cheshire

Dr Tom Wright replies:

I suppose I asked for it. If so sharp a mind as Melvin Tinker's finds what I said confusing, I must have been really obscure. I covered a large subject in a short space, and I apologise to Melvin, and any other old friends who may have been puzzled.

The main problem, underneath the details, concerns the basic Christian worldview or theology. Wherever you stand, people further to the left will accuse you of being on the right, and *vice versa*. Traditionally, evangelicalism has been prone to a dualism which, afraid of pagan monism (or anything that appears to approximate to it, whether Catholic sacramentalism or the liberal 'social gospel'), keeps God and the world well apart. The end of that road is Peretti's extraordinary book *This Present Darkness*, which owes its huge popularity (I think) to the fact that it reinforces the dualism inherent in much British and North American evangelicalism. The opposite road leads, of course, to New Age thinking with its blatant neo-paganism, *à la* Matthew Fox, whose writings owe their popularity to the dehumanizing effect of 'Christian' dualisms. We must grasp these issues clearly, and re-articulate the full biblical gospel in a way which cannot be collapsed into either position: this means Trinitarian monotheism, centred on cross, resurrection and Spirit. I have found, in trying to get this right in theory and practice, that semi-New-Agers think me a dualist (because God and the world are to be distinguished) and semi-dualists think me either a liberal or a sacramentalist (because God and the world are dynamically interrelated). I doubt if Melvin Tinker thinks of himself as a dualist, but I sense that his reaction comes from that quarter. I would have had the same reaction ten years ago, when (as I now realise) I held some-

thing of a dualist position myself. Since then, I have written a commentary on Colossians. . . .

In particular, I find myself committed, in a way that Melvin Tinker does not seem to, to *history*. It is not an option for me to say that Jesus accommodated himself to the language of the time in order to say something quite different: that is the method of Bultmann in a nutshell. Evangelicalism is sometimes closer to Bultmann than it realises. The theology of the gospels lies *within* the serious history, not abstracted from it, and the 'political' dimension of the gospel stories is not part of a 'timebound' bit, to be stripped away. The resulting hermeneutic, which Melvin Tinker claims weakens the authority of scripture, actually strengthens it (see now my article on the Authority of the Bible in *Vox Evangelica* 21, 1991, 7-32), since it takes seriously the nature of the Bible as it actually is. It is precisely because I persist in believing in the inspiration of the *Bible* itself that I find myself driven into the positions I have taken, and it is at that level that further debate should, I think, be conducted.

A couple of details. First, of course there is an 'other worldly dimension' to Jesus' teaching – as there was, and is, to all Judaism. The question is, how does that 'dimension' mesh with the rest of reality? According to the NT, 'we look for new heavens *and a new earth*'. No Platonism there!

Second, I agree that it's difficult to assess the present position of actual 'powers'. I apologise for the 'lack of precision' at this point. The resurrection of Jesus reaffirms the whole created order, the 'powers' included – but now clearly *as* subject to Jesus' lordship. Of course some 'powers' still exalt themselves against that lordship. The signs of this are the creation of 'atheist' states, where the state or ruler become *de facto* divine, and the consequent dehumanization of persons. There is a fair amount of this in contemporary Western society; why then do some Christians get cross if one tries to address the problem? (I speak, not of straw, but of flesh.)

N.T. Wright, Oxford.

The prophetic word, the religious establishment, and the political power of the state: Reflections from the Third World on the clash between the prophet Amos and the high priest of Bethel (Amos 7:7-17).

Christians living in most nations of the non-Western world often find it much easier to relate to the world-views and cultures portrayed in the OT than do their fellow Christians in the democratic West. This is especially so where believers find themselves living at the sharp edge of social and political injustices perpetrated by oppressive regimes, sometimes even aided and abetted by the religious establishment itself. It takes immense courage to raise the cry for justice, and the personal consequences for such lone voices can often be devastating. This brief essay attempts to highlight some of the difficulties besetting the church as it lives out its life under the shadow of totalitarian power structures in the Third World.

A voice from outside

Amos, a native of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, was called to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. As a foreigner there, he was thus at an immediate disadvantage, for no national ever takes kindly to being criticized by an outsider. Most newly emergent nations are extremely sensitive to criticism from outside. Foreign correspondents, international aid workers, diplomats and missionaries have to be extremely guarded in their public comments, otherwise they are likely to be declared *persona non grata*.

A compromised establishment

Israel was not only an independent political unit, but it also had its own schismatic ecclesiastical establishment. After the rupture of the Solomonic empire, Jeroboam I set up state shrines at Bethel and Dan as cultic centres in the Northern Kingdom, to rival the focal point of the Jerusalem temple in Judah. Jeroboam also invalidly ordained his own non-Levitical priesthood, set up an alternative cultic calendar, and on one occasion took upon himself the role of priest by offering sacrifices on the altar at Bethel. So the ecclesiastical establishment itself had become fundamentally compromised, theologically, legally and politically, and remained so up to the time of Jeroboam II in Amos' day. Church and state had been fused into one religious-political entity: 'This is the King's sanctuary, the Temple of the Kingdom'. The man in charge of this state sanctuary at Bethel was Amaziah the high priest. Amaziah was a typical establishment man: 'Don't rock the boat, maintain the status quo, the Government is doing its very best'.

In some Third World countries, some mainline denominational churches are fundamentally compromised, both theologically and politically, participating in the corruption of the establishment, supporters of the status quo, and jealously protecting their own special interests and privileges. In other countries it is often the mainline denominations who take the initiative in making courageous public stands on social and political issues, even though they may be considered not doctrinally sound by some of their more fundamentalist brethren. This nearly always provokes the angry response, 'the Church should keep out of politics, and stick to preaching the simple gospel'. It can also be the case that the conservative doctrinally pure churches, the small 'spiritual' sects and denominations keep their heads down and retreat into their pietistic ghettoes, even, on occasion, spiritually whitewashing the most evident abuses.

Harsh centralized authority

Ideally, kingly power in Israel was delegated power. It was Yahweh alone who was absolute monarch and ruler. So the king was Yahweh's representative, mediating and dispensing God's righteousness to society at large, and enforcing the covenant stipulations upon the common people. But when bad kings abused their responsibilities, the only checks and balances in the system were the lone voices of God's covenant prophets.

Modern Third World nations are no strangers to the harsh political regimes of the ancient world. However, unlike ancient Israel, most newly emergent nations are not theocratic states. Rather they are pluralistic societies with many different races, cultures and religions. Unlike the post-Christian secularized nations of modern Europe, they are often profoundly religious cultures. Their leaders are often religious men who nevertheless have thrust themselves into power often by brutal, undemocratic means. The ruling cliques line their own pockets at the expense of the vast number of the oppressed poor, whose precarious daily subsistence is so dependent, not only on the arbitrary whims of the head of state, but also on economic decisions made by multi-national consortia far distanced from the turmoil of the local scene.

The high price of protest

Into this scenario strides Yahweh's anointed prophet. Amaziah, a loyal state-appointee, acts as an unofficial spy and reports Amos to the king: 'Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the heart of Israel'. A cry of political subversion, a foreigner plotting to overthrow the government! Every corrupt and tottering regime needs a scapegoat, so Amaziah tells Amos to get out.

Most Third World regimes have their watchdogs in the churches, ready to report the least whiff of anti-government sentiment. Any valid social or political protest is deliberately misrepresented. Those who dissent have their characters publicly assassinated. Their patriotism, their loyalties, even their cultural identities are often brought into question. They are often accused of being in the pockets of foreign paymasters. Amos was merely deported. But the case of the indigenous protester is much more precarious. Jeremiah was left to rot in a squalid dungeon in appalling conditions. His contemporary prophet Uriah was even abducted from his hideout in Egypt by a snatch-squad sent out by the king, and then executed. Third World dissenters fare little better. There are mysterious 'disappearances', car 'accidents' are arranged, as is intimidation by the hired heavies, illegal detention without trial, and denominations are pressurized to neutralize troublesome priests.

The exposure of sin

What had Amos done to rattle the establishment so badly? And why were the authorities so angry? The social criticism of Amos was considered unpatriotic, disloyal and treasonable. His exposure of the ruling classes was merciless: oppression of the poor, denial of justice, the sexual misuse of women, deliberate profanation of the Holy, bribery, corruption, unfair trading practices, *etc.* If we look at the other eighth-century prophets, the catalogue gets even more grotesque: perverse legislation, unjust decrees, misappropriation of ancestral land, exploitation of poor manual labour, extortion by blackmail and protection rackets, selling cheap and shoddy goods, exploitation of foreigners, failure to prosecute and invoke the law.

A great deal of personal courage is needed to catalogue and expose detailed specific abuses. The very attempt to get information will produce at best a cover-up, at worst violent political thuggery. He is a very brave individual who dares to print and document exposure of malpractices, naming names of individuals, dates of money paid into Swiss bank accounts, contracts given outside of those submitted by tender, sudden withdrawal of permits and trading licences, political appointments given to totally unqualified tribal friends, details of double funding, siphoning off foreign aid into private bank accounts, corrupt police officials, details of ballot boxes destroyed, *etc. etc.*

Moral and spiritual accountability

Amos applied the plumbline of Yahweh's undeviating moral law to his covenant people, both Israel and Judah. Yet the Gentile nations also were held accountable and morally culpable under the light of God's natural law. So Third World nations acknowledge universal moral norms. They would have no international respectability if they did not do so. Regimes follow regimes on anti-corruption platforms, yet often the darkness increases. So even in pluralistic societies, the church has a

mandate to shine as light in the darkness of corruption.

For the poor, the exploited and the powerless, suffering endlessly, hopelessly under systems they are powerless to change, the cry goes up, 'How long?' In societies paralysed by fear, God still raises up individuals like Amos, careless of their own personal safety, who dare to confront the authorities with their injustice. Yet an ultimately more effective protest may be made if the whole national church leadership can be mobilized into action. The authorities are then much more likely to take notice. And where the church can arouse the attention of the international media, there is greater hope for change.

The churches under pressure in the Third World urgently need the spiritual and moral support of Western Christians, in their opposition to unjust systems and practices. The need to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves is as great as ever.

Tom Gledhill, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Kenya

Sternberg on biblical narrative — a review article

R.W.L. Moberly

Rev. Dr Walter Moberly teaches Old Testament in the University of Durham, England. He contributed an earlier article on 'Story in the Old Testament' in Themelios *11.3 (April 1986).*

The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading
Meir Sternberg
(Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985), 580 pp., ISBN 0 253 20453 4.

Biblical study is going through something of an upheaval at present. Confidence in familiar approaches to the biblical text is being eroded, and scholars are increasingly wondering whether the questions they are asking are necessarily the best and most helpful. Two of the most important factors contributing to the upheaval are well illustrated in this book by Sternberg.

History as literature

In the first place, there is the fundamental shift from treating the OT as history to treating it as literature (though, since the OT is obviously both history and literature, it is perhaps more accurate to say that the shift is from reading the text according to the agenda and priorities of the ancient historian to reading it according to the agenda and priorities of the literary critic). Sternberg defines the key word in his title as follows: 'Poetics is the systematic working or study of literature as such. Hence, to offer a poetics of biblical narrative is to claim that biblical narrative is a work of literature' (p. 2). Sternberg is scathing about many so-called 'literary approaches' to the text on the ground that they are ultimately arbitrary, that is that they do not understand how it is intrinsic to the nature of the text that it should be read as literature. So he offers a full-scale theoretical account of what it means to understand OT narrative as inherently and intrinsically literary.

First, although he insists on the value of historical study for understanding the text (though in practice the only aspect he utilizes is a knowledge of biblical Hebrew), he is clear that attempts to pinpoint the OT writers as figures in history is largely a waste of time: 'The sad truth is that we know practically nothing about biblical writers — even less than about the processes of writing and transmission — and it looks as though we never will' (p. 64). What matters, and is knowable, is the nature of the writer as an artist, *i.e.* not who he was, but how he worked.

Secondly, all the various OT narrative writers (except the late Ezra and Nehemiah) adopt the same fundamental stance of anonymity. The basic reason for doing so is that it enables them to speak with a knowledge and authority that transcend what would be available to them as particular figures in particular historical situations. For example, a writer can say what was in God's mind at the time of the flood (Gn. 6:5-7; 8:21-22), or what was in Amnon's heart as soon as he had raped Tamar (2 Sa. 13:15), and because he does not draw attention to his own real-life context he does not invite the question 'How do you know?' This means that the biblical writer is effectively claiming divine inspiration — because he knows what only God can know — and was recognized and accepted as such within ancient Israel: 'It is inconceivable that a storyteller who keeps in closer touch with God's doings and sentiments than the very prophets who figure among his dramatis personae would operate as their inferior in divine sanction; or that his claim would be challenged by the only society that canonized its sacred writings because it pinned on them faith and hope alike' (p. 79).

Thirdly, 'the very choice to devise an omniscient narrator serves the purpose of staging and glorifying an omniscient God' (p. 89). This means, among other things, that there is something absolute about the story the writer tells — to question it by 'How do you know?' or 'But what about a different version?' (as in so much modern historically-oriented criticism) becomes an act of distancing that subverts the nature of the text.

Fourthly, although the writer knows all, he does not reveal all; although he tells the truth, he does not reveal the whole truth. Rather, he tells a story that is full of gaps, ambiguities and puzzles. This is because the life of man, unlike the life of God, is indeed limited in knowledge and full of gaps and ambiguities. In literary terms, what it means is that the *form* of the communication — an ambiguous narrative by an omniscient narrator — intrinsically matches the *content* of the communication — the freedom of man under the sovereignty of God. Although often the reader is given information that the characters in the story do not possess, nonetheless the task of readers, as of those in the story, is to struggle to grow in understanding as best they may.

On one level, then, this is an exciting and challenging book for the Christian. In the way the concept of inspiration is moved to centre stage and in the way in which difficulties in the text are taken with great seriousness as part of a strategy of communication (the difference between the truth and the whole truth) rather than explained away by appeal to source or redactor, there is much to illuminate and inform. On another level, however, it must be emphasized that this is not a book that can be taken to support an evangelical doctrine of Scripture, for that would be a fundamental misunderstanding and misuse of it.

The main reason for this is that Sternberg's approach is exclusively directed to understanding OT narrative as a particular kind of ancient literature, with no interest whatsoever in scriptural hermeneutics, that is, the question of what it means for a believer today to reverence and live by this material as the Word of God today. This perhaps emerges most clearly in his initial discussion about the nature of OT narrative. He is heavily critical of attempts to categorize OT narrative as, *e.g.*, fictionalized history (history told with techniques akin to those of modern fiction), because however much the material may appear to be so in *our* terms today, it was not perceived as such in its ancient context. For fiction is in principle independent of factuality, so that if someone presents an alternative account it poses no problem to the validity of the account already given — it is simply an alternative. Whereas for OT narrative, 'it claims not just the status of history but, as Erich Auerbach rightly maintains, of *the* history — the one and only truth that, like God himself, brooks no rival' (p. 32). This means that the genre of the material is

to be recognized as historiography, even though it contains what we consider fictional. 'Inspiration is primarily nothing but a rule that governs the communication between writer and reader, licensing the access to privileged material (*e.g.* thoughts) that would otherwise remain out of bounds and giving all material the stamp of authority' (p. 33). 'Herein lies one of the Bible's unique rules: under the aegis of ideology, convention transmutes even invention into the stuff of history, or rather obliterates the line dividing fact from fancy in communication. So every word is God's word. The product is neither fiction or historicized fiction nor fictionalized history, but historiography pure and uncompromising' (p. 34).

