

words used in his retroversion *in order to create* catchwords. Similarly tendentious renderings from Coptic back to Syriac are 'corpse' rendered by 'flesh' (p. 106), 'evening' rendered by 'night' (p. 115), and 'belongings' rendered by 'house' (p. 124). A significant proportion of the catchwords discovered can be accounted for in a similar way.

A second category of catchwords are those said to sound similar. Take, for instance, the link supposedly established between sayings 54 and 55: 'The two homophones [sic], šmayā [heaven] and sānyā [hate], would only be separated by a handful of words' (p. 105). To begin with, Perrin should have reconstructed Syriac sāmē (absolute state) for sānyā (emphatic state). Next, although s and š look similar in a Roman-based alphabet, no evidence is produced that the sounds they represent were perceived as similar at the time. Thus the only sound in common between the two words is ā, which occurs in a different stress position in each. Consequently there are no matching sounds between the words. Similar examples could be multiplied and large numbers of alleged catchwords accounted for.

The argument is founded upon technical detail and it is due to scores of technical errors that it fails. Since the premise that the Gospel of Thomas was composed in Syriac has itself not been set on a secure foundation Perrin's subsequent case that the Gospel of Thomas had the Diatessaron as its source lacks cogency. A significant achievement of the book, however, is to be a reminder that there is still no firm evidence against as late a dating for the Gospel of Thomas as Perrin proposes.

P.J. Williams, Aberdeen

Wesley and the Wesleyans
Religion in Eighteenth Century Britain
John Kent

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, vii + 229pp. p/b, £14.99, ISBN 0521455553

SUMMARY

In this book Professor John Kent challenges the generally accepted view among historians that John Wesley promoted a widespread revival which saved the soul of the British people. Instead, he suggests that Wesley simply tapped into primary religion which manifested itself in healings, sobbings and fallings. These experiences, far from being the work of God, simply occurred as the result of altered states of consciousness in those concerned. Professor Kent also argues that the Hanoverian established church was not as lax or as weak as Wesley maintained.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch greift Professor John Kent die unter Historikern allgemein anerkannte Ansicht an, dass John Wesley eine weitläufige Erweckung angetrieben hat, die die Seele der Briten gerettet hat. Im Gegensatz dazu legt Kent nahe,

Wesley hätte einfach eine Grundreligion angezapft, die sich in Heilungen, Weinkrämpfen und Hinfallphänomenen geäußert hätte. Diese Erfahrungen, weit entfernt davon, das Werk Gottes gewesen zu sein, traten einfach als Resultat veränderter Bewußtseinszustände auf. Kent argumentiert darüber hinaus, dass die etablierte hannoversche Kirche nicht so locker und schwach war, wie Wesley behauptete.

RÉSUMÉ

John Kent s'oppose ici à l'idée, généralement admise par les historiens, selon laquelle John Wesley aurait été à l'origine d'un grand réveil qui aurait sauvé l'âme du peuple britannique. Il pense au contraire que Wesley a donné dans une religiosité simpliste se manifestant par des guérisons, des soupirs ainsi que par des personnes se laissant choir. Ces expériences, loin d'émaner de l'œuvre divine, résultaient tout bonnement d'états de conscience altérés chez les participants. Kent soutient aussi que l'Église anglicane n'était pas aussi laxiste ni aussi faible que le prétendait Wesley.

* * * *

This is a book which presents an alternative to the generally accepted view of the impact of John Wesley on eighteenth century English society. Professor John Kent does not accept the traditional historiography that there was a large scale evangelical revival which 'saved the soul of the British nation through the miraculous gift of the Spirit'. Rather, he argues, that Wesley tapped into 'primary religion', which for Kent is a kind of subconscious carnal sensuality, which can be brought to the surface and excited by rhetoric and the techniques of the revivalist and the evangelist. Primary religion, according to Kent, manifested itself 'in meetings thick with talk of answered prayer', 'sudden bursts of religious enthusiasm', healings and alleged diabolical miracles which he regards as 'old fashioned'. Kent is also scathing of Wesley's teaching on holiness and interprets the professed experience as merely an altered state of consciousness in the believer.

It is clear therefore that Kent is no fan of John Wesley, indeed he is a strident critic of the founder of Methodism. Wesley, he asserts, lived with 'self-rejection', 'found in religion a means of imposing his will on some of his contemporaries' and, despite allowing women to preach, he was intensely patriarchal and sought always to confine women to the domestic sphere. Wesley, writes Kent, 'dropped out of the mainstream of British society, to wander around the British Isles for about fifty years' and although not anti-intellectual, 'he did not question the classical, including biblical authority on which his education had relied'.

Kent is critical of Wesley's attacks on the established church and maintains that the Wesleyan societies had a detrimental effect on the parochial system. His sympathies clearly lie with the Hanoverian established church and he contends that 'eighteenth century Anglicanism was never as dead as Wesley said it was'. Kent draws on the writings of several of Wesley's ecclesiastical oppo-

nents, among them William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, who clearly recognised that the Wesleyans and some Anglican Evangelicals were simply engaging the primary religious instincts of their followers.

