

## Book Reviews

### TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH The Globalization of Christianity Kenneth Hylson-Smith

London: Paternoster, 2007 237pp £12.99 ISBN: 978-1-84227-475-0

‘European colonisation involved spreading disease, enslaving their populations and forcing them to convert to Christianity...’ Thus began The Times’ review of “Dark Continents” in Channel 4’s series “Christianity: A History” (February, 2009). Not a happy picture of the Christian missionary endeavour. And yet the programme itself, by writer, playwright and Christian Kwame Kwei Armah was much more positive and showed how Christianity had taken root in contextualized ways across South America and Africa.

The weekend I read that review and watched the programme, I was also reading Hylson-Smith’s book. Just as Kwame’s actual programme was more positive than the media review, so this book also gives a positive appraisal of the worldwide missionary movement and the Christian Church in the face of media scepticism and cynicism.

The book is, he says, ‘a response to the many historians, sociologists, theologians, atheists, agnostics and media pundits who in recent decades have declared Christianity, or at least the institutional Church, to be in retreat and even suffering from terminal illness’. Whilst I am not convinced that such media punditry or academic analysis is as widespread as it once was, this book does show Christ’s Church to be healthy, vigorous and global. As such, it encouraged me in my faith in the Lord Jesus who is building his Church.

The book’s Introduction sketches the paradigm which Hylson-Smith seeks to refute. It would have been nice to have the opening sentence say ‘this is something of the accepted paradigm which I am setting out to rebut’ rather than me reading it and becoming increasingly wound-up that this analysis was simplistic and incorrect, but I guess that was the point. We begin with the Renaissance and Reformation and move through Protestantism to deism and on to liberalism, Nietzsche and “Honest to God”, whereby we see the Church with few members, assailed intellectually and increasingly secularised.

It is a very helpful summary of the kind of paradigm many of us were probably taught and which consequently is still believed by many people. However, even

my first university lecture in 1992, by my atheist anthropology lecturer, made it clear that two movements were on the rise across the world—fundamentalist Islam and fundamentalist Christianity—and that the process of secularisation was seemingly being reversed globally. Authors like Patrick Johnstone and Philip Jenkins have made this point too. Atheist Matthew Parris has himself recently argued that Africa needs Christianity not aid money (*The Times*, December 28, 2008). Indeed, many have argued that the increasing profile of people like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens is precisely because they have woken up to find the world not nearly as secularised and atheist as they had been schooled to believe. Therefore, I am not convinced that Hylson-Smith's target is as common as it was a decade ago.

Six chapters seek to challenge the Introduction's perceived paradigm, showing how Christianity was vibrant across Europe and North America from the seventeenth century onwards (ch. 1). This vitality in turn led to great missionary movements in the 19th (ch. 2) and massive church growth across the Western World (ch. 3), South America (ch. 4), Africa (ch. 5) and Asia (ch. 6) in the 20th. There are loads of statistics to encourage us to see that the church is bigger than you think (although I would have liked more tables and possibly the odd map to help me visualise this better). As a Westerner it was a great and humbling reminder that the Church is not Western and that the vibrancy among believers of Asian or African background in London is true in Africa and Asia too, and that the centre of Christianity is moving southwards.

This is good news and one we might need to encourage our congregations with, if they do feel threatened by media pundits or the rise of militant Islam or simply feel small through being a minority where they are. As Elisha's servant had his eyes opened to see the LORD's power all around him, so this book helps us to see that the gospel is the power of salvation and is bearing fruit across the world. It is a good book to provide illustrative, statistical comfort in sermons, although I am not convinced that many church members would read the book itself because it did feel like one more fact after another and became a little samey after a while.