This is all very well, and presents no difficulty if one simply comes to the OT as to any other literature – to enter imaginatively into its world while one is reading, but to step out of it, back into the 'real world', when one finishes. But the central issue for the believer is that the world of the biblical text is not ultimately different from the real world, but rather provides that understanding of reality by which contemporary life should be understood. The point of saying this is not to criticize Sternberg for not doing what he was not wanting to do, for that would be wholly improper; rather, the point is simply that evangelical Christians should not suppose that Sternberg's use of the concept of inspiration in his sophisticated literary attack on historical approaches to OT narrative provides any resolution to the theological and hermeneutical problems of what it means for Christians today to regard the OT as inspired. Sternberg's categories are those of the literary analyst, discussing ideology, rhetoric and the manipulation of the reader. Those concerned to formulate a hermeneutic of trust towards the biblical text may find straw here, but they will still have to make their own bricks.

In terms of modern literary study of the OT, this is much the most sophisticated treatment that I have read, and I would recommend anyone to read the first three chapters. But the recommendation comes with a word of warning – it's hard work. It's not that Sternberg writes the tortuous and tortured English of so many would-be literary theorists, but there is a density and compression that makes the reading slow and that makes it helpful to read the chapters more than once. Moreover, it must be said that as the book proceeds it becomes decidedly prolix. Sternberg clearly delights in the language and concepts of literary analysis. Lesser mortals may find the delight difficult to share, and wonder whether the amount of analysis is genuinely proportional to the amount of interpretative insight gained.

Generally speaking, despite his insights and sophistication, Sternberg is not the best place to start for anyone who wants to discover how their reading of the OT may be illuminated by the agenda of modern literary criticism. In my judgment, the best book to start with is S. Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*, JSOTS 70 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), to be followed by R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (London & Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1981). Both of these are easy to read and provide ample illumination of the text according to their agenda. Nonetheless, Sternberg has produced a major work of deep conceptual rigour, and he repays the effort required.

Jewish biblical scholarship

There remains the second reason for the ferment in contemporary biblical study that is illustrated by Sternberg. This is the resurgence of Jewish biblical scholarship. Although this is less discussed than the issue of literary approaches, it is no less important. Until relatively recently, at least two things could be confidently said about biblical scholarship. First, the creative centre where the agenda was set was Germany. Secondly, biblical scholarship was overwhelmingly a Christian, and predominantly Protestant, undertaking despite the presence of a few distinguished Jewish scholars (*e.g.* Buber, Heschel, Kaufmann, Cassuto). Neither of these is true any longer, and the reasons are probably interconnected. For America has taken over from Germany as the creative centre, and there is a great wealth of creative Jewish biblical scholarship in America (and Israel) but hardly at all (for tragic historical reasons) in Germany.

This is important because even those Jews who, like Sternberg, do not come to the Bible for specifically religious reasons, still come with a Jewish cultural perspective. At one level this means a difference in terminology. One is reminded afresh of what perhaps one had always taken for granted, that the terms 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament' are specifically Christian terms for the Bible. For the Jew, for whom there is no 'New Testament', there is no 'Old Testament' either. What Christians call 'Old Testament', Jews call 'Tanakh' (an acronym of its constituent parts, Torah, Nebiim, Kethubim) or simply 'Bible'. Thus the three books mentioned above, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, *Narrative Art in the Bible* and *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, are all using the term 'Bible' in a specifically Jewish sense, *i.e.* excluding the NT.

At a deeper level, what is happening is that Jewish scholars are seeking to create new agendas for biblical study, and not simply to acquiesce in asking the questions that Christians (and predominantly liberal Protestants) have asked. For the historical-critical consensus of the last 200 years has been profoundly Protestant in its fundamental assumptions – liberal Protestants have set the agenda, and more conservative Protestants have modified that agenda. One might have hoped that when Roman Catholic scholars came relatively late to the scene they might have learnt from the mistakes of Protestants and avoided them; but on the whole they have simply taken over the Protestant way, errors as well as strengths (if the *New Jerome Bible Commentary* may be taken as a guide). But Jewish scholars are breaking free of the Protestant agenda, simply because they do not share so many of the basic assumptions.

I do not think it is accidental that the three best works (in my judgment) on literary approaches to the Bible/OT are all by Jews. For Jewish culture is rooted not only in the Bible but also in the rabbinic writings, central to which is a close yet imaginative reading of biblical narratives. It is not just that Alter and Sternberg refer much more to rabbinic readings of the text than they do to Christian readings, but also, at a deeper level, it seems to me that what they are trying to do is to re-mint something of the historically Jewish/rabbinic approach to the text within the context of a sophisticated modern literary criticism. In many ways, therefore, a literary approach to the biblical text is a characteristically Jewish approach.

What this may mean in the long run, it is difficult to say. But in the short term, there is something here that Christians can appropriate and learn much from. In British secondary education, for example, the study of the OT is virtually dead, not least because of the historical categories in which it has been taught. A literary approach, which takes the great stories seriously and sees them as addressing important questions about life, at least offers the prospect of being *interesting*. And even though that is still rather less than understanding the OT as Scripture, the authoritative Word of God, it is not a bad place to start from!

BOOK

REVIEWS

1 and 2 Chronicles
(Forms of the Old Testament Literature, 11)
Simon J. De Vries
Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989, xv + 439 pp.

Simon De Vries has been a prominent contributor to form-critical studies of OT narrative. His *Prophet against Prophet* (Eerdmans, 1978) provided a taxonomy for narrative stories concerning the prophets, and his form-critical analysis of narrative expanded beyond prophetic stories in his commentary on *1 Kings* (Word, 1985). His new commentary on 1 and 2 Chronicles provides the most extensive form-critical analysis available for this corpus and is a singularly valuable addition to Chronicles studies.

Each chapter includes a helpful bibliography, analysis of the structure of the pericope, classification of the genres and subgenres within it, and a discussion of the setting and intention of the text. The commentary itself is followed by a fourteen-page glossary of the genre types and genre elements De Vries identified within the text. This is a helpful reference tool while reading through the volume, and the editors have determined to include a glossary in all subsequent volumes of the FOTL series (p. xiii). De Vries' system of classification for the genres within Chronicles is both lucid and thorough.

Methodologically De Vries is somewhat between an older diachronic approach to the text via form criticism and more recent synchronic approaches emphasizing the role of genre identification in determining a reading strategy. As in his earlier works, De Vries does use his form-critical analysis to make inferences about the past history of particular pericopes and the process of development that may have led to the present form of the text. However, along with most recent practitioners of form criticism, he has all but jettisoned the past excesses of the discipline in associating a single genre with a single *Sitz im Leben*. For that matter, his discussion of 'setting and intention' is more oriented to the place of the pericope within the larger work and its contribution to the Chronicler's theology than to recovering an underlying diachronic sociological matrix as was common practice in the older form criticism. In this respect De Vries appears far closer to more recent synchronic approaches which view genre identification as a key to reading strategy and interpretation instead of diachronic inferences. It is primarily the setting within Chronicles rather than within the traditional notion of *Sitz im Leben*. This is symptomatic of a shift in form-critical studies in general, and it is a welcome change. All would agree to the importance of genre identification in establishing the 'rules' for interpretation of a text, and careful consideration of De Vries' analysis will be important for all further work in Chronicles. This shift in the tenor of form-critical studies has largely taken place during the twenty years since the FOTL series was conceived, and it is striking to note that the emphasis in the editors' foreword (p. xii) is still almost exclusively on diachronic concerns. I am not confident that De Vries would himself agree with this assessment; for that matter the book could have been improved slightly if space had been allotted to the author to reflect on how he sees the current state of the discipline.

De Vries casts his lot with the growing number of commentators (Japhet, Williamson, Braun, Dillard) who do not consider Chronicles to be from the same hand/s that produced Ezra-Nehemiah. He assigns the Chronicler to a date in the fourth century BC (pp. 16-17). Throughout the volume De Vries distinguishes between ChrH (the Chronicler as historian) and ChrR (the Chronicler as redactor); though the two may in fact be the same person (p. 16), the distinction highlights two separate literary procedures.

By and large De Vries' conclusions about the compositional history of Chronicles tend to be restrained. He does not see much secondary glossing of the text and interacts thoroughly with those who see more. For example, the genealogies are often subjected to analysis which suggests numerous later expansions; De Vries, on the other hand, argues that the only secondary material in 1 Chronicles 1–9 is the transitions and glosses for which ChrR himself is responsible (p. 22).

De Vries is not willing to identify Chronicles as midrash (pp. 55, 57, 106). His approach to the issue of eschatological expectation or messianism in Chronicles is quite balanced (pp. 99, 115, 157). He views Chronicles not so much as the history of a nation, but as the history of a congregation (p. 18); interests in the legitimate cult are foremost.

In addition to his extensive form-critical analysis, De Vries identifies four *schemata* as prominent in Chronicles (pp. 102-103, 426). A schema is not a genre but a pattern that replicates itself in different passages. De Vries singles out schemata (1) of reward and retribution, (2) of revelational appearances, (3) of dynastic endangerment, and (4) of festivals.

De Vries has made a major contribution to Chronicles studies with this volume; he has furthered the work of all who will follow him.

R.B. Dillard, Westminster Theological Seminary.

Matthew for Today. A Running Commentary on the Gospel According to St Matthew
Michael Green
London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1988, 301 pp., £6.95.

Michael Green offers something different from recent major commentaries on Matthew: 'A commentary that does not give detail on each verse, but tries first to understand the pattern of the book as a whole, and how each section fits in with what precedes and follows. A commentary which is written out of the excitement and impact of the text, and tries to share that excitement. A commentary which tends to apply the text to the present day and show its relevance to the Christian life.' As such, it is rather more like one of 'The Bible Speaks Today' Series, though more compressed. However, with its aim of exegeting the text carefully and providing a contemporary application, that series has not attempted to treat such a complex biblical book as Matthew's gospel within the span of 300 pages. Consequently, Green's contribution is an introduction to Matthew, offering little satisfaction to those who want to wrestle with some of the complex issues it raises.

Green argues that this gospel was addressed, in the main, to 'believing Jews or Jews who were hovering on the verge of confessing Jesus as the Messiah'. The structure and the character of the gospel suggest further that it was primarily addressed to teachers within the Jewish Christian community. In presenting his material, Matthew sought to record what Jesus said and did and to apply it to the lives and times of his readers. The three audiences in the gospel (the disciples, the crowds and the scribes and Pharisees) correspond to the readership for whom Matthew writes (the leadership in Matthew's church, ordinary church members, and the leaders of the local Jewish synagogue). Most helpful in Green's introduction is his discussion of the plan of this gospel, where he takes seriously the alternation between narrative sections and blocks of teaching, and observes 'the hinge nature of chapter 13'. However, he makes a simplistic link between Matthew's five teaching sections and the five books of the Jewish *torah*, suggesting inadequate reflection on the nature and purpose of the material presented by the evangelist. The introduction concludes with a brief review of Matthew's main concerns: Christology first, then 'the unity of revelation' (how the OT finds fulfilment in Christ), the life of discipleship, the kingdom of the heavens, the people of the Messiah, the end of the world, the universality of the good news.

The strength of Green's approach is to attempt to explain the parts with reference to an appealing outline of the whole. Furthermore, the commentary is written in an easily readable form, with plenty of sub-headings and a rhetorical prose style. This means that preachers would find the arrangement of the material and method of approach suggestive for effective teaching. Bible students approaching Matthew for the first time would find Green's brief analysis a helpful way to get a grasp of the gospel's emphases, themes and structure. As the author himself claims, this is a commentary designed to give you 'the sweep of the biblical book' and to excite you.

However, because it seeks to do so much so briefly, I wonder how ultimately useful this book will be. At the exegetical and theological level, Green gives brief assessments of complex issues which will not be satisfying to many readers (*e.g.* his treatment of Matthew's use of Is. 7:14 [in fact, the king in question was Ahaz not Hezekiah], or the meaning of the highly significant Mt. 5:17-20). There is a great need for popular literature, reflecting the insights of contemporary evangelical scholarship, so that non-specialists can grasp the issues and some of the solutions that are being put forward. I am not certain that Michael Green has helped very much in this bridging exercise.

David Peterson, Moore College.

Jesus within Judaism
James H. Charlesworth
Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1988; London: SPCK, 1989, xvi + 265 pp., £9.95.

The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus
Bernard J. Lee, SM
New York: Paulist Press, 1988, vi + 160 pp., $7.95.

Interpreting Difficult Texts: Anti-Judaism and Christian Preaching
Clark M. Williamson and Ronald J. Allen
Philadelphia: Trinity Press International; London: SCM Press, 1989, viii + 133 pp., £8.50.

The three books under review deal in various ways with the implications of Jesus' Jewish birth, heritage and environment – an essential corollary to the fact of the incarnation.

Of the three, Charlesworth's is by far the most valuable. It contains the Gunning Lectures delivered in 1985 in New College, Edinburgh. It is a refreshing study for many reasons: here is a scholar who is complete master of his subject and who without apology treats the Jesus of history as a suitable subject for historical research, going so far as to devote a chapter of his book to 'Jesus' Concept of God and His Self-Understanding' – matters about which, a recently influential school of thought assured us, nothing can be known and nothing should be said. The author was brought up under the influence of this school of thought; he acknowledges his indebtedness to three studies which he read in the 'sixties – by Günther Bornkamm, Hugh Anderson and David Flusser – for winning him over to the possibility and importance of Jesus Research. For him, 'Jesus Research' is distinct from the old quest for the historical Jesus, whose career and epitaph were written by Albert Schweitzer, and from the new quest launched in the 1950s; it undertakes rather to see Jesus in his cultural setting, in the light of new discoveries which have been made within the past half-century.

Here, then, Jesus is viewed in the light of the OT Pseudepigrapha, the Qumran scrolls, the Nag Hammadi codices, Josephus, and Palestinian archaeology. On the first of these Charlesworth speaks with unsurpassed authority. He concentrates on three features of this body of literature: apocalypticism, eschatology and soteriology (the consciousness of sin and need of forgiveness). Jesus, he notes, was certainly not an apocalyptist; yet contemporary apocalyptic thought is important for understanding his message. Of special interest in this regard is Charlesworth's reassessment of the character and date of the *Parables of Enoch* (1 Enoch 37–71). He agrees with Matthew Black that this collection antedates AD 70; his own conviction is that Jesus knew and was influenced by it as well as by Daniel's vision of 'one like a son of man' (Dn. 7:13), indirectly if not directly. This is something that calls for fresh and careful study. As for Jesus' 'Son of Man' sayings, Charlesworth is persuaded that none of the three categories into which these have been divided is the invention of the church.

