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Book Reviews

TRIUMPH OF THE KING: The Message of 2 Samuel

Gordon J.Keddie

Evangelical Press, Darlington 1990 267pp. £6.95pb. ISBN 0 85234 272 1

Once again Gordon Keddie has produced a fine piece of work that will prove to be of great value to preacher and Bible student alike. *Triumph of the King* carries on where *Dawn of a Kingdom* leaves off, the latter being the author's exposition of 1 Samuel. Both volumes are in the Welwyn Commentary Series. This commentary uses the *New International Version* English text. Being written in a clear, straightforward style it is not difficult to read. Moreover it is spiritually rewarding.

The author correctly sees David as occupying centre stage within 2 Samuel and thus orders his exposition accordingly. He divides the book into six parts and entitles them *Revival—David the King* (chaps. 1–10); *Retrogression—David and Bathsheba* (chaps. 11 and 12); *Rebellion—David and Absalom* (chaps. 13–19.8); *Restoration—David's return* (chaps. 19.9–21); *Reflection—David's prophecy of Messiah* (chap. 22); and *Recessional—David's last days* (chaps. 23 and 24). Under each heading the text is carefully explained and applied not just in the context of David's life but also of salvation history. In particular, as indicated above, Keddie sees David not just as a type of Christ but also as one who contemplated the coming, sufferings and kingdom of the Messiah. He is also honest, recognizing as he does, and as we all know, that David was far from perfect. Helpful, practical insights abound. Challenging lessons are drawn out and, where appropriate, pressed home.

I have no hesitation in commending this volume most warmly. It will be used to great profit by preachers as they prepare sermons and by those who wish to get to grips with this portion of Scripture in their private quiet times.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne

GEORGE CURRY

I AM JEREMIAH Alan Pain

Kingsway, Eastbourne 1990 155pp. £2.99

ISBN 0 86065 722 1

This is an imaginary autobiographical account of Jeremiah and his message. It is intended for personal and group study 'provided you separate imagination from interpretation' (Introduction, p. 12). Two thirds of the book is devoted to an insight into the prophet's personality and background, while the remainder concentrates on his message. The author assumes that the reader is already familiar with Jeremiah and the book is not a short cut to a fuller understanding of the prophet. Pain sometimes uses unnecessary jargon (for example, 'cultic liturgy', p. 63) and enters into academic discussion, such as the debate about the identity of Perah (p. 43, cf. Jeremiah 13:5), suggesting that he is not entirely sure of his target readership. He tries to remain faithful to the book of Jeremiah as far as possible and includes frequent quotations from the *New International Version*, although these

break the flow of the text. At times the author lets his imagination wander freely, suggesting, for example, that Jeremiah admired but did not understand Isaiah (p. 15) and enjoyed reading Hosea (p. 51)!

The book is a brave attempt to make an unfamiliar part of the Bible more understandable and the last five chapters, on the message of Jeremiah, contain a helpful analysis of the content and context of the prophet's message: the best part of the book. Pain's humorous approach and Sue Lea's line drawings help to popularize a prophecy of which many fight shy, but it is doubtful whether a serious Bible student would be satisfied with a study which owes more to the imagination of the author than to the original prophecy. The approach is one which has been used effectively in the past, but on this occasion it does not quite come off.

144 Marton Road, Bridlington, East Yorkshire

ANDREW MAUCHAN

JESUS IN JOHN John Sutters

Churchman Publishing Ltd., Worthing, 1990 139pp. £4.95pb.

