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Editorial: On the Shoulder of Giants

One of the great unexpected pleasures of assuming the editorship of *Themelios* at this point in time has been my inheritance from the previous editor of Peter Heslam's article on Abraham Kuyper and Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. These two men, giants in their time, are seldom cited today even among evangelical scholarly circles, and, when they are, it is more often to criticise their views than to learn from them. Yet one can scarcely claim to understand the shape and concerns of evangelical life and thought in the twentieth century without some reference to them – a point which Dr Heslam makes with great clarity in his article. As Dr Heslam devotes most of his attention to Kuyper, it is perhaps worth our while to look briefly at the contribution of B.B. Warfield.

Warfield was a remarkable man. Even with all the gains of evangelical scholarship of the last fifty years, we have no-one like him today in terms of the sweep of his interests and his apparently omnivorous theological mind. The pre-eminent professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary after the death of Charles Hodge, his learning was breathtaking. Well-acquainted with the latest theological scholarship, conservative and liberal, in English and in German, his writings covered the whole sweep of the theological encyclopaedia. Most famous now, perhaps, for his views on the cessation of the supernatural gifts and his defence of the classic orthodox position on the nature and authority of Scripture, he also made profound contributions to biblical theology, church history, and contemporary church debates about the Christian life. If evangelicalism has a vision today for a theology which is grounded in expert scholarship, yet which relates to the life of each and every believer, then Warfield must take a large part of the credit for inspiring just such a vision. I am sure that I am not the first, and will certainly not be the last person who first had his mind set on fire for academic theology through reading the works of the Princeton professor.

In addition, however, and perhaps more significantly, Warfield was also a man with a deep personal commitment to Christ which informed everything he did. It was this desire to serve Christ which motivated all of his theological activity. Week by week, he was concerned not simply to develop a rigorous and scholarly articulation of the historic Christian faith, but also to apply that same faith to the nuts and bolts of everyday life. Indeed, while professor at Princeton, he spent every Sunday afternoon teaching the students about the relevance of theology to Christian experience.² With a wife who was tragically injured and crippled early on in marriage, Warfield was no stranger himself to suffering and to the reliance upon God which such suffering engenders. It was his own powerful personal experience of Christ's upholding grace that enabled him to communicate the deeper currents of theology and Christian experience to his students.

It is remarkable, but as I survey the works of Warfield on my shelves, it is difficult to know which have been of more use to me over the years: the works which impart the vision of a profound and scholarly evangelical theology or those which speak of Christian experience. Is that not evidence that Warfield made just the kind of contribution to theology and to church life to which all theological teachers and students should aspire?

Warfield, then, should speak powerfully to us as we set about theological endeavour in our generation. He was not perfect and he made his undoubted mistakes, but he is not, as some might be tempted to feel, an awkward boulder in the way of evangelical theological progress. Rather, he is a giant upon whose shoulders we might do well to stand if we are to see further. The breadth and depth

of his scholarship should move us all to yet greater efforts in our attempts to mine the Bible and church history for further insights into the gospel of Jesus Christ; and his passionate commitment to Christ and to daily Christian living should challenge us not to rest on our scholarly laurels, as if university degrees and academic honours were the goal for which we ultimately strive, but to press forward to apply our studies to our relationships both with other people and, supremely, with God himself. Let us look at Warfield and learn from him, bearing in mind his own wise words to his students at Princeton: 'In your case, there can be no "either-or", either a student or a man of God. You must be both.'

¹For a good introduction to the theology of Warfield, see his *Studies in Theology* (Banner of Truth).

²For a selection of these addresses, see his *Faith and Life* (Banner of Truth).

In this edition we welcome Dr. Carl Trueman as the new Editor of *Themelios*. Until recently Carl taught on the theology faculty at Nottingham University, and is now a lecturer in historical theology at Aberdeen University. His thesis on the Reformation was published by OUP, and a recent work on John Owen by Paternoster Press. As well as being a frequent conference speaker and teacher on historical theology, Carl claims that he is also an expert in cowboy films of the '40s and '50s. We welcome Carl and look forward to the growth of *Themelios* under his direction.

Notice. The editors draw attention to the fact that in *Themelios* 24.1, an extremely excellent article by Graham Cole was not listed in the table of contents on the front cover. We take this opportunity to apologise to Dr Cole and to draw the attention of *Themelios* readers to his contribution.

ARCHITECTS OF EVANGELICAL INTELLECTUAL THOUGHT: ABRAHAM KUYPER AND BENJAMIN WARFIELD¹

Peter S. Heslam

*Dr Peter Heslam, currently a curate in the Church of England, is an internationally recognised expert on the thought of Abraham Kuyper, the great Dutch polymath. He has recently published a major book, *Creating a Christian World View (Eerdmans/Paternoster)*, which analyses the famous Lectures on Calvinism which Kuyper gave at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898. In this article he compares and contrasts the thought of Kuyper with that of another great fountainhead of evangelical thought, B B Warfield.*

Introduction

Last year marked the centenary of a significant moment in the formation of the contemporary evangelical mind. In October 1898, the Dutch Reformed theologian, politician, journalist and educationalist Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) delivered the annual series of Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary. While in itself this may not seem like a very remarkable event, the core ideas of those lectures have informed and inspired several generations of evangelical thinkers, and there is every evidence today that the influence of these ideas is growing.² The person most singularly responsible for Kuyper's international reputation was a member of the Princeton faculty at the time of his visit: Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851–1921). Not only did he have a hand in Kuyper's invitation to deliver the Stone Lectures, but he was intimately involved in the translation, publication and distribution of Kuyper's work in the English-speaking world. In doing so, he openly expressed his admiration for his Dutch colleague, and commended him enthusiastically to new readers. In the introduction to Kuyper's *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology*, he wrote:

*As a force in Church and State in whose arm those who share his fundamental principles trust with a well-founded hope of victory, Dr. Kuyper is probably today the most considerable figure in both political and ecclesiastical Holland.*³

Shortly before Kuyper's visit to Princeton, Warfield published a biographical sketch of Kuyper's career, in order to introduce him to a wider American audience. Once again, his admiration for his Dutch colleague is all too apparent:

In the conflict with unbelief and indifferentism, with materialism and pessimism, in brief with all the elements that are undermining the health of the individual or of the people, he [Kuyper] has ... remained the leader whose

forceful words strengthen the hearts of the Christians in Holland, no matter to what ecclesiastical tendency they may adhere.⁴

Two years later he wrote that Kuyper displayed 'a systematizing genius that is very rare'.⁵

Warfield's enthusiasm for and propagation of Kuyper's work may seem odd in view of the fact that these two theologians represent different figureheads, different sources of inspiration, in contemporary evangelical thought and reflection. As George Marsden has written: 'In almost every field today, evangelical scholars are divided in two camps ... the Warfieldians and the Kuyperians.'⁶ The key differences between Kuyper and Warfield were derived, however, from their difference in approach to a single issue: the relationship between faith and reason. This has to be fully acknowledged, alongside a recognition of the importance of this issue, if an over-exaggerated picture either of their differences or of their similarities is to be avoided.

This article will aim to compare the ideas on faith and reason that were held by these two architects of contemporary evangelical intellectual thought, and to account for some of the differences. Kuyper's Stone Lectures, which have most often been published under the title *Lectures on Calvinism*, will be taken as the starting-point for this discussion. The comparisons that are made will serve a further aim of this paper, which is to situate Kuyper's lectures in the immediate context in which they were given: Princeton Theological Seminary in the autumn of 1898.⁷ The advantage of focusing the analysis on the Stone Lectures is that in them we are presented with the essential Kuyper. Anyone, in fact, seeking to discover the heart of Kuyper's thought is best advised first to go to the *Lectures on Calvinism*, rather than to any of his other works. There are at least four factors that account for this.

First, they represent a summary of Kuyper's thought, the components of which he had worked out over the quarter-century of his public career that had passed before his visit to the United States, chiefly through his relentless and prolific journalism.⁸ Major areas of his thinking, about which he had published a great deal, are presented in concise form. Despite their modest length, therefore, the *Lectures* have a broad scope: they represent a kind of 'manifesto' of Kuyper's thought.⁹ Secondly, the Stone Lectures were presented at the highpoint of Kuyper's career. When he gave them he was Professor of Theology, Member of Parliament, leader of the Anti-Revolutionary Party, and Chief Editor of his daily newspaper *De Standaard* and his weekly religious newspaper *De Heraut*. Three years later he became Prime Minister of the Netherlands. The Kuyper of the Stone Lectures, therefore, is Kuyper at the peak of his intellectual and organizational powers – it is Kuyper in his prime.¹⁰ A third factor is that in the Stone

Lectures Kuyper made an attempt to relate his ideas to a foreign audience that was unfamiliar with them. Out of all Kuyper's publications, including those that have been translated into other languages, the *Lectures on Calvinism* is the only substantial work that was originally intended for a foreign audience. Because of this, allusions to debates and struggles peculiar to the Dutch context are kept to a minimum. This not only allows attention to focus on the underlying principles of his thought, but it contributes to the lucidity and accessibility of the style and argumentation.¹¹

Fourthly, it was in the Stone Lectures that Kuyper first used the concept of worldview in the specific sense of *Weltanschauung* as a way of giving shape to his entire body of thought. This is not to deny that certain aspects of his worldview concept were evident in his thinking before 1898: but where these occurred there was no systematic application of this concept to opposing ideologies, and no attempt was made to define the contours of a Calvinistic worldview.¹² The transition to the full use of the worldview concept as the central feature of Kuyper's thought was largely due, in fact, to the influence of the Scottish theologian James Orr (1844–1913), whose Kerr Lectures for 1890–91 Kuyper consulted in preparing his Stone Lectures.¹³

Taken together, these four factors help account for the fact that it is this work amongst Kuyper's extensive repertoire that has had the greatest international rapport and impact. A number of other eminent Dutch theologians have given the Stone Lectures since they were founded by Levi Stone in 1871, but none of these series of lectures, once published, have been as widely circulated or as profoundly influential as Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism*. At the height of his career, Kuyper made a bold and spirited attempt to bring together the main strands of his thought in a concise, comprehensive and systematic way and in so doing accentuated their dynamic potential. What ensued is the most complete, cogent and visionary expression of Kuyper's thought that is available to any reader.

Kuyper at Princeton

What was Kuyper's reception like when he came to Princeton? Against a background of excitement and anticipation a certain degree of irritation emerged shortly before he arrived. The cause of this irritation was Kuyper's decision to make amendments to his Lecture manuscripts following his reading of American history *en route* to the United States and in the public library in Manhattan.¹⁴ The alterations having been made, he sent a full annotated text to Warfield with the request that it be translated afresh. There were, however, only about ten days to go before the Lectures were due to begin. With break-neck speed Warfield organized translators amongst his colleagues and contacts and managed to run off a printed version for Kuyper's use on the rostrum. In the front of one of the dozen copies that were made

of this version, Warfield paid a handwritten tribute to 'the gentlemen who permitted themselves to be hurried through the task of translating these lectures'. He pointed out that before the English edition of the Lectures was published in 1899, 'the text was much altered by Dr. Kuyper himself with a view to bettering the English, but with the effect of waning it sadly'.¹⁵

Exasperation gave way to bewilderment after Kuyper arrived. In the conferment ceremony of honorary doctorates at the university Kuyper was accompanied in the procession by Albert V. Dicey (1835–1922), Professor of English Law at Oxford University, who along with Kuyper was to receive an honorary doctorate in law. Both candidates for the degree were called upon to address the audience. In a letter to his wife Dicey wrote:

On the platform were the President and other University officers. Distinguished visitors, such as the ex-President of Cleveland, and the recipients of degrees, viz. Dr. Kuyper and myself. It was a bright, gay scene, but in some ways oddly unlike the giving of degrees at Oxford. ... We were each asked to say a few words. This led to the most remarkable speech I have heard for a long time. Kuyper ... looked like a Dutchman of the seventeenth century. He spoke slowly and solemnly. His English was impressive, with here and there a Dutch idiom. He told us he was a Calvinist; that he had been persecuted by anti-Calvinists – this itself sounded like the language of another age. All the good in America had its root in Calvinism, which was as much a legal and an ethical as a religious creed. The Continental States had sympathised with Spain. Not so the Dutch Calvinists. 'We have not forgotten our contest with Spanish tyranny; we fought it for a hundred years. In six weeks you have given Spanish power its coup de grace, but neither England nor the United States would have been free but for Dutch heroism. Spain has in all countries and in all ages been a curse to the world...' This was the tone of the whole speech. There was not a word of flattery to America. One felt as if the seventeenth century had visibly risen upon us to give the last curse to Spain. After that I spoke, said nothing very remarkable, but dwelt on our ideas of law and justice being the true bond between England and the United States... Then luncheon and a sort of levée – infinite handshakings and introductions. My head whirled over it... This is the outline of our jaunt to Princeton. I brought away an additional LL.D., a gorgeous hood, very pleasant recollections.¹⁶

Although these words come from only one member of Kuyper's audience, and an English one at that, they provide a unique insight not only into the occasion itself but into the kind of impression Kuyper made at Princeton.

Kuyper and Warfield

Warfield, of course, would have been less taken aback by Kuyper than Dicey, given his familiarity with Kuyper's work and with the Calvinistic tradition in which he stood. He, like Kuyper, was both an eminent theologian and an ardent polemicist, not given to exercising restraint when dealing with opinions that stood opposed to his own, even when it was with Kuyper that he disagreed.¹⁷ He also resembled Kuyper in his passion for publishing his views. Numerous articles flowed from his pen, most of them appearing in the *Princeton Theological Review*, which he dominated in a not dissimilar way to Kuyper's domination of *De Standaard* and his weekly religious newspaper *De Heraut*. Many of his publications, like those of Kuyper, dealt explicitly with the subject of Calvinism, and he shared with Kuyper the conviction that historic orthodoxy had to undergo further development so as to be able to address contemporary issues. Warfield also struggled, as did Kuyper, against the mounting influence of liberalism, although Warfield restricted his opposition largely to theological issues and particularly to the doctrine of Scripture. It was no doubt because of such affinities that one of Kuyper's daughters translated some of Warfield's work into Dutch,¹⁸ and that Warfield was known to American students as the 'American Kuyper'.¹⁹

The similarities and differences between Kuyper and Warfield on the relationship between faith and reason are seen most clearly when their treatments of evolution, biblical inspiration, and a Christian approach to science are compared. Although these similarities and differences have until recently escaped detailed scholarly attention, their relevance to current discussions of the same issues is highlighted by the point made at the start of this paper that the Warfieldian and Kuyperian traditions are still of considerable importance in evangelical reflection on the issue of belief and rationality.