As for eschatology, the recent access to Jewish literature of the period provides further illuminating background to Jesus' announcement that the appointed time had fully come and the kingdom of God drawn near and to the expansion of that announcement in his ministry of teaching and healing. As for soteriology, this literature contains repeated confessions of sin and prayers for pardon which find a reassuring answer in Jesus' teaching about the inexhaustible forgiveness of the heavenly Father.

The Qumran scrolls, with the light they have shed on a previously dark period, not only provide the 'ideological landscape' of Jesus' life and reflect the social and economic settings of Palestinian Jews at that time; they emphasize with special clarity the real 'uniqueness' of Jesus and show how the genesis and distinctive genius of primitive Christianity are to be 'found essentially in one life and one person' (p. 74).

The relevance of the Nag Hammadi codices is of a different order, with the new questions raised by them about the possible Jewish and pre-Christian origin of gnosticism. But Charlesworth's attention is fixed specially on the *Gospel of Thomas* and its background, and on the possibility that here and there it has preserved a pre-canonical form of a saying attested in one or more of the NT gospels.

In the brief discussion of Josephus attention is specially paid to the shorter form of the *testimonium Flavianum* attested in Arabic in a writing of the tenth-century Melkite bishop Agapius. This is closer to Josephus' probable wording than any other form in which it has come down to us, but not identical with it: even this form shows the signs of interpolation and redaction to which all extant forms of the text have been subjected. It is the critic's task to distinguish between these two processes and, by removing or correcting their effects, to restore what Josephus probably wrote. That he did make a non-committal reference to Jesus and his followers now seems quite certain; for those to whom it is important to produce a non-Christian first-century witness to the historical Jesus, here it is.

The survey of the evidence of Palestinian archaeology includes an account of recent discoveries in Capernaum and Jerusalem, and of their help in making Jesus visible in his social setting. The Johannine picture of Jesus driving sheep and oxen out of the temple precincts is seen to be no longer improbable now that excavations round the Huldah Gates have shown that large animals could easily have been led from the 'Solomonic Stables' to the halls of the money changers.

But the main importance of this book lies in its emphatic rejection of the criterion of dissimilarity as a tool for recovering the teaching of the historical Jesus and in its confidence that the gospels provide firm evidence for the nature of his thought and message. This is one of the most encouraging studies of its subject to have appeared for a long time.

The study of Bernard Lee also emphasizes the Jewishness of Jesus but concentrates on those features of his Jewishness which are believed to be distinctively Galilean. The author does not claim to be an authority in this field (he speaks of Pompey as conquering Syria from 'King Pontus' and thinks that Hyranus II was made high priest by Herod the Great), but he makes full use of the works of Geza Vermes and Seán Freyne. He is interested in the christological significance of his study – a study which, he says, 'does put many historical Christian interpretations at risk' – but might well have said outright that if our Lord's incarnation is taken seriously, then all that can be established about his historical character, including his 'Jewishness', should be welcomed as an aid to understanding what incarnation involves. The exposition of the author's main theme is unhelpfully mixed up with an account of his own philosophical progress, leading him to something like process theology.

The two writers of *Interpreting Difficult Texts* are properly concerned about the prevalence of anti-Jewishness in much Christian thinking and preaching and consider how far such attitudes are encouraged by NT texts. They see rightly that such texts need to be interpreted in their true contexts. But when one considers that the NT writers (with the probable exception of Luke) were themselves Jews, we have the situation (paralleled to some extent at Qumran) of a radical minority criticizing the religious establishment: this criticism was not anti-Jewish as such but implied rather that the minority maintained the true Judaism (*cf.* Rom. 2:28-29). To say that Luke's picture of the prodigal's elder brother is a 'caricature of Judaism' is nonsense: the younger brother was also a Jew, and so was the father, and so indeed was the narrator – the elder is rather a typical member of the moral majority, whether Jewish or Gentile, offended when someone who has outraged all decent standards is welcomed with all the lavishness of God's grace. But the book is to be commended as a protest against the absurd idea that our Lord is honoured by the denigration of his kinsfolk.

(The late) **F.F. Bruce.**

Lion Let Loose: The Structure and Meaning of St Mark's Gospel
John Sergeant
Exeter: Paternoster, 1988, 95 pp., £4.95.

Sergeant's spritely written and slim volume joins the recent spate of books on the literary structure of Mark. The title derives from the author's contention that since the time of Augustine Mark has been 'caged by the critics', and expresses his intention to rectify the situation.

Informative opening chapters on literary technique examine Mark's use of 'dovetails' (*i.e.* Markan sandwich), symbols, irony and titles. The one on irony is the best: *e.g.* Sergeant points out the bitter irony of those who criticize Jesus for healing on the Sabbath and yet, on the very same day, plot his murder (3:6). Some discernment is required in the chapter on titles. Although it has become common to view 'my beloved son' (1:11; 9:7; 12:6) as deriving from Genesis 22, the matter is still far from certain (*cf.* Chilton and Davies, 'The Aqedah', *CBQ* 40). While Sergeant recognizes the importance of the OT for Jesus' titles, it is disappointing that little is offered elsewhere on Mark's use of the OT (there is a brief hint on p. 79), especially as others have observed its considerable importance (*cf.* Piper, 'Unchanging Promises . . .', *Interp* 11; Kee, 'The Function of Scriptural Quotations . . .' in *Jesus und Paulus*, ed. Ellis (1975); Swartley, 'The Structural Function of . . . "Way" (Hodos) . . .' in *The New Way of Jesus*, ed. Klassen (1980)).

Turning to the structure, Sergeant argues that Mark's concern is to help Christians deal with the Neronic persecutions: the misunderstanding and violence which greets their proclamation of the good news is no different from

the experience of Jesus. The tragic tone of the gospel points to the horrors they face (p. 30) and the irony of the crowd's acceptance then betrayal of Jesus parallels the believers' experience (p. 31).

Sergeant largely follows the almost-standard conventional literary model (on other approaches, see Hurtado, *Themelios* 14.2, pp. 47ff.): Galilee, 1:1–8:30; the journey, 8:31-10:45; Passion, 10:46-16:8; but with several innovations. He rightly integrates chapters 2 and 3, with 3:20-35 as the climax of the confrontations, but fails to establish a convincing link with the parable chapter. I am not persuaded that the double disobedience of the leper (1:40ff.) introduces both the hostility of the religious leaders (presumably because the man did not go to the priest) and the stifling crowds as the two millstones who together grind Jesus' Galilean ministry to a halt (p. 45). The suggestion that the verb θλίβωσιν (3:9) is a veiled reference to the negative role of the crowds who 'persecute' Jesus' work (thus warning against having too many people turn up to a meeting for fear of attracting the attention of the Roman authorities) almost invites a rejoinder from James Barr.

There is merit in the idea that chapters 6–8 present Jesus as having abandoned Galilee after his rejection at Nazareth and Herod's execution of John, but that chapters 7–8 are also a last desperate attempt to overcome the disciples' obduracy, in which miracles are more laborious (7:33, touch and spittle are required instead of a mere word) and secretive (7:35ff., but *cf.* 1:44), is less obvious. I did like Sergeant's observation concerning the trials. Here Roman justice and Jewish religion, both considered to be the best in the world, are seen to fail abysmally when judged by their response to Christ. The final chapter, 'Symbol and History', rightly asserts that 'to argue that because a story means a lot it probably didn't happen' is a gross *non sequitur* (p. 81). But Sergeant appears to equivocate when he then suggests that Mark would regard a question on the historicity of the rent veil as 'hardly relevant' to his purpose.

Lion Let Loose is a mixed bag. It does not require a hefty scholarly background and thus serves well in introducing most of the standard (and some not-so-standard) motifs and literary connections. However there are occasional methodological flaws (as per θλίβωσιν, and appeals to the other gospels to explain Mark are sometimes forced (is Jn. 12:24 really the interpretative key to Mk. 4, p. 49?). It is also a pity that no guidance is offered to those (*e.g. Themelios* readers) who may wish to pursue things further; the citing of key representatives of various positions with some follow-up bibliography would have been helpful.

Has Sergeant succeeded, where so many others have failed, in finding the key to the Markan structure? This reviewer remains unconvinced. Although I agree that Mark has the church's suffering in mind, Sergeant has really only shown the influence of this concern on individual elements. What he has not provided is an over-arching rationale behind Mark's ordering of these elements. Nevertheless, these caveats aside, there are many useful and stimulating insights, and the book generally models the sort of thinking that will handsomely repay students of literary structure.

Rikk Watts, Bible College of Victoria, Australia.

The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel

Halvor Moxnes

Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988, 208 pp., $12.95.

Moxnes' book is an excellent example of the fruit which can result from the use of social science methods in the study of the NT. The current (utilitarian) canon for the use of social science methods is their ability to enlighten the text. Moxnes more than succeeds in bringing to light the complex interdependencies presupposed by the economic material in Luke's gospel. Beyond this, he is capable of making the sometimes complex modelling of social anthropologists transparent to novices and yet instructive to those specializing in the social scientific interpretation of the NT.

The problem that Moxnes sets for his study is to understand the role of the Pharisees in Luke's gospel through the focus of Luke 16:14, where they are called 'lovers of money'. The meaning of this verse has remained opaque because it has not been interpreted in light of the place of the Pharisees in the overall picture of socio-economic relationships within the gospel. The systems of socio-economic interaction presupposed by the gospel narrative are part of a distant foreign world. To understand it we must find tools which can aid in comprehending foreign worlds. Moxnes helps us travel through this foreign world using the skills of social anthropologists, experts in foreign travel.

Systems of social interaction are never 'frozen' artefacts. They exist in an ongoing manner, with a constant flow of social relationships up and down various scales. A strength of Moxnes' study is his currency in interactionist theory as opposed to more static social theories. He offers a major advance in understanding the Pharisees in Luke because he attempts not to capture a still photo, but a moving picture of the ways in which they interact with other groups and individuals on the gospel scene. However, one should be aware that social theorists are 'legion' and interactionism is one of several possible viewpoints for the material Moxnes examines.

Social anthropologists and classical historians agree that the socio-economic system of first-century Palestine was one of negative and/or balanced reciprocity. The first was represented in the exploitation of the peasant classes by the social élite and the second in the manner in which the élites interacted among themselves. Moxnes argues that Luke is strongly opposed to this system and calls instead for the 'economy of the kingdom' to govern human relationships. God's action in Christ offers the model to be followed. Jesus came as the benefactor of humanity, the one who has brought the jubilee year. This is a time of justice and equality for all as God himself enacts a central redistribution of goods and initiates role reversals. The central social and economic theme of Luke's gospel is a call for a generalized reciprocity, which includes the poor, and outright redistribution. This is to be found in Luke's emphasis on alms and hospitality. In the classical world, giving enhanced the status and power of the giver. Luke calls instead for the giver to expect nothing in return and for the great to be servants.

The Pharisees in the gospel appear as foils for this Christian economy. They seek to enhance their own power by negative reciprocity *vis-à-vis* the poor and balanced reciprocity in relation to their peers (*e.g.* they invite to dinner only those capable of repaying them). The charge against the Pharisees of being 'lovers of money' is Luke's Christian value judgment. Moxnes argues that a neutral observer would not have found the Pharisees particularly avaricious. They acted within the accepted social standards of their time. They are 'bad' people because they reject Jesus and in common with 'bad' opponents in antiquity are seen as operating with impure economic motives.

Moxnes' work is unsurpassed in bringing to light the socio-economic world of the gospel narrative, *i.e.* what he calls 'the surface level of the gospel at the time of Jesus'. But although most of the work is devoted to understanding the socio-economic world of Jesus as portrayed in the gospel, ultimately he wishes to draw conclusions about the situation in Luke's community as reflected in the gospel. In this step he encounters some methodological problems.

1. Comparison with Acts is only cursory. He acknowledges it to be a different setting than the gospel, but does not ask how this affects the reading of the gospel. One must somehow account for changes in reading between the time of the narrative and the time of its narration. Most agree that Acts more closely mirrors the world of Luke and his church. It is urban, mobile, upwardly aware, and relatively prosperous. How do such people understand stories about Palestinian peasants? This question is not asked.

2. Moxnes divides Luke's world into élites and non-élites and rightly states that Christians were among the latter. But his economic contrasts are élites to non-élites (all presumed to have the same economic viewpoint), while the important question is how the more prosperous segments of the non-élites interacted with the less prosperous segments. This question is only briefly touched upon.

3. It is not adequately demonstrated that some of Luke's material reflects the viewpoint of those 'who receive' as opposed to those 'who give'.

4. The social sciences are inherently reductionist. Moxnes is to be applauded for allowing theological questions to stand after social analysis of the text has been completed. However, some may be uncomfortable with the direction he sees Luke to be leading us. Luke's gospel holds a theology of liberation, *i.e.* a theology of empowerment for the dispossessed. Luke's Christian economy is the 'view from below', *i.e.* the view of the peasant. This he believes originated with Jesus. More central to Moxnes' closing statements is the position that through the gospel the existing social system is challenged to reflect the egalitarian economy of the kingdom of God. In this he is surely right.

Thomas Martin, Fremont, Nebraska

James (Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 48)

Ralph P. Martin

Waco, Texas: Word, 1988.

Word commentaries aim at a very wide assortment of readers, from student to scholar. Each volume's ability to do that well depends on its author. This volume by Martin reflects his scholarly temperament. Students reading it will

face unexplained technical language, untranslated Latin, French and German, and some unusual phrases. Although Greek is translated as in other Word commentaries, Martin includes such large contexts sometimes (1:17-19a; 1:21-23) that a novice or non-Greek reader will be lost in the ensuing discussion. Also, Greek phrases within his discussion sometimes are left untranslated. An extended discussion of early Christian writers' use of James may stimulate informed scholars, but an assumed familiarity with the content of their writings will leave the student frustrated.

Evangelical students and scholars will appreciate much of Martin's discussion about the historical James. Martin denounces the views of F.C. Baur which imagine James and Paul as antagonists during the formative years of the church. Rather, Martin takes seriously Acts' portrayal of James' mediation between Paul and the conservative Jerusalem church. Martin applauds the canonical status of the Epistle of James both on the grounds of its theology and overall message.

Some may be perplexed when Martin attributes to James, the Lord's brother, only the 'deposit of James' teaching'. Upon this deposit, Martin proposes, a first edition of James was published by his disciples who fled Jerusalem for Syrian Antioch after his martyrdom in AD 62. This is how Martin accounts for such evidence as early support for this epistle in Syria, the allusions to Syrian climate in 5:7, and the literary connections between James and Matthew. The Hellenistic idioms and other forms of expression in James, as well as the epistolary form, come from that 'enterprising editor' who was trying to undergird the authority of teachers in his community. Martin is surprisingly unclear on whether or not the historical James actually wrote anything which appears in the Epistle of James.