ISBN 185093 200 X

In view of the library of books and devotional writings on the Gospel of John it may be questioned whether another is necessary. John Sutters answers it by giving to the public a work that inspires the mind and moves the heart. His book is neither a commentary nor a treatise. The method that he uses is to select incidents that John records of the ministry of Jesus and to interpret them by his Person and claims. He accepts that John's Gospel is the only factual and accurate eye witness account of what Jesus said and did, the Synoptic Gospels being secondary, not primary. For the author John's account of the feeding of the five thousand, the healing of the blind man, and the raising of Lazarus were literal events, that with others and Christ's statements of himself establish him as the eternal Son of God. Throughout, he delves into Christ's mind as it gradually explored the nature of the kingdom and kingship in the face of growing political challenge by the Jewish authorities. To this end he interprets the case of the woman taken in adultery which appears in a sixth century manuscript as factually true, and not either a displaced episode or as the production of a later disciple or disciples. He regards it as a Pharisaic, factual challenge to Jesus on his view of the Mosaic Law. This conservative approach to the Gospel of John is stimulating and refreshing. Set forth in short chapters that are aids to meditation, Sutters's book will help much to establish the true nature of Jesus, and draw the reader closer to Him. Underlying what he writes is the question, 'Who is Jesus?'. To him He is the eternal Christ sharing the Father's mature and glory. As the God-man his works and statements of himself in the Fourth Gospel are thus entirely credible. Such is Sutters's viewpoint set forth in lucid compelling thought-forms.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

JAMES: WORD BIBLICAL COMMENTARY VOLUME 48 R. P. Martin
 Word Books, Waco, Texas 1988 cix + 240pp. £18.95 ISBN 0 8499 0247 9

This is R. P. Martin's second contribution to the *Word* commentary series, of which he is the New Testament editor. And an excellent contribution it is, too.

It follows the standard pattern of the *Word* series: an extensive introduction precedes a commentary which moves section-by-section through the letter, providing for each section (a) an extensive bibliography of English, German and French writing on the passage; (b) a translation by the author; (c) notes—pretty full, in this case—on technical matters of grammar and text; (d) introductory remarks on the 'Form/Structure/Setting' of the passage; (e) phrase-by-phrase comment on the Greek text (knowledge of Greek is essential to derive profit from this section); and (f) a concluding 'Explanation' which seeks to reflect theologically on the overall message of the section. The volume concludes with indices of ancient and modern authors, principal topics, and Biblical texts.

I think that Martin has produced a masterpiece within this format. The introduction, which amounts to some eighty pages, succinctly covers all the basic issues of background, authorship, purpose, message and structure with the sure touch of a scholar equipped for his task with a monumental knowledge of the relevant ancient and modern literature, and a sensitive 'feel' for the text. In particular, he makes considerable use of the French commentary of F. Vouga, for which he clearly has a high regard. In fact, I think that Martin's introduction would provide a better orientation in the letter than ploughing through the whole of J.B. Adamson's vast *James: the Man and His Message* (Eerdmans, 1989), in which scholarship bewilders and obscures.

The body of the commentary does not fall into the trap illustratable from some of the other volumes in the series, in which the 'Explanation' section amounts to little more than a summary and repetition of the preceding 'Comments'. Martin has it right, and is not reluctant to engage with contemporary issues where appropriate. The 'Comments' themselves are demanding, especially because he lays considerable emphasis on illumining James against his Old Testament and inter-testamental background; but the style is clear and easy to follow. Interestingly (on a particularly thorny passage), he goes along with the (rather unlikely!) view that the whole of 2:18–19 is the voice of an objector, to whom James then replies in 2:20ff.

I have one major problem with the book, concerning his views on authorship. He does not believe that the letter is by James the brother of Jesus, rather that it was penned by a disciple of James, using and editing authentic material from his master. I find this not just disappointing, but also puzzling, because in his introduction he gathers material about the person and ministry of James which illumines the background to the letter to an extraordinary degree: in particular, he shows how, in all likelihood, James was martyred in 62 AD for standing out against the economic injustices perpetrated on the poor by the ruling Jerusalem élite—in fact, for speaking loudly and publically the kind of things he writes about riches and poverty in 1:9–11, 2:1–6, 4:13–17 and 5:1–6. He also helpfully expounds 1:20 and 3:13–4:4 against the background of the Zealot 'anger' and rivalries that typified life

in Palestine during the early years of the church. But he resists the pressure of this evidence, and instead locates the composition of the letter in Antioch in Syria, in the later decades of the first century. I do not personally feel that he has given a fair hearing to the view which dates James really early, in the forties AD, at a time when Jewish Christians had not separated themselves from the synagogue, and James could expect his letter to be heard by both Christians and Jews.