Evolution

Kuyper maintained that the worldviews of Christianity and evolution were diametrically opposed to each other, without any hope of reconciliation. They were, as he put it, 'antipoles between which neither reconciliation nor comparison is thinkable'.²⁰ He did not, however, in contrast to many of his Catholic and orthodox Protestant contemporaries, reject the validity of the scientific data produced by evolutionary scientists, nor was he opposed to the idea that one species may have evolved out of another.²¹ He maintained, rather, a notion of 'relative evolution', or 'evolutionary creation', by which he sought to acknowledge the validity of biological research whilst maintaining the integrity of the Genesis account.²² His censure of evolutionary theory was based on what he regarded as an attempt by its purveyors (such as Herbert Spencer and

Ernst Haeckel) to take all areas of knowledge, including metaphysics, within its ambit, thus allowing it to assume religious pretensions. Whilst, therefore, rejecting evolution as a worldview, he accepted it as a scientific hypothesis, conceived using fallible human reason. Ilse Bulhof has claimed that this position, assenting as it did to the idea of progress and to a form of qualified Darwinism, was 'doubtless the most creative' amongst religious responses to evolutionary theory in the Netherlands. In Claude Welch's estimation, similarly, it represents 'an ingenious way of looking at evolution "from a Christian point of view"'.²³ Despite the threat to orthodox Christian faith posed by the evolutionary worldview (or 'evolutionism' as Kuyper often called it), Kuyper did not believe that engaging in reasoned dialogue with its advocates was the way forward. This, he maintained, would be entirely fruitless, given the reality of the antithesis between Christian and evolutionary presuppositions. Christian opposition to evolutionism should take the form not of a blow-by-blow defence, but of the development of an equally fundamental, religious worldview that was true to Christian principles.²⁴

Kuyper's treatment of evolution would certainly have struck chords with his Princeton audience. In contrast to their predecessor Charles Hodge (1797-1878), who had vigorously opposed evolutionary theory as essentially atheistic, A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield sought to reconcile Darwin's findings with the teachings of Scripture.²⁵ In a way similar to Kuyper, they argued that evolutionary theory should be accepted as a viable hypothesis for explaining natural development, but they insisted that it must not seek to address metaphysical questions. If it did so, it would be bound to fall into anti-Christian speculation, whereas Darwin's agnosticism was not the inevitable outcome of his evolution theory.²⁶ Warfield was keen to stress, indeed, that evolution might supply a tenable theory of the means by which divine creation occurred. He thereby wished to accept 'theistic evolution', which was a theory closely resembling Kuyper's notion of evolutionary creation.²⁷ It was not, however, until after Warfield's death in 1921 that theologians at Princeton, along with most other conservative evangelicals (who had since come to be called fundamentalists), began to allow the notion of evolution to take on mythical proportions as the great collective symbol of scientific naturalism, in a way similar to Kuyper and German positivist philosophers before them. Once the transition had been made, it virtually became the defining aspect of their warfare with modern scientific culture.²⁸ Although, at the time of his visit, the severity of Kuyper's attack on evolution as a worldview may not have found resonance at Princeton, the level of agreement between Kuyper and Warfield on the value of evolution as a scientific theory but its destructiveness if applied to the realm of metaphysics is remarkable.

Biblical inspiration

A similar level of agreement is apparent in their positions on biblical inspiration. This is worth emphasizing in view of the inaccurate study of biblical authority and inspiration by Rogers and McKim, in which it is argued that Kuyper maintained a much more positive attitude to biblical criticism than did Warfield.²⁹ The differences between Kuyper and Warfield in this whole area are significant and stem from a basic difference in philosophical background, but they must not be allowed to obscure the fact that their chief bearing is on the value of defending the authority and inspiration of Scripture, rather than on belief in the authority and inspiration of Scripture itself. Kuyper's claim that the Bible is God's Word both as a whole and in its parts corresponded closely to Warfield and Hodge's insistence that 'the Scriptures not only contain, but *are the word of God*'.³⁰ In fact, both Kuyper and Warfield assumed that there was only one truly Reformed perspective on this matter, and both failed to provide a rigorous engagement with the critical-historical issues raised by the new scholarship concerning the place of Scripture in the traditional teachings of the church. Settling instead for dogmatically assertive and polemical arguments, both theologians won considerable support for their case – Kuyper amongst the Dutch Orthodox Reformed (the *Gereformeerden*) and Warfield amongst the mainly orthodox membership of the American Presbyterian Church.

It was the issue of apologetics that constituted the chief practical point of difference between Kuyper and Warfield in the area of biblical inspiration. Warfield engaged in apologetics and endorsed its use with unrivalled vigour, tending in doing so towards the post-Reformation scholastic view that reason could be a preamble. He argued that human reason compelled people to believe the Bible because of evidential or logical proofs of its divine character. The Scriptures had therefore to be vindicated as a technically reliable guide to science and history before a person could trust in them.³¹ Kuyper, on the other hand, shunned apologetics, maintaining that the Holy Spirit moved people to accept the authority of the Scriptures because of the message of salvation they contained. The function of Scripture was, in fact, soteriological: it brought people to salvation.

Calvin's doctrine of Scripture provided Kuyper the starting-point for this position. While Calvin's *necessitas Sanctae Scripturae* (necessity of Holy Scripture) gave Kuyper cause for suspicion towards attempts made by modernistic scholars, such as Albert Schweitzer, to apply techniques of literary criticism to the biblical accounts, Calvin's *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* (testimony of the Holy Spirit) lent support to his rejection of reasoned argument in the effort to affirm the authority of the Scriptures; the Holy Spirit, who indwelt the believer, bore witness to their truth.³² Thus he declared at the start of his

Stone Lectures, in words that were no doubt aimed directly at his Princeton audience: 'In this struggle [between the worldviews of Christianity and modernism], Apologetics have advanced us not one single step. Apologists have invariably begun by abandoning the assailed breastwork, in order to entrench themselves cowardly in a ravelin behind it.'³³ The point reached its intended target, Warfield later writing in criticism of Kuyper and his associates: 'Apologetics has its part in Christianizing the world, and this is not a small part: nor is it merely a subsidiary or a defensive part ... It has a primary part to play and a conquering part.' He confessed to finding the Kuyperian aversion to apologetics 'a standing matter of surprise'.³⁴ Kuyper's functional view of the Bible differed markedly, therefore, from Warfield's rational or 'philosophical' approach even though the dogmatic positions maintained by Kuyper and Warfield on the authority and inspiration of Scripture bore striking similarities. The difference is partly accountable for in terms of Kuyper's commitment to the social emancipation of the orthodox Protestant sector of the Dutch population. Whilst Warfield looked to the power of reason for confidence in the future of Christianity, Kuyper sought that confidence in the embodiment of Christian (especially Reformed) principles in social institutions, which could only be achieved through the desired emancipation. Apologetics had little part to play in this, as this group were already committed to the authority of Scripture, without the need to be persuaded into believing it by intellectual argument.

Science

The divergence between Kuyper and Warfield on the relationship between faith and reason manifested itself most clearly in their respective approaches to 'science'. Kuyper used this term to refer not merely to the natural sciences, but to the entirety of human science, including the humanities, in a way akin to the German *Wissenschaft* (meaning 'learning' or 'knowledge'). Although his ideas ran counter to the dominant agnostic trend in science, he refused to cultivate antipathy for science or any belief in a conflict between science and faith. Apart from a keen interest in and enthusiasm for new scientific and technological innovation, he regarded love for science and the denial of any dualistic withdrawal from science as marks of authentic Calvinistic religion. This had been demonstrated in history, not least in the Netherlands, where in the seventeenth century and under the influence of Calvinism there had been a flowering of scientific enterprise, symbolised by the fact that the telescope, the microscope and the thermometer had all been invented there. Propensity towards science was indeed inherent in Calvinistic doctrine, particularly in the doctrine of decrees and its derivative, foreordination, according to which the cosmos was not subject to the chance and disorder typical of Arminianism but manifested unity, stability and regularity – a belief fundamental to the very possibility of science, and integral to all modern scholarship.³⁵

Kuyper's argument was obviously intended to stimulate scholarly enterprise, but at Princeton he was preaching to the converted. Contemporary American evangelicalism was in general committed to scientific involvement, to the extent that it is possible to speak of the 'Evangelical love affair with Enlightenment science'.³⁶ Kuyper's Princeton audience was certainly no exception, even though its academic endeavours were concentrated on a fairly narrowly defined set of theological and ecclesiastical concerns.³⁷ What would have sounded strange to them was not the denial of any conflict between science and religion but the assertion that within the realm of science there was a fundamental conflict between Christian and non-Christian presuppositions, manifesting itself in a sharp division between those scientists who believed the cosmos to be in an abnormal (fallen) state and those who believed it to be in a normal (unfallen) state. Whereas if there had been no Fall, Kuyper explained, human consciousness would have operated in the same way for all people, the intervention of sin and the need for regeneration had resulted in two kinds of consciousness, that of the regenerate and that of the unregenerate, the former of which held to the abnormal state of things and the latter to the normal. Now, if human consciousness is the starting-point of all knowledge, it must also be the starting-point from which all science proceeds, and due to the twofold division in consciousness, the science of normalists and the abnormalists must be fundamentally different from each other.³⁸ As he put it in his *Encyclopedia*, the 'two kinds of people' that existed by reason of the divine act of regeneration represented an irreconcilable division in human consciousness, and therefore inevitably produced 'two kinds of science'.³⁹

Warfield regarded Kuyper's position as seriously misguided. He saw no reason to challenge the prevailing scientific consensus that science was an objective, unified and cumulative enterprise of the whole of humanity, and he insisted that there was no difference in kind between the work of regenerate and unregenerate scientists. The two types of scientists did not construct separate buildings, as Kuyper had argued, but worked 'side by side at the common task and the common edifice takes gradually fuller and truer outlines'.⁴⁰ Although Warfield agreed with Kuyper that there was a difference between the results of Christian and non-Christian scientists, he insisted that this was not a difference in type, but in quality: 'It is not a different kind of science that they are producing ... It is only a better scientific outlook, and the better scientific product'. Whatever differences there might be between them, both sorts of scientists were striving towards erecting 'one edifice of truth'.⁴¹ This belief in a unified corpus of knowledge adds to the reasons already suggested as to why Kuyper and Warfield differed so strongly on the value and effectiveness of apologetics; without the unity of knowledge, apologetics was futile.

Aside from the need to supply an epistemological basis for arguments for or against apologetics, why should Kuyper and Warfield have disagreed so sharply about the unity or otherwise of science? The chief reason lay in their difference in attitude towards the Enlightenment and revolution. Following G. Groen van Prinsterer (1801–76), his predecessor as leader of the anti-revolutionaries, Kuyper associated the Enlightenment with the increasing secularization of European society. He insisted that the sweeping intellectual and cultural changes that had taken place in the wake of the French Revolution were characterized by 'unbelief', even though some of them were to be welcomed for their immediate practical benefits. There was, as a consequence, a fundamental antithesis between two competing worldviews, that of Calvinism on the one hand, grounded on the principle of God's sovereignty, and that of the Enlightenment on the other, grounded on humanistic and naturalistic principles. In the United States, in contrast, evangelicals had supported the American Revolution, and this inclined later generations to view Enlightenment thought in a more positive light, despite their rejection of certain elements. This attitude was aided by the fact that neither radical revolution nor Enlightenment scepticism had taken deep root in American culture. The American Revolution was in fact led mainly by advocates of the moderate strand of the Enlightenment that was associated with Newton and Locke. In addition, Scottish Common Sense thought which maintained its influence in nineteenth-century American academia, had helped to encourage a synthesis between modern scientific theories, the principles of the American Revolution and evangelical Christianity.⁴² In contrast, therefore, to Dutch Calvinists who contended against more radical forms of Enlightenment scepticism, American evangelicals generally accepted the Enlightenment idea of an empirically based rationality. Indeed, they embraced objective science as an ally of Christianity because the laws it sought to discover procured evidence of God's benevolent design.⁴³ Although this auspicious relationship between science and Christianity underwent severe challenge in the upheaval that followed the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in 1859, the Princeton Theologians maintained their confidence in the possibility of objective, neutral science and in its value in supporting orthodox Christian doctrine.⁴⁴

The epistemological question which lay at the heart of the division between Kuyper and Warfield was whether or not the acquisition of knowledge was exactly the same in principle for the regenerate and the unregenerate mind. Kuyper, who was influenced by the Idealist tradition, conceived of knowledge in terms of the organic relationships it involved between creator, cosmos and the knowing subject. For this reason, all human knowledge presupposed certain givens about the way the universe was held together: knowledge, independent of religiously held presuppositions, simply did not exist. Warfield,

in contrast, was schooled in the Baconian tradition with its insistence that knowledge was gained by considering the evidence and reaching conclusions based on that evidence. Accordingly, human knowledge was independent of the belief system held by the investigating subject. Warfield's argument suited his context in the United States, a country that was founded on principles derived chiefly from the moderate Enlightenment, but it differed markedly from Kuyper's fiercely critical attitude to the Enlightenment which in the Netherlands presented itself as a much greater threat to orthodox Christian belief than in the United States.⁴⁵

Against this background, Kuyper's insistence on a twofold division of science during his visit to Princeton was designed to encourage American evangelicals to cease being enamoured of Enlightenment science. Instead they were to develop their own kind of science within their own, independent institutions of learning, as the only effective way of providing principled opposition to the modernistic worldview. Again, it was an argument closely tied to his programme of emancipating the orthodox Protestant sector of the Dutch population, reflected in the fact that his call for a university in the Netherlands with an explicitly Reformed constitution was simultaneously a call for a university for a specific social group – the orthodox Protestant lower middle classes (the *kleine luyden*). Not surprisingly, therefore, Kuyper's vision for science failed to find resonance at Princeton, and was partly responsible for the divergence between Warfieldian and Kuyperian trends in American evangelicalism which still persists today. His application of the notion of the antithesis, which was relevant to the situation in the Netherlands, was not fitted to the American scene, where Christian and Enlightenment traditions co-existed without open conflict.