The value of Martin's hypothesis is that it puts flesh and bones on similar views announced by Peter Davids in his 1982 commentary in the NIGNTC series. An evangelical position need not be tied strictly to historical or even unified authorship. The value of James to the church today is not diminished one way or the other. However, many evangelical scholars would legitimately question whether a loyal disciple of James would go as far as Martin suggests in transcribing his master's teaching. Personally, I question whether postulating an editor has enough advantages to overturn the traditional view that the Lord's brother authored the epistle.

Despite the challenge Martin's views on authorship may be to conservative evangelicals, they are a thought-provoking attempt to move people away from viewing James as a 'general' epistle and toward seeing James as a reaction to real problems in a church or a group of churches. According to Martin, James the apostle sought to unite two opposing factions in the Jerusalem church. The later editor sought to strengthen the position of valid teachers against false teachers in the Syrian churches.

Martin's commentary contains many other strengths. In his introduction, he reviews the current debate on 'Jewish Christianity', displays prominently the parallels between Matthew and James, expounds on the wisdom background of James, attempts to identify the various classes of poor that James champions, and interacts with structural outlines found in other commentaries before suggesting his own. This last feature surprisingly includes Motyer from the 'Bible Speaks Today' series, an expositional commentary, yet excludes Moo from the Tyndale series, which is more academic and very thoughtful.

The commentary proper features in-depth analysis of words and phrases, supplying a wealth of background for interpretation. He does an excellent job of interacting with other current commentaries. Most prominent are Adamson, Davids, Dibelius, Moo, Mussner, Ropes and Vouga. He sides often with Moo, neglects Laws, and reserves his most stinging comments for Scaer. Rightly, he presents a strong argument against Davids' unusual view that 1:13 should be read as 'trial' and not 'tempt'.

On the most discussed passage of James, 2:14-26, Martin presents insightful analysis. First, he does an excellent job of setting the context. He demonstrates a vital connection between 2:14-26 and 2:1-13, something many commentators overlook, by displaying both formal and stylistic parallels between the two. Secondly, his excursus on faith and works with regard to Paul, while brief, is an excellent summary of prevailing views. He maintains the credibility of James' point without undercutting Paul's. Thirdly, he handles well the question of where to put the quotation marks in 2:18, settling for, 'You have faith and I have works'. Fourthly, throughout his comments he shows himself to be extremely well read.

Martin's comments on some passages are disappointing. He does a good job on background parallels but does scant interpretation of the proverb in 1:19. In 2:1-13 he is convinced by R.B. Ward ('Partiality in the Assembly: James 2:2-4', *Harvard Theological Review* 62(1969), pp. 87-97) that the setting is judicial rather than for worship. I agree with Laws (pp. 101-102) that Ward's is striking but too specific for the general description James gives. In 3:1-12, Martin maintains that James' images are ecclesial rather than anatomical. James' primary concern may be the church and teachers, but Martin sometimes gets the cart before the horse in his analysis of these verses. James' images begin in the sphere of a person's body or general experiences. The church is one of a number of applications, including the individual.

Martin's volume contains a few organizational weaknesses which need to be noted. The most striking comes in his introduction, where he depends on a PhD thesis by M.I. Webber he supervised. He refers to this thesis four times in section two but does not provide the reader with bibliographic information (other than the Author's Preface) until the bibliography list of section three. Martin's volume also displays imprecise internal reference occasionally, as when on p. 36 he simply says 'see earlier'.

Finally, it seems to me that Martin's 'Explanation' of each section included material that was too wide-ranging, some of which seemed to fit better in the Form/Structure/Setting. I recognize that Martin is the NT Editor of this series and his use of the 'Explanation' sections may well model what the series intends. However, I find the brief, simple summaries of the text's intention and contemporary applications in earlier volumes like those of Bauckham *(2 Peter and Jude)*, Bruce *(1 and 2 Thessalonians)* and Smalley *(1, 2, 3 John)* much more helpful than the lengthy and varied use of the section by Martin in this volume.

Martin's volume on James, then, has its strengths and weaknesses. In the tradition of the Word commentaries, it is thorough on bibliography and commentary. Martin is at his best when he is digging into the background of a word or phrase and when he is interacting with other scholars. However, a clearer explanation of his final interpretation of a verse sometimes would help. Evangelicals may be dissatisfied with his judgment on authorship, but his volume is worthy of careful study. Students may appreciate a commentary like Martin's in later years, but I do not recommend it as a student's first volume on James.

William R. Baker, St Louis Christian College.

New Testament History

Richard L. Niswonger

Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, 332 pp., $19.95.

Dr Niswonger, an Associate Professor of History and Bible at John Brown University, has written a history of NT times from 332 BC to AD 100. The first four chapters cover the historical background up to the time of Jesus, chapters 5–8 revolve around the ministry of Jesus, chapters 9–12 deal with church expansion within the framework of the book of Acts, chapters 13–14 discuss the last four decades of the church reconstructed from the canonical literature (pastoral epistles of Paul, the general epistles, and Revelation) and from extra-biblical literature (Josephus, Roman historians, early church fathers), and chapter 15 is a brief conclusion dealing with the geographic spread of Christianity, church doctrine and government, and reasons for Christianity's growth. The book is interspersed with many illustrations and nine maps and also has four appendices, a bibliography, and indices of persons, subjects, and biblical references.

The author is straightforward in his introduction by stating that 'to claim total objectivity is to be a victim of self-deception' and one should admit his or her presuppositions and then seek to be fair with the evidence in that light. Subsequently, he has done a splendid job in this respect throughout his work. He explicitly states that he is writing within the conservative and traditional framework and views the gospels as reliable historical documents. On controversial issues he lays out the options and carefully weighs the evidence and then states his conclusions and yet is very open to the objections raised against his views. In attempting to answer the objections, he discusses the issues fairly and without rancour. On the whole he has worked with original sources, although there are times when he uses secondary sources (*e.g.* ch. 4, n. 4, he states Cicero's view on the Epicurean philosophy and cites George Panichas rather than Cicero; ch. 7, n. 1, he mentions Tacitus' description of Tiberius' position in the empire but cites Jack Finegan).

There are a couple of areas that need examination. First, on p. 132 the author uses the terms 'governor' and 'prefect' interchangeably and then states that 'procurators' took over the administration of the province in AD 44. Admittedly there was confusion of terminology at that time but it would have been beneficial to the reader to give a short explanation of the problem and why Josephus used all three terms while the NT only used 'governor'. Furthermore, it is more likely that the provincial rulers were not called 'procurators' until Claudius' reign after AD 50 rather than in 44.

The second area concerns the year of Christ's crucifixion (pp. 121-122, 140-141, 150-157). The author has accepted the popular AD 30 date. The issue is not the date *per se* but how the author arrived at this conclusion. He bases it on Luke 3:23 which is a non-technical chronological note stating that Jesus was 'about' thirty years of age at the commencement of his ministry, rather than basing it on

Luke 3:1 which has a specific chronological note indicating that the commencement of John the Baptist's ministry was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius. Since Tiberius' reign began in AD 14, John's ministry would have begun in AD 29. However, since Jesus had at least a three-year ministry the author suggests that one needs to reckon the commencement of John the Baptist's ministry from the beginning of Tiberius' co-regency with Augustus in AD 11 or 12 rather than from the death of Augustus in AD 14. This is mere mathematical gymnastics because there is no shred of evidence that anyone ever reckoned from Tiberius' co-regency but, on the other hand, there is much evidence that the Roman historians reckoned from AD 14. Furthermore, if one were to count from his co-regency why would one reckon from AD 11 or 12? There is nothing in these dates to suggest the commencement of the co-regency. A more likely time would be when Tiberius received *tribunicia potestas* and *imperium proconsulare* in AD 13, which would mean that the earliest possible time for the commencement of John the Baptist's ministry was in AD 28. However, there really is no evidence that it was ever reckoned from AD 13.

A few minor details need only to be mentioned. Dr Niswonger states that Paul was converted in AD 33-4 (p. 200), but in Appendix E this is listed as occurring in AD 32-3. In Appendix C there needs to be a vertical line drawn from Son of Cleopatra to Herod Philip. Furthermore, the author was not careful in his dates in the bibliographical entries: for example, in ch. 8, n. 1, Edersheim's work was not in 1971 but in the 1880s; in ch. 11, n. 3, Conybeare and Howson did not publish in 1949 but in 1853; in ch. 10, n. 16, Machen published in 1921, not 1947. Others could be cited. It is important to have precise dates so that the reader may know when the scholar made his or her contribution to the discussion at hand.

On the whole the author is to be commended for his work. It is written with clarity and generally with a fair handling of the evidence. His dealing with the extra-biblical material in the Roman period was most interesting.

Harold W. Hoehner, Dallas.

One God, One Lord
Larry W. Hurtado
London: SCM, 1988, 178 pp., £8.50.

This book is an important new study of the evidence relating to the worship of Jesus in the early church and its relationship to the religious climate in which it originated. The author rejects the idea that the cult of Jesus was the result of a relatively late Hellenistic influence on the early Christians, and demonstrates that it can be found in the earliest strands of Palestinian Jewish Christianity. As he says (p. 11): 'the evidence suggests strongly that... well before these later developments, within the first two decades of Christianity, Jewish Christians gathered in Jesus' name for worship, prayed to him and sang hymns to him, regarded him as exalted to a position of heavenly rule above all angelic orders, appropriated to him titles and Old Testament passages originally referring to God, sought to bring fellow Jews as well as Gentiles to embrace him as the divinely appointed redeemer, and in general redefined their devotion to the God of their fathers so as to include the veneration of Jesus'.

From there he goes on to claim that ancient Judaism had a concept of 'divine agency' which made it easier for these Jewish Christians to accept that Jesus might be 'exalted to the right hand of God' and that early Christian religious experience produced modifications to this Jewish idea which made their devotion to Christ *sui generis*. With great care he takes us through the various types of divine agent which can be found in Judaism — personifications of divine attributes, exalted patriarchs and ministering angels. In each case he shows that the Jews were never tempted to abandon their traditional monotheism, and always regarded these agents as subordinate to the being of God himself. Then he devotes himself to what he calls the early Christian 'mutation', showing how this went well beyond anything which had come before.

In all this it is clear that Hurtado is confronting the tradition, developed by Bousset and preserved by a host of disciples, which denied that the worship of Jesus was ever an authentic part of Jewish Christianity. In particular he makes it plain that this development has nothing to do with the apostle Paul, who took it over in an already existing state. But what was it that made the first Christians take this great and decisive step? Here Dr Hurtado is less satisfactory, suggesting that it was a combination of reflection on their part and a common experience of worship. The idea that Jesus himself might have taught his disciples that he was God is still not seriously considered, with the result that we are presented with a great event which seems to have an inadequate cause.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Dr Hurtado comes down strongly on the conservative side at those points which matter most to him. This book may well help to shift the discussion of Christian origins into a new and more positive phase, and for this we must be profoundly grateful.

Gerald Bray, Oak Hill College.

Biblical Interpretation
Robert Morgan with John Barton
Oxford: OUP, 1988, 342 + x pp., £8.95.

This book forms one of three general volumes in the new 'Oxford Bible Series', edited by Peter Ackroyd and Graham Stanton. This is a series aimed particularly at sixth-formers, with the idea of providing overviews of the Bible and biblical scholarship by treating categories of biblical literature, rather than individual books. This volume is foundational to the whole series (although each is supposed to be independent of the others).

The 'sixth-former' in this case will have to be intellectually and theologically on the ball. This is a demanding book, hardly one for beginners. Started as a joint OT-NT project, with an author from each speciality, it has ended up largely the work of Robert Morgan, with some occasional OT input from John Barton. The reason for this change of direction is hinted at in the Preface, and becomes clearer as the book progresses: instead of contenting himself with a general survey of the history of biblical interpretation and of 'options' for interpretation today, Robert Morgan has given us something of an individual *cri de coeur*. This makes the book much more valuable.

His thesis is compelling, and biblical scholarship is going to have to respond. In fact, it has already begun to do so, in that a major session at the British SNTS gathering in Bristol in September 1989 was devoted to the book, with critiques by Tony Thiselton and Francis Watson and a response from the author himself. In essence, the argument of the book is this:

(1) We must give up the pretence of an 'objective' biblical scholarship focusing on historical questions. This *is* a pretence, because biblical scholars have almost always been religiously motivated, and their religion has played a powerful rôle in shaping their scholarship. In the case of the leading German liberals of the last 200 years, this religion has been one which enabled them to say very radical things about the Bible without disturbing their own commitment — but the 'theory of religion and reality' from which they lived was no less important for them *and their scholarship* than for the conservatives who were horrified by their proposals.

(2) The fact that biblical scholarship has focused on historical questions for 200 years now must be put into right perspective. Reimarus (1694-1768) put historical questions on the agenda by arguing that the appearance of Israel and of Christianity could be explained entirely on rational, humanistic grounds. Since then, scholarship has been taken up with historical issues, because it has generally been accepted (following Reimarus) that the *application of reason* to the Scriptures is quite in order — but does reason really lead to Reimarus' conclusions? Yet, even though history has been at the top of the agenda, Morgan argues that the *essence* of the response to Reimarus has been to forge 'a theory of religion and reality' which can incorporate into itself this *rational* approach to the Scriptures while still valuing them religiously. The actual theories adopted by a Baur, a Bultmann or a Barth differ greatly — but in each case it is the *theory*, rather than the historical study, which has been the driving force.

(3) This being the case, we must recognize the power of the interpreter in the process of interpretation. He or she shapes the study according to his or her own aims — *and this is not just inevitable, but right.* 'Speakers and writers have some short-term moral right to be understood as they intended . . . but that right dies with them or with the occasions for which the utterance was intended. . . . Without the source or author there would be no power, but once it is released all this power resides in the hands or minds of the interpreters, *i.e.* readers who determine the meaning of what they are reading' (p. 270). The emphasis on a historical approach to the Bible has arisen from the interest of its interpreters — but other emphases are just as valid if interpreters have other concerns.

(4) This means that Morgan is warm towards the recent application of sociological theories to the Bible, and the adoption of more literary, less historical approaches. He insists that the *theory* is the vital thing. It would be possible simply to add a few more methods ('rhetorical criticism', 'discourse analysis') to the armoury of biblical scholarship, but this would be to miss the point of the exercise: for simply by adopting the methods, we are (whether we like it or not) making a statement about the nature of human beings and the cognitive processes by which we interact with the world. And that is in fact the game we are playing, if we are basically interested in the Bible for *religious* reasons. The Bible gives us our world-view, and we must be conscious about it.

A brief review does not permit a proper engagement with an argument of this power

and erudition. However a few comments may be made:

(1) The quotation above from p. 270 is misleading, in that he is careful not to open the flood-gates to 'anything goes', whatever-takes-your-fancy styles of interpretation. However, the effect of his argument is to reduce the importance of an *historical* engagement with the Bible. At the Bristol debate, Francis Watson questioned whether an historical interest really entered biblical scholarship only in response to the rationalist challenge, and it would certainly seem to me that one of the distinctive features of the theology of the Reformers was their incorporation into their approach to the Bible of a sense of historical distance, to which the whole movement of modern critical study owes its origin. We cannot get away from the fact that that sense of history is built into our world-view and so embraces our approach to the Bible (here we may contrast the attitude to the Qu'ran in Islam). So I would want to underline, perhaps more than Morgan does, the insistence that no true biblical scholarship can be ahistorical, simply because of the nature of biblical faith. All Christian faith involves relation to Jesus of Nazareth, a figure of history.