Chapter 7, a summary and conclusion, consciously focuses on the 'sensational globalisation of Christianity' and 'does not greatly highlight failures and shortcomings'. As such it is more a Hebrews 11 approach to the global church

(as examples to inspire), rather than describing or analysing what individual Christians or churches are actually like (as sinners whose faith and life do frequently waver). Living in what seems to be a post-Christian nation, I was a little surprised by his positive appraisal of the church, but I suspect Hylson-Smith's answer to this is that we need to distinguish between Christianity and Christendom when we look at Church numbers over time. That requires a further book to deal with adequately, not least because it should be applied consistently to church growth in the South as well as the North. Overall, as the back cover says, this 'book is a great antidote for the negativity one often finds about the future of the Church'.

ROB SCOTT

St. Helen's, Bishopsgate

## **DOSTOEVSKY: LANGUAGE, FAITH AND FICTION**

**Rowan Williams**

Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008 290pp \$24.95 ISBN 9781602581456

Like the works of Dostoevsky himself, this volume is polyvalent and defies neat summary. However, Archbishop Williams helpfully shares his surprising reason for penning the work. He points out that his consideration of Dostoevsky is actually a response to the 'current rash of books hostile to religious faith' (p. ix). Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and their fellow neo-Darwinian atheists, treat religious faith as an aberrant aspect of misdirected rationality, failing 'to attend to the general question of how systems of meaning, or world-views, work' (p. ix). In their lack of self-awareness, the anti-religionist writers fail to notice that their own writings are far from mere empirical rationality—they are full of metaphor and imagery, such as computer modelling, selfish genes, etc. (p. x).

Archbishop Williams' work then, positions itself as an attempt to enter into the imagination and worldview of one great literary figure who wrestled with Christian faith claims—Dostoevsky. If modern atheism, as Williams suggests, is a failure of empathy and imagination, then what better way to redress the imbalance by carefully reflecting on literature from Dostoevsky?

Williams does not make any argument so simplistic as to say that Dostoevsky is a Christian or non-Christian author. He is all too aware of the 'complexity

and delicacy of creating a fiction that both clearly speaks the truth and yet provides the material on which a refusal or refutation can be based' (p. 240). Rather, Dostoevsky was somebody who engaged with the grand themes of Christian faith, and gave his literary characters freedom to explore the issues. Williams sums up his thesis: 'This book has argued that we best read Dostoevsky as working through the analogy between writing and divine creation; the point being not to assimilate human creativity to the divine but to introduce to the imagination a model of making that is directed towards freedom not control' (p. 234). He also gives helpful explanations of issues such as dialogical exchange in literature (p. 144ff). Such asides help us learn the art of reading, and can be applied to the appreciation of many writings.

Archbishop Williams' book will drive readers to turn the pages of Dostoevsky's great novels—doing so could only profit. Williams is surely onto something when he argues that Christianity needs a rejuvenated sense of empathy and imagination, to combat the sleight of hand self-presentation of modern atheist apologists. It may well be that we could learn something from the apologetic strategy of Dostoevsky, who argued for the truth by daring to give strong arguments to Christ's opponents. The haunting sense that the atheist has not won the argument, though they have been given every help to do so, is surely something we could do with feeling a bit more.

PETER SANLON  
Cambridge

## **LOVE ONE ANOTHER: Becoming the church Jesus longs for** **Gerald L. Sittser**

Nottingham: IVP, 2008 192 pp £8.99pb ISBN 9781844743452

The New Testament expands Jesus' instruction to the church to love one another into twelve so-called 'mutuality' commandments which form the basis of this book. First published as *Loving Across Our Differences* in 1994, this volume maintains the same basic purpose with some new stories. After a brief introduction to the second edition, there is a chapter for each commandment. There are also questions in a study/discussion guide.

Each chapter begins by narrating an incident to introduce the issue and then moves to look at command in its biblical context. Further examples and illustrations are given by way of application. There are helpful observations on

Christian behaviours and church life; and some pertinent insights into the ways that Christians think they are keeping these commands but in fact fail. Sittser makes a useful observation with regard to the last two commands, to stir up and to admonish: both address Christians who are resistant to the call of Christ; those held back by inertia are to be provoked to obedience, while wilful rebellion is to be confronted and admonished. Applications are generally consistent with the contexts for the given mutualities, but the author rarely tries to prove assertions from scripture. For instance he says that ‘we are called to forgive even when no confession has been made’ (p. 65) without going on to show why he thinks this is the case. On occasion it was not clear whether Sittser was being woolly or provocative, which I found frustrating. Those remarks notwithstanding, this is a helpful book with some useful insights into putting these important commands into practice: as we do so the church begins to look more and more like she should. The style is clear and accessible and although this is published by IVP in the UK, many of the illustrations are drawn from American church life.