However, despite this disappointment, this is an excellent work and will become the standard Greek-text commentary on James for years ahead.

London Bible College, Northwood

STEVE MOTYER

WHAT'S SO UNIQUE ABOUT JESUS? Chris Wright

MARC/Monarch, Eastbourne 125pp. £2.50pb.

ISBN 1 85424 114 1

This book should not be dismissed because it appears lightweight. Although it is not an academic thesis, it is written by someone whose experience both in India and the United Kingdom qualifies him to deal realistically with the subject.

For those involved in theological research, this could well prove a starting point for further study. For those concerned about the theories, both inside and outside the church, being readily accepted to-day, this is both informed and readable. It is written primarily with mission in mind, whether overseas or dealing with the prevailing Western patterns of theological thought centred on pluralism and relativism.

Starting from the confusion that prevails at the present moment, Dr. Wright points out that there are factors governing the scene other than simply theological ones. Living in a plural society necessitates realizing that there are social, educational, scientific, moral and emotional aspects which influence men's attitudes. He is not an exclusivist as he is willing to heed what other religions have to offer. He does not, however, follow those who would in the name of Christianity itself surrender certain claims to the uniqueness of Christ, emphasizing that the 'offensive aspects of Christianity cannot be abandoned'. His main purpose is to help Christians avoid the form of bigotry that leads to open conflict or stubborn intransigence.

How can the uniqueness of Christ and the pluralism of society be reconciled? Liberalism seeks not only to make Christianity 'understandable' to people, but also to set up a 'unitive pluralism' with other faiths—in other words to relativize Christianity and make all religions equally valid. Faced with this dilemma, Dr. Wright rejects pluralism and lives uneasily in the overlap between Exclusivism and Inclusivism. He sees Christ as unique, universal and final, as the climax of God's action in history to reveal himself and save humanity. 'But', he goes on to say 'I would not endorse that brand of exclusivism that denies the presence of any revelation, truth or grace in the religious traditions of human beings who, though fallen, are still the image of the one living God'. It is from this point that the author, using the Bible as his final authority seeks to discover a way through this dilemma.

A book well worth reading.

NOT BY BREAD ALONE David B. Knox

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh 1990 143pp. £2.50pb.

ISBN 0 85151 565 7

As the title of this slender volume suggests the author is eager to see God's people know, understand, apply and live by God's written Word. David B. Knox, now officially in retirement but yet still active in George Whitefield College, South Africa, has long been known, both in this country as well as in Australia, for his 'unshakeable belief in the divine authority and inspiration of Scripture' (p.x). This book will enable a much wider audience to benefit from his learning and spirituality.

For the most part the contents of this volume were originally given as radio addresses from Sydney, Australia. In some eighteen chapters we are presented with a stimulating critique of some social trends in the western world of the late twentieth century's insights. The subjects covered include punishment, race, money, sex, women's lib., war, homosexuality and abortion. Scriptural truth and Biblical principles are brought to bear on each topic in a fresh and compelling manner.

I was left wanting more. I believe that many who read this book will feel the same way. If I am right then surely we can say this is a good book that deserves a wide readership. Pastors can safely recommend it to young and old Christians alike. Moreover they will benefit from it themselves. It is to be hoped that his labours will encourage ministers to follow in his footsteps and apply Scripture to the pressing moral issues of today. It is also to be hoped that God's people will see afresh that man is not to live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

St. Stephen's Vicarage, Low Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne

GEORGE CURRY

THE BIBLE AS RHETORIC Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility Ed. Martin Warner

Routledge, London 1990 236pp. £8.99pb.