Morgan accepted Watson's comment in his response to the debate, although I have a feeling he could come back at me and remark that, by emphasizing a historical approach in contrast to the attitude of Moslems to the Qu'ran, I am simply revealing the 'theory of religion and reality' that makes me tick!

(2) He does not tackle sufficiently (to my mind) the problem posed by the self-assertion of the interpreter. From one perspective it is of course true that we cannot help being ourselves, and that we *use* what we are and what we want as interpretative tools and guides. But Christianity has always insisted that the Bible exercises an authority *over* the church and its teachers. How can the teachers consciously distance themselves from their own concerns while, at the same time, making their concerns a basis and starting-point in their scholarship? Perhaps the fact that Morgan does not tackle this question is related to his failure to 'come clean' about *his own* 'theory of religion and reality'. We need an autobiographical element in a book which emphasizes so much the rôle of the interpreter in shaping the 'meaning' of the text.

(3) A substantial point made by Tony Thiselton follows on from this. Robert Morgan commends a more 'literary' approach without exploring how this might actually work in practice. Literary responses are essentially individual: but Christians are not. How can we guard against the break-up of the 'community of faith'?

With Thiselton, I want to underline this. We cannot get away from the fact that, as Christians, we belong to a community. And in fact this is never more obvious to us than when we engage in biblical interpretation. The fellowship we express in common worship and service is also expressed in thoughtful interaction with minds of the present and of the past, in a common wrestling with the Scriptures. We cannot disassociate ourselves from them (though we may disagree with them) – yet if they are to come into the picture, we must qualify the place and force of our own 'literary' response to the text.

In his response, Robert Morgan substantially accepted Tony Thiselton's criticism, recognizing that he simply had not had the space to develop his theme in this direction.

Having made these three tentative criticisms, however, I want to identify myself with this book. I empathize with his *cri de coeur*, and believe he is right in his basic thesis. Evangelical scholarship needs to hear what he says and to come to terms with it. Some evangelical scholars have reacted against the new 'literary' approaches to the Bible simply because they sit loose to historical criticism as we have learned to practise it in the last 100 years. See, for instance, the evaluation by Scott McKnight in his *Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels* (Baker, 1988), pp. 121-137. I am cautious about this negative reaction, because the technical tools of modern historical criticism have only been available for a few years (comparatively), and are *not* available *today* to the vast majority of Christians who nonetheless nourish themselves truly by the Scriptures. We need to beware of taking the Bible out of their hands by making it the proper preserve of those with the technical tools of interpretation at their disposal. That is the way of Gnosticism. We certainly need to be able to check our *intuitions* about the meaning of the Bible, but these are in fact checked as much by fellowship with other Christians (both present and past) as by careful historical engagement with the biblical text.

Chapters 2 to 5 contain a fascinating survey of biblical scholarship since Reimarus, chapters 1 and 6 give the essence of Morgan's argument, chapter 7 (66 pages) surveys and evaluates the application of literary approaches to the Bible, and chapter 8 summarizes and draws conclusions. I wish the contents page gave more of an idea of the actual thrust of the book – his headings are anodyne in comparison with the real vigour of his argument. Each chapter contains a list of 'Further Reading' (full), and there is a fascinating 'Annotated Index of Names' (pp. 297-335) which gives pithy information and sidelights on the main figures discussed and will prove generally useful as a basic Who's-Who of biblical scholarship. (Did you know that Hengstenberg also wrote on freemasonry and duelling?)

We must not ignore this book – it sets an agenda for evangelical scholarship.

Steve Motyer, London Bible College.

Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek

David Alan Black

Baker Book House, 1988, 181 pp., pb, n.p.

Every student knows the frustration of encountering technical terms which must laboriously be looked up in some obscure dictionary or encylopedia. Linguistics, increasingly finding its way into biblical studies, has its own quite enormous specialist terminology, and this book explains and illustrates most of it. There is a useful index to ensure that the reader can readily locate *tagmemes, morphemes, paranomasia, metonymy* and so on. The book is carefully organized, with an explanation of what linguistics is, and then chapters on phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, the sounds of Greek, word formation, the grammar of strings of words, and the study of meaning. The book is very carefully written, and well laid out.

So the first thing to be said is that most students will profit from owning and using *Linguistics for Students of New Testament Greek*. It's the kind of book you can dip into at any time, read a bit, and learn something from. Or the kind of book to have ready on the desk when reading a serious commentary. And when the word *hendiadys* turns up you'll know where to turn to find out what it means.

But the second thing is that the book could unintentionally give the reader the wrong idea about meaning. Actually chapter five, which is all about semantics, meaning, is good: clearly Black does understand what James Barr and others have been saying about the source of meaning. But in earlier chapters of the book some odd things appear on meaning. On p. 72 we are told that the root *ag* means to lead or to drive, and that *agros* is to be understood as 'field (where cattle are *led*)'. And on the same page the root *ba* means to go, and *probaton* means 'sheep (that which *goes forward*)'. And still on p. 72 we have an explanation of *diabolos* from *bal* meaning to throw: the devil is 'one who *throws* words at'.

The illustration from Hockett on p. 79 is similarly unfortunate. A Greek word is compared to a locomotive (the word stem) which picks up inflectional morphemes like so many boxcars, 'each carrying a particular load of meaning'. This model is then used to suggest that morphological analysis 'enables the reader to obtain the significance of each morpheme and thus to understand the total significance of the verb form'. But meaning is not determined in this way. As the author almost certainly knows, past tenses do not always signify the past, imperative forms are not always commands, interrogative particles do not always signal questions, and meaning is to be found *not* in the word, still less in the morpheme, but in the context within which language is being used.

I think that a second edition of this work will be called for. And then the chapter on morphology can be brought up to date.

Peter Cotterell, London Bible College.

Revelatory Positivism? Barth's Earliest Theology and the Marburg School

S. Fisher

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, xv + 348 pp., n.p.

Simon Fisher here offers us an important monograph on a neglected area of Barth studies. The book is a very detailed attempt (the detail betrays the thesis origins) to trace the influence of Marburg philosophy of religion on the very early work of Barth, before his movement into the 'dialectical' phase of his theology in the middle of the second decade of the present century. Whilst we have been accustomed to think of this dialectical phase as 'early Barth', Fisher suggests that the earlier material is of some significance in understanding what is happening at the beginnings of Barth's theological pilgrimage. Though Barth's early work has been something of a centre of controversy for the last fifteen years or so (largely over the issue of Barth's early socialism and its relation to the theological motivations of dialectical theology), his earliest liberal writings on philosophy of religion have been scarcely noticed. Dr Fisher's book seeks to make good the omission.

The book falls into three blocks of material. There is, first, an exposition of the religious philosophy of the neo-Kantian philosophers of Marburg, where Barth himself studied and was much influenced by the philosophy of figures like Cohen and Natorp. Although Marburg philosophy has been explored as a background to Bultmann, its significance for Barth is rarely recognized, and Fisher's exposition is one of the first attempts to relate the material in English. His account is very detailed and accordingly

rather dense: the inattentive might easily miss some of the threads of the argument. Next, he offers a critical exposition of aspects of the thought of Wilhelm Hermann, the Marburg systematic theologian long recognized to have had a deep influence upon Barth. It has often been pointed out that it was from Hermann that Barth came to grasp the importance of the integrity of theology as an autonomous discipline (though Hermann's arguments would later cause Barth much trouble). In an often severely critical account, Fisher interprets Hermann via what he regards as the metaphysical confusions and inadequacies of Ritschl, stressing Hermann's positing of a religious given, a revelatory experience through which he had hoped to secure theology against the idealism of his philosophical colleagues. Third, Fisher expounds some very early essays by Barth on the theory of religion. Once again, the account is very dense – perhaps too dense, given the rather slight character of the Barth texts and their somewhat marginal position in the Barth corpus. The argument is rounded off (as the title promises) by a look at the issue of 'revelatory positivism', Bonhoeffer's famous charge against Barth, and some considerations of the relation of revelation to culture.

The great strength of the book is its immensely careful scholarship, both in examining the details of the texts to which it gives attention and in setting them in their cultural and intellectual contexts. Fisher is too careful a scholar to be satisfied with the polemics or casual characterizations which have often marred English-language writing about Barth. Nevertheless, the general impression left by the book is that it is a little too cramped, a little too restricted to detailed commentary, and does not really allow itself to address wider issues with sufficient fluency. It might, for example, have been very fruitful to examine Barth's earliest material in the light of current 'post-liberal' readings of his work (such as those offered by Frei or Lindbeck) in which Barth's theology of revelation and his epistemology are receiving fresh interpretations. That said, Fisher's work sets high standards of meticulous scholarship, and readers should be grateful for a book which not only traces a neglected part of the intellectual background to contemporary theology but also extends their sense of what is happening in the most complex and ramified theological *oeuvre* of the century.

John Webster, Wycliffe College, Toronto.

Eternal God: A Study of God without Time
Paul Helm
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, 230 pp., £25.

Swimming against the tide of contemporary philosophical orthodoxy, Helm has produced an indomitable defence of the concept of a timeless God written from a Calvinist perspective.

While admitting that God's eternity is neither explicitly taught in Scripture nor derivable from the dubious procedure of the etymological study of key biblical words, Helm argues that the doctrine is an implication of such divine attributes as immutability. Like certain scientific concepts (*e.g.* the electron) it is, then, an invaluable postulate while being extremely difficult to describe or imagine. Following Boethius, Helm is able to state, however, that God is eternal in that he 'possesses the whole of his life at once: it is not lived successively' (p. 24).

The greater part of Helm's book is an attempt to defend this thesis against the criticisms of fellow analytic philosophers. A number, like A.N. Prior, have argued, for example, that a timeless God would not be completely omniscient since he could not know what is happening *now*, but, Helm insists, by the same token an omniscient God would need also to be spatial in order to know that something is occurring *here*. Or even worse, an all-knowing deity would have to be me because 'one can only know precisely what is happening to *me* if one is *me*' (p. 75)! To avoid these awkward implications Helm prefers to concede that omniscience should be taken to mean that while God is cognizant of the temporal order of events, he does not share the temporal flow of our experience.

Against R. Swinburne *et al.* Helm goes on to defend the position that an eternal being can be fully personal since he can have timeless knowledge and eternal intentions, some of which bring about temporal states (the helpful analogy is offered of standing orders which are responsible for things happening without themselves being changed). Helm concludes that a 'timeless being may not act within the universe yet it makes sense to say that such a being produces (tenseless) the universe' (p. 69). As for the sustaining work of God, one has merely to affirm God's timeless intention that the universe should display temporal development.

Helm accepts, with most philosophers, that divine foreknowledge and libertarian human freedom are incompatible, but he goes one step further and argues that the issue is unaffected by placing God outside time because although God would then simply know, it could still be truly said by a temporal agent that God foreknew yesterday what would happen today. Just as I could not truly say, 'I am not talking', but someone else could say of me, 'He is not talking', so while 'foreknowledge' is not a correct description of God's knowledge it is a correct description of the way that timeless knowledge is recognized by a temporal agent. Determinism logically follows: 'God's knowledge is past, past for certain individuals in time, and so necessary for them' (p. 105).

To preserve human autonomy some philosophers, like K. Ward and R. Swinburne, have placed God in time and limited divine omniscience to the past and present only, but Helm considers the cost is too great and the notion of divine providence is jeopardized.

Left with a timeless God and a deterministic universe, Helm tackles the issues of divine and human responsibility. Interacting with A. Flew he rejects the view that only atheist determinism can consistently hold man accountable. Man is responsible and free when he does what he wants to, that is when he acts voluntarily. Helm argues in the tradition of Augustine that although God is responsible for evil, he is not morally culpable since creaturely evil is a logically necessary condition for an overwhelming good. The analogy is offered of a toxic substance given as a medicine.

Helm goes on to apply soft-determinism to God himself who is certainly free *from*, for example, moral decay and weakness while also being free *to* follow the dictates of his nature. In fact his nature necessitates the actualization of the universe. Helm rejects the view that God has chosen between equally optimum universes on the grounds that this would reduce his final choice to an arbitrary whim.

The work concludes with a study of how eternal God may be meaningfully referred to and individuated in language.

This book is undoubtedly an intellectual *tour de force* which will drive readers into a reappraisal of a philosophically unfashionable theology which, however, is of a noble lineage, passing back through Jonathan Edwards, Calvin and Augustine. Helm is a lucid communicator, presenting essentially difficult ideas with remarkable clarity. His book manages to be free of jargon although perhaps he could have defined what philosophers mean by the phrase 'Cambridge changes' rather than just refer the reader to a book by P. Geach in which it is discussed (p. 19).

Although the book is a formidable piece of sustained argumentation, it is in the nature of philosophy that no thesis is unanswerable and it will be interesting to see how Helm's critics respond. Some will surely question his basic assumption that absolute divine immutability is indefeasible. His main argument seems to be that for God to be *sui generis* he must be immutable in the sense that nothing about him could possibly change, for if it merely means that his character could not alter, as for example K. Ward maintains, then he would not be unique since a person 'who is incorrigibly and uniformly brave . . . would be immutable in exactly the same sense' (p. 87). But there seems to be a choice of two counter arguments here: either one could deny that any person could be incorrigibly brave, for no-one could withstand, say, everlasting torture or protracted treatment with mind-distorting drugs without his spirit breaking, or one could concede Helm's point and admit that immutability, so defined, is one of God's communicable attributes while refusing to conclude that God is therefore finite since he remains ontologically necessary and herein lies his uniqueness.

Undoubtedly others will feel dissatisfied with his treatment of divine and human responsibility, for although he succeeds in undermining Flew's position by establishing that if atheist determinism entails human responsibility, so does theist determinism, many like myself remain unconvinced that *either* kind of determinism is compatible with human responsibility. The absolution of God from culpability fares little better. The toxic substance analogy would hold good for a theology involving universal salvation but, with the casualty rate that Scripture insists upon, one must draw the conclusion that God's glorious master plan is at the expense of the individual who, therefore, does not seem to matter very much.

Some will also feel uneasy about Helm's tendency to present the issue of freedom in a dilemma form: for example, either God's choices are the inevitable expression of his nature, or they are mere caprice. In contrast, advocates of libertarianism want to argue that a free, responsible choice is neither wholly determined by one's nature nor a random decision, but rather an ultimately unpredictable choice made, however, for some reason, although that reason is not itself the cause of the choice.

For those unwilling to take the determinist path, is a truncated concept of divine omniscience the only available option? Perhaps it is time to question the assumption that foreknowledge entails determinism, for what if God's past knowledge is logically contingent upon my future act? God would then know of my act because I shall freely choose to do it, rather than his foreknowledge necessitating my choice. This thesis has been ably demonstrated in a recent book by W.L. Craig called *The Only*

Wise God. It is a pity Helm was not able to interact with it.

