

purple plastic. It is the Franklin brand King James Bible with Concordance. And lest you doubt the efficacy of this particular device, there is a quote right next to it saying, "The Franklin Bible. The fastest, surest way I've found for reference and concordance work. And it's fun." And who is this quote from but

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that internationally known Bible scholar Johnny Cash. Yeah, I guess in his profession singing songs about bar room brawls, Ol' Johnny must do a heap of Bible reference and concordance work. Yes, ask any popular TV evangelist and he will tell you the two go great together... The Bible and Cash... Cash and the Bible.

And it will print the holy word in any of three fonts, large, small, or Baptismal. (Just a little joke, friends. It's only two fonts.) It runs on four Triple-A batteries. That's one A for the father, one for the Son, and one for the Holy Ghost. And this way each of those super-charged Gospels gets its own battery. But you better get long-life batteries cause this baby's gonna help you find Life Eternal.

But are you ready for the next step? My friends, are you ready? Have you prepared yourself for the next step into the world of the Intel Intercessor? Will your heart sing with the Microsoft Missal? Are you prepared for the future of the Pentium Pentatuch, those 4.999828 Books of Moses? Well Greg Garvey, a visual arts professor at Concordia University (I'm not making this up. Concordia.) has built a computer confessional. Yup, this is a computer program that listens to your sins and deals out the proper penance, printed out on a little paper ribbon. I mean, why take a human priest away from his good works just to listens to a sin or two and determine a proper penance? If a machine can do that, why not? And think of the nifty computer penances. "Here is a number, my son. Each time you say a Hail Mary you can decrement by one. When the number is less than or equal to zero, you have performed your penance. Remember to decrement, my son, that you not fall into an Eternal Loop." "But was it a sin, Father?" "Yes, but technically it wasn't a Fault. It was just a Flaw." "Uh, I think I'd rather it was a Fault."

And let us say A-men. [-mrl]

2. "The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires" by Brian N. Stableford (Interzone #91/#92, January/February 1995, novella) (a novella review by Evelyn C. Leeper):

Normally I don't review short fiction from magazines, but I'm willing to make an exception in this case. If I don't, you might not realize you should be nominating this for a Hugo next year.

This is part of what appears to be a new trend in British science fiction involving Victorian vampires. Perhaps the best-known example on the American side of the Pond is Kim Newman's ANNO DRACULA, but Stableford has also written a relatively well-known novel in this milieu, THE EMPIRE OF FEAR (an expansion of "The Man

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Who Loved the Vampire Lady," which I recently reviewed as part of the anthology TOMORROW SUCKS).

"The Hunger and Ecstasy of Vampires" starts in 1895 with the gathering of eight Victorian gentlemen to hear the story of Edward Coplestone, who has traveled into the far future with the help of a drug he developed. (It is obvious from how they are introduced that these gentlemen are people who should be known to the reader, but who am I to spoil your fun in guessing who they are?) In the future Coplestone has discovered the result of the conflict between humans and vampires, and much more. At times Stableford evokes H. G. Wells's TIME MACHINE--thoroughly consciously and intentionally, I might add. At other times, his writing is more in the sweeping style of Olaf Stapledon's galactic epics. One might think either is an odd style for a vampire novel, but Stableford proves that it's the author who ultimately determines what works and what doesn't--and he makes it work beautifully.

In addition to his other feats here, Stableford manages to write a story with Oscar Wilde as a major character without resorting to filling his dialogue with every famous thing Wilde ever said, while still making Wilde seem like Wilde. If this doesn't impress you,

you've obviously never read the various Sherlock Holmes pastiches in which Holmes meets Wilde apparently for the sole purpose of providing Wilde with an opportunity to say all his most famous lines.

In short, this is a Hugo-class novella, full of lyrical descriptions, a conflict in which both sides have their strengths and their weaknesses (both in their powers and in their philosophies), and interesting, three-dimensional characters. I know it will be hard to find this in the United States (unless some far-seeing company decides to market it as a stand-alone novella--hint, hint), so look for it in Glasgow at Intersection if you're there. I've just started subscribing to INTERZONE, but I can see why it keeps making the ballot for semi-prozine when it publishes this stories of this quality. [-ecl]

3. Twice Sold Tales Used Books in Red Bank (NJ) is going out of business by the end of the month and selling off their stock for half normal price (which is normally half cover). I suspect they were driven out of business by Pyramid Books, which has a much larger selection (especially in SF). [-ecl]

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Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness.

--Thomas Paine

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