Kuyper's impact

It might be fair to conclude from the above that Kuyper's visit to Princeton failed to have any impact on Warfield. This is not, however, the case. Warfield was delighted with Kuyper's Lectures, and was disappointed that he was unable to attend one of the series of six on account of an ulcerated tooth.⁴⁶ He praised them for 'expounding with the utmost breadth and forcefulness the fundamental principles of Calvinism', and claimed that since his visit to the United States Kuyper had become 'one of our own prophets to whose message we have a certain right'.⁴⁷ Although he valued in particular the breadth in scope of Kuyper's thought, he claimed also to be in agreement with its general drift. The points on which he differed were, he claimed, of no particular consequence:

I have always delighted in your theological writings: the point of view from which you survey doctrine is so high and the prospect you take is so wide, – the richness of

*your thought, the comprehensiveness of your grasp, and the broad sweep of your mind, as you deal with these high themes, are ever my delight and admiration. There are minor matters, of course, in which I should take issue with your constructions: but these are mere nothings. – I rejoice I feel myself in full accord with the great march of your thought and I never consult your books without deriving from them both instruction and inspiration.*⁴⁸

This positive evaluation of Kuyper's work is reflected in the fact that in 1912 Warfield, on behalf of his Princeton colleagues, invited him to attend the centenary celebrations of the founding of the Seminary later that year and to give an address. Kuyper was obliged to turn down the request due to prior commitments, but the invitation to be a platform speaker at such an important moment in the life of the Seminary and in the tradition it represented could hardly have been possible had Kuyper been regarded as being significantly at odds with Princeton dogma. Even in 1919, twenty-one years after the event, Warfield was still praising Kuyper's 'thoroughly admirable and wide-minded Stone Lectures'.⁴⁹

The influence of Kuyper's Stone Lectures on Warfield's thought is evident in the latter's most important treatments of Calvinism. Here he almost plagiarises the Lectures, especially in his argument that Calvinism represented a broad movement in culture and society; that it was rooted in a particular kind of religious consciousness, from which it emanated; that this religious consciousness represented the purest and most advanced stage in the development of religion; and that Calvinism offered the best prospects for the future of Christianity.⁵⁰ These ideas are key ones in Kuyper's thought and are most poignantly expressed in his Stone Lectures.⁵¹ We may conclude, in fact, that Warfield's understanding of Calvinism was largely indebted to Kuyper's exposition of it in the Stone Lectures. It is a conclusion that goes some way to explain why Kuyper's influence in North America has worked partly *through* the Princeton Theology, even though in some important respects it is opposed to it.⁵² There are even hints, despite the fundamental epistemological differences, that Warfield was partially persuaded by Kuyper's insistence on the radical influence of worldview on science, and on the importance of the testimony of the Holy Spirit in affirming the authority and inspiration of Scripture. In a review he wrote of Orr's Stone Lectures for the year 1903–1904, for instance, Warfield commended Orr's notion of an irreconcilable conflict between the Christian and the modernistic (or 'evolutionary') view of the world, and applauded Orr for setting out to show that 'the Christian view in the forum of science is the only tenable one'.⁵³ By 1910 he was prepared to accept that true Christian conviction was able to exist without rational grounding in external evidences, and that 'the supreme proof to every Christian of the deity of his Lord is ... his own inner

experience of the transforming power of his Lord upon the heart and life'.⁵⁴ Only a few years after publishing his criticisms of Kuyper, therefore, there are at least indications that Warfield began to incline towards Kuyper's views, which, as we have seen, were indebted to James Orr in the way he formulated the concept of worldview at Princeton. It is possible, therefore, that there was a certain tentative rapprochement – a convergence of minds – sometime after Kuyper's visit to Princeton. Warfield never went so far as to assert the existence of two kinds of science, and he continued to defend the value of apologetics, albeit in more level-headed, less triumphalist tones.⁵⁵

Kuyper's Stone Lectures are more important for gaining an understanding of his thought than has previously been recognized in Kuyper scholarship. The very fact that they represent a concise summary of his ideas addressed to a foreign audience may even be one of the reasons why their importance has been overlooked. Dutch-speaking scholars with an interest in Kuyper's ideas, who through the language have access to the entire body of his work, tend to concentrate their analysis on his lengthier and more specialized works, while those with an interest in his career focus on his journalism, correspondence and public discourses in the Netherlands. The usefulness of a short summary originally designed for people far removed from the Dutch situation who had little or no access to his more detailed monographs has not been immediately apparent. Add to this the highly generalized, imaginative and 'prophetic' genre in which they are written, which, though not peculiar to the Stone Lectures, adds to a sense of their detachment from concrete debates, and it is no wonder that these lectures have not been regarded as particularly significant by the majority of Kuyper scholars. It is hoped that this paper has provided sufficient reason why the importance of Kuyper's Stone Lectures should now be fully recognized, a century after the event. Their importance becomes apparent in any serious attempt to understand the overall shape not only of his ideas, but of his career and of his influence outside the Netherlands. This is closely tied to the fact that it was in these lectures that Kuyper first made deliberate, thorough-going and comprehensive use of the worldview concept. This concept is so fundamental to his thought, so important to his career and so central to his international legacy that 'Kuyper' and 'worldview' are virtually inseparable, even though it is inaccurate to assume that the whole of Kuyper's career can be interpreted as an attempt to articulate a Calvinistic worldview. It is only fitting, therefore, that the centenary of Kuyper's Stone Lectures should be marked by a range of international conferences and publications that aim to assess the range and scope of his legacy.

- ¹ This article is a reworked version of a paper due to appear in a collection derived from the centennial Kuyper conference at Princeton Theological Seminary in February 1998, edited by Luis E. Lugo. Both papers are based on the contents of my book *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism* (Eerdmans/Paternoster: Grand Rapids/Carlisle, 1998).
- ² This is especially the case in the area of social ethics. See Peter Sedgwick, 'Theology and Society' in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Late Twentieth Century*, edited by David F. Ford, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 286-305 (295); Ronald H. Preston, *Church and Society in the Late Twentieth Century: The Economic and Political Task* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 81. Those influenced by the Kuyperian tradition in Britain include the well-known theological writers N.T. Wright, Oliver O'Donovan, Alister McGrath, Graham Cray, Jeremy Begbie, Elaine Storkey and the late Lesslie Newbigin.
- ³ Benjamin B. Warfield, 'Introduction', *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology: Its Principles*, by Abraham Kuyper (New York: Scribner; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), xi-xix (xii). This book is the English translation of the second volume of Kuyper's three-volume *Encyclopaedie der heilige godgeleerdheid* (Amsterdam: Wormser, 1894).
- ⁴ See Warfield's introduction to Witsius H. de Savornin Lohman, 'Dr. Abraham Kuyper' in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 36 (1898): 561-609 (562). This is a translation of De Savornin Lohman's booklet *Dr. Abraham Kuyper* (Haarlem: Tjeenk Willink, 1889). Warfield handed Kuyper a copy of the newly published English version during his stay at Princeton. See the Kuyper Archive (hereafter KA), letter 6271 (19 October 1898).
- ⁵ B.B. Warfield, 'Introduction' to *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, by A. Kuyper (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), xxv-xxxix (xxviii). This volume was republished under the same title by Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, in 1975.
- ⁶ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 151.
- ⁷ Although only those ideas Kuyper presented at Princeton will be considered, supplementary material from his earlier work will be used wherever it sheds light on those ideas.
- ⁸ Hendrikus Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years of Theology: Report of a Personal Journey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 109 n. 8.
- ⁹ Ernst Troeltsch referred to Kuyper's Stone Lectures as the '*Manifest des modernen Calvinismus*', in his *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, 16 vols (Tubingen: Mohr, 1922), vol. 1, 732.
- ¹⁰ Both J.C. Rullman and W.J. van Welderen Rengers consider the years immediately surrounding 1898 as the zenith of Kuyper's career. See J.C. Rullman, *Abraham Kuyper: een levenschets* (Kampen: Kok, 1928), 178-79; W.J. van Welderen Rengers, *Schets eener parlementaire geschiedenis van Nederland sedert 1848*, 4th ed., 4 volumes ('s-Gravenhage, 1950-55), vol. II (1950), 154.

- ¹¹ The well-known Kuyperian philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd maintained that Kuyper's Stone Lectures are perhaps the best example of the 'principal clarity and sharpness' that characterized Kuyper's work. See Dooyeweerd's 'Kuyper's wetenschapleer', *Philosophia reformata: orgaan van de vereniging voor calvinistische wijsbegeerte*, 4 (1939): 193-232 (197).
- ¹² See, for instance, Kuyper's 'Pantheism's Destruction of Boundaries', *Methodist Review* 75 (1893): 520-37, 762-78. This is translation of Kuyper's *De verflauwing der grenzen: rede bij de overdracht van het rectoraat aan de Vrije Universiteit, oktober 1892* (Amsterdam: Wormser, 1892).
- ¹³ See *Lectures on Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University Under Auspices of the L.P. Stone Foundation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931): 11 (note 1). Orr's lectures were published in 1893 under the title *The Christian View of God and the World* 4th ed. (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1897). In them Orr argued that Christianity possessed an independent, unified and coherent worldview derived from a central belief or principle – an argument almost the same as Kuyper's on behalf of Calvinism.
- ¹⁴ Kuyper consulted the second volume of George Bancroft's *History of the United States of America*, 6 volumes (New York: Appelton, 1882-84), Henry Cabot Lodge's *Alexander Hamilton* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1892), and F.B. Hough's *American Constitutions* (Albany: Weed Parsons, 1872).
- ¹⁵ See the copy of the Lectures held in the archives of the Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary. The 1899 English-language version referred to was published by Fleming Revell, New York.
- ¹⁶ Letter from A.V. Dicey to Elinor May Dicey, cited in R.S. Rait, *Memorials of Albert Venn Dicey: Being Chiefly Letters and Diaries* (London: Macmillan, 1925): 153-55. Kuyper's reference to America's struggle with Spain in this passage refers to the Spanish-American War of 1898.
- ¹⁷ Their disagreements appear not to have jeopardized their cordial relations. A year before Kuyper's death on 8 November 1920, Warfield spoke warmly of the bond of friendship between them – 'a bond begun in a devotion to the theology which you have taught with so much distinction through so many years; strengthened through a happy acquaintance with you when you were good enough to visit us in Princeton'. KA, letter 8620 (letter from Warfield to Kuyper, 7 November 1919).
- ¹⁸ B.B. Warfield, *Calvijn als theoloog en de stand van het Calvinisme in onzen tijd*, trans. C.M.E. Kuyper, with a Preface by H. Bavinck (Kampen: Kok, 1919), B.B. Warfield, *Het godsdienstige leven van den theologischen student*, trans. C.M.E. Kuyper (Kampen: Kok, 1920), first published in *De Heraut*, 4-25 May 1913 (original English version: 'The Religious Life of Theological Students', *Union Seminary Magazine*, 24 (December 1912/January 1913): 208-22).
- ¹⁹ 'In memoriam Prof. B.B. Warfield', *De Heraut*, 27 March 1921.
- ²⁰ *Lectures*, 11, 18; *Evolutie*, 11.

- ²¹ *Evolutie*, 14, 47.
- ²² *Lectures*, 132; *Evolutie*, 48.
- ²³ Ilse N. Bulhof, "The Netherlands", in *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism*, ed. Thomas F. Glick (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 269-306 (303); Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), vol. II, 200.
- ²⁴ *Lectures*, 18-19; *Evolutie*, 50.
- ²⁵ Charles Hodge's classic treatment of evolution can be found in his *What is Darwinism?* (New York: Scribners, Armstrong, and Company, 1874).
- ²⁶ For A.A. Hodge's position, see his review of Asa Gray's *Natural Science and Religion* (1880), in *Presbyterian Review*, 1 (July 1880): 586, 588, and his 'Introduction' to Joseph S. Van Dyke, *Theism and Evolution* (New York: Armstrong, 1886), xv-xxii. For B.B. Warfield's position, see his 'Darwin's Arguments Against Christianity and Religion', *The Homiletic Review*, 17 (1889): 9-16; 'Charles Darwin's Religious Life: A Sketch in Spiritual Biography', *Presbyterian Review*, 9 (1888): 569-601; *The Present-Day Conception of Evolution* (Emporia, Kans: 1895); 'Creation versus Evolution', *Bible Student*, 4 (1901): 1-8; 'Calvin's Doctrine of Creation', *Princeton Theological Review*, 13 (1915): 190-255.
- ²⁷ See B.B. Warfield, 'On the Antiquity and Unity of the Human Race' (1911), in his *Biblical and Theological Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 235-58. 'Theistic Evolution' was the title of an article written in 1898 by G. Macloskie of Princeton University, and published in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 9 (1898): 1-22. Macloskie argued that the theory of evolution was not incompatible with orthodox Christian belief.
- ²⁸ Marsden, *Understanding*, 147.
- ²⁸ J.B. Rogers and D.K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 390. Severe scholarly criticism of Roger and McKim's interpretation of the biblical inerrancy controversy has been expressed, most notably in J.D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) and J.I. Packer, 'John Calvin and the Inerrancy of Holy Scripture' in *Inerrancy and the Church*, ed. John D. Hannah (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 143-88.
- ³⁰ See Kuyper's, *De hedendaagse Schriftcritiek in hare bedenkelijke strekking voor de Gemeente des levenden Gods: rede, bij het overdragen van het rectoraat der Vrije Universiteit, gehouden den 20sten october 1881* (Amsterdam: Kruyt, 1881). English translation: 'The Biblical Criticism of the Present Day', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 61 (1904): 409-42, 666-8 (430). This was Kuyper's most notable contribution to the debate on biblical inspiration and was given in the same year as the position of the Princeton Theologians on the same issue received classic expression in an article by Warfield and A.A. Hodge. See A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield, 'Inspiration', *Presbyterian Review*, 2 (1881): 225-60. Republished in book form