ED MOLL

Wembdon, Bridgwater

## **NOT UNDER BONDAGE:**

### **Biblical Divorce for Abuse, Adultery and Desertion**

**Barbara Roberts**

Ballarat, Australia: Maschil Press, 2008 190pp £11.95 ISBN9780980355345

The strength of this book lies in the fact that it has been written not by a theologian, but by a woman who has been the victim of domestic abuse. Her experience, which does not differ from what many pastors may encounter in ministry today, has been of starting out as a Christian with minimal biblical teaching and marrying a non-Christian. After five years, during which a daughter was born, she left her husband because of the abuse and was granted custody of the daughter with the husband having access.

Four years later, during which she had been attending church and studying the Bible, her husband made a profession and this led to reconciliation. However, the abuse recurred and this led to a further separation and finally divorce. So the contents of this book reflect the struggle of an author who has had to assess her own situation and experiences in the light of Bible teaching. Key to the understanding of the book is the claim that the Bible permits ‘disciplinary

divorce' where a seriously mistreated spouse divorces the offender after abuse, adultery or desertion. 'Tracherous divorce' occurs when a spouse obtains divorce for reasons other than abuse, adultery or desertion, and is condemned by the Bible. The non-offending or mistreated partner is then said to be able to remarry if the offending partner was sexually immoral or has abused, deserted or unjustly dismissed the other party and is judged to be 'as an unbeliever'.

In making these claims the writer has carefully examined both Old and New Testament Scriptures on the subject and demonstrates a wide acquaintance with other writers historic and contemporary on the subject. An example of her grappling with the text is on p. 100 where she points out how in Matthew 5:32 the NIV for instance translating 'causes her to become an adulteress' fails to bring out the passive form of the verb which she would prefer to see rendered 'causes her to experience adultery'. Thus helpful advice is given for pastors struggling to counsel those who are victims of abuse within a marriage but feel trapped within it by biblical teaching, or those divorcees of either sex who find themselves unsure of whether the Bible would permit them to remarry.

Her conclusions may well cause many to re-evaluate some traditional teaching on divorce and remarriage, and her story should encourage all to have a deeper understanding of people who come to them during or after suffering similar experiences. Apart from an extensive bibliography there is a briefer but helpful list of secular as well as Christian 'Further Reading for Victims' placed in order as the writer found them helpful. This book demands to be read by all those who are called on to advise both men and women who face the sorrows and trauma of an unhappy marriage.

DAVID WHEATON  
Blandford Forum

**THE FIRST AND SECOND LETTERS TO THE THESSALONIANS:  
The New International Commentary on the New Testament  
Gordon D. Fee**

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009 400pp £29.99hb ISBN: 978-0-8028-6362-1

Gordon Fee has an outstanding reputation as a New Testament scholar and commentator. This volume on Thessalonians, which replaces the older contribution in this series by Leon Morris is another excellent contribution.

Fee combines a careful and detailed engagement with the text with a hard-hitting style, making this a compelling read. Fee explicitly aims to help ‘busy pastors’, so he deliberately keeps his introductory comments brief as in his experience pastors and students rarely read them. This aim also underlies his repeated pattern of outlining the flow of the argument within each textual unit, before considering the meaning of each verse, and then making brief applications to the contemporary church.