Robert R. Cook, Redcliffe College, London.

Theology Today. Two contributions towards making theology present
Jürgen Moltmann
London: SCM, 1988, x + 99 pp., £4.50.

This slender volume contains two articles written originally for an Italian encyclopedia in 1984 and 1986. They were later published in German (1988) and have now been translated into English. They are of interest for two reasons: as works of Moltmann and as accounts of the state of modern theology.

The first article is on 'The Course of Theology in the Twentieth Century'. In it Moltmann outlines the social, cultural and political context of theology first in the nineteenth and then in the twentieth centuries. He goes on to describe four different attempts to find a secular relevance for the Christian faith: demythologizing (especially Bultmann); theology of secularization (especially Bonhoeffer); theology of liberation; and 'Christian theology of modernity', which embraces the theologies of hope and freedom. Moltmann then considers the search for Christian identity after the collapse of Christendom. He rejects defensive, reactionary strategies which lead to a ghetto existence. Instead he urges a return to the origins of Christian faith. This he sees happening in the Catholic 'discovery of the Bible as the origin and criterion of the church's tradition' and in the Protestant 'discovery of Jesus as the origin and criterion of the New Testament traditions' (p. 30). He then, in the light of this, discusses first the significance of the OT and secondly modern Christologies. Finally he considers the ecumenical dimension of theology today. 'Theology today has become so much the common task of all Christian churches that it is often no longer possible to recognize the confessional origin of the different contributions' (p. 41). He sees a movement from anathema to dialogue to cooperation, with the hope of an eventual common confession of faith. More controversially, he wants Christians to recognize Jews as part of the people of God and to enter into dialogue with the world religions, giving up absolute Christian claims.

The second article is on 'Mediating Theology Today'. This describes a theology which 'mediates the Christian message that has been handed down in such a way that it falls within the horizons of the understanding of the people of a particular time' (p. 53). 'Mediation between the Christian tradition and the culture of the present is the most important task of theology. Without a living relationship to the possibilities and problems of the man or woman of the present, Christian theology becomes sterile and irrelevant. But without reference to the Christian tradition Christian theology becomes opportunist and uncritical' (p. 53). The reader will recognize that Moltmann's 'mediation' of theology is what is more commonly called contextualization, which Moltmann in the first article calls the contextual method (p. 12). Four examples are given of mediating theology in the modern world: existentialist theology (Bultmann); transcendental theology (Rahner); cultural theology (Tillich); and political theology and imperfect modernity.

What has the volume to offer? Perhaps most valuable is the analysis of the social, cultural and political context of modern theology (pp. 1-12, 53-56). This is very helpful, though not necessarily accurate in every detail. Secondly, there is the exposition of modern theological movements which blends sympathetic and positive exposition with critique. For example, Bultmann is chided for, *inter alia*, absolutizing the nineteenth-century scientific world-view (pp. 14, 65f.) and for limiting the biblical message to the private inwardness of the believer (p. 66). But his positive role in challenging theology to face the hermeneutical task is also applauded. Tillich is also chided for 'privatizing the Christian message'.

Thirdly, Moltmann's own theology can be seen. There is much in his approach from which the evangelical can learn, though there are points where the ways will diverge. Moltmann's attitude to other religions will be one of these. Moltmann's concept of a 'theology of freedom' (pp. 24-26) owes a considerable amount to modern liberal philosophy and is not so obviously related to the biblical message. In the second article Moltmann argues that the 'mediation' of the gospel requires both adaptation and contradiction, relationship to the present context and fidelity to the Christian message, 'therapeutic' relevance to the modern situation and 'apologetic' defence of the Christian faith (pp. 54, 88, 94). This is certainly correct in that all good contextualization of the gospel will include these two elements. The challenge of the task lies precisely in knowing when to adapt and when to contradict. One person's adaptation is another person's syncretism. One person's contradiction is another person's reactionary conservatism. Moltmann's own attempt at the balance will not satisfy all readers at every point, but all should be stimulated by this volume to think the issues through more carefully.

Tony Lane, London Bible College.

Patience and Power: Grace for the First World
Jean-Marc Laporte
Paulist Press, New York and Mahwah, N.J., 1988, 297 pp., $14.95.

In this book the distinguished Canadian Jesuit scholar Jean-Marc Laporte, who is a leading authority on St Thomas Aquinas, gives us his latest reflections on the doctrine of grace. He takes as his theme the division of the church into East, West and 'South', the last referring to the emerging churches in the Third World. He recognizes that each of these churches has something of vital importance to contribute to the whole, and that the Western church will never have a fully developed theology unless and until it can incorporate insights from other great Christian traditions. Obviously he is on solider ground in dealing with the East than he is with the 'South', since the identity and coherence of the latter is highly questionable. As it turns out, it mostly consists of the liberation theology of Paulo Freire, which is interesting, but hardly on a par with the giants he discusses in the rest of the book.

His main theme is that a renewal of the theology of grace in the Western church is vitally important if Christianity is to thrive into the next century. He regards this tradition as central to the church as a whole, and traces it back from Thomas Aquinas through Augustine to St Paul. (The Eastern tradition, in contrast, owes more to St John and the developments of his thought by the Greek Fathers.) Of special interest is the position he assigns to Luther and other Protestants. Far from dismissing them, he recognizes that Luther recaptured the necessary understanding of grace as rooted in the concept of a personal relationship with God. His claim is that this understanding was also developed by Thomas, but by the time of Luther had been obscured by late mediaeval scholasticism.

Protestant readers of this book will be amazed and impressed by the breadth of Laporte's theological understanding, and will find themselves in sympathy with much of what he says. The chapter on Aquinas may be harder to follow than the others, since it is more specialized, but the effort to come to grips with his thought will be well rewarded. He sees issues on the broad canvas of development, and does his best to fit Pauline teaching on salvation, for instance, into the doctrine of the Trinity as this was developed by Augustine and refined by Aquinas. There are times when his attempts at reconciliation may have gone too far (as, for example, in his restrained praise of Pelagius), and most of what he says about current society, including Third World problems, seems badly digested in comparison with his mastery of the classics. But if these things can be sifted out, the real treasure in this book will shine all the more brightly. Evangelicals should read and learn from it as an example of theology in the great tradition of the Western church.

Gerald Bray, Oak Hill College.

Renewal Theology: God, the World and Redemption: Systematic Theology From a Charismatic Perspective
J. Rodman Williams
Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie, 1988, 443 pp., $19.95.

This first of a two-volume series is written by an evangelical scholar with a Reformed background who has been involved in the charismatic renewal movement for 25 years. The author lectures at the CBN University in Virginia. The book is a fairly traditional treatment in 15 chapters of the theological task, theology proper, the human person, sin, covenant, and Christology, done at the Bible college or early university level. In the section 'The Method of Doing of Theology' (pp. 21-28), Williams cites such factors as 'seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit', 'reliance on the Scriptures', 'familiarity with church history', *etc.*, but offers no discussion of what theoretical method (*e.g.* the inductive, deductive, verificational, *etc.*) one ought to follow to do theology most responsibly. His half-page treatment of the important issue of 'integration' in theology (p. 19) makes no mention of the Zondervan multivolume work by G. Lewis and B. Demarest, entitled *Integrative Theology*. The first volume of this work (1987) develops an extensive rationale for integrating biblical exegesis, historical theology, apologetics, and practical theology, and it explicates a viable technical method for

achieving said integration in the formulation of one's Christian world-and-life-view.

Given the author's Reformed past and charismatic present, it is interesting to see where and how these diverse influences manifest themselves in the book. Williams' all-too-brief discussion (four pages) of general revelation clearly reflects his Reformed background. Concerning the practical outcome of general revelation *vis-à-vis* non-Christian people, the author concludes that 'Some awareness of God continues, some strivings of conscience, some mixed-up knowledge — but *nothing positive remains*' (p. 35). G. Lewis and this reviewer (see *Integrative Theology*, vol. 1, ch. 2) conclude from the scriptural evidence that whereas general revelation affords no *saving* knowledge of God, it does provide the sinner with a *general* knowledge (variously distorted) of God's existence, character, and moral demands which, indeed, renders possible human intellectual, moral, and social existence in the world. Apart from God's general revelation and common grace, life as we know it simply would not be. Williams also follows the Reformed perspective in his doctrine of original sin.

The reader must search diligently to identify the peculiarly 'charismatic' aspects in this first volume of *Renewal Theology*. The author states that theology ought to be done in an attitude of prayer, in a spirit of reverence, out of a heart of love, and for the glory of God. But surely these concerns are close to the heart of every sincere evangelical writer and are not the unique possession of the 'charismatic' theologian. The author's 'charismatic' emphasis emerges most clearly in his rejection of the cessation of miracles in the post-apostolic era. In harmony with contemporary renewal emphases, the author allows for the continuance of miracles in the church. The purpose of miracles is not to attest fresh revelation, but to confirm 'the authentication . . . of the true preaching of the gospel at any time in history' (p. 165). Any cessation of miracles in history must be attributed to the failure of God's people. Williams also denies the theory of a limited atonement (p. 369) and the so-called *extra-Calvinisticum* (p. 327).

Other aspects of the book may raise questions in the reader's mind. For example, Williams opposes the dichotomous view of the human person, claiming that a body–soul dichotomy would seriously minimize spirit — the reality by which persons relate to God. 'Trichotomy does point in the right direction' (p. 213). This reviewer is also concerned about the author's ready use of the neo-orthodox rubric of 'paradox' to describe the reality of the incarnate Jesus Christ (pp. 342ff.). A theological explication of the person of the God-man that is faithful to the biblical data and logically noncontradictory can be developed without appeal (so early, at least) to the category of paradox (see *Integrative Theology*, vol. 2, ch. 6). After examining relevant data the author concludes that the NT *hilastērion* language is best understood in the sense of 'expiation' rather than 'propitiation' (pp. 360-361).

Some insights brought forth in the book are very helpful, including the treatments of creation, of the origin of sin, of God's covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David and the new covenant, and the discussion of Jesus as the representative and universal man who belongs to all people of all times and in all cultures.

In sum, *Renewal Theology* represents a well-written and handsomely produced general, as opposed to technical, survey of theology from a purported 'charismatic' perspective. Admittedly its interaction with scholarly literature throughout Christian history — both ancient and contemporary — is rather limited and relegated to footnotes. Given the fact that the book's development of theological themes comports fairly well with what most centrist evangelicals hold, the reader of *Renewal Theology* awaits the publication of volume 2 to discover who the 'renewal' people or those called 'charismatics' really are.

Bruce A. Demarest, Denver Seminary, Denver, Colarado.

Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements

Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee (eds.)
Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, Zondervan, 1988, 911 pp., $29.95.

With the publication of the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, scholars and students have for the first time a reliable and easy-to-use basic resource guide. No other single work contains so much information on such a variety of subjects relating to these important religious movements. Anyone with interest, academic or otherwise, in these movements will find this *Dictionary* highly informative and probably indispensable.

As in other works of this *genre*, the *Dictionary* is the product of a large number of scholars. Most of the sixty-six contributors are American (eight come from outside the United States), most are male (only four women were included), most are Protestant (four Roman Catholics, as far as I could determine), and most would classify themselves as participants in these movements, at least to some extent.

Dictionaries of this type are difficult to review. By nature they are devoid of plot or story-line. The large number of contributors precludes any single point of view. Nevertheless, the careful reader can detect a thesis of sorts running throughout the book: the Pentecostal and charismatic movements are authentic products of the Holy Spirit within the churches and deserve to be given their rightful place in the wider worlds of religious scholarship and Christian fellowship. Thus while we cannot say the book contains one perspective, we can say that it was written for a single purpose.

That purpose is carefully presented in the introduction, where the editors seek to place these movements within their various religious and historical contexts. There are no real surprises here and no new ground is broken. The editors begin by defining the similarities and differences between Pentecostal and charismatic in theological and ecclesiastical terms, then move on to uncover their historical roots in five rather recent theological developments: the Wesleyan emphasis on two works of grace in the Christian life (justification and sanctification); the stress of 'higher life' teachers on a post-conversion enduement of power for witness and service; the rise of dispensational premillennialism; an emphasis on faith-healing in the ministries of prominent evangelical teachers; and most importantly, the strong 'Restorationist' longing for the vitality and miracles of NT Christianity. These factors converged in the ministry of Charles F. Parham in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, caught fire in the Azusa Street Revival of 1906, and then spread to the rest of the world. In the twentieth century the desire for spiritual power and renewal in mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches precipitated the charismatic movement, which shared many of classical Pentecostalism's beliefs and behaviours but developed its own distinctiveness. In short, the introduction provides a good historical and theological overview so that readers can better understand all that follows.

Articles cover an impressive breadth of topics. Biographical entries include virtually all the Pentecostal and charismatic 'greats', usually with an admirable balance of appreciation and candour. Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart, for example, are portrayed 'warts and all'. Even the 'not so greats' get biographical treatment. In fact, one suspects that all one had to do to rate an article in the *Dictionary* is to be 'baptized in the Holy Spirit' and establish a moderately successful radio, television, missionary or local church ministry.

Other articles cover historical, theological and exegetical themes. Many books of the Bible, for example, are summarized and evaluated from the Pentecostal perspective. Pentecostal denominations and charismatic fellowships are deftly described; and theological disputes between 'insiders' are carefully unpacked and examined.

Of special interest are the articles on the movements' distinctive beliefs and religious behaviour. There are extensive treatments of 'baptism in the Holy Spirit', 'gifts of the Spirit', 'glossolalia', and other charismatic gifts. In general these articles are well done, carefully nuanced, and a clear statement of the conclusions of current scholarship, both inside and outside these movements. Often authors interact with social science research and admit, without capitulating to its perspectives, that spiritual phenomena may be analysed in a variety of ways. Occasionally, however, authors must 'chew more than they can bite off' from biblical and theological data. For example, in the articles on 'word of knowledge' and 'word of wisdom' authors strenuously seek an elusive biblical basis for contemporary practice. After all their exegesis, it is still hard to see NT parallels of the televangelist who announces through a 'word of knowledge' that a goitre is dissolving in Cleveland.

As inclusive as the *Dictionary* seeks to be, there are some omissions. As the editors themselves admit, most emphasis is given to North America and Europe, while Africa, Asia and South America, where Pentecostalism is experiencing its greatest growth, receive little attention. On the other hand, most scholars would be willing to pay the book's price for Grant Wacker's fine article on 'Bibliography and Historiography of Pentecostalism (U.S.)'.

All in all, this is an excellent volume. It demonstrates that Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement have 'come of age'. Their ranks include first-rate scholars who are willing and able to engage in self-analysis and self-criticism. The book also reveals that these movements are beginning to suffer from the same things that afflict the broader evangelical movement: the stresses caused by success and wider acceptance in the world they used to condemn; and the growing theological diversity within their own ranks. If the level of scholarship demonstrated in the *Dictionary* is any indication of the movements' direction, one might be tempted to say, 'Welcome to modernity'.