- as A.A. Hodge and B.B. Warfield, *Inspiration*, with an introduction by Roger R. Nicole (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 29.
- ³¹ See, for instance, Warfield's 'Introduction' to Francis R. Beattie's *Apologetics: Or the Rational Vindication of Christianity* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1903).
- ³² *Lectures*, 56–57.
- ³³ *Lectures*, 11. In his rectorial address at the Free University in 1892, Kuyper engaged in virulent polemics against those who resorted to apologetics in the struggle against modernism. They had allowed the enemy to prescribe the plan of campaign, and had thus fallen into hopeless confusion. A. Kuyper, *Pantheism's Destruction*, 31–32 (31).
- ³⁴ See Warfield's review of H. Bavinck's *De zekerheid des geloofs* [The Certainty of Faith] (Kampen: Kok, 1901), *Princeton Theological Review*, 1 (1903): 138–48.
- ³⁵ *Lectures*, 110–15.
- ³⁶ Marsden, *Understanding*, 122.
- ³⁷ This was of course typical of theological education in the nineteenth century. Mark Noll has noted, however, 'the Old Princeton weakness in cultural analysis and the concomitant lack of effective Christian outreach in society'. Mark A. Noll, 'The Spirit of Old Princeton and the OPC', in Charles G. Dennison and Richard C. Gamble (eds), *Pressing Toward the Mark: Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: Committee for the History of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986), 241.
- ³⁸ *Lectures*, 137–38.
- ³⁹ Kuyper took pains in his *Encyclopedia* to point out areas that were common to both kinds of science, such as those concerned primarily with empirical investigation. Nevertheless, his emphasis on the role of underlying religious presuppositions in science is one of the chief defining characteristics of Kuyperian or 'neo-Calvinistic' thought. In North America it became known as 'principled thinking' because of its penchant for exposing and engaging with the presuppositions and starting-points of contemporary theoretical thought. See Albert Wolters, 'Dutch neo-Calvinism: Worldview, Philosophy and Rationality', in *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition*, ed. by Hendrik Hart (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1983), 113–31 (123–24); James D. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 17.
- ⁴⁰ See Warfield's review of Herman Bavinck's *De zekerheid des geloofs* in *Princeton Theological Review*, 1 (1903): 138–48 (145).
- ⁴¹ *Princeton Theological Review*, 1, 145–46.
- ⁴² Marsden, *Understanding*, 127–28; Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University, 1976), xvi and passim.
- ⁴³ Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*:

The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 71–100.

- ⁴⁴ In 1871, for instance, Charles Hodge claimed that the solution to the apparent conflict between science and religion was simply to 'let science take its course, assured that the Scriptures will accommodate themselves to all well-authenticated facts in time to come, as they have in the past'. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribners, 1872–73), vol. I, 57.
- ⁴⁵ George Marsden, 'The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia', in *Faith and Rationality*, ed. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 219–64 (253). The above discussion of the intellectual background to the differences between Kuyper and Warfield draws on some of Marsden's insights, even though these have been roundly criticized in Donald Fuller and Richard Gardiner, 'Reformed Theology at Princeton and Amsterdam in the Late Nineteenth Century: A Reappraisal', *Presbyterion*, 21 (1995): 89–117.
- ⁴⁶ KA, letter 6271, from Warfield to Kuyper, 19 October 1898.
- ⁴⁷ Warfield, 'Introduction' to *The Work of the Holy Spirit* by Kuyper, xxv–xxxix (xxv–xxvi).
- ⁴⁸ KA, letter 7053, from Warfield to Kuyper, 15 April 1905.
- ⁴⁹ KA, letter 8620, from Warfield to Kuyper, 7 November 1919.
- ⁵⁰ See Warfield's 'Calvinism', in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Johnson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1908), vol. II, 359–64, republished under the same title in Warfield's *Calvin and Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931), 353–69; B.B. Warfield, 'Calvin as a Theologian' (1909), published as an appendix to B.B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine* ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956), 481–507 (492–93, 497).
- ⁵¹ See especially the first, second and sixth Stone Lectures. The extent of Warfield's borrowing from Kuyper is illustrated by comparing 353–56 of Warfield's 'Calvinism' article in his *Calvin and Calvinism* with 17 of Kuyper's *Lectures*.
- ⁵² Berkhof, *Two Hundred Years*, 109.
- ⁵³ B.B. Warfield's review of James Orr's *God's Image in Man, and its Defacement, in the Light of Modern Denials* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905) in *The Princeton Theological Review*, 4 (1906): 555–58 (555).
- ⁵⁴ B.B. Warfield, 'The Diety of Christ', in *The Fundamentals* (Chicago: Testimony, 1910), vol. I, 22, 27–28; Harriet Harris, 'After Liberalism: Fundamentalism in a Post-Liberal Context', *Theology*, 100 (1997), 340–48 (343–44).
- ⁵⁵ See, for instance, Warfield's 'Apologetics', in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, I, 232–38.

'GOD DOES NOT PLAY DICE'

Tony Gray

Tony Gray is the Staffworker for the Religious and Theological Studies Fellowship. He previously wrote for *Themelios* on the issue of Annihilation. The current article arises from recent research.

'God does not play dice'. Such was Albert Einstein's objection to the quantum theory which proposed that physical events could only be known in terms of probabilities. Similarly, a number of theologians have recently been making the same objection to the resurgence of a particular view of God which may be likened to quantum theory. One of the figures at the centre of this debate is the Canadian evangelical theologian, Clark Pinnock. The questions that he and others raise are some of the most important facing theology and the Christian life.

Who, what, why, when?

The Openness of God was published in 1994 (Pinnock, C., et. al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove: IVP/Carlisle; Paternoster, 1994)) and brought to a wider audience the reflections of a number of North American theologians which were concerned specifically with the doctrine of God.² Billed as 'a biblical challenge to the traditional understanding of God', the multi-authored volume attempted to swim against the tide of accepted orthodoxy. Traditional categories of immutability (that God does not change), impassibility (that God cannot suffer) and foreknowledge were reconsidered, in order to present a doctrine of God which was at root more relational. One of the authors, Clark Pinnock also co-authored, at the same time, a volume entitled *Unbounded Love: A Good News Theology for the 21st Century* with Robert Brow, producing a much more developed and theological exploration of the philosophical ideas that had been put forward in the first volume. Their catch-phrase was 'creative love theism', painting a picture of a loving and creative God.

In 1997 Clark Pinnock was the main contributor to a major conference in London, *A Theology for Revival*. Here he presented in full his 'openness model', a model of the doctrine of God which he wished the churches to embrace, and which had radical implications for most of our theology and church life. His presentation was given in the light of the recently published *Flame of Love* (Downers Grove; IVP, 1996), where Pinnock explores a theology of the Holy Spirit, integrating most of his previous thinking along the lines of the openness model.

Pinnock himself is noteworthy for his own specific pilgrimage in theology. Originally an ardent Calvinist, Pinnock made a name for himself in the arena of apologetics and evangelical Christian theology. However, a theological U-turn significantly altered his

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beliefs, and his ensuing Christian ministry.³ Yet the question for Christians in general, is why is this so important? What is significant about this academic debate?

Fundamental to the whole enterprise of Christian theology is our understanding of God. Evangelists fight against secular understandings of God, whether it be of an old man on a cloud, or some new age cosmic being. Pastors wrestle with situations where people have experienced bad and harmful father-figures, and so project this onto their understanding of God. And of course theologians, philosophers and ethicists all demand to know what sort of god God is, in order to make sense of the world. In particular, the field of the philosophy of religion, as well as systematic theology, has spent much energy in trying to explain the nature and activity of God. Yet for the ordinary Christian, understanding God is also crucial. Is God really there? How do I know God? Will God answer my prayers? Does God have a plan for my life, and if so, does he know what is going to happen? Am I really going to heaven?

Who is God?

It is because of these very real and practical questions that the issues Pinnock presents are important. Pinnock's theology covers a huge spectrum of ideas. From the nature of God, the Trinity, the work and person of the Holy Spirit, to atonement, freewill, and sin, and perhaps most famously, issues concerning religions, hell, and salvation. It would be impossible to cover all of these matters here. Most crucial to the whole enterprise is his understanding of God. For that reason, this article will concentrate on Pinnock's version of the openness doctrine of God, or creative love theism.

Creative love theism is a composite model with the following basic features. First, it celebrates the grace of God that abounds for all humanity. It embraces a wideness in God's mercy and rejects the idea that God excludes any persons arbitrarily from saving help. Second, it celebrates Jesus' category of father to express God's openness and relationality with us. God seeks to restore relationships with estranged people and cannot be thought of primarily as a Judge seeking legal settlement ... Third it envisions God as a mutual and interrelating Trinity, not as an all-determining and manipulative transcendent (male) ego.⁴

Openness theology/creative love theism rejects most of the traditional labels attributed to God. According to these theologians, they are unhelpful (they distort our understanding of our relationship with God) and unbiblical (they are imported mainly from Greek Platonic philosophy, and so distort the true biblical picture of God). The charge is that traditional theology has been influenced by a system, rather than by the Bible. So, for example, the idea of transcendence, that God is

different, altogether separate and removed from the created world, is perceived to have become the over-riding model, and hence we have lost an understanding of God as near, close, involved and loving towards us. Similarly the belief that God is eternal traditionally portrays God as not being bound by time, space, or anything else which he has created. He is present everywhere, and at all times (or perhaps, outside of time), and so often described as timeless. Openness theologians challenge the idea of God as timeless as unbiblical and Platonic.

*A timeless being cannot deliberate, anticipate or remember. It cannot do anything or respond to anything. There cannot be any before or after. In short it cannot be the divine Agent we love and worship.*⁵

Although affirming God's eternal nature, they prefer to conceive of God as everlasting *within* time (as many other non-openness theologians also do). Of more interest are the remarks which Pinnock makes concerning immutability and impassibility. Of the latter, the idea that God is not subject to the whims, pains and sorrows of creatureliness (for example, God is not subject to or affected by our suffering), openness claims that God is grieved by human situations, that he does come down and identify with our sufferings. In fact, one of the most creative responses to the horrors of the holocaust was that God was suffering there with the victims. Of course, the supreme example of this is on the cross, where 'God entered history so profoundly that not only was the world touched and affected by it, but God was touched and affected by it also.'⁶

Most significantly, openness theology reinterprets traditional categories of omniscience and foreknowledge. These together constitute the belief that God knows everything that there is to know, and therefore God knows what is going to happen in the future, and has always known what is going to happen in the future. Openness, and most explicitly the theology of Pinnock, claims that God has only past and present knowledge. That is, for a time-bound being to know things in the future is a logical impossibility. God can make an expert estimation of what is going to happen – after all, he is God, has all the resources of the world, and is pretty good at working out what you and I are going to do. The model most often used to illustrate this point is of a grand-master chess player. If you or I play Kasparov, we stand little chance, for he can work out from all the possibilities within the game of chess what you or I are probably going to do. He has all the experience, all the knowledge of all the possible game plans, and all the expertise, whereas I only know the basic moves. Similarly, God can predict what you or I would do tomorrow, but he does not know absolutely, for this would mean that your decision and my decision had been predetermined.

God knows everything that can be known, just as he can do whatever can be done. But he does not know what

is unknowable, and cannot do what is undoable. Future choices made freely are not knowable by any being, for the simple reason that there is nothing yet to be known. Future decisions are future – they do not exist in any sense until they are made. Therefore, it is no deficiency in God's omniscience that he does not know them ... The Bible presents us with a God who faces the future as an open possibility. Some of it is determined by what has already happened, but much of it is open to God's action and to human freedom. This means that we can be co-participants in shaping what will occur.⁷

The implications of this for God's sovereignty are inescapable. Pinnock holds firmly to a very strong understanding of human freedom (libertarianism), such that God gives significant weight to human beings, and so respects their free choices. In fact, creaturely freedom is so significant that God may be surprised by our choices. This is a risk. This is a more personal and loving God, who is prepared to take risks with his creation. Thus God is sovereign in much the same way as the grand-master chess player – he will win ultimately, but it may take him a little longer to get there, if we surprise him and do or choose something that God had not anticipated.

*History is not the playing out of a tirelessly fixed decree but a theater where the divine purposes are being worked out by the resourcefulness of God in dealing with the surprises of a significant creation. History is neither random nor predetermined.*⁸

Openness theology is not meant to be a novel theology, arising out of thin air. Instead, it intends to be a biblical theology, and some of the challenges it offers to traditional theology come from biblical stories. For example, the OT paints several scenarios where God is portrayed as dynamic and free. In the story of Jonah, God intends to destroy Nineveh as a punishment for its sins. Yet, then the seemingly unexpected happens, Nineveh repents, Jonah is upset, God is pleased, and so in Jonah 3:10 God changed his mind. It seems that God did not know what was to happen, had not fixed it from the beginning of the world, and responded to the free decision of humans. Similarly, in Exodus 32 God decides not to punish Israel after Moses' intercession, even though he had already intended to do so. Exodus 32:14 reads that 'the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened'. Perhaps the most vivid picture of this compassionate, changeable and responsive God is seen in Hosea 11, where we hear God's own conversation with himself, deciding not to punish and so desist from judgement as 'my heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused.' (v. 8b).

For Pinnock and others, this alternative way of viewing God, a God who in a sense does play dice, has radical implications for Christian life. As some read through this presentation of

Pinnock and others, questions and criticism may begin to arise. What sort of God is this? Can I really put my trust in this God? Yet Pinnock is adamant that such a God is shown to be more loving, more relational, and our relationship with him is therefore improved. How amazing a God who takes the risk to create human beings with significant free choices, such that he may well be surprised! How amazing, a God who can steer the world in the way he ultimately wishes, even though he never forces people to do his will! How amazing a God who lets me partake in his world, he lets me make real decisions which he respects, and who waits for me to get involved before things happen! For Pinnock this is not a down-sized God. Rather, this is a more personal, more relational and ultimately more trustworthy God than an all-knowing, all pre-determining God.

God creates for his own pleasure, and his pleasure as a triune lover is to admit new partners to the dance. For this reason God embarks on the risky adventure of creating a nondivine, significant created order and even pledges to be involved in it.

