

Transgender

Vaughan Roberts

- The Good Book Company, 2016, £2.99, 80pp, ISBN 9781784981952
- Reviewed by **Rick Thomas**, CMF Public Policy Researcher

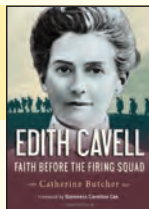
Transgender, how to understand it – as disobedience, dysphoria or deconstruction? Vaughan Roberts steers towards pastoral sensitivity and robust biblical clarity.

Roberts shows how gender identity has been dislocated from biological sex, assuming that we should seek to alter a person's body to conform to their sense of gender identity, and examines transgender through the biblical lenses of creation, fall, redemption and 'new' creation. He suggests that true authenticity is found only through living as we were intended to live – in relationship with our 'Maker'. The gospel is good

news of rescue through Christ and ultimately of complete restoration of bodies and minds. Those who experience gender dysphoria need compassionate care, including encouragement to identify with their birth sex.

The final chapter is worth the cover price alone. It is full of practical help given as advice in a series of 'what if' scenarios.

What Roberts has done, and done well, is provide a read-in-one-sitting, tender-hearted but uncompromising introduction to transgender for Christians who find themselves wrestling with cultural trends or seeking to support friends or patients wrestling with gender identity issues.



Edith Cavell

Faith Before the Firing Squad
Catherine Butcher

- Monarch Books, 2015, £8.99, 191pp, ISBN 9780857216571
- Reviewed by **Steven Fouch**, CMF Head of Nursing

In the midst of commemorations of the centenary of the First World War, the story of a Christian nurse in Belgium, executed for treason, is not an obvious stand out. Yet the death of Edith Cavell became a global cause celebre.

Butcher paints a picture of this most unlikely patriot and martyr. Born to a believing family in Norfolk, Edith grew up regularly praying and reading the Bible. Her family also instilled in her the values of service of the poor, sick and vulnerable as part of her devotion to her Lord. So it was that she embarked on a career as a governess in Britain and Belgium, before undertaking nurse training as a second career in her early 30s.

Fluent in French, Cavell was

approached to return to Belgium to set up the country's first nursing school in 1907. Thus, she found herself in Brussels as German troops marched in to occupy it in the autumn of 1914. During the next year, Cavell, along with various Belgium resistance fighters, ran a shelter for wounded allied troops, smuggling as many as a thousand soldiers and airmen back into allied territory.

The reader is taken into Cavell's personal correspondence and the reminiscences of her friends and colleagues. But above all, she shows how Cavell's faith in Christ inspired her service. As a result, when she was arrested and sentenced to death, she faced her final hours with forgiveness, faith and hope.



Virtually Human

Flourishing in a digital age
Ed Brooks & Pete Nicholas (ed)

- IVP, 2015, £8.99, 176pp, ISBN 9781783593897
- Reviewed by **Andrew Horton**, former CMF Media Producer

A book about our digital world has the potential to be irrelevant faster than you can say 'Google plus'. Thankfully, this book skillfully avoids this trap.

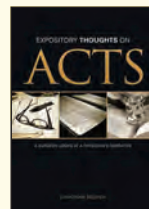
It begins with the theory and theology of technology, followed by practical applications and insights for us today. Theology isn't left behind, there's biblical insight and application from start to finish.

The story of technology is unpacked through the lens of the Bible, looking at its nature, purposes and potential. It's not technology itself that can be innately good or bad, and in fact we read that God knows the good in technology because its goodness comes from him. But

we do need to be wise in our choice to say 'yes' or 'no' to the way we use technology. We're encouraged to praise God for technology because technology can display God's glory too.

Brooks and Nicholas don't leave you feeling either guilty or overwhelmed – you're more likely to feel strengthened in your battle to carve some Bible-time out of your social media treadmill.

Augmented and virtual reality devices may help us 'see the world better', but we'll always see it best through the lens of God's great plan for humanity. *Virtually Human* is essential reading for anyone who wants to know what it means to be an effective disciple in the digital age.



Expository Thoughts on Acts

A surgeon looks at a physician's narrative
Jonathan Redden

- Christian Media Ritchie, 2015, £7.99, 200pp, ISBN 9781872734392
- Reviewed by **Peter Pattison**, retired GP

Older readers will probably be familiar with Bishop J C Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*. Surgeon Jonathan Redden's book is consciously modelled on those volumes. It covers the whole of Acts in about 70 short sections. The Bible text is printed, followed by one or two pages of comment.

The comment is strong on application. The necessary engagement with the text and context – the exegesis, awareness of critical issues and referral to mainstream commentaries – have all been done, but are in the background. The thoughts are expository in the truest sense of that word – they expose what is

in the text and its implications for contemporary living, rather than imposing extraneous ideas or using the text as a springboard for unconnected thoughts.

Are you looking for something to stimulate your daily Bible reading? This would be an excellent start. In the 19th century Bishop Ryle wrote material specifically for use in family prayers. This present book could help couples to read Scripture together and, in some cases, could help families to engage with the Bible.

In a day when daily Bible reading is neglected or squeezed out, anything that could help us to a fresh start is to be welcomed.