In 1 Thessalonians Fee argues, against most commentators, that the apostles are innocent ‘like infants’ rather than ‘gentle’ in 2:7. He also emphasises the letter’s high Christology, especially where Paul echoes Old Testament passages using ‘Lord’ to refer to Jesus, as in 3:13. The passage 4:13-18 is hotly debated, but Fee persuasively shows that Paul’s overriding purpose is not to ‘satisfy eschatological curiosity,’ but to comfort the living that dead believers will be with Christ at his coming. As elsewhere, punches are not pulled here with Fee strongly rebuking ‘Left Behind’ theology. However, while I fully agree with his conclusions here, I feel extra engagement with the positions he rejects would further strengthen Fee’s case. Many will find Fee’s more Pente-costal view of prophesy in 5:19-22 strange—perhaps this too should be ‘tested carefully’!

Fee is determined that 2 Thessalonians should not be relegated to ‘Cinderella’ status. He argues strongly throughout for its authenticity following Howard Marshall’s contention that ‘several very weak arguments against authenticity do not add up to one strong one’. Throughout the commentary, (especially in chs. 2 and 3), Fee is careful not to go beyond the text. He refuses to speculate concerning the identity of the man of lawlessness (2:5-8), focusing instead on what is clear—namely that Paul is seeking to comfort the persecuted and misinformed Thessalonians. Similarly, he is agnostic whether the idleness is caused by patron–client relationships or plain laziness, demonstrating that Paul’s overarching concern is for the health of the believing community (3:6-15).

To my mind the biggest weaknesses are that Fee, by his own admission, does not engage with much recent secondary literature, so that in places (such as 1 Thessalonians 4:17 and the introductions to both letters) I was left wanting more. Nevertheless, this commentary will provide a great resource for busy pastors and students. Throughout the commentary he also evaluates several modern translations, generally favouring the TNIV (of which he was a

committee member). The applications for today are relevant and spiritual, again assisting the busy pastor both in personal reflection and sensitive application to others. However, perhaps its greatest strength is that exegetical conclusions are always linked back to the author's pastoral purpose within each section. This constant focus helps to keep the main things the main things. For me, this volume at least equals and perhaps, supersedes Gene Green's commentary in the Pillar New Testament series as my first port of call on the Thessalonian letters.

KIERAN BUSH

Oak Hill College, London

## **ANGLICAN EVANGELICAL IDENTITY: Yesterday and Today**

**J.I. Packer and N.T. Wright**

London: The Latimer Trust, 2008 180pp £7.99pb ISBN 978 0 946307 95 1

Latimer House has republished three articles written 30 years ago on the ever important issue of the identity of Anglican Evangelicalism. Two of the articles are by Dr. Jim Packer. The first tackles the question as to whether evangelicals can properly stay in the Church of England, and the second "A Kind of Noah's Ark? The Anglican Commitment to Comprehensiveness". The third, by Dr. Tom Wright, is entitled "The Problem and Prospects of Evangelical Anglican Identity". The new Latimer Study intriguingly reverses the noun and the adjective! Both authors, Dr. Packer now an expatriate viewing the scene from Canada, and Dr. Wright now Bishop of Durham, have written new introductions to their earlier papers.

It is probably a good thing to have had these papers republished in the light of the developments of the last 30 years, both to see how things have moved on and to discern how the current divergence in today's evangelicalism had its genesis—the divergence that is exemplified by Churchman on the one hand, and Anvil on the other, and by Church Society/Reform on the one hand and Fulcrum on the other. Both authors are godly men, good Christian brothers, both calling themselves evangelicals. This, of course, happened in the 1920s with the CMS/BCMS split. Both sides called themselves evangelicals, the one labelling the other liberal evangelicals, the other calling the former conservative evangelicals. We may sadly be seeing a rerun of the 1920s. Both authors claims to be descendents of Ryle, Handley Moule, Griffith Thomas and Stibbs. It is sad if, when we have so much in common, we attacked one another.