ISBN 0 415 04409 X

Rhetoric is the art of using language to persuade, and is customarily divided into three modes: appeal to the personal character of the speaker (or writer), for example, 1 Thess. 2.9f; to the emotions of the audience, Job 19.21; and to rational argument, Acts 5.38f. With this understanding the present volume sets out to examine the way in which the Biblical authors use rhetoric to persuade the reader of their message. All of the authors are University dons of standing drawn from departments of Theology, Philosophy, English, Classics or related disciplines, so the treatment is not exactly at a popular level. After an introduction by the philosopher Martin Warner, Lynn Poland writes a rather technical chapter on *The Bible and the Rhetorical Sublime*. John Barton in *History and Rhetoric in the Prophets* concludes that their linking of disaster to national sin was sometimes a 'rationalization' and that 'we should not be taken in too much by the force of their rhetoric', which was skilful. David Clines next writes on *Deconstructing the Book of Job*, that is to say, showing how it undermines its own message. I was not at all convinced. *Biblical Story and the Heroine* by Margarita Stocker deals in a rather feminist spirit with the story of Judith. Stewart Sutherland, turning to the New

Testament, writes on *History, Truth and Narrative*, a thoughtful but inconclusive discussion of the historical value of the Gospels. Roger Trigg's essay '*Tales artfully spun*', is on the contrary, a robust and effective defence of their historical value; as a Professor of Philosophy he makes some telling points. David Jasper, under the rather enigmatic title *In the sermon which I have just completed, wherever I said Aristotle, I meant Saint Paul*, offers a clever analysis of the rhetoric of Mark, but I found it unhelpful. *The Fourth Gospel's art of rational persuasion* by another philosopher, Martin Warner, is however luminous; its title indicates its matter well. It suggests a rather interesting conclusion. 'If this account of the narrative level of the Fourth Gospel is even approximately correct it places the readings of a number of influential scholars (Kasemann, de Jonge, are two mentioned) in a very odd light.' Nearer the end he writes

... rhetorical criticism becomes subversive of much traditional higher criticism, with its tendency to reduce 'the history behind the material ... to the history of the community that shaped it' (Robinson 1985) ... the whole persuasive strategy of the Gospel depends on its being subject to rational controls at the levels of narrative, judgement and sign'.

One cannot but welcome this contribution. *The world could not contain the books* by Michael Edwards, Professor of English, and '*Truth*' and '*Rhetoric*' in the *Pauline Epistles* by George Kennedy, Professor of Classics, are much less significant essays. Finally, *The language of ecstasy and the ecstasy of language* by another philosopher, Cyril Barrett, concludes the symposium on an interesting note.

There is a Bibliography of seven pages; an Index of Biblical references of two; and a General Index of five.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

THE PHILOSOPHY IN CHRISTIANITY Ed. Godfrey Vesey

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1990 xvi+244pp. £10.95pb.

ISBN 0 521 37578 9

This composite work consists of the 1988/89 Royal Institute of Philosophy lectures. It is made up of fourteen contributions by a panel of eminent classicists, philosophers, and theologians. There is a Foreword by the Editor in which he briefly outlines the tenets of Platonism, since it is this school of Philosophy with which the contributors are mainly concerned, and he is aware that many of the readers will be deficient in their acquaintance with Greek thought. The coverage of the collection is thus much narrower than the title might lead one to expect.

There are four broad divisions: first, lectures touching on the Trinity and the Incarnation; second, on God and His relation to the Creation; third, on Man's approach to God; and fourth, on Philosophy, Religion and Truth. All of the lectures are worthwhile, technical but not too technical, and covering very diverse topics. John Dillon writes on *Logos and Trinity*; Maurice Wiles on *Arius and Athanasius*; Richard Swinburne on *Could God become Man?*; Keith Ward on *God as Creator*; Christopher Stead and Gerard O'Daly on

Augustine's teaching on Being, Predestination and Freedom; Norman Kretzmann on *Reason in Mystery*; J. R. Lucas on *God's Foreknowledge and Vulnerability*; A. H. Armstrong on *On Not Knowing too Much About God*; Stewart Sutherland on *Hope*; Stuart Brown on *Christian Averroism*; Renford Bambrough on a Wittgensteinian topic, *Does Philosophy 'Leave Everything as it is'? Even Theology?* There are two excellent lectures by women dons: Grace Jantzen on *Mysticism and Monism*, challenging the usual alignment of the two; and Eleonore Stump on *Faith and Goodness*, a thorough analysis of the views of Thomas Aquinas on the relationship of faith's knowledge to reason's. I enjoyed these as much as any; but if I dare say so as a mere man, I found the repeated reference to the theologian as 'she' a little counter-productive!