This is a fascinating book which provides some profoundly interesting insights into both Wesley and the Wesleyans and also the Hanoverian established church. Some who read this book will however wish Professor Kent had attempted to engage with the literature on what constitutes a revival, the social impact of the Wesleyans and the debates about Wesley and revolution as set out by E.P. Thompson and other more recent historians. The fact also remains that even if we admit Wesley's critique of the Hanoverian Anglicanism was overly harsh, there was still widespread clerical non-residence and lack of attention to pastoral duty at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Nigel Scotland, The University of Gloucestershire

Semper Reformandum

Studies in Honour of Clark H. Pinnock

Stanley E Porter & Anthony R. Cross
(editors)

Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003, xiii + 414 pp.,
£24.99, pb, ISBN 1-84227-206-3

SUMMARY

This book is a collection of 22 essays written in honour of the controversial Canadian theologian Clark Pinnock. The subject matter covered is eclectic and diverse, reflecting Pinnock's own wide-ranging interests. Some contributors interact closely with Pinnock's work; others use their chapter to expound on a topic without any reference at all to his writings. There is something of interest for every reader in the collection. The significance of the book is in drawing our attention to one question: "to what extent is the evangelical tradition in need of reform if it is to be true to its claim to be biblical?"

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch ist eine Sammlung von 22 Artikeln, die zu Ehren des kontroversen kanadischen Theologen Clark Pinnock verfasst wurden. Die abgedeckten Gebiete sind vielfältig, worin sich Pinnocks eigene weit gestreuten Interessen spiegeln. Einige Beiträge stehen in enger Auseinandersetzung mit Pinnocks Werk; andere legen ein Thema dar ohne jeden Verweis auf Pinnocks Arbeiten. Die Sammlung bietet etwas Interessantes für jeden Leser. Die Bedeutung des Buches liegt darin, dass es unsere Aufmerksamkeit einer Frage zuwendet: „In welchem Ausmaß hat die evangelikale Tradition eine Reform nötig, wenn sie ihrem Anspruch treu bleiben will, biblisch zu sein?“

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage comporte vingt-deux essais en l'honneur du théologien canadien controversé Clark Pinnock. Il est assez

éclectique et d'une grande diversité quant aux sujets abordés, ce qui reflète les champs d'intérêts variés de Pinnock. Certains auteurs entrent en dialogue serré avec l'œuvre de Pinnock ; d'autres traitent un sujet de leur choix sans se référer à ses écrits. Il y a quelque chose d'intéressant pour tout lecteur dans cet ensemble. Il présente l'intérêt d'attirer l'attention sur la question suivante : « Jusqu'à quel point la tradition évangélique a-t-elle besoin de se réformer si elle se doit d'être fidèle à sa volonté d'être biblique ? »

* * * *

There is perhaps one non-controversial thing to be said about the Canadian theologian Clark Pinnock – his work is highly controversial. In November 2003 he survived a vote of the North American Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) over whether, as an "open theist", he should be allowed to continue in membership. This collection of essays helps the reader to understand why that vote was taken.

The editors have drawn together 22 contributions to mark Pinnock's retirement from twenty-five years of teaching at McMaster Divinity College. Most of the contributors are supportive of his project of reforming evangelical theology, although few are uncritical. I suspect that many of them would have voted in his favour at the ETS, given the chance. For a more robust critique of Pinnock's work, from a more traditional evangelical stance, readers will have to look elsewhere, e.g., Gray, Tony & Sinkinson, Christopher (eds), (2000) *Reconstructing Theology: a critical assessment of the theology of Clark Pinnock*, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2000).

The first two chapters are helpful scene setters. Barry Callen gives a potted biography of Pinnock's theological journey from an ardent fundamentalist to a committed open theist. The second chapter by Roger Olson summarises eight characteristic features of postconservative evangelical theology (as Olsen prefers to call open theism). The first chapter is important in helping the reader to understand the interaction between life experience and theological opinion that is central to Pinnock's journey. The second chapter is important in that it gives the "big picture" that helps the reader understand the significance of, and the links between, the contributions that follow. Without these two chapters, the reader who was unfamiliar with Pinnock's work and the debates surrounding it would probably be lost.

The twenty chapters that follow are an eclectic mix of variable length, subject matter and quality. Some interact directly with Pinnock's work. Others seem simply to be the author's own reflections on a topic that is part of Pinnock's wide ranging interests, but which make no reference at all to his writings. These twenty chapters are loosely grouped around a number of themes, although there are no sections to make the organisation of the book clear to the reader. There is a definite sense that the editors have adopted a "light touch" policy in both the commissioning and revision of the contributions. The subjects covered include the nature of God,