FEBRUARY 2018 READING

Posted on February 28, 2018 by Eddie

Two good church history books, some indifferent missiology, some awful science fiction and a book about vets in North Yorkshire; February's reading.
Category: Observations

Here is a brief summary of the things I've read this month. A few serious books and a whole lot of stuff that I got cheap or free for my Kindle. Some good, some bad and a few that were downright ugly.

Christian Books

The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and MoodyÂ and Disruption of Evangelicalism (History of Evangelicalism 4) are the next volumes in the excellent IVP series on the history of evangelicalism. If I'd been more organised, I'd have written fuller reviews of each of these - they certainly deserve it. I've made copious notes on both books and will be referring to them extensively in the future.

Missionary Methods: Research, Reflections, and Realities (Evangelical Missiological Society Series Book 21): this multi-author book is part celebration and part critique of the excellent and reveredÂ Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?Â by Roland Allen. It's a bit of a specialist area, but if you've read Allen's book, it is worth having a look at the follow up.

Celebrations of past events seem to be the order of the month.Â The State of Missiology Today: Global Innovations in Christian Witness (Missiological Engagements)Â was written to celebrate the first 50 years of the Fuller School of Intercultural Studies. There is some good stuff in here, but also some material, which, if I were writing a longer review, I would want to criticise in some depth. If you need to read this, you probably already have. If not, you'd have to be very keen to splash out the money on it.

History

Dunkirk: A Miracle of Deliverance; there are better and more comprehensive books on Dunkirk, but this one is cheap and manages to cover the essentials without being over-long. If you've seen the movie and would like some more background, this is well worth getting hold of.Â Sudden VictoryÂ is basically a short history of tank warfare with the emphasis on the short. It's ok, but no more than that.

Biography

Horses, Heifers and Hairy Pigs: The Life of a Yorkshire VetÂ is basically James Herriot brought up to date by someone working in Herriot's practice in North Yorkshire. I prefer the original books, but this is not bad at all.

Science Fiction

It's not often that science fiction authors manage to squeeze a bad spoonerism into a title, but the author of Drake's RiftÂ manages just that. It's an entertaining enough story about a small group of marines who manage to resist waves of attacks from a bunch of strange aliens. Think Rorke's Drift in space and you've got the idea. There is also a space battle that seems to have been adapted from Trafalgar. All in all, it's a diverting book, though not so diverting that I want to pay to read the rest of

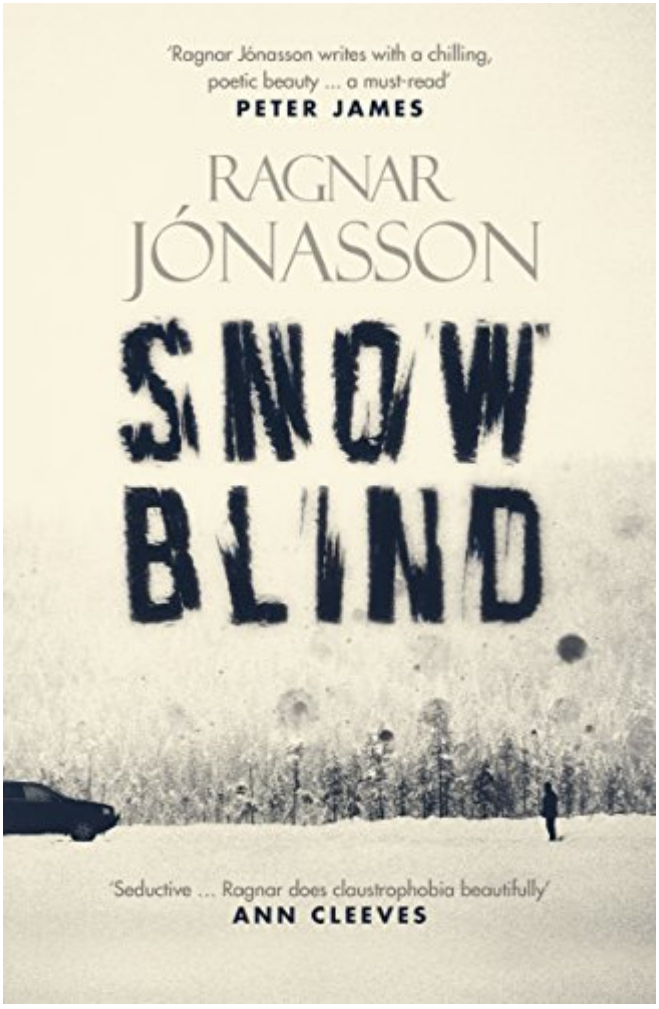
the series.

Infinity Wars (The Infinity Project)Â is an entertaining enough book of short stories imagining what war will look like in the future. It's not as gruesome as it sounds and at times it is positively intriguing.

Plague Wars: Infection Day; last month I made the comment that I tend to avoid anything that describes itself as a trilogy. I made an exception for this series of books (which is the first of a number of trilogies - all part of the same series). They tell the story of a virus which heals people of all known diseases and makes them nice to be around at the same time. Obviously corrupt governments want nothing to do with something as helpful as this. It's a nice idea and would have made a great novel. I'm not sure that the idea can be maintained over a trilogy, much less a whole host of trilogies.

I'm a great fan of both Arthur C Clarke and Stephen Baxter, so when I came across a book that they had co-authored in a second-hand book sale, I decided that I had to buyÂ Time's Eye: A Time Odyssey Book One. It's an interesting enough Â time travel story that has Rudyard Kipling, Alexander the Great, Ghengis Kahn and a modern day helicopter pilot meeting up in Afghanistan. However, by the end of the novel the idea had worn thin and I won't be going back to read the rest of the series.

Crime Thrillers



Mummy's Favourite: Top 10 bestselling serial killer thriller (DC Charlotte Stafford Series)Â is a perfectly acceptable, if a little gruesome, murder mystery. I enjoyed it as I read it and the twist at the end was pleasing enough. I'd not object to reading more books featuring the same decretive, but I wouldn't pay full price for them.

Never AloneÂ was free on Kindle. It's an interesting enough story, though the final twist is telegraphed from fairly early on. The problem is, the story was ruined by a weird convention whereby chapters were written in the first, second or third person depending on who was in focus. In the hands of a better author this might have worked, but for me it was just clumsy. Sometimes just telling a simple story is the best way to go.

I thought that Snowblind (Dark Iceland)Â was an absolute cracker. I don't know if a book set in Iceland qualifies as Scandic-Noir, but it's a good story whatever you call it. It's basically a locked room mystery, with the locked room being an isolated village in Iceland which is cut off from the rest of the country by winter snow fall. The main characters are engaging and the mystery was thoroughly satisfying. I'll definitely look out for more books in this series.