A theological challenge to listen to

Pinnock's re-assessment of our understanding of God, whilst causing great consternation to many, can be cautiously welcomed, for a number of reasons even if we do not agree with it. First, it must cause us to return to the biblical testimony, to check and see whether our interpretations are valid. Is our understanding of God one which grows out of the biblical story, or are we following patterns and systems laid down by theologians and philosophers? It can only be healthy when we say we know, love, serve someone, to come to them again and again, to check how much we really do know them, and based on that knowledge, how we love and serve them.

Second, Pinnock challenges unhealthy emphases in Western theology. At times there has been overemphasis on transcendence, playing down the immanence and nearness of God for fear of drawing God in our own image. Additionally, our understanding of God as impassible may be so static that we no longer see a God who loves and is involved in the sufferings of his people.

Third, Pinnock reminds us also of the great many things on which Christians, who are nevertheless united on many fronts, ultimately disagree. Is God timeless or eternal within time? Do we side with Calvin or with Arminius on God's predestination? Does God predestine due to his eternal decision or on the basis of knowing whether we will respond to the gospel or not? It is these and many other complicated questions which the debate with Pinnock has brought up.

A theological challenge to respond to

Having been positive, it remains the case that much of Pinnock's theology is not so digestible. One of the major issues concerns the whole nexus of arguments connected with omniscience, foreknowledge, divine sovereignty, and human freewill. If we argued that God is temporal, everlasting within time, and his omniscience means that he has complete knowledge of the future, many would conclude that God therefore foreordains all that is to happen in the future. The implication is then that human choices are not truly free. However, if we put a premium on human freedom, as openness theology does, we may therefore wish to conclude that God does not have knowledge of the future free choices of human beings, precisely because these are things that cannot be known. There are logical impossibilities in this world – a square cannot be both a square and a circle at the same time. God cannot himself perform things that are logically impossible. Since it is impossible to foreknow future free actions of human beings, God cannot be omniscient in the sense of knowing future free actions. This does not mean that his omniscience is restricted, for he still possesses all the knowledge that it is possible to know.

Foreknowledge and Freedom

The main contention of the openness view has to do with the relationship between foreknowledge and freedom. Is human freedom infringed because God knows what is going to happen? Some philosophers, for varying reasons, and based on various understandings of God's eternity, deny this. Bruce Reichenbach, who is sympathetic to Pinnock's model of God, strongly disagrees that foreknowledge and freedom are incompatible, as it confuses the fact that God knows what will happen with the fact that he knows this fact because I choose to do it:

To argue in this way is to confuse the order of causes (what brings something about) with the order of knowledge (the basis on which we know something). What God knows is the event itself. Thus God will know the event if and only if the event occurs. That is, God will have a certain belief about an event occurring if and only if that event occurs. It is because (in a non-causal sense of having to do with our knowledge) the event occurs that God believes it occurs. But then one cannot turn around and make the event depend on God's knowledge of the event, as the objector does when he says that God's foreknowledge determines, for the foreknowledge depends upon the event, and not vice versa.¹⁰

Here is one attempt to understand foreknowledge with a strong concept of human freedom. Others reply to this dilemma supposing that God can know what you or I *would* do in any

given situation. If God had this knowledge (called Middle Knowledge), then he would know the future not by determining it, but by the fact that he knew what we would freely choose in any given situation.¹¹

A more common and traditional response has been labelled *compatibilism*. That is, that there is a sense in which the omniscience and omnipotence of God are compatible with human freedom of a certain kind. Compatibilism lies in a particular understanding of human freedom.

- According to this view, people perform free acts when they do what they want to do, not when they have the power of self-causation, or some other version of indeterminism. That is, they are not constrained or compelled in their actions, but what they do flows unimpededly from their wants, desires, preferences, goals and the like.¹²

This then picks up the key issue to much of the openness debate – what we mean by human freedom. As has been observed in the discussion on omniscience, the limiting of God’s foreknowledge is driven not only by a particular understanding of what can or cannot be known of the future, but by a particular understanding of human freedom. A compatibilist would wish to assert that the openness view of libertarian freedom, the sort of freedom that is utterly without constraints, is neither biblically nor logically accurate. Rather, a compatibilist would argue that human freedom involves two levels of causality – that is, causes on an action which constrain the agent, and causes that do not. An action can therefore be free, even if causally determined, as long as the causes are non-constraining. For example, God could cause me to choose Weetabix for breakfast and as long as this causing was not constraining, that is it was in line with my desires and tastes and appetite, my action would remain free. Under this model, ‘genuinely free human action is seen as *compatible* with non-constraining sufficient conditions which incline the will decisively in one way or another.’¹³

A Victorious God?

In addition to these issues, Pinnock admits that God may be surprised. Although God will ultimately achieve his plans of victory, it may take him a little longer due to our lack of co-operation or our choosing to do something he had not expected. God neither knows all that will happen, nor ordains it. If God has such limitations, then a number of questions come to mind immediately. How did God ensure that Christ came into the world? If Mary had freely objected to being used as God’s servant, another servant would have to have been found. And if that servant objected, then another; and if not that one, then another. Although it may be unlikely, on the openness model, that all possible Marys would have refused, it is still *possible*, and thus it is *possible* that God’s plans will ultimately have been thwarted.

Consider another important aspect of theology, the end times. Although it may take longer than God expected to reach the end times, the openness God is confident in his victory. Yet, on the grand master chess theory, it is possible that Kasparov can be surprised, and even though he is the most resourceful and knowledgeable player in the world, someone could come up with an unexpected move, and throw him off beam. His victory is not assured. Similarly, it is *possible* on the openness model (and it must be possible, otherwise something is set and determined about the future before it has happened, and that conflicts with human freedom) that God's creation would end up in ultimate revolt and never be conquered. Pinnock may reply that God has got eternity to work all this out, so there are no worries. Fine, but it is *possible* that for eternity, God would be frustrated. No victory, no final homecoming.

A Revealing God

A similar line of questioning faces Pinnock's doctrine of revelation. Given the possibility that God can be frustrated, our grounds for believing that the Scriptures we have are those which God intended us to have are brought into question. Pinnock remains committed to a form of infallibilism, such that the Scriptures are trustworthy in all that they intend to do.¹⁴ However, if it remains possible that human freedom can work against God's plans, then our ability to trust the Scriptures for these purposes must at least be open to doubt. Such a question may lead in two directions. Either our reliance on Scripture becomes merely an irrational act, whereby the words of Scripture become revelation because of a fideistic decision. Or, on the other hand, we begin to lack confidence that Scripture is in fact revelation from God, thus undermining any attempt at theology we wish to make.

Theological Language

Much of Pinnock's argument is carried forward on two fronts – the theological and philosophical discussion of God and God's attributes, and the biblical evidence for such a case. All philosophers and theologians must remember the nature of theological language. All our talk of God is approximate. This does not mean that we can never know God, yet the very idea of saying something about God is fraught with difficulty. We can either talk of anthropomorphisms – in his actions God speaks, talks, walks, etc. and in his being God is like a father, a shepherd, an eagle, etc. and so we use human language of a divine being. These are not descriptions of what God is, but rather what God is like. God does not have a mouth, feet, or a crook like a shepherd's. On the other hand we can talk of God negatively. God is never evil, God is not like us, God is not capricious. Yet, when we come to say what God really is, things become more difficult. The Bible uses some terms – God is Spirit, God is love – but neither spirit nor love in the ways we

would commonly understand them. This important discussion must be kept in mind when we consider the doctrine of God. In all our attempts to understand God and to talk about him, we are only ever getting part of the way there.

Of course, such discussions therefore determine how we are to understand the biblical language about God. Some language talks about God as a being who does not change, who is like a rock, etc. Other language describes God as having reactions, such as those Pinnock uses which indicate God changing his mind. The theologian therefore has to make a decision concerning which language is central and which controls our theological framework. Calvin's position was that Scripture uses the language of reaction so that God can accommodate himself to human capacities. It may in fact prove too revisionist if Pinnock and others were to re-interpret all of the biblical images of God along the lines of the reactionary language.¹⁵

Connected with the issue of language, is the meaning that theologians give to certain words. Of primary importance to Pinnock and other openness theologians is the category of *love*. Yet although all Christians would agree on love being a prime attribute of God, surely it is necessary to fill this word with content. In our context, love can mean many things depending on the circumstances. A father can love his child by discipline, a young teenage couple talk of love and may end their relationship in days, people fall in and out of love. Christian theologians must make every effort to fill the category 'love' with biblical content. This lack within Pinnock's theology can be highlighted by the fact that he and Brow are bold enough to make the controversial claim that 'Religions can be viewed as alternative accounts of love'.¹⁶

Finally, the issues of language about God, and definitions of words, bring us to one of Pinnock's major charges – that traditional views of God are contaminated by Platonic thought, and theologians use non-biblical categories to describe God rather than biblical ones. In response we may say a number of things. First, Platonism itself was and is an extremely complex phenomenon. Following Plato were his disciples, neo-platonists and more. There are important historical and methodological differences to be made, and we must be careful. Second, all interpreters of Scripture, whether in the fourth or the twentieth century are influenced by the thought forms of the day. We cannot speak of the Bible without in some way importing modern categories. For example, when we try to discuss the 'persons' of the Trinity which we believe to be revealed in Scripture, you and I mean something very different by 'person' than what the church fathers meant. The preface of the openness of God is rather unhelpful, seemingly indicating that their authors escape the 'virus' of Greek philosophy.¹⁷ Clark Pinnock admits that openness is also tied to a world-view, a thought-form, but in contrast to a traditional model of God, openness theologians want to remove

the early western philosophy and introduce a more modern context. Thirdly then, if this is the case, the question remains as to which metaphysical system used to understand God measures up in the best possible way to Scripture. For example, if traditional views import categories of immutability which are alien to Scripture (and this author would be happy to admit this to an extent), do not openness theologians import views of radical human freedom which are also alien to Scripture?

It seems that Pinnock's accusation against Platonic philosophy is reminiscent of the biblical theology movement 40 years ago, when sharp contrasts were being made between Hebrew and Greek world-views. James Barr made it clear how misleading and unhelpful this distinction was, and since then biblical scholars have adopted a much more nuanced approach to understanding biblical terms.¹⁸ Similarly, scholars must be careful in their use and understanding of non-biblical terms, and take care in laying too much blame at the foot of a particular world-view in which that term may have been used.

Conclusion

This article has only begun to scratch the surface. Any Christian must take seriously how God actually speaks of himself through Scripture and we have not even begun to do this. There remain questions concerning the way the Bible speaks of God, the relationship between revelation and reason and so on. Yet the discussion concerning Pinnock's theology does not stop with remote debates concerning the nature of God. It radically affects many of the following – how we view prophecy, the nature of assurance, the role and operation of prayer, God's guidance and whether he has a plan for our lives, for example. In all these matters let us make sure that we avoid making God in our own image, or even in an image which we would like God to be.

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¹ A version of this paper first appeared in the journal *Frontiers* (Summer 1998), 28-33. My thanks go to the editors for their permission to reproduce the amended version here.

² Of the many reviews of *The Openness of God* see Frederick S. Leahy in *Evangelicals Now* (April 1997), Paul Helm in *Foundations* (No. 38, Spring 1997), 35-38, and Michael Williams, in *JETS* 40:3, 498-502.

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- ⁹ *Flame of Love*, 56.
- ¹⁰ *Predestination and Free Will*, 110.
- ¹¹ For an exposition of middle knowledge, see William Lane Craig, *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987).
- ¹² P. Helm, *The Providence of God*, 67.
- ¹³ Feinberg, *Predestination in Free Will*, 24–5.
- ¹⁴ See *Unbounded Love*, 167, and Pinnock's earlier work, *The Scripture Principle* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), where he affirms the trustworthiness of Scripture in bringing people to a knowledge of God, 'even though the Bible is not inerrant at this present moment' 224.
- ¹⁵ See the helpful comments made on this in a review of *Openness* by Paul Helm in *Foundations* (No. 38, Spring 1997), 35–6.
- ¹⁶ *Unbounded Love*, 23.
- ¹⁷ *Openness*, 9.
- ¹⁸ James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: OUP, 1961). Commonly known as the root fallacy, Don Carson comments in *Exegetical Fallacies* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 44, that 'the heart of this fallacy is the assumption that any language so constrains the thinking processes of the people who use it that they are forced into certain patterns of thought and shielded from others ... one should be suspicious of all statements about the nature of 'the Hebrew mind' or 'the Greek mind' if those statements are based on observations about the semantic limitations of words of the language in question.'

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF JÜRGEN MOLTMANN

Donald Macleod

Donald Macleod is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Free Church of Scotland College in Edinburgh. A well-known preacher and informed evangelical commentator on theological issues, he has recently published a book on the Person of Christ in the IVP *Contours of Christian Theology* series. In this article, he supplements the arguments in that book by giving a critical appraisal of the Christology of the influential German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, and pointing to areas where this can be a stimulus to evangelical reflection on Christ.

Of Dr Jürgen Moltmann's many publications only one, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, is specifically devoted to Christology.¹ All the others, however, have significant Christological content. This is certainly true of the two other volumes of what he himself labelled his 'systematic contributions to theology': *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1980) and *God in Creation* (1985). But it is equally true of his earlier works: *Theology of Hope* (1964), *The Crucified God* (1972) and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975).

Between the earlier and later works there are, however, clear shifts in emphasis. Moltmann himself admits that by 1980 he no longer wanted to be controversial and decided to focus instead on 'long-term problems of theology'.² But the changes appear to be merely changes of emphasis. There have been no retractions.

Moltmann is not an easy read. One reason for this is that all his works are involved simultaneously in several different discourses. Feminism, ecology, anti-semitism, theodicy, the peace movement and political activism are never far out of sight even when he is discussing Christology. These peripheral conversations are always fascinating, but they are also distracting, especially since the reader faces the further difficulty that Moltmann's work does not run in the tram-lines of conventional theological debate. His Christology, for example, does not follow the contours of biblical theology, plotting the NT development, nor does it engage seriously with historical theology. In *The Way of Jesus Christ* Moltmann achieves the extraordinary feat of writing over 300 pages on Christology without once mentioning Chalcedon. Nor, again, does he follow the categories of systematic theology. Students who look for the classic *loci* (pre-existence, incarnation, unipersonality and so on) may indeed find something, but they will have to search carefully, and as they search they will be conscious of few landmarks.