This is a useful contribution to the philosophical theology of what might be called 'Classical Christianity'. There is a Chronological Chart at the end, an Index of Names, and an Index of Subject.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

ON KNOWING CHRIST Jonathan Edwards

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1990 276pp. £3.50 ISBN 0 85151 583 5

It is generally acknowledged that Jonathan Edwards was one of the most brilliant preacher-theologians of the Christian era. That ten of his most effective sermons should now be before the public is most appropriate in an age when preaching is denigrated. The sermons will introduce the reader to Edwards's scriptural and theological reasoning. Running through all is the truth of God's majesty and the terrible condition of all who ignore or reject the salvation that he offers through his eternal Son Jesus Christ. In them, realism and hope are conjoined in Edwards's desire to influence the sinner to turn to Christ. For gospel preachers they provide an example of his homiletic method arising from a text by way of contextual introduction, declaration of his subject, pointed exposition, and penetrating application. It was a structure from which he rarely moved whether preaching to a village congregation or Harvard University. The sermons breathe an air of conviction, earnestness and urgency. In this, as in his writings, his imagery is superlative. From the standpoint of man's total depravity Edwards offers a total Redeemer. His thinking is so acute that he is prepared to hold that the least sin is infinite evil as committed against an infinite God. He therefore argues in the sermons for a pre-conversion preparatory period of intense conviction of sin, a sense of God's wrath, and a growing desire for relief until salvation is found in Christ.

All the sermons are faultlessly reasoned and eirenic in presentation. In them Edwards appeals to the mind, will, and heart. It is doubtful whether any one can read them without being deeply affected.

5 Green Lane, Clapham, Bedford

ARTHUR BENNETT

THE BIRTH OF MODERN CRITICAL THEOLOGY Klaus Scholder

S.C.M. Press, London; T.P.I. Press, Philadelphia 1966 (English Translation 1990) 184pp. £10.50

ISBN 0 334 02442 0

This book, originally published in German in 1966, has recently been translated (very lucidly) by John Bowden. Klaus Scholder, who died in 1985, was Professor of Modern Church History in the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Tübingen, and in this brilliant survey he charts the rise during the seventeenth century of the movement which was to result in the modern critical attitude to both the Bible and to theology. Strangely, while the 'Higher Criticism' (as it used to be called) is associated in the minds of most with Germany, the early stirrings of the movement left Germany largely unaffected. The story which Prof. Scholder tells so interestingly therefore has little connexion with that land. It begins with a discussion of the norm of faith in the controversies started by the Reformation. Then it moves to the considerable impact of Socinianism, a movement which while it was never very powerful in the numbers of its adherents, nevertheless sparked off a huge amount of controversy as witnessed by the extant literary evidence. As is well-known, this movement was strongest in Poland, from where it later spread to Germany, Holland and England. The author then turns to the challenge to the Biblical world picture which was posed first, by Copernicus and the heliocentric view of the solar system; and secondly by the less sudden and well-marked but equally significant change in the assessment of world history. In both spheres, astronomy and early history, the Bible's witness, hitherto unchallenged, was called into question. Then comes the gauntlet thrown down by philosophy (a term which includes much that we now call science). This introduces an interesting discussion of the notorious idea of 'double truth', that a proposition can be true in theology and its opposite true in philosophy, an idea long and seriously entertained by many thinkers as a dogmatic defence. However, for Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy there was never any question of double truth; the Bible was supreme and if philosophy enunciated contrary views, these views were false. But the challenge was there.