Timothy P. Weber, Denver Seminary.

Philosophy of Religion

Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan

Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988, 402 pp., n.p.

This is a revised edition of a book originally written in 1974 by Professor Geisler alone. The authors cover four main topics: the nature of religious experience, the possibility of theistic proofs, religious language, and the problem of evil. There is thus no discussion of such topics as miracle or the nature of the soul.

The authors cover the ground with thoroughness, giving a large number of references. Probably a lot of students will find their practice of stating an argument (whether their own or someone else's) in a series of brief, numbered sentences helpful for clarity, though at times, I think, it makes for over-simplification.

There are three noteworthy sections where the authors cease simply to compile a basic textbook for students and set out at length a particular view of their own. These are the chapters dealing with the cosmological argument, with the theory of analogy in the section on religious language, and with the problem of evil. In dealing with the cosmological argument, Geisler and Corduan reject the form in which it has perhaps most often been stated, at least since Leibniz – in terms of reasons for the existence of things – and revert to an earlier pattern: finite, compound things require causes for their existence, and there cannot be an endless regress of causes (this claim is not based on empirical observation but on 'meta-physical necessity'), so there must be an infinite First Cause, who is to be identified with the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

On analogy, they agree with Scotus that our concepts of the divine qualities must be univocal, but add that they must be *predicated* analogically. Their examples to illustrate this idea are not all helpful: some seem indistinguishable from univocality (Socrates and Fido both being animals), while others suggest that a difference in degree is involved (flowers and God both being beautiful).

On evil they argue, not that this is the best of all possible worlds, but that it is the best of all possible ways to achieve the best of all possible (moral) worlds. This means that in a sense it is the *worst* of all possible (though not of all conceivable) worlds: for God will allow all the evil that is necessary to achieve his goal, and not a bit less. This section is in some ways the most interesting part of the book.

There are, indeed, real difficulties in the details of their argument, and I think it will not really do as it stands; but its interest is still considerable.

Richard Sturch, Islip.

Darwin's Forgotten Defenders

David N. Livingstone

Wm. B. Eerdmans & Scottish Academic Press, 1987, 210 pp., £7.95.

David Livingstone has written a well-researched and very readable book that explores one aspect of the relationship between science and Christianity. His aim is to show how many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century evangelicals were in varying degrees favourably disposed towards the theory of evolution. Contrary to what many modern-day evangelicals may believe, some of our scholarly forebears did not react in a wholly negative way to Charles Darwin.

After setting the scene and recounting the Darwinian revolution, Dr Livingstone describes first how evangelical scientists and then how evangelical theologians met the challenge. Evangelical Christianity was the culturally dominant religion in nineteenth-century North America and therefore it is not surprising that there were many scientists in key institutions who were orthodox evangelical believers. Livingstone shows how men such as Asa Gray (Harvard), George F. Wright (Oberlin), James Dana (Yale), A.H. Guyot (Princeton), William Dawson (McGill), Alexander Winchell (Michigan), George Macluskie (Princeton) and others grappled with the issues raised by Darwin. They responded in different ways, some more favourably and others less so, but none dismissed any form of evolution as incompatible with orthodox Christianity. Livingstone points out how the issue for them was not so much the challenge of Darwinianism to the Bible as to the concept of divine design in nature.

Among the theologians opinion was more varied, but again surprisingly favourable. Charles Hodge of Princeton, the most eminent nineteenth-century Calvinist theologian, did react unfavourably to Darwin's theories, especially as they touched upon divine design. However, his colleague at the college, the philosopher James M'Cosh, took a more favourable view; as did, perhaps most surprisingly, B.B. Warfield. Other notable theologians such as R.L. Dabney, W.G.T. Shedd and Augustus Strong are dealt with, as well as British theologians such as James Orr.

It is only with the twentieth century that evangelicals began to divide over evolution. The modernist controversy signalled the decline of evangelical orthodoxy and the rise of theological liberalism in the churches and colleges. As the century wore on tensions over the issue rose. Livingstone helpfully puts the debate within its wider cultural context, especially in the period following the First World War. From a position of cultural ascendancy evangelicals were forced to the periphery of church life and society. The result was that evangelicals saw science as a threat. Towards the end of the book Livingstone takes the debate up to the present time.

This book gives the creation–evolution debate a needed historical perspective. It reveals how committed evangelicals grappled with the issues raised by Darwin in a sophisticated and learned manner. It also reminds us how evangelicals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were very much in the cultural and intellectual mainstream in a way their heirs have not been since. However, the book leaves some questions unanswered. Dr Livingstone ably expounds the various positions, but he does not deal with the theological issues raised. No doubt this was beyond his purpose in writing the book. Nevertheless, the theological issues are real ones, and whatever our forebears thought, we still have to deal with these. The theologians Dr Livingstone deals with were concerned with design and providence, but what about the reality of death in the world? How does the entry of death relate to evolution?

The other criticism I have of this enjoyable book is that it is written like a tract. Dr Livingstone has done his work well, but he has done so for a cause, that of theistic evolution. The book has a partisan flavour to it. That is no bad thing in itself, but I think it has coloured its treatment of more recent contributions to the debate. I found Dr Livingstone unnecessarily dismissive of those who do not echo the earlier tradition he has ably sought to recover.

Kenneth Brownell, Minister, East London Tabernacle Baptist Church.

The Transformation of Culture: Christian Social Ethics After H. Richard Niebuhr

Charles Scriven

Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988.

One recognizes a classic by the conversations it engenders. Nearly forty years after H. Richard Niebuhr wrote *Christ and Culture*, it is still being analysed, critiqued and revisioned. (In that work H. Richard Niebuhr outlines five ways that Christians understand the interaction of Christ and culture: 1. Christ above culture; 2. Christ of culture; 3. Christ against culture; 4. Christ and culture in paradox; and 5. Christ transforming culture.) Charles Scriven's book redefines the 'enduring problem' through Anabaptist eyes. It may, in fact, have been more aptly titled *Christ and Culture: An Anabaptist Revisions the Debate.*

Scriven focuses on two questions: 1. How the church should relate to the dual authorities of Christ and the prevailing culture, and 2. How the church can remain faithful to Jesus if it condones violence. H.R. Niebuhr saw these concerns as central to many in the 'Christ against culture' stream. Scriven turns the tables, analysing each of Niebuhr's categories as well as recent Christian social ethics in terms of these two questions.

This revisioning presents two problems. First, it is difficult to separate Scriven's reporting of Niebuhr's thought and his critique. In asking 'What Was Niebuhr's Real Question?' (chapter 2), Scriven is in danger of losing sight of what Niebuhr actually said. Secondly, framing the Christ and culture discussion in terms of a dual authority of Christ and culture subsumes the entire debate under one or two of Niebuhr's five types (Christ against culture and/or Christ and culture in paradox). Instead of discussing various views of the Christ/culture dynamic, Scriven focuses on a partial agenda: how Christians and the church respond to two disparate authorities.

After 'revisioning' Niebuhr's project, Scriven analyses the thought of nine recent Christian social ethicists. He discusses the theologies of Gustavo Gutierrez, Johannes Baptist Metz, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Stanley Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder, among others. He critiques the Christ/culture dynamic of each, asking his questions about dual authority and non-violence. Scriven's goal is to show that the Anabaptist analysis is more cogent than any other and that it shows the way that Christ transforms culture.

Scriven's analysis helps the reader to see the Christ and culture debate clearly from one point of view. For example, his arguments on natural law and pacifism are fairly predictable and come directly out of his tradition. His section on character ethics and Hauerwas is quite good, showing his familiarity and compatibility with this stream of ethics. On the

other hand, his interaction with Langdon Gilkey, who comes from a different and more synthetic tradition, makes one wonder if he feels the pull of that position at all. His assessments of the work of others bear the stamp of his Anabaptist tradition, showing the types of questions that face one attempting to be '*in* culture *as* loyalists to Christ' (p. 158, italics his).

The weaknesses as well as the strengths of that tradition are reflected in this work. One must take care, therefore, to keep Scriven's agenda clearly in mind. He does not give a thorough analysis of the thought of any one thinker, but rather selects his discussants and his points to further his own position. Scriven is forthright about the determined direction of his argument: 'Niebuhr charges Anabaptism with being anticultural, unresponsive to human social needs and goals', he states (p. 28). This book is a response to that charge.

Scriven does not solve the 'enduring problem'. Nor does he show that the Anabaptist tradition is *the* definitive way to Christ's transformation of culture. However, the discerning reader interested in hearing a strongly argued Anabaptist position in the debate will appreciate this book.

Francis S. Adeney, Visiting Scholar, Von Hugel Institute, St. Edmund's College, Cambridge.

Theology and Politics

Duncan B. Forrester

Oxford: Blackwell, 1988, ix + 182 pp., £7.95 pbk.

In the opening chapter of this book it soon becomes clear that the Professor of Christian Ethics at the University of Edinburgh is not among those who hold that the Christian religion should keep out of politics, and that he is among those who believe that Christianity's usual political stance should be a critical one. This he holds to be the witness of the OT and NT, and it inclines him to prefer the sectarian Tertullian to the establishmentarian Eusebius, but the more subtle and ambiguous Augustine to both of them.

It also leads him, in Chapter Two, to argue against any position that removes politics in principle from the reach of theological scrutiny – whether espoused by Luther, Enlightenment philosophers, the secular theologians of the 1960s, Edward Norman, H.M. Kuitert, John Habgood or Roger Scruton.

Liberation theology takes the stage in Chapter Three and never strays far from the footlights in the ensuing chapters on the Bible, Christology and the Church, since the author judges it 'the liveliest and most challenging school of political theology today' (pp. 150-151). Perhaps the major point where Forrester reckons liberation theology to tell against its Western political alternatives – *e.g.* Moltmann (pp. 60-61) – is in its insistence that theology should be done in the service of those who are poor in economic, social and political terms *here and now*. In other words, it must be committed to the cause of 'liberation' in the actual context in which it finds itself. One of the salient characteristics of a theology that is engaged in such praxis is the seriousness with which it takes the task of social analysis – both of society in general and of the Christian churches in particular – in order to identify the peculiar forms that oppression takes in its own context and so to specify the kinds of liberation to be pursued.

Evangelicals will be especially interested in Professor Forrester's account of liberation theology's use of the Bible, and in particular in his comparison of it with fundamentalism (pp. 84-85). Although he does not state his own opinion directly, he does imply approval of the liberation theologians' conservative assumption that valid analogies can be drawn between the Bible and today's politics – *pace* Dennis Nineham and Jack Sanders (pp. 90-91) – and of their radical proposition that only those with the right political commitments are in a position to interpret Scripture properly. He is less critical than this reviewer would have liked of liberation theology's tendency to take *political* liberation as *the* hermeneutical criterion, and so to regard as authoritative only those parts of Scripture that accord with it. For, even granted the necessity of some (provisional) canon by which to interpret the Canon, can liberation theology really be said to have a 'high doctrine of Scriptural authority' (p. 83) when its presuppositions about what the text *should* say sometimes lead it to take as authoritative what the text allegedly tries hard *not* to say (p. 102)?

Still, if Duncan Forrester finds in liberation theology's use of Scripture perhaps a little too much to admire, he is by no means unaware of its weaknesses and limitations in other respects. He is implicitly critical of some liberation theology, for example, when he insists that political theology should aspire to the *reciprocal* interpretation of the classical theological tradition and the political context, and not to the *reduction* of the former to the latter (pp. 127, 150). Moreover, he is quite sure that, for all its exemplary virtues, liberation theology is not the only valid form of political theology; indeed, according to its own canons different political contexts require different theologies (pp. 150-151). Accordingly, he can envisage situations where the prophetic, Augustinian model of political theology – of which he reckons liberation theology a species (p. 168) – would have little to offer: for example, where the church has the opportunity to give what he nicely calls 'disturbing support' to those who wander up and down the perplexing corridors of power (pp. 43, 105). In other words, there is even a time and a place for a more Eusebian approach (pp. 160-163).

Duncan Forrester has given us a very readable, jargon-free, historically informed and well balanced account of a topic that pervades theological discussion today. Students of theology at all levels and of a variety of theological and political persuasions will learn from it.

Nigel Biggar, Latimer House & Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

Spirituality and Liberation

R. McAfee Brown

Spire, 1988, 160 pp., £4.95.

This book, like Gaul, is in three parts. The first part exposes the need to overcome the great fallacy of dualism. At least 35 examples of dualism are offered, but the title of the book suggests the unifying concern, which is to reconcile spirituality and liberation after their tragic divisions into worship and politics, inwardness and social action, *etc.* Dualism must be repudiated in any form, but so must any reduction of spirituality to liberation or liberation to spirituality. Rather, Brown recommends a double movement – 'withdrawal and return' – whereby each nurtures the other in a unified life. The second part gives 'clues for construction'. Here an examination of OT (Micah), NT (incarnation) and liturgical/sacramental materials purports to establish the unity of the sacred and the secular, true spirituality and true liberating practice. It ends with a celebration of the spirituality of sex, including an apparent endorsement of sexual relations outside heterosexual marriage. The third part offers the conclusion that spirituality and liberation are two ways of talking about the same thing. A consciously and literally *radical* approach to interpretation will learn that 'when we do get to the root meaning of either term, *the inclusive reality to which each of them points is the same reality*' (p. 114). Drawing on Guttierez, the proposal essentially sustained is that a single, unifying act of life defines Christian discipleship, with prayer and the quest of justice as components but not as separables. Dualism, the great fallacy, is banished.

The book is written in a deliberately racy style which, while it sometimes brings to life the biblical materials, also sometimes carries away its author, for instance when he dubs the opening verses of Hebrews 11 as dull and confusing (p. 140). But what of the substance? The claim that spirituality and liberation (*e.g.* active commitment to social justice) need to be integrated is sound enough and important enough. If we have heard this a lot recently, some of us doubtless need to hear it again. However, the presentation of this claim is marred by at least five defects.

1. The central idea, dualism, is confused. Thus Brown lists 'Greek vs. Hebrew' as a dualism to be repudiated (p. 26), but then he proceeds to insist on opposing the Hebrew to the Greek understanding in order to show the non-dualist nature of biblical religion (p. 63, but see too p. 27). He ignores both the fact and the significance of the fact that there *is* such a thing as a healthy spirit in a sick body or a sick spirit in a healthy body, finding even the language 'physical or spiritual' dualistic (Berdyaev, p. 113).

2. There are too many assumptions and too few arguments about the 'political' nature of Christ's ministry. This is a difficult area, for people's surface reading of the gospel data apparently differs from culture to culture and such reading in any case needs to be supplemented by knowledge of the first-century background. But the closer we sail to the proposition that Che Guevara helps us redefine Christian prudence (Balasuryia, p. 133), the more we need to be clear on the differences between Che and Jesus.

3. There is no awareness of the danger in modern advocacy of liberation, namely the danger of surrendering distinctive Christian identity. Following a lead from the Jewish author Elie Wiesel, Brown aspires to communicate to non-Christians by writing as a Christian. Fair enough. But when cello playing is given as the instance of spirituality and remarks on the transcendence of art offered as a way of explaining the movement to break down dualism, the author seems to miss his mark. Yet asking about the distinctiveness of Christianity is always useful when discussing liberation.