This is linked to a further difficulty: verification. How does Moltmann satisfy himself that something is true? More important, how does he convince the reader that something is true? The two means of verification normally open to Christians

The Christology of Jürgen Moltmann

are Scripture and tradition. Neither of these seems particularly important to Moltmann. He has a decidedly smorgasbord approach to the canon; and his respect for fathers and reformers is scant, to say the least. His real criteria lie elsewhere. In order to be true, a doctrine must offer a viable theodicy (it must shed light on Auschwitz); it must advance Jewish-Christian dialogue, bearing in mind that Jews were 'sufferers' and Christians 'perpetrators'; it must meet the ecological concerns of humankind; it must give a platform for Christian political activism; and it must both illuminate and be illuminated by the preoccupations of feminism. Above all, theological statements must be validated by experience.⁵ Even what looks like his fundamental theological principle, *crux probat omnia* ('the cross is the test of everything') is itself accepted only because it conforms to these criteria.

But the main reason for the reader's difficulty is that Moltmann never allows us to relax. It is as if he were determined that every sentence had to be either provocative, brilliant or questionable. Reviewers have spoken variously of 'subtle complexity', 'minute complexity' and 'comprehensive profusion'. The argument often proceeds by way of image and suggestion rather than by way of clarification and analysis. As a result, the reader is liable to go away stimulated, yet less enlightened than he thinks.

Yet there are some ideas hammered out so relentlessly and set in so many different lights that they become for ever part of our theological baggage. Two of these are particularly important: first, Jesus as the fulfilment of the Messianic hope; second, Jesus as the crucified God.

Jesus and the messianic hope

Moltmann's stress on eschatology was stated unmistakably in his first major publication, *Theology of Hope*. Christianity, he argued, is not only *evangelion* but *epangelia*: not only 'good news' but 'promise'. Furthermore, *evangelion* itself has to be taken not primarily as good news about the past but as good news about the future. This is closely connected with Christ's resurrection, which Moltmann discusses in the core section of *Theology of Hope* (Ch. III, 'The Resurrection and the Future of Jesus Christ'). Modern reflection on this topic, he notes, has been preoccupied with the question, 'Is it historical?' For post-enlightenment man the answer has been, 'No!' Even Christians have tended to see the story of the resurrection not as a statement about an event, but as a statement about their own state of mind. Behind this lies the principle espoused by such scholars as Troeltsch: history is analogical. All historical events are basically similar and the threshold criterion by which we are to judge whether an event is historical is its agreement 'with normal, usual, or at least variously attested happenings.'⁶

If we approach the gospel accounts of the resurrection armed with this criterion we shall, of course, conclude that they are

un-historical. But there is an alternative way, argues Moltmann. The resurrection itself challenges and questions our whole modern understanding of what is 'historical'. In particular, it challenges Troeltsch's principle of analogy and sheds revolutionary new light on what is historically possible. Hence its central importance. The debate about it is no mere wrangle over a detail of the distant past. It is concerned with the nature of history itself. Christ did not simply repeat the past. Neither will Christian history merely repeat the past. The *parousia* will bring something new; something that has never happened before, even in Christ. The resurrection tells us that history is governed not by analogy, but by (divine) promise.

Moltmann's forthright emphasis on the resurrection⁷ presents a curious contrast to his attitude to the virgin birth, which he dismisses as a legend (or set of legends) created to give mythical expression to the idea of Jesus as the divine Son. It is difficult to see why a view of history shaped by the resurrection cannot equally accommodate the virgin birth. Once we breach the principle that all historical events are analogous we surely have an epistemological framework for all the Christian miracles. If so, then the miracle of Christmas performs the same function at the beginning of Jesus' life as the wonder of the empty tomb does at its end.

The all-embracing emphasis on eschatology in *Theology of Hope* is sharply focused on Christology in *The Way of Jesus Christ*. Moltmann admits (xiii) that he wrestled over the choice of title. 'Way', he says, is evocative of three ideas: process (or progress) as applied to Jesus himself; development, as the church's own Christological advances in a historically conditioned and limited environment; and ethics, as the gospel invites us to follow the way of Jesus.

It is the first of these ideas that dominates Moltmann's Christology. He is concerned with the eschatological journey of Jesus. It is not, however, a solitary journey. It is a trinitarian one: the story is the story of Jesus' dealings with the Father and Jesus' dealings with the Spirit as, together, they redeem and renew creation.

Jesus' *Way*, according to Moltmann, is in three stages: the messianic fulfilment in the Advent; the apocalyptic sufferings of Messiah at Calvary; and the messianic consummation in the final renewal of the cosmos.

The first of these, the messianic advent, is obviously pivotal. For Moltmann, the central Christological concept is *messiahship*. He lays down the challenge, 'What does christology mean except messianology?' (1) and goes on to build on the fact that the gospels understand his whole coming and ministry in the contexts of Israel's messianic hope (28). First and foremost, then, Jesus is the one in whom OT and Jewish expectations find their fulfilment (Moltmann does not seriously consider the possibility that OT promise and Jewish

expectation may have diverged radically). Hence his choice of sub-title: *Christology in Messianic Dimensions*.

From such a standpoint Moltmann is inevitably dismissive of the *anthropological* Christology which in German Liberalism ended up merely admiring 'Rabbi Jesus' and in British Modernism tended towards equating the human with the divine (Christ was truly God because he was truly human). He is more ambivalent towards patristic Christology. One of his central concerns, after all, is with what the Way of Jesus means for God and this inevitably requires an acceptance of trinitarianism. At the same time, he is sharply critical of both the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds on the ground that they present a static Christology focused on metaphysical concepts such as *nature* and *substance*. As a result, they have virtually nothing to say on 'the Way' of Jesus. They are silent on his earthly life and ministry and on his prophetic and social teaching. Even the Apostles' Creed moves directly from 'was born' to 'suffered under Pontius Pilate', as if there was nothing in between.⁹

Moltmann is deeply conscious that *messiahship* is a Jewish concept and that any claim that Jesus is the Messiah must refer in the first instance to his being the Jewish Messiah (there is no other) and the fulfilment of Jewish hope. This raises a question of critical importance: Why does the Jew say 'No!' to Jesus? Moltmann cites a number of Jewish scholars (most notably Martin Buber) to provide an answer. They say, 'Jesus has not fulfilled our hope! The world is not redeemed! And we do not see the life and work of Jesus as constituting any real *caesura* in human history!'¹⁰

At the heart of these objections lies a radically different view of redemption. According to Buber, 'The redemption of the world is for us indivisibly one with the perfecting of creation'.¹¹ Schalom Ben-Chorin speaks to the same effect: 'The Jew is profoundly aware of the unredeemed character of the world'.¹²

Part of Moltmann's answer is that Judaism has its own embarrassments. Ben-Chorin, for example, argues that the only *caesura* in history is the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. But this, too, says Moltmann, left the world unredeemed. Similarly, if there can be no provisional messianic presence in an unredeemed world, what room is there for the quasi-messianic presence of 'the chosen people'?

But Moltmann's real answer is to accept the premises of the Jewish argument and then proceed to assimilate it into his Christology. Jesus has not fulfilled the hope of Israel: yet.

The 'yet' is crucial. Jesus has still to complete his way and finish his journey. Moltmann even suggests that he is not yet Messiah. It is something he is becoming or working his way into. Such language confuses the holding of an office with the completion of its task: Tony Blair is, presumably, Prime Minister. But Moltmann's central contention is both true

and invaluable. The fact that Christ has not completed his task does not discredit him. He is on the way to completing it and in his *parousia* he will give us all that the Jew ever longed for. In particular, he will give us that new creation which is central to Jewish hope. The kingdom of God will ultimately mean the transformation of the whole of reality. We have no right to interiorise it (as if it had significance only for personal religion) or to politicise it (as in the state-allied churches of Christendom). It is external, material and social, involving both a universal reign of peace and a perfected creation. Moltmann's favourite text is 1 Corinthians 15:28: God will be all in all. Unfortunately, he never exegetes it and one hesitates to do the exegesis for him. The best provisional exegesis is the Lord's Prayer: when the Messiah finishes his journey, God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

This central emphasis on messianic Christology is profoundly satisfying. At its edges, however, there are several questions.

One was raised by Karl Barth shortly after the publication of *Theology of Hope* in 1964. 'This new systematising', wrote Barth, 'is almost too good to be true'.¹³ If anything, this is even more true of *The Way of Jesus Christ*, and the situation is further complicated by the fact that in Moltmann's thought there are also parallel systems (and systems within systems). For example, behind the dominant arrangement in *The Way of Jesus Christ* we find a further schematisation under the heading, 'The Three-Dimensional Person of Jesus Christ' (149). The three dimensions are: first, his eschatological person; secondly, his theological person; and thirdly, his social person. It is difficult to assess such patterns. Does their multiplicity serve to prevent the hegemony of any single one? or does their abundance reflect a mind disposed to impose order and classification where none exist?

Barth also expressed the opinion that Moltmann's hope is 'finally only a principle and thus a vessel with no contents'.¹⁴ This observation was linked to the influence on Moltmann of Ernst Bloch, a Marxist exponent of the philosophy of hope ('hope without God'). Moltmann read Bloch's work, *The Principle of Hope*, in 1960 while on holiday in Switzerland and later confessed, 'I was so fascinated that I ceased to see the beauty of the mountains'.¹⁵ Barth suspected that Moltmann simply wanted to 'baptise' Bloch, but Moltmann vigorously denied this: 'I did not seek to be Bloch's heir'.¹⁶

Moltmann could offer a strong case in his own defence, especially since he links the fulfilment of hope very closely to the *parousia*. Against Barth's tendency to speak of the *parousia* as merely a revelation of what Christ already is, Moltmann insists that it brings in something new. He writes,

Christ's parousia does not merely 'unveil' the salvific meaning of Christ's death. It also, and much more, brings the fulfilment of the whole history of Christ, with all that

*it promises; for it is only with Christ's parousia that 'the kingdom that shall have no end' begins ... That is why this future of Christ does not bring the turn of history 'once more'; it brings it 'once and for all.'*¹⁷

More serious is the objection that Moltmann's stress on eschatology is secured at the expense of the cross. Beneath this lies something more fundamental still: Moltmann's passion for theodicy betrays him into being obsessed with suffering almost to the exclusion of sin. It is God who has the problem, not humanity. Why did he permit Auschwitz or Hiroshima? The sense of guilt and the classic Lutheran preoccupation with forgiveness and justification are almost entirely absent. The quest is for answers, not for forgiveness; for hope, not for acquittal.¹⁸ Even the cross is an affirmation of God's solidarity with us in pain, rather than a divine act of atonement for sin. In fact, Christ would have come even if Adam had never sinned. As a result, Moltmann is totally dismissive of the Anselmic view of the incarnation as what he calls 'an emergency measure ... the functional presupposition for the atoning sacrifice on the cross'.¹⁹

Moltmann finds that the rationale of the incarnation is not in sin, but in creation. At one level, it is the perfected self-communication of the triune God to his world.²⁰ At another, it is a step taken 'for the sake of perfecting creation'.²¹ This is linked to some dubious exegesis of the reference in Genesis 1:26-27 to humans being made in the image of God. Moltmann takes this as a promise: in Christ 'we have the fulfilment of the promise made to man that he will be "the image of the invisible God"'. It follows from this, according to Moltmann, that Christ is the true man and 'it is therefore in union with him that believers discover the truth of human existence'.²² In other words, even if humankind had never fallen Christ would still have become incarnate in order that we should have a clear idea of what was meant by being in the image of God. Such reasoning has only a tenuous link with the biblical text and falls completely apart if the image was a fact of history rather than a part of eschatology (that is, if humankind at his point of origin was made in the image of God). Besides, such a demonstration of the image would have been absolutely useless for all the generations before the incarnation. They would have had no inkling of what was meant by the image of God.

As an appendix to this we should note Moltmann's assumption that on the Anselmic view Christ becomes redundant after the cross: once creation has been redeemed the God-man is no longer needed.²³ But this is not a natural consequence of the Anselmic view. The soteriological work of Christ continues between the resurrection and the *parousia*; and even after the *parousia* Christ continues as the Last Adam, the head of creation and the first-born among many. He will function for ever as the pastor of his people (Rev. 7:17); and he is the

designated leader of humanity in its stewardship of the ages (Heb. 2:9).

The Crucified God

The second outstanding idea in Moltmann's Christology is the divine suffering involved in the life of Christ and particularly in his cross. This is usually associated with what will probably remain his magnum opus, *The Crucified God*, but it also figures prominently in *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (Ch. II, 'The Passion of God') and in *The Way of Jesus Christ* (Ch. IV, 'The Apocalyptic Sufferings of Christ').

The Crucified God was published in 1972. 'I wrote it', said Moltmann later, 'with my lifeblood.'²⁴ More than any other of his works it reflects his personal vision of the theological task: 'For me theology springs from a divine passion – it is the open wound of God in one's own life and in the tormented men, women and children of this world'.²⁵ Like the earlier work, *Theology of Hope*, it sees the whole of theology from a focal point: 'For me the cross of Christ became the "foundation and critique of Christian theology"'.²⁶ In particular, Moltmann wished to change from what he saw as the traditional preoccupation with what the cross meant for Jesus to what he saw as a revolutionary preoccupation with what it means for God: 'Does an impassible God keep silent in heaven untouched by the suffering and death of his child on Golgotha, or does God himself suffer these pains and this death?'²⁷ At the same time, Moltmann remained committed to his quest for a theodicy. '*The Crucified God*', he wrote, 'was also my attempt to find an answer for a life in Germany after Auschwitz'.²⁸

At the heart of *The Crucified God* lies an emphatic rejection of the idea of divine impassibility (here Moltmann acknowledges his debt to British thinkers such as J.K. Mozley, G.A. Studdart Kennedy and C.E. Rolt, as well as to Kazoh Kitamori, Miguel de Unamuno and, of course, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who once wrote in his prison cell, 'Only the suffering God can help'). Moltmann defines his position carefully. God cannot suffer unwillingly or helplessly. Neither can he suffer because of any deficiency in his being. Nor, again, can he ever be a mere victim, helplessly assailed. But he can suffer *actively*, argues Moltmann. He can go towards suffering and accept it. He can suffer in love. This does not bespeak any deficiency in his being. On the contrary, it is possible only because of 'the fullness of his being, i.e. his love'.²⁹ He is affected by human actions and sufferings not because he is afflicted by some neurosis but because 'he is interested in his creation, his people and his right'.³⁰

To some extent Moltmann can appeal (and does appeal) to the prophets in support of his denial of impassibility. He writes, for example, 'At the heart of the prophetic proclamation there stands the certainty that God is interested in the world to the

point of suffering.³¹ But his real appeal is to the cross. He invokes Luther's principle, *crux probat omnia* ('the cross is the test of everything') and argues that the simplistic idea that God cannot suffer is exploded at Calvary. The cross is not merely something which happens to Christ. It happens between him and his Father. Moltmann is careful to reject *Patripassianism*. It is not the Father who was crucified, dead and buried. The suffering of the Father, he insists, was different from that of the Son. But it was no less real. What Abraham did not do to Isaac, God did to his own Son. He gave him up. He abandoned him. He cast him out. He delivered him to an accursed death. In doing so, the Father himself 'suffers the death of the Son in the infinite grief of love'.³² Having said that, Moltmann instantly warns against understanding the Father's suffering in *theopaschitic* terms. The cross is not the death of God. God did not die. He did not cease to exist or cease to function. We must speak not of the death of God but of death in God.³³ More precisely, we must speak in trinitarian terms: 'The Son suffers dying, the Father suffers the death of the Son ... The Fatherlessness of the Son is matched by the Sonlessness of the Father'.³⁴ What they share is that each *surrenders*. The Son surrenders himself to forsakenness. The Father surrenders his Son. Most deeply separated in the forsakenness, they are most inwardly one in surrendering.