Dr. Packer claims in his new introduction that his views are unchanged. Although he pushed himself to the edge politically in seeking to work with Anglo-Catholics he remains essentially a conservative evangelical. His is a call for us to stand firm in the face of liberalism. Evangelicals are now more numerous but more fragmented. The Anglican Communion has deteriorated with the liturgical blessing of same-sex unions, the seeking of a convergence of all religions, and, because liberalism is always renewing itself, there is now a peculiarly virulent form of Protestant liberal theology. His call to us today is to think globally rather than domestically; to think future rather than past; to think theocentrically or confessionally rather than institutionally or on matter of 'order'.

The Bishop of Durham's paper and his new preface have a different target. His fear is that conservative evangelicals are losing the plot. His target and critique is not so much liberals but fellow evangelicals. It behoves us to heed his warnings. Readers of this journal may well feel that Fulcrum more often attacks us than it does liberalism, and Tom Wright's paper of 1980 reveals the genesis of Fulcrum. The Bishop of Durham is infuriating because so much of what he writes is so good, and he himself is hated by the liberals. In addition it is good for us to be critiqued. We must not curl up into a defensive porcupine ball. Yet at the same time some of his criticisms make one wonder whether he is really still in touch with 'classic evangelicalism'. For instance, he accuses us of being obsessed with Paul rather than the Gospels. Not true of the circles that use 'Read-Mark-Learn', and 'Christianity Explored' based also on Mark's Gospel. We are accused of neglecting the 'kingdom of God', yet thanks to Goldsworthy the Kingdom is the main, but not the only, grid through which many of us read the whole Bible.

In his new introduction Dr. Wright recounts how soon after the publication of his 1980 paper he had a phone call from Professor Henry Chadwick who said 'I agreed with every word you wrote'. This is, sadly, a giveaway. Dr. Chadwick was an outstanding theologian, and his lectures on the shape of Christian theology were 'musts' for any ordinand. He was orthodox, gloriously so, as is Dr. Wright—and yet when it came to his teaching on the atonement and on the inerrancy of Scripture he wobbled. It has to be said too that in his brave attempts to bring about some rapprochement with Rome he moved in a 'churchy' direction. The same has to be said of Dr. Wright, which is why he attacks conservative evangelicals for anti-clericalism, and why he gratuitously

picks on a well-known London church—presumably St Helen’s Bishopsgate who have made the pulpit central rather than the Holy Table—quoting with approval the bishop who moans that they have turned the church into a mosque. Dr. Wright’s assertion that the central action of the Christian faith is the Lord’s Supper needs to be matched by the central activity of the preaching and hearing of God’s Word.

So—Dr. Packer encourages us to stand firm. Dr. Wright issues a warning. We need both.

JONATHAN FLETCHER  
Wimbledon

## **THE MESSAGE OF ZECHARIAH: Your Kingdom Come**

**Barry Webb**

Leicester: IVP, 2003    188pp    £9.99    ISBN: 0-85111-294-3

This book, one of the BST series of Old Testament expositions, seeks to expound the text of Zechariah in a way which is readable, accurate, relevant, and not dull, and it succeeds in this aim. It contains a lengthy but worthwhile introduction, and then looks at the text of Zechariah in two sections, Kingdom Prelude (chs. 1–6) and Kingdom Consummation (chs. 7–14).

The Introduction begins with Jesus, and with placing Zechariah within the now and not yet of Christian eschatology, and this desire to read Zechariah in the light of Christ whilst taking the Old Testament text seriously can be seen throughout the book. After surveying Zechariah’s world and Zechariah himself, Webb briefly and helpfully traces the structure of the book. He then examines the message of the book under six headings: repentance, the city of God, the now and not yet of the kingdom, cleansing, messiah and the people of God. Throughout the book there are helpful footnotes leading to secondary literature. Thus, whilst this book is not a technical commentary, it provides access to that literature. The Introduction finishes with a short section entitled ‘Zechariah, Jesus and Us’, and a comment on the nature of prophecy.