4. We need more specificity on our attitudes to the poor. It is true that Brown is concrete in his attention to liberation, as his final chapter well illustrates. Yet there are different levels, conditions and causes of poverty. Further, as the words of Berdyaev reveal, there are different *attitudes* to poverty: there may be a time for counselling others as

one counsels oneself to *endure* something and times for sparing no effort to revolutionize something. We need guidance to discriminate, a guidance offered by those who experience poverty to those of us who live in luxury.

5. Finally, we need a sound historical sense of what the church has held to be essential to spirituality. Brown thinks that the church for most of her history has been guilty of the great fallacy. Others tell us it all happened at the Enlightenment. Such statements are often made without supporting evidence. Granted that Brown is not trying to write a history, one wants to see the basis of the claim that so many have got it wrong all these centuries. And that brings us back to our first point: clarity on 'dualism' is essential.

Theologians have doubtless often revelled in reflection, with little concern for action. Amongst the strengths of liberation theologies is their criticism of this. But we cannot sidestep the need for careful and thorough reflection. Then positive truths embedded in Professor Brown's contentions will be allowed to emerge.

Stephen Williams, United Theological College, Aberystwyth.

Reformation Thought: An Introduction
Alister E. McGrath
Oxford: Blackwell, 1988, 212 pp., n.p.

Any new book by Alister McGrath is an event, and this one is no exception. Though it is neither a contribution to Reformation scholarship nor a work of popularization, it is valuable as a tool for budding Reformation scholars. It possesses a number of virtues.

The first arises from the very fact that it is an introduction to Reformation *thought*. For too long the Reformation has been hijacked by political and social historians, especially those who have an ideological axe to grind. It is good to be reminded, somewhat forcefully, that other things were involved and were in fact central. These, as it happens, were *religious* ideas.

Another virtue is that it is an introduction which introduces by a process, not of simplification, but of explanation and elucidation. The student is informed of the current state of research in language which is understandable but not patronizing. Recent hypotheses are succinctly summarized, and technical terms are clearly explained.

Furthermore, the swimmer in historical waters is gently guided from the shallow to the deep end of the pool. He is provided with numerous bibliographies – short lists of books for further reading at the end of each chapter, a 'select bibliography' consisting of 46 items, and a 13-page 'supplementary annotated bibliography' (whose system of annotation, it has to be said, is the one infuriating feature of the book, as far as this reader is concerned). A total of seven appendices encourage the reader to probe more deeply into the subject. They range from the elementary (a glossary of theological and historical terms and a chronology of political and intellectual history) to the almost abstruse (*e.g.* on finding and using major primary sources).

The content of the book is appropriate to its purpose. The introduction deals with various preliminary matters – the demand for reform, the concept of 'reformation', the importance of printing, the social context (briefly), and the religious ideas of the Reformers (in the broadest of terms). The main chapters are on late medieval religion (all too brief), humanism, scholasticism, grace, Scripture, sacraments, the church and political thought: a feast of good things.

The question is bound to arise whether a Luther scholar has been able to do justice to the other Reformers. No doubt the Calvin and Anabaptist specialists will make their laments, but the verdict of a generalist with a special interest in Luther is that the bias is there, but not seriously so.

The one small question about this book is: for whom is it targeted? Obviously intended for the undergraduate, it is particularly suited to the student with special interest in the Reformation who is anxious not only to swim in the deep end but to dive into it! It would be a thousand pities if the less able student for whom it would be so helpful were to be deterred by some of the appendices.

Harold H. Rowdon, London Bible College.

Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1780s to the 1980s
D.W. Bebbington
London: Unwin Hyman, 1988, £35.00 hb, £11.95 pb.

For many years British evangelicalism has lacked an adequate history. It has consequently been easy to generalize from a slight acquaintance with the sources and then to fit evangelicalism into an interpretation which had much more to do with the perspective of the writer than with a careful examination of the evidence.

Thanks to David Bebbington's classic study, a landmark has been laid down which must be a definitive point of reference for any future work which claims to be informed. Dr Bebbington is an outstanding historian with an unrivalled knowledge of the primary and secondary sources, an empathy with his subject-matter and a capacity to write in crisp, lucid prose. His work is made much sharper because it is undergirded by a simple thesis, namely that evangelicalism, far from being an unchanged phenomenon, has 'altered enormously over time in response to the changing assumptions of Western civilization' (p. 19).

Evangelicalism, he argues, is a distinct phenomenon of the last 250 years, owing of course much to its heritage, in particular the Reformation and Puritanism, but also in sharp discontinuity with that past. It was distinct most of all, at the time of its origins, in that it proclaimed a confident doctrine of assurance. It was based on an experience of God (to quote Jonathan Edwards, 'a supernatural inward sense, or insight', p. 49). Confidence in experience as the fount of knowledge was an Enlightenment characteristic. Indeed, argues Dr Bebbington, evangelicalism in its initial eighteenth-century dress, far from being anti-rationalist, was a product of the Enlightenment. John Wesley is no anti-Enlightenment hero who can provide ammunition for twentieth-century critics of the Age of Reason. Rather, his faithful followers imbibed a 'rational religion that deprecated visions and revelations' (p. 52).

The mood however changes in the nineteenth century. Within evangelicalism there was 'a heightened supernaturalism' (p. 81). This was typified in the belief that the preaching of the gospel would not gradually bring the millennium. Only the second coming of Christ would inaugurate the new age. Supernaturalism was evident too in the emphasis on tongues and healing, the underplaying of reason (and hence of natural theology) and the development of a much 'higher' view of biblical inspiration. This mood change was, Dr Bebbington urges, a product of Romanticism. In its reaction to the Enlightenment it rejected arid reason and gave centrality rather to feeling, intuition and awe before the glories of the natural world. Thus the great annual inspirational event for so many late nineteenth-century evangelicals was the convention held at Keswick, which blended 'all the attractions of mountains and lakes, remoteness and grandeur, artistic associations and memories of the Lake Poets' (p. 158).

Dr Bebbington might also have used Romanticism as an explanation of the distinctive characteristics of twentieth-century evangelicalism. There are, after all, obvious affinities between the nineteenth-century holiness and the twentieth-century charismatic movements. There are also differences, the product, he maintains in keeping with his thesis, of twentieth-century culture and, in particular, of modernism, which remains sceptical about the possibility of arriving at any objective reality. Rather than engage in such a fruitless search, it seeks to express the spontaneity of the self, delving back to the unconscious and, in art, deliberately defying 'good taste'. Within the charismatic movement (as in the Oxford Group before it) the emphasis on spontaneous expression, the apparent preoccupation with healing (especially psychological), the exaltation of the non-rational and the anti-structural bias all have, he contends, their roots in modernist culture.

Is Dr Bebbington right? In broad outline surely yes. From its earliest days the church has realized that gospel truths will be expressed differently according to cultural heritage (see Acts 15). All are the products of their culture, and evangelicals can be no different in this respect; they should not be surprised at how much they have changed through this period. Whether Dr Bebbington does not sometimes over-schematize and produce, for example, turning points in history which are improbably precise (*e.g.* pp. 47, 88, 94, 233), giving insufficient attention to the overlap of cultures (for example the Enlightenment in the twentieth century), will occupy historians in much constructive debate. How far any particular cultural formation has obscured the heart of the gospel is a proper question for the historical theologian but one which Dr Bebbington, the historian of religion, scarcely addresses. In the end the gospel can never be merely a reflection of its culture. Though it cannot communicate if there is no reflection, it must also stand over against that culture. In that respect it would be encouraging to see contemporary evangelical Christians becoming as sharp in their critique of aspects of modernism as they are dismissive of the Enlightenment.

This is a very important book for any Christians (and not only evangelicals) who have a serious desire to understand their origins. It is scholarly, but its good organization, frequent sub-headings and its admirable (and sometimes memorable) one- or two-sentence summaries at the end of each section should carry any readers equipped to read this journal through many issues, controversies and personalities which may be unfamiliar to them. They will emerge in the end with a more

profound self-awareness, and that is high praise indeed.

C. Peter Williams, Trinity College, Bristol.

Helping the Helpers: Supervision and Pastoral Care
J. Foskett and D. Lyall
London: SPCK, 1988, 164 pp., £5.95.

This book sets out to explore the themes and methods of training and supporting those who exercise a ministry of pastoral care within the church. It recognizes that helpers need help themselves and aims to look at the support given to both ordained and lay people.

The first chapter deals with new developments, such as the increased importance of lay pastoral care. From the beginning the need to build up a community of faith, rather than eliminating defects in a person's life, is seen as the focus of counselling.

The main emphasis of the book is on how the relationship and process of supervision works; so it begins with looking at a basic Action-Reflection model of pastoral supervision. One of the strengths of the book is the helpful use of carefully documented illustrations to show, not only how good supervision works, but how to remedy the problems.

Whilst models can be useful, at times this book does rely too heavily on their use. Models are helpful guides but when too legalistically followed become restrictive – people do not always fit neatly into categories. The excessive use of models can lead to pre-judgment on a person's real needs and the supervision he requires.

Chapter 6 was particularly helpful in suggesting ways of supervision, *e.g.* triads – three people who are involved in ministry regularly meeting to consult together, and to support each other. The book goes on to look at the tensions within the contemporary approaches to pastoral care – such as pastoral care being both the function of the whole people of God and also a function of trained people within the church. Possible problems in the relationship between student and supervisor are then considered.

The book tends to focus on supervision with regard to the professional in ministry. It would have been useful to explore how the professional in ministry caters for the supervision and support of the laity involved in pastoral care. Overall this is a book worth reading, since the subject of supervision for those involved in this ministry has been neglected.

Clare Hendry, Oak Hill College.

Family Matters. The Pastoral Care of Personal Relationships
Sue Walrond-Skinner
London: SPCK, 1988, 179 pp., £4.95.

Written by an experienced practitioner who is also an Anglican deacon, this book sets out to describe the theory and practice of family therapy. Every minister of the gospel will be sure to meet families presenting a whole range of problems. This book provides a thorough, clear introduction to one way of helping them. Those who have no particular background in counselling theory and techniques will find it rather specialized and technical, though it is sure to stimulate thinking, and wrestling with insights and ideas not considered before. It reflects a Catholic Anglicanism and has an interesting final chapter entitled 'Towards a Theology of the Family' (which omits any reference to the writings of Paul), but evangelicals will feel that biblical and theological concepts and principles should be given a more controlling role than they are.

The book begins by explaining certain key ideas in family therapy. These ideas are then developed in chapters which describe and illustrate the counselling process itself and some of the various approaches which can be adopted. The author is highly practical and examples from case-work make her meaning clear. The starting-point is that the family must be considered as a whole, and counselled as a whole. Even problems which may appear to concern only one member of the family must be viewed in the context of the whole because the family consists of a network of relationships which all interact with each other. The objective of family therapy is to help the family function better by bringing about structural change. In achieving this the balance of responsibility rests with the family rather than the counsellor.

What, however, is a family? The author insists that we must 'avoid sacralising one kind of family structure'; we have to face the fact that families come in many varieties and forms. We also need to avoid a static view of the family, since family life changes as it passes through the family life cycle (she outlines seven stages in this), each change imposing its own particular strain on the family. The author believes that understanding can often be gained by constructing a genogram, or family tree, which maps out family history and locates its members in their relational position.

In all this there is a great deal that is of positive value and it is surprising that the concept of treating the family as a whole is such a recent development, an unfortunate result of the individualistic tendency in Western thinking. There are questions, however. If the concern is simply with family dysfunction and restructuring relationships to enable it to function more adeuqately, where is the place for individual sin, for apology and forgiveness? And what is a family like when it is functioning well? Is it just that its members relate well to each other, and to people outside the family, or does it function in particular ways pleasing to God and made known by him?

Paul E. Brown, Hanley, Staffs.

The Bauer Thesis Examined: The Geography of Heresy in the Early Christian Church.
Thomas A. Robinson
(Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 248 pp. + xiv.

The publication of Walter Bauer's *Rechtgäubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum* in 1934 stirred no wide interest but it did attract the attention of some significant scholars. Its thesis was that the classical theory of the development of orthodoxy and heresy, the priority and majority of orthodoxy, was incorrect; although heresies were forms of community and faith that later generations would reject, earliest Christianity in most regions was first and strongest heretical. Bauer basically skipped the New Testament as a field of study and worked on the literature at the end of or just after its era. He divided the evidence into geographical areas and made his case for each. Only Rome fits the description of having an orthodox majority from the beginning. (That was itself an unexpected claim from a staunch Protestant.)

The volume was republished with additional essays by others in 1964 and appeared in an English translation from the United States during 1971. Although the thesis is still held by some prominent historians of early Christianity, it has received rather scathing criticism in recent years. Some early reviews called it into question. H.E.W. Turner's *The Pattern of Christian Truth*, the Bampton Lectures of 1954, attempted a serious refutation and a spate of articles and parts of studies since its translation have attacked various sections of Bauer's study. Robinson's effort is one of the first books since Turner's to reconsider the topic.

The volume is organized in three parts, each more successful than the previous one. The first, concerned with the history leading to the debate, is introductory. Anyone aware of the problem will not find the observations here particularly trenchant, although the theological student will be brought into the discussion with some sense of its wider context.

The second part begins to show the power of Robinson's effort and his sense of the inadequacy of Bauer's thesis. Wisely he includes numerous comments from Helmut Koester's *Introduction to the New Testament* which in so many ways attempts to sharpen the focus of Bauer's thesis both by accepting the premises that heresy often preceded orthodoxy and that investigation should be pursued on a geographical basis. Robinson questions that geographical method itself, and then argues that Edessa, Egypt, Corinth, Rome, Jerusalem and Antioch have far too little information about them to support any kind of hypothesis concerning the relationship of orthodoxy and heresy. The data is either 'ambiguous' or 'mute'. Overall that well may be true. But on occasion, Robinson does not deal with some of the important information. When he deals with Egypt, Robinson neither mentions that the Western Text of Acts describes Apollos as an Alexandrian nor notices that Morton Smith studied an interesting fragment from Clement of Alexandria. He also does not treat certain parts of Ignatius's epistles that contain information about the martyr's concern for Christianity in Antioch. It is still obvious, however, that the caution and good judgment of a fine historian are at work.

The last three chapters focus on the information for Ephesus and Asia Minor. Here Robinson is at his best. He devastates Bauer's thesis, showing clearly that its weakness is not portrayed by offering yet another speculative reconstruction of the silences. Precisely because this geographical area offers the most textual evidence of any region of early Christianity, it is the finest test case. And in many instances Bauer's interpretation of the data which apparently support his thesis fails because of the misused paradigm or a misread text.

This volume by itself will not defeat what is an ever-weakening hypothesis. But no one can defend Bauer's thesis without going directly through it. And one of its major aims, describing the best attested region of early Christianity (Ephesus and Asia Minor) as a stronghold of orthodoxy, is a bullseye.

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BOOK REVIEWS

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20)