The last and very significant influence in the triumph of the modern critical spirit discussed by Prof. Scholder is the formulation of its philosophical basis in the ideas of Descartes. 'The significance of Cartesian philosophy lies in its principles and not in its results', he says; and he goes on to give a brilliant analysis of what this means. It is a new method of thinking that is now introduced, and this has far-reaching results. The thinking subject becomes the starting point, not the object to which its thought is being directed. Reason has nothing but itself on which to rely; and sure knowledge can be gained only through doubt. Further, the 'double truth' problem was to be decided in favour of reason. For a considerable time reason, thus enthroned, was employed in the service of reconciliation between theology and philosophy; but with growing self-confidence this aim inevitably receded.

The increasing concern was systematically to shake the authority and credibility of the Bible, to unmask its history as obscure fiction and its theological statements as long obsolete prejudices which dissolved into insubstantial schemes in the light of reason.

Only with the rise of historicism does a new mediating position emerge, a

position developed further in the nineteenth century Biblical criticism. Thus Prof. Scholder concludes this brilliant survey.

What reaction does one make to all this? Two points remain with me. There are many references to the 'accommodation theory' (that the Holy Spirit accommodates His language to human understanding when He speaks of scientific matters), a theory which the author seems to view disparagingly. Now, to call this a 'theory' is perhaps to give it a bad name for many people in advance; 'notion' or 'idea' might be better designations. The author notes that this idea appears quite early, for instance Galileo uses it. But Wittich (1625–1687) was, he says, the first *theologian* to employ it. He is surely wrong here, for Calvin writes (over one hundred years earlier) in his great Commentary on Genesis

Moses wrote in a popular style things which, without instruction, all ordinary persons, endued with common sense, are able to understand; but astronomers investigate with great labour whatever the sagacity of the human mind can comprehend . . . the Spirit of God here opens a common school for all . . .

Again, 'Moses says, that God had *planted*, accommodating himself, by a simple and uncultivated style, to the capacity of the vulgar.' Calvin speaks of the Holy Spirit 'choosing rather to stammer like a nurse with her children' so as to be understood; but strangely Prof. Scholder makes virtually no reference to Calvin.

My other point concerns the notion of 'reason'; I wish it were more carefully defined, both here and elsewhere. It is often currently used in contradistinction to Scripture (and Tradition), as if Scripture can be understood apart from reason. Reference to a good commentary on Romans 7 say (such as Cranfield's) should soon dispel that misconception. A better distinction would be between reason supplied with *biblical* data, and, reason operating on what can best be described as *scientific* data, that is to say, on evidence *accessible in principle at will to man as man*. To observe this distinction would tidy up a lot of misconceptions.

Reading this book has left me with the conviction that the dispute between the conservative and liberal positions is by no means over; the liberal position is wide open to counter-attack on many fronts. Please God, we shall yet see a return to faith in the Bible as the Word of God.

There are thirty four pages of Notes, a Table of Abbreviations, and an Index of five pages.

Ivy Cottage, Grove, Wantage, Oxon.

DOUGLAS SPANNER

THE ENGLISH SABBATH: A Study of doctrine and discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War. K. L. Parker

Cambridge University Press 1988 250pp. £27.50

ISBN 0 521 30535 7

It is not until some years after the Reformation that Sunday became a matter of serious controversy among Christians. Different emphases are found in the teaching of the Fathers, the medieval Schoolmen, and the Reformers themselves. The differences between the Reformers have often been exaggerated, however, and for the most part they are not of a serious character.

Though they had rejected medieval legalism, few of them were prepared to go as far as Tyndale, and to question the connection between Sunday and the fourth commandment. Luther, Calvin, Bullinger, Bucer, Peter Martyr and Jewel were all agreed that the fourth commandment requires Christians to observe days of rest and worship, or sabbaths, and that Sunday is the chief means of fulfilling the requirement. It was this moderate sabbatarian view which was embodied by Jewel in the homily 'Of the Place and Time of Prayer' in the Church of England's *Second Book of Homilies*, and the same view was endorsed by Richard Hooker.