In the Kingdom Prelude, Webb deals with the first six chapters of Zechariah. He splits the text into short manageable sections, and whilst this material has clearly been preached, thankfully it does not read as a series of sermons. There is interaction with other Old Testament and New Testament texts, some of

which are quoted in full, and issues arising from the text such as the wrath of God are dealt with clearly. There are many sensible comments and observations on type and content of material, on the meaning of biblical words, and on biblical theology. Webb draws many helpful parallels and again there are many useful footnotes. Applications show sensitivity to the text in its original context and to its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

The material in *Kingdom Consummation*, dealing with chapters 7 to 14, continues in the same vein, and Webb splits the two longer oracles of chapters 9 to 11 and 12 to 14 into shorter sections for easier digestion. Issues of original meaning and fulfilment are considered here, and naturally considerable attention is paid to the messianic elements of the book. The exposition of the text is clear, readable, sensitive and sensible, and applications remain cogent.

Overall, the careful reader will learn much not just about Zechariah, but also about the whole Bible from this book. Its short sections would lend themselves well to devotional use, but it should also not be ignored by those preaching from or seeking to teach Zechariah at a deeper level.

JAMES HUGHES

Christ Church, Greenbank (Cheshire)

**The COURAGE to be PROTESTANT: TRUTH-LOVERS,  
MARKETERS and EMERGENTS in the POSTMODERN WORLD**  
David F. Wells

Nottingham: IVP, 2008 253pp £14.99pb ISBN: 978-1-84474-278-3

For the last fifteen years David Wells has been involved in an impressive multi-book project, beginning with *No Place for Truth: or, Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (1993), followed by *God in the Wasteland* (1994), *Losing our Virtue* (1998) and *Above All Earthly Pow'rs* (2005). This latest volume is not so much a summary, but what Wells calls an attempt to get at the 'essence' of the project. It is accessibly written, without footnotes or literature survey, and focuses on five major doctrinal themes—truth, God, self, Christ, and the church. The book is fast paced, with vigorous prose, engaging illustrations and provocative challenge.

Wells is a shrewd observer of the evangelical world, which he subjects here to devastating critique. He portrays the movement as divided into three divergent

constituencies. First, the classic evangelicals who hold to historic Protestant orthodoxy and love the truth. Next, the ‘marketers’ who personally believe the gospel but see the truth as an impediment to successful evangelism. Third, the ‘emergents’ who are not really evangelical at all. Wells’ analysis is razor-sharp and pulls no punches. He is not afraid to name Bill Hybels and Rick Warren as icons of the evangelical marketers, who he claims are guilty of ‘the most stunning cultural naiveté’ by their adoption of business strategies to grow local churches (p. 13). He protests that too many evangelical congregations have stopped taking their lead from the Bible, and instead rely upon the hottest marketing trend or the latest demographic survey.

Wells’ appeal makes uncomfortable and invigorating reading. He warns that evangelicals are tempted to conceal, or dilute, or even jettison the truth in our efforts to make the gospel ‘easy to swallow, quick to sell, and generationally appealing’ (p. 237). Throughout the book he argues that too often we have replaced *sola scriptura* with *sola cultura*, as we resort to entertainment and therapeutics to attract the crowds rather than the faithful proclamation of Christ crucified. His chapter on ‘Christianity for Sale’ should be obligatory reading for every evangelical pastor who has been tempted to cut corners in order to boost numbers. Wells pleads—

There is a yearning in the evangelical world today. We encounter it everywhere. It is a yearning for what is real. Sales pitches, marketed faith, the gospel as commodity, people as customers, God as just a prop to my inner life, the glitz and sizzle, Disneyland on the loose in our churches—all of it is skin deep and often downright wrong. It is not making serious disciples. It cannot make serious disciples. It brims with success, but it is empty, shallow, and indeed unpardonable. It is time to reach back into the Word of God, as we have not done in a generation, and find again a serious faith for our undoubtedly serious times. It is now time to close the door on this disastrous experiment in retailing faith, to so do politely but nevertheless firmly. It is time to move on. It is time to become Protestant once again (pp. 57-8).

This book is a trumpet call, a much-needed summons to courage—the courage to stand faithful to biblical Christianity in the midst of post-modern chaos.