Here then, just where he seems most decisively eclipsed, God is most clearly revealed. Precisely where the Father and the Son are separated we see the divine story as one which is essentially trinitarian: 'if the cross of Christ is understood as a divine event, i.e. as an event between Jesus and his God and Father, it is necessary to speak in trinitarian terms of the Son and the Father and the Spirit ... The form of the crucified Christ is the Trinity'.³⁵ No doubt Moltmann is striving, as usual, to make his language as striking and innovative as possible. But, clarified and analysed, it seems fully consonant with what B.B. Warfield wrote eighty years ago: the revelation of the trinity 'was made not in word but in deed. It was made in the incarnation of God the Son, and the outpouring of God the Holy Spirit ... the revelation of the Trinity was incidental to, and the inevitable effect of, the accomplishment of redemption'.³⁶

But the cross revolutionises ('modifies', to use Warfield's word) our concept of God not only to the extent of defining him as triune but also to the extent of shattering the idea of divine impassibility. Many Christians have difficulty with this, but it seems to me that Moltmann's central concern (what the cross meant for God the Father) accords fully with the perspectives of the NT itself. There, the key-texts (Jn 3:16, Rom. 5:8; 8:32, 1 Jn 4:9f.) see Calvary not merely, or even primarily, as an action of God the Son but as an action of God the Father. It is first and foremost a demonstration of *his* love. However important the priesthood of the Son, the priesthood of the Father is primary. It is the cost to *him*, as the one who gave up his Son, that is stressed.

Moltmann espouses the dialectical (as opposed to the analogical) principle in his approach to the knowledge of God. Being is revealed not in its like but in its opposite. Love, for example, is revealed only in hatred and unity only in conflict. Similarly God is revealed only in his opposite. The *god-ness* of God appears only in the paradox of divine abandonment on Calvary. There is truth in this to the extent that the concept of God which emerges from Calvary is counter-intuitive. Our personal *sensus detatis* does not expect divine *kenosis* or divine passibility. That is why such an idea is a *scandalon*. But this is no reason to reject the principle of analogy. Indeed, it is analogy which offers the best framework for the defence of passibility. We could not sacrifice our own children without pain. Abraham could not sacrifice Isaac without pain. If we are made in God's image (which we undoubtedly are, although Moltmann views this as only a hope) we can extrapolate from what Calvary would have cost ourselves to what it cost God: all the more so because the NT language of the cross deliberately echoes Abraham's experience. In the accounts of both the Baptism and the Transfiguration Jesus, like Isaac, is 'my Son, whom I love' (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). If the sacrifice cost God nothing, if he surrendered his Son impassively and unmovedly, he is utterly different from us and we are not in his image. If there was for him no pain and no cost, if Calvary was a mere blip on the impersonal screen of the Unmoved Mover, we are not in his image. It is not merely that we cannot attain to such Stoicism: we deplore and abhor it. It would mean that he is not love and that Fatherhood and Sonship are optional, meaningless metaphors.³⁷

What Moltmann does not do justice to, however, is the anomalousness of the divine pain. 'The self-sacrifice of love', he writes, 'is God's eternal nature'.³⁸ This gives the divine pain a degree of inevitability and normality which does not do justice to the perspectives of grace or to the discretionary nature of mercy. Nor does it take proper account of the reasons behind our instinctive aversion to the idea of divine passibility. Our instinct is that it is inconceivable that 'the blessed God' should suffer stress, disturbance or commotion. It is unthinkable that a frown should cross his face or a furrow wrinkle his brow. We know that in a normal universe God would be impassible. But the universe is not normal. It has been disrupted by sin; and sin is *anomia* (1 John). Once that *anomia* enters history it carries a thousand other anomalies in its train. It involves the whole creation in suffering. It involves God in the alien, distasteful work of condemnation. It involves God in pain.

Any theodicy which relieves this tension is *ipso facto* discredited. Sin is that which absolutely ought not to be; and pain in God is that which absolutely ought not to be. The Crucified God is unthinkable. Sin (*anomia*) makes it possible, but nothing makes it logical, far less self-evident.

Moltmann is open to Anselm's charge, *Nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum.*

As Moltmann stresses:

*Out of God's passion there arises the divine sympathy. Through the incarnation God shares and understands our finitude. Through the cross, God enters our godforsakenness. He humbles himself and takes upon himself the eternal death of the godless and the godforsaken, so that all the godless and the godforsaken can experience communion with him.*³⁹

Hence 'the godforsaken and rejected man can accept himself when he comes to know the crucified God who is with him and has already accepted him'.⁴⁰ (One is slightly uneasy about the idea that this applies to every godforsaken person; but this is probably taken care of by the reference to his *coming to know* the crucified God. Nevertheless, Moltmann's thought shows a strong tendency towards universalism).

This point about the divine sympathy is dramatically illustrated in a passage which Moltmann quotes from *Night*, a book written by E. Wiesel, a survivor of Auschwitz:

*The SS hanged two Jewish men and a youth in front of the whole camp. The men died quickly, but the death throes of the youth lasted for half an hour. 'Where is God? Where is he?' someone asked behind me. As the youth still hung in torment in the noose after a long time, I heard the man call again, 'Where is God now?' And I heard a voice in myself answer: 'Where is he? He is here. He is hanging there on the gallows ...'*⁴¹

This is the idea of God's sympathy with the oppressed carried to its ultimate (and, I think, quite legitimate) conclusion. Moltmann writes

*There cannot be any other Christian answer to the question of this torment, to speak here of a God who could not suffer would make God a demon. To speak here of an absolute God would make God an annihilating nothingness.*⁴²

Finally, Moltmann brings out with great clarity the fact that it was because of his prophetic ministry that Christ was crucified. The gospels are not interested in his sufferings from nature and fate, or in his economic sufferings as a carpenter's son. They focus on those sufferings which he prompted by his actions. He 'incited' the world against himself 'by his message and the life that he lived'.⁴³

This is the root of Moltmann's sympathy with Liberation Theology.⁴⁴ Christians, he insists, have no right to quote Jesus as an example of mere patience and submission to fate. Even less do we have a right to use him as an excuse for our own silence, passivity and weakness in the face of social injustice.

'Too often', writes Moltmann, 'peasants, Indians and black slaves have been called upon by the representatives of the dominant religion to accept their sufferings as "their cross" and not to rebel against them.'⁴⁵ He pleads, instead (and in classic Liberation terminology), for an orthodoxy which is matched by *orthopraxis*: one which draws out the consequences of the cross for politics: 'The church of the crucified Christ must take sides in the concrete social and political conflicts going on about it and in which it is involved, and must be prepared to join and form parties'.⁴⁶

That, however, is another question, for another time.

Finally, a caveat. As deconstructionists tirelessly remind us, every writer loses control over his work once it is published. To some extent, great or small, they are at the mercy of their readers, unable to dictate a response. Moltmann is more vulnerable than most. His work has been described as an invitation to think and to rethink. The danger is that we read with our own eyes, proceed to think and rethink our own thoughts and then attribute them to Moltmann. I doubt if I have escaped that hazard: in which case I must thank him for some of my own most cherished thoughts.

¹ Moltmann offers a more popular treatment in *Jesus Christ for Today's World* (London: SCM Press, 1994).

² Jürgen Moltmann, (ed.), *How I Have Changed: Reflections on Thirty Years of Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1997), 20.

³ Details of Moltmann's major publications are as follows: *Theology of Hope* (1965. ET, London: SCM Press, 1967); *The Crucified God* (1972. ET of 2nd edition, London: SCM Press, 1974); *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975. ET, London: SCM Press, 1977); *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1980. ET, London: SCM Press, 1981); *God in Creation* (1985. ET, London: SCM Press, 1985); *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1989. ET, London: SCM Press, 1990).

⁴ *How I Have Changed*, 20.

⁵ In *Jesus Christ for Today's World*, for example, he observes (2) that 'practice is the touchstone against which a christology's authenticity has to be tested'. Cf. *How I Have Changed*, 20: 'It should be possible to verify theological statements by one's own experiences or by empathy with the experiences of others'. But how, then are we to 'authenticate' practice and experience?

⁶ *Theology of Hope*, 175.

⁷ He speaks more ambiguously in *Jesus Christ for Today's World* (4) 'Of course the symbols of raising and resurrection are drawn from an earlier era, when people talked in mythical pictures and images about God's marvellous intervention in this world.'

⁸ Cf., Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. 1, 2, 172-184.

⁹ Moltmann suggests that the following might be inserted at this

point in the Creed:

Baptised by John the Baptist
filled with the Holy Spirit
to proclaim God's kingdom to the poor
to heal the sick
to receive the rejected
to awaken Israel for the salvation of the nations
and to have mercy on all human beings.

(*Jesus Christ for Today's World*, 3–4).

- ¹⁰ *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 28–37.
- ¹¹ Cited in *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 28, from Martin Buber, *Der Jude und sien Judentum* (Cologne, 1963) 562.
- ¹² *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 29. Quoted from Schalom Ben-Chorin, *Die Antwort des Jona* (Hamburg, 1956), 99.
- ¹³ Karl Barth, *Letters 1961–1968* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1981), 174.
- ¹⁴ Karl Barth, *Letters 1961–1968*, 218.
- ¹⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *How I Have Changed*, 15.
- ¹⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *How I Have Changed*, 16.
- ¹⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 319.
- ¹⁸ Cf. the comment of Ruth Page (reviewing *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*), 'Humanity seems to require perfecting in its fellowship rather than saving from its sin.' (*Scottish Journal of Theology*, 1984, Vol. 37 No.1, 98.).
- ¹⁹ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 114.
- ²⁰ *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 116.
- ²¹ *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 116.
- ²² *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 116–17.
- ²³ *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 115. Cf. The discussion of Calvin's idea of Christ as the *lieutenant de Dieu* in *The Crucified God*, 257–262.
- ²⁴ *How I Have Changed*, 18.
- ²⁵ J. Moltmann et al., *A Passion for God's Reign* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 2.
- ²⁶ *How I Have Changed*, 18.

- ²⁷ *How I Have Changed*, 18.
- ²⁸ Cf. Hartmut Meesmann's remark that for Moltmann 'theology after Auschwitz must be different from theology before the annihilation of the Jews.'*(How I Have Changed*, p. 119).
- ²⁹ *The Crucified God*, 230.
- ³⁰ *The Crucified God*, 270.
- ³¹ *The Crucified God*, 271.
- ³² *The Crucified God*, 243.
- ³³ It is probably true, however, that Moltmann flits too easily from the idea of God *suffering* to the idea of God *dying*. See D.G. Attfield's comments in 'Can God Be Crucified?', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 1997, Vol. 30 No. 1, 49–50: 'there is no sense in attributing an absolute ending of body and brain process to the almighty ... God cannot therefore die in the sense of ceasing to be, and still be called God'.
- ³⁴ *The Crucified God*, 243.
- ³⁵ *The Crucified God*, 246.
- ³⁶ B.B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1952), 33. The quotation is from an article, 'The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity', first published in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Chicago, 1915), Vol. V, 3012–22.
- ³⁷ See *The Crucified God*, 230: 'Were God incapable of suffering in any respect, and therefore in an absolute sense, then he would also be incapable of love'.
- ³⁸ *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 32.
- ³⁹ *The Crucified God*, 276.
- ⁴⁰ *The Crucified God*, 277.
- ⁴¹ *The Crucified God*, 273–274. Quoted from E. Weisel, *Night* (1969), 75f.
- ⁴² *The Crucified God*, 274.
- ⁴³ *The Crucified God*, 51.
- ⁴⁴ See *How I Have Changed*, 19. Cf. *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 8: 'There must be no theology of liberation without the glorification of God and no glorification of God without the liberation of the oppressed'.
- ⁴⁵ *The Crucified God*, 49.
- ⁴⁶ *The Crucified God*, 53.

RESCUING THEOLOGY FROM THE THEOLOGIANS

Gerald Bray

Gerald Bray is Professor of Anglican Theology at Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama. He has written numerous books, most notably Biblical Interpretation: Past And Present, and has a profound concern for the relationship between scholarly theology and the life of the church. In this article, he argues that theologians, while pursuing a vitally important task, must never lose sight of their role within the church.

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It is a great honour for me to have been invited to deliver the third annual John Wenham lecture. I knew John Wenham personally and had the privilege of working fairly closely with him over a number of years, an experience which left me, as indeed it left all those who knew him, with a deep appreciation of his love for the Lord and his total dedication to the cause of the Gospel in the world of academic scholarship. He was a man who could have attained high positions in both the university and the church if he had been prepared to compromise his beliefs, but to the end of his days he remained faithful to what he knew to be true and he never lost any opportunity to communicate his learning and his enthusiasm to others.