The received opinion, however, is that English sabbatarianism really began with the Puritan, Nicholas Bownde in 1595; was checked by James I's *Book of Sports* in 1617, and was exposed as a novelty by the Laudian, Peter Heylyn in 1636. The detailed investigations of this book reveal a very different picture. Bownde's book was not novel or extreme. A moderate sabbatarianism had been standard teaching in the Church of England from the Reformation onwards. There was a difference of opinion whether recreations were suitable, outside service time, on Sundays, as the *Book of Sports* maintained. The real novelty was Heylyn's contention that Sunday was not a sabbath at all. This correction of established misconceptions is overdue, and we owe it to a Benedictine monk, who has included an informative account of medieval sabbatarianism!

Latimer House, Oxford

ROGER BECKWITH

I BELIEVE. George Carey
S.P.C.K., London 1991 207pp. £7.99.

ISBN 0 281 04532 1

It has recently become a habit in the U.S.A. to use the verb 'enjoy' without a predicate, as if it were possible to produce this activity without any clear object in view. One is reminded of this when approaching this book, whose title seems to be similarly aimless. There was a time when it would have been assumed that such a book would be an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, an appropriate subject for a bishop to comment on as an official defender of the Church's faith. Today however, we have come a long way from those simpler times, and the content of belief seems to be rather less important than the mere fact of its presence.

To be fair to the new Archbishop of Canterbury, it must be agreed that his expression of faith ('confession' would be too strong a word, even for him) is a good deal more robust than what one might expect from some of his colleagues. There are times indeed, when it rises to the level one would seek from an experienced parish priest, as for example in the address on justification by faith and Christian living, delivered to the East Midlands Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship in 1986 (pp. 32–39).

The snag is that Dr. Carey is so much more than a parish priest, and that accordingly, so much more is, and should be expected of him. Yet it is precisely when we consider these utterances as those of a theological college principal, a diocesan bishop and now Archbishop of Canterbury that their weaknesses become all too painfully apparent. The plain fact of the matter is that if their author were not in the position he is in, this book – a compilation of his theology – would never have seen the light of day. It would not deserve

to. That is a harsh judgment, but one which is sadly justified by the contents.

Dr. Carey comes across in these pages as a man with little or no idea of what systematic, coherent Christian teaching that is to say, doctrine) is. As a result he is liable to make statements which, though they may sound fine in themselves, are not adequately carried through in the whole of his preaching and teaching ministry. Take for example, the following ringing denunciation:

As a ghetto they create their own lifestyles and moral values and often express theologies that are anti-Christian as well as anti-human – Pelagian, Arminian and gnostic (p. 45).

Is this an attack on the liberal theological clique which has dominated our universities for a generation or more, and which does little but reveal its moral and spiritual bankruptcy under the guise of exploring new dimensions of divine reality? Not at all. The above, believe it or not, is a denunciation of 'fundamentalism', a slippery word at the best of times, and one which the principal of a well-known Evangelical theological college ought to have been intelligent enough to avoid, in terms which can scarcely be applied to the Augustinian, Calvinistic and often literalistic sort of conservatism he is likely to have encountered in the course of his work. But since these accusations are made without any supporting evidence, we are left wondering just whom he is describing – a serious matter when we consider that for many in the Church, 'fundamentalist' is no more than a smear word for 'Evangelical'.

But at least the future Archbishop was prepared to say that Pelagianism (one of his favourite bugbears), Arminianism and Gnosticism are anti-Christian and anti-human, even if their precise relationship to 'fundamentalism' remains something of a mystery. However, the careful reader of these pages will not take long to notice that the author himself is guilty of all three heresies in other pages of his book, which shows that he fails to apply his doctrinal convictions to his preaching in a consistent manner. It is one thing to rail against a series of catch-words, but quite another to ensure that one avoids the traps they set oneself!

As the Archbishop knows only too well, charges of 'heresy' can be very hurtful, so we must look carefully at what he says to demonstrate the point being made. Let us start with Arminianism, which is carefully expounded in the second piece, entitled 'Why should I follow Christ?' Dr. Carey opens with a quote from Scripture: 'You did not choose me, but I chose you' (John 15:16), a splendid text for a detailed exposition of the practical significance of the doctrine of predestination. Alas, he goes on to expound *exactly the opposite* by the subtle device of suggesting that there is another side to the story, which Jesus unfortunately did not expound in this passage! Quite apart from the rightness or wrongness of the doctrine being proclaimed, which is that we have a part to play in our salvation by choosing Christ, the total misuse of the Scriptural text would be quite unacceptable, even from a first-year ordinand.