ANDREW ATHERSTONE  
Oxford

## ANTI-ARMINIANS: THE ANGLICAN REFORMED TRADITION FROM CHARLES II TO GEORGE I

Stephen Hampton

Oxford: OUP, 2008 293pp £69hb ISBN: 978-0-19-953336-7

Some historians have described the period after 1662 as ‘the eclipse of Calvinism’, as if Reformed theology had been entirely and irrevocably overthrown within Anglicanism at the Restoration. Even some evangelical churchmen have recently been heard to argue against what they pejoratively term ‘Calvinism’ on the basis that such theology was decisively rejected by the Church of England in the seventeenth century. This clear, engaging, and erudite study by Stephen Hampton, the Dean of Peterhouse in Cambridge, seeks to revise that inaccurate picture, and to show that despite some severe setbacks, Reformed Anglicanism remained a vibrant and viable force in the time between the great ejection and the great awakening.

Dean Hampton sets about his task by first giving the reader an introduction to the great and the good of the Reformed Anglican world in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Notwithstanding their Reformed theological credentials, some of these men were also notable for a commitment to the neo-Laudian agenda in terms of elaborate church architecture and various high church stage props, ‘Reformed divinity, but with Restoration curlicues [ornamental twists]’ as the author puts it, a style he himself it seems is probably most comfortable with. This makes them look a somewhat peculiar and eccentric Anglican bunch within the wider international movement, but still recognisably Reformed, in certain aspects of their soteriology for example. There may be quibbles over the precise definition of what constitutes ‘Reformed’ here at times; Hampton’s definition is deliberately somewhat broad and flexible and looks for certain ‘motifs’ in each figure’s theology rather than any coherent ‘ideology’ or programme, which means more straightforward Calvinists may feel less affinity with some of these divines than with others.

One question left somewhat hanging in the air by this book is what precisely was new about the Revival of the eighteenth century if the gospel of salvation by faith alone was not unknown in the highest circles before it. The Dean helpfully points out that it was the Reformed who were the majority amongst the conforming Evangelicals at that time and it is true that men like Whitefield and Toplady acknowledged a great debt to the generation of Reformed

Anglicans highlighted here. Whilst it has been claimed that Reformed Anglicans before the Revival were a very small minority, Hampton claims that they numbered at least twelve bishops, six deans, and several senior divinity professors, not to mention several of the greatest scientific minds, one of the most celebrated preachers, two eminent Patristic scholars, and some influential ecclesiastical courtiers. This is hardly indicative of an invisible minority; indeed, it could well provoke Reformed Anglicans of the early twenty-first century to jealousy, languishing as they do without anything approaching this level of influence in the Church of England. We certainly have very few senior figures today who are competent and willing (as Hampton puts it), ‘to expound the Reformed faith as the uncontroversial norm of Anglican belief’.

The Reformed credentials of the men under this spotlight are demonstrated through an examination of various intricate debates in which they were involved. In terms of their Trinitarian orthodoxy, their view of salvation, their doctrine of justification, and their doctrine of God, they clearly arrayed themselves against insidious Socinian (unitarian) influences and perniciously prominent Arminian liberalism. The central chapters contain deft exposition of these interactions, some of which have an eerily familiar ring (such as the arguments over the precise meaning of the phrase “works of the law”, whether the active righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer or not, whether there is a place for justification by works at the last day, and what is new about the new covenant). In each one, Reformed Anglicans were able to articulate a clear, sophisticated, and biblical response to the novel intrusions of the day. While some of the discussion here feels dense and occasionally esoteric, again, the depth of their scholarship and breadth of their reading make one long for similarly vigorous Reformed Anglican divines in our day.

This, then, is an important corrective to the relative neglect of conforming Reformed theologians amongst those who have written on this period. The great usefulness of its carefully worked through conclusions to the ‘conforming Reformed’ today is that it helpfully joins the historical dots between the Restoration (when all Calvinist influence was thought to have been expunged from the Established church) and the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century (which saw a resurgence and revitalisation of that Reformed gospel).