Pelagianism rears its ugly head in the third piece, entitled 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?' (Mark 10:17). It must be admitted that, taken out of context (as of course it is), this text lends itself quite nicely to an exposition of salvation by works, which is precisely what we are given in the paragraphs that follow. The appeal is to young people to make the kind of self-sacrifice that only the young and uncommitted are likely to consider, and which

normally wears off once the cares of the world start to intervene. There is not a mention of sin or repentance, which admittedly would probably have blunted the enthusiasm of the occasion, though arguably their place in the Gospel message is more fundamental than the things which are on offer here.

As for Gnosticism, no fewer than three talks are devoted to it, under the heading: 'A Pilgrim at Walsingham'. Only someone with an essentially gnostic view of the world could possibly take Walsingham seriously, and one does not have to be a card-carrying Evangelical to view the goings-on there with more than a little scepticism. Yet here we find 'England's Nazareth' being commended as a place which commemorates the 'home of Jesus', whom, the Scriptures tell us, had nowhere to lay his head! One would expect a bishop, especially one of Evangelical credentials and New Testament scholarship to boot, to be more concerned to educate his flock away from such foolishness, and not to support them in it.

A major section of the book is given over to addresses which take us through the Christian year, from Advent to Pentecost (Trinity Sunday is, perhaps significantly, omitted), but they are disappointing on the whole. Some, like the addresses for Christmas and Epiphany, are little more than blessed thoughts, only marginally related to the theme of the day. Others, like the ones on the Ascension and on Pentecost, say a number of useful things but leave out the essentials. The Ascension is the entry of Christ into his kingdom, which is nowhere mentioned, and Pentecost is the beginning of the mission of the Church – the major theme of Acts 2, but likewise not mentioned here at all.

But the really disappointing piece is the lengthy study of the cross, prepared for Lent. We must surely agree with Dr. Carey that the cross should once again be placed at the centre of our spiritual life, but the interpretation of the atonement which he gives is simply mind-boggling. How can someone who calls himself an Evangelical possibly base his doctrine of the atonement on the exemplary theory of Abelard, touched up with Macleod Campbell and even the Reformation unitarian Socinus? There are some touching and important references to the principle of substitution, which are encouraging, but Dr. Carey cannot accept the idea that Christ's death was a payment for our sins, and this accounts for his rather curious eclecticism elsewhere in this chapter.

The last two sections of the book deal with questions of ministry and the Church. The two themes overlap to such an extent that the talks on ministry are more like a description of parish life, though the place of the ordained minister within that setting is not wholly ignored. Here the reader feels that at last Dr. Carey has come to the subject which is closest to his heart, and these chapters are among the best in the book. One might fairly criticize him for having a 'managerial' approach to the Church which does not always suit the pastoral image of a bishop, but given the inefficiency and waste which is so often excused in Church circles, this emphasis offers an important corrective. The chapter on the removal of the episcopate is particularly good, though unfortunately it is the least likely ever to be implemented!

The impression of its author which this book leaves is one of a kindly parish priest, very much at home with ordinary people, and able to relate to them in a simple and unpretentious way. There must be many who will have heard these addresses and been comforted by the fact that their pastor is someone

who is approachable and who understands their problems and needs. On more than one occasion he draws back from controversial issues so as not to give offence to one group or another in his audience, and the desire to be helpful and encouraging comes across right through the book. These are important qualities, and they should not be forgotten or minimized, in spite of the criticism which has to be made of the contents of some of the addresses printed here. Perhaps in the future he will be lucky enough to find advisers who will be able to persuade him not to rush into print with half-baked ideas, but to concentrate on the things which he is good at – bringing comfort to ordinary people and giving them a sense of enthusiasm for the task which lies ahead of them in building up the Church.

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