Minor criticisms could be levelled at parts of the book, such as the distracting

and unnecessary use of feminine pronouns to describe the generic (i.e. a person or an agent is referred to as 'she' or 'her' for no particular reason), and proof-reading is not quite up to the standard one would expect for such an expensive tome from an ancient press. However, this does not distract too much from what is otherwise an assured and elegant performance. Finally, two small caveats at this point; first, this book is far too expensive and probably not worth the investment of nearly £70 for most ministers, though every theological library worth its salt ought to have at least one copy. Oxford University Press should bring out an inexpensive paperback for us to enjoy immediately. Second, and perhaps I ought to have mentioned this to begin with, the author is now this reviewer's doctoral supervisor, so the reader ought to feel free to discount everything positive mentioned here—unless of course you read the book for yourself and see that it really is a fascinating, insightful, and polemically useful study of a neglected part of our Church's history.

LEE GATISS

Peterhouse, Cambridge

## **JUST SEX: IS IT EVER JUST SEX?**

**Guy Brandon**

Nottingham: IVP, 2009 220pp £9.99pb ISBN 978-1-84474371-1

This is an excellent book which is designed to commend the biblical view of sex and human relationships to a society which so often does not see any real connection between the two. It does not rehearse the biblical texts because society is not really impressed by an account of what the Bible says. Instead Brandon uses the Christian worldview to explain the pain of so many people's experience today when sexual intimacy is divorced from the building of human relationships. Most people assume such intimacy is indeed 'just sex' but are then puzzled by the hurt they feel.

Since sex so dominates our culture this book is a great asset to Christians who want to help others understand why they need Jesus Christ and the gospel. It is also a help to those who minister to Christians struggling to be faithful to Christ in the face of the sexual pressures and confusion which our society creates.

Brandon shows how sex has consequences not just for the people involved but also for the wider community. He shows that intimate relationships are not to

be simply identified with sexual intimacy. He also dips his toe cautiously into the way in which public policy today might enable sex to be placed in the proper perspective and healthy relationships encouraged. There is a thoughtful appendix in which twenty common questions people ask about the Bible's teaching on sex are briefly addressed.

Inevitably some readers will find that the chapters leave certain questions unanswered. Probably a whole book could be written for each of the chapters. However it is high time that Christians had the confidence to commend the biblical view of sex and relationships rather than always having to be defensive about it. In the face of the pain and sadness that so many experience today this book is a real asset in showing how Christ and God's ways can bring healing and joy to our lives.

MARK BURKILL  
Christ Church, Leyton (London)

Venture to some of the most remote corners on the planet and find out what it's like to live there. Viking heritage is imprinted into Norway's 1,700 wild and westernmost isles that lie at the opening of the North Sea where one islander has devoted his life to preserving the past. Norway. Remote Places. Island. View image of For more than 500 years, a remote tribe has lived suspended on a cliff-side (Credit: Credit: Ibrahim Shehab). To the Ends of the Earth. A 500-year-old town carved in a cliff. For more than 500 years, a remote tribe has lived suspended on a cliff-side in the mountains of Oman. Oman. Remote Places. View image of The Faroe Islands (Credit: Credit: Nori Jemil). To the Ends of Christians also believe that God is timeless and eternal. All of these ideas are found in the Christian Bible, which is made up of the Old and New Testaments believed to be part of God's revelation to humanity. God is the creator and the giver of all life: "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." Genesis 1:1. All Christians believe that God created everything and is still involved with the world in a mysterious way. The Christian Church also influenced the growth of the new feudal relations a great deal. The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity began at the end of the 6th century (597) and was completed, in the main, in the second half of the 7th century. Before this the Angles, Saxons and Jutes had been pagans, that is. they believed in many gods. The spread of Christianity brought about important changes in the life of the Anglo-Saxons. Many new churches and monasteries were built all over the country. The kings and nobles granted much land to the bishops and monasteries, and that promoted the growth of the big landed estates. The kings also granted them the right to collect dues from the population and to administer justice on their estates.