Few things were dearer to John Wenham's heart than his desire to share Christian truth with as many people as possible, and I am certain that he would have had a good deal of sympathy with the title of today's lecture. Rescuing theology from the theologians indeed! Few disciplines have suffered more from the follies of its practitioners than this one has, and yet none is more important for the eternal destiny of the human race. We can get to heaven without knowing anything about computer science, molecular biology or geophysics, but to be deprived of the knowledge of God is to be deprived of eternal life, and theology is nothing if it is not about knowing God.

This, I think, is where we have to begin. After all, if theology were not particularly important, it would not really matter whether the experts dwelt in a world of their own or not. I must confess that I feel this way about such disciplines, (if that is the word for them), as sociology and literary criticism. I do not much care whether the doctors of these things are comprehensible or not, because I know in my heart that I shall go on talking to other people and reading their books whatever the experts might say. Perhaps, in the final analysis, it is better that I cannot understand them, since that way they do not impair my enjoyment of the things they are trying to analyse.

Now there are many people who think that theology is in the same category as the social sciences and the humanities.

Does it really matter, they ask, what learned theologians are saying if I have a personal knowledge of God in my heart and a living relationship with him in my life? What need is there for me to complicate the obvious, or to reduce the existential reality of spiritual experience to cold, abstract propositions? In one sense, of course, such people have a point – there is no need to do this at all. An illiterate grandmother in New Guinea who has met with Jesus is a greater theologian than a university professor of the subject who has not, and I have no doubt whatever that I shall meet more of the former in heaven than the latter. Without a personal experience of God, theology is a waste of time – indeed, it is quite meaningless. You can drive a car without knowing anything about car mechanics – most of us do, in fact – but what would be the point of studying car maintenance if you have no car to maintain, have never seen one and perhaps even doubt whether such things exist?

The first qualification for any true theologian is a personal encounter with the living God, which can only come as his Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, points us to the righteousness which has been won for us by Christ's atoning sacrifice, and assures us that the prince of this world has been judged by the Father's acceptance of that atonement. Once we are clear about that, we can go on to the rest, but only once we are clear, because the rest is really no more than an elaboration and application to different areas of life of the great themes of the gospel. What I am saying here is nothing new. The Apostle Paul threw everything away, and told his people that he would still throw everything away, if only he could have the surpassing knowledge which was his in the love of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:7–8). The great medieval doctor of theology, St Thomas Aquinas (1226–74), stopped writing his great *Summa* of theology when he had a vision of the living God, and no power on earth could persuade him to take up his pen again, because what he had seen and known went beyond anything which could be described by the human mind.

It may seem paradoxical to say so, but the attitude of Paul and Aquinas is one which ought to be shared by every theologian – as indeed it is, by those who truly know God for themselves. For who can describe that wonder in anything like adequate terms? And who can be content with a shadow of that reality when once he has experienced it in its fullness? Even the most clever intellectual reconstruction pales before the glory of the God whom it is trying so hard to describe, and theologians, more than anyone, ought to be aware of the feebleness of their efforts with respect to the object of their inquiry. For in no other discipline must the description inevitably fall so far short of the reality; nowhere else must the gap between theory and practice yawn quite so widely as it does here.

So why bother with theology at all? The first, and main reason that we are forced to do so is evangelistic. Theology is a means given to us by God for helping us to distinguish in our minds

what is true from what is false in the statements which are made about him. Perhaps we need not make any statements at all, but we all do, and we must know whether what we say is right or wrong. Of course, our statements will never come anywhere near the true experience of God himself; theological argument by itself has never converted anybody, nor can it. But having said that, it still has an important role to play in preparing our minds to receive an experience of the living God. It does so, primarily by warning us what we must and must not expect. We are told for example, that the One with whom we have to do is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, all good, all loving, all gentle and all patient. None of these things means anything until we have met him, because our minds are unable to comprehend what such a being would be like. But when we do meet God, we recognise who he is and what he is like, because the pieces of the mental jigsaw finally slot into place. He is the one who corresponds to all the clues, and indeed who far surpasses them.

True theology can only be the fruit of human experience of God, but this experience is not the preserve of any one person. Nor is it possible for any one of us to have a full and exhaustive understanding of him. Even if we restrict ourselves to the things which have been revealed about God, and refrain from idle speculation about him, it is still true that none of us knows or understands everything. Even within the parameters of his self-revelation, God remains far greater than we are, and his revelation is a challenge to us to explore him more fully, as much as it is a confirmation of what we have already experienced.

I want to look at this more carefully because I believe it is here that so many of our modern difficulties have arisen. We are so focused on personal experience that it is hard for us to imagine that we all have much more to learn - and that much of the learning which we still have to do is written down for us in Holy Scripture, if only we had eyes to see it. For example, every once in a while I come across some poor person who tells me that he or she no longer experiences the same things that he or she knew at an earlier stage in the Christian life. People who once spoke in tongues no longer do so, but do not understand why. Others, who once found it no trouble at all to read several pages of the Bible at a stretch, now have to exert themselves to plod through a single chapter. And so on. In trying to help such people, I usually say that it may be that God is challenging them to go on to higher things in the Christian life, that they have been deprived of their earlier enjoyments not because they have sinned or grown cold, but because they are being told that it is time for them to move on. A large amount of the spiritual dryness which we experience is ultimately due to the fact that God is working in us at levels that we do not understand, and until we can penetrate them and see the wonder of his work in the secret places of our hearts, we shall go about looking for him, as the bride in the Song looked for Solomon, but we shall

not find him. Growth is an essential part of life, but it is seldom (if ever) apparent to the one who is doing the growing. Theology is a sketch of what spiritual growth should be like, giving us a kind of checklist of the things which we still have to experience for ourselves.

Theology can only perform this function, of course, if it is the faithful reflection of the collective experience of the Church. This experience is twofold. First of all, I believe that God has been bringing his people to increasing maturity down through the centuries. This does not mean that he is constantly giving us new revelations, but that he is helping us to understand existing revelation more deeply. A classic example of this is the question of slavery. Even the apostles accepted it, although they knew that all men were ultimately created equal in God's sight. But today we are no longer prepared to tolerate it because God has educated our collective conscience to the point where we abhor something that the first followers of Jesus made provision for. Likewise we are far more sensitive today to the many weaknesses of the human race which we find in handicapped people, though this was not so much the case in Biblical times and it is remarkable how little is said about them in the Scriptures.

The spiritual maturing of the Church finds its outward expression in the development of theology, as does the particular experience of certain individuals. For example, some unknown person in ancient times came to the realisation that God is a trinity of three persons in one being, or substance, and this insight has been canonized for us in the classical formulations of our faith. Similarly, someone else suddenly understood that Jesus of Nazareth was one divine person in two natures - divine and human, and that too, got transmitted to subsequent generations by way of theology. Of course not everyone, then or now, shares these understandings, and some have openly rejected them as either inadequate or wrong. But enough people over a long period of time, and from very different social and cultural backgrounds, have resonated with them as authentic expressions of Biblical revelation that we can say that they are true in a way which goes beyond the limitations of any one pattern of thought. That is why they have entered our theological inheritance as touchstones of what we call orthodoxy - a word which means 'right worship'. For if we truly know God as he is, and if we are worshipping him in the right way, these are the things that we shall believe and confess about him. There is a great deal more to it than that, to be sure, but there is nothing less, and it is our theological perception which provides us with the bottom line of authentic Christian experience.

Orthodoxy is a word which has nasty connotations to some people, but in actual fact it is nothing but a checklist of essential truth. I say 'truth' in the singular, rather than 'truths' in the plural because ultimately all truth is one, and orthodoxy

cannot be broken down into component parts. This is perhaps most easily understood by giving an example. You all know the chorus, 'Jesus is Lord':

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it!
 For by his power, each tree and flower
 Was planned and made.
 Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it!
 Sun, moon and stars in heaven
 Cry 'Jesus is Lord'.

The impulse for this chorus comes from two parts of Scripture – it is a combination of Psalm 19 and Philippians 2:11, and so can claim to be 'Biblical', at least superficially. Of course, no-one is naive enough to believe that if you go out to look at the sky you will hear the planets shouting 'Jesus is Lord', but it is not the poetic licence to which we must object here. The real problem with this chorus is that it claims that the message of redemption, which is what 'Jesus is Lord' proclaims, can be heard in creation – in other words, that a person can come to a knowledge of Christ without the proclamation of the Gospel. The result is therefore heresy, made up by putting selected truths together in the wrong way. I know that many people will find this hard to swallow. Whoever wrote the chorus was presumably not intending to come up with that, and I am sure that is true. Most people who sing it do not come to that conclusion either, and that is also no doubt true, though whether it is because they have meditated deeply on the words, I somehow doubt. Most people I know like the tune and never get any farther than that.

I know as well as you do that probably nobody has been led into heresy as a result of singing this chorus, and yet it is still potentially dangerous because it is theologically wrong. The subtlety, and therefore the great danger, of heresy is not that it is so palpably false that no well-meaning person would ever go near it. On the contrary, heresy is usually made up of half-digested truths, juxtaposed in ways which lead to the wrong conclusions. Woolly thinking of one kind or another may go on for generations, and only blossom into error when some clever person comes along to draw the logical conclusions from what he thinks is generally believed. In the early church, for example, the great Arian heresy, which held that Jesus was a creature and not God, emerged after centuries of a vaguely-held belief that the Son was inferior to the Father, and therefore not fully 'God' in the strict sense of the term. For a long time, people held together their worship of Jesus, on the one hand, with this subordinationist theology on the other, and never really tried to harmonise the two, so that when Arius thought he was just tying up loose ends, a lot of people were ready to believe him. In fact he created a heresy which proved to be one of the hardest to combat in the history of the church, precisely because so many ordinary people thought that what he was saying sounded right.

This is why a chorus like 'Jesus is Lord' is dangerous. Even if it makes little or no difference to us, it is a concession to woolly thinking which will one day meet its Arius, and then it will become clear that years of accepting that sort of thing have inadvertently prepared the ground for false teaching. It is the task of a good theologian to point this sort of thing out, even if it is unpopular at the time, and warn the church against falling into complacency, which is the prelude to error. When it is doing its job properly, theology trains the Christian mind to be on the lookout for possible trouble, as well as challenging believers to explore dimensions of their faith which may not yet have occurred to them.

So far I have been making out the case for good theology, but I am well aware that for many people today the problem is that so much of what passes for theology is bad or worse. Theologians tend to be noted for their unbelief, even on the rare occasions when they can be understood, with the result that many of the keenest believers today have a fear and an aversion to the subject. In some quarters it may even be thought that these two things go together – the more concerned you are to win people for Christ, the less time you will have for subtle argumentation which is liable to end up in heresy or unbelief. Conversely, the more theology you read, the less interested you will be in evangelism.

I am well aware of this situation and I believe that it is a tragedy for the church. In one sense, there is not much any one of us can do about it, since problems like this one are the result of many decades, even centuries of development, and barring an upheaval like the Reformation, are unlikely to disappear quickly. The liberal theological establishment with which we are blessed has just as strong an instinct for self-preservation as anyone else, and it will not give up its power easily. Students and others will continue to face the dilemma of having to be conversant with their doctrines on the one hand, so as not to appear 'ignorant' of current thinking, and yet keep themselves mentally and spiritually pure on the other. The latter task inevitably means developing antibodies to the prevailing establishment position, and this is never easy.

Many conservative students end up speaking the language of the liberal establishment whether they want to or not, and hanging on to their convictions may be almost impossible. I cringe, for example, every time I hear a supposedly conservative scholar talk about the 'Easter-event' instead of the Resurrection, because the former term is just a way of accepting that something extraordinary happened at the first Easter without specifying what it was. It has become an acceptably neutral term in academic discourse, but it shunts personal conviction to one side in a way that the blunter term 'resurrection' does not. And the minute you move away from the bluntness of theological tradition to the supposedly neutral ground of modern scholarly dialogue, you have in fact taken a step down the road towards unbelief.

Another serious problem is that in such an atmosphere, orthodoxy can all too easily appear as a defensive reaction which has nothing but negative things to say, and so it can become very unattractive, even to those who might otherwise be disposed to accept it. The feeling that an orthodox theologian is usually a determined heresy-hunter, totally lacking in anything like a sense of humour and completely unable to see anybody else's point of view, is unfortunately too widespread for us to be able to ignore it. Such people do exist, alas, and they may do more harm to the cause of Christ than those who openly attack it. There is nothing quite so off-putting as the inquisitor who burns people at the stake out of love for them, because he would rather see their bodies burn in this world than their souls burn in the next!

I do not want to dwell on perversions of this kind, but I think we have to recognise that they do exist and that they have given the cause of orthodox theology a bad name. The answer is not to turn away from orthodoxy as if it is a hopeless cause best left to die its long overdue death, but to do what we can to use it to rescue theology for the church in the right way. An important key to this is good communication, and often the people best equipped to do it are the preachers and teachers in our churches. One of the main tasks of the preacher, and one of the main reasons why a preacher should have the best theological training available, is that they are supposed to be able to unpack abstract theology in a way which will mean something to the person sitting in the pew. That this classical understanding of the preacher's role now sounds strange to many people is a sign of just how far we have departed from the traditional Reformed understanding of the professional ministry. I spent twelve years of my life training men and women for the Church of England, and I have to say that it was a constant uphill battle – not so much against the prejudices of the students as against the unwillingness of the powers-that-be to take the notion of a professional preaching and teaching ministry seriously. It often seemed that, as far as they were concerned, a guitar, an annual reservation at Spring Harvest and a smattering of current psycho-sociological jargon was all the well-equipped pastor would ever need! Certainly that is all that some of them had, and one can only wonder at the sort of ministry which must result from that.

I am saying this because I believe that the best way to rescue theology from the theologians is to preach it in a clear and compelling manner. Karl Barth (1886-1968) once said that if theology could not be preached, then it was not theology at all. That is profoundly true, and ought to serve as the touchstone by which we measure whether any particular doctrine or theological system can meet the expectations placed upon it. Perhaps before I develop this theme further, a word about the nature of preaching is in order. Effective preaching has three co-equal elements.

The first of these is good exegesis, the right interpretation of the Biblical text. Any form of address which is not the exposition of a Biblical text is not really preaching at all. I know that styles differ and that it is possible to preach thematically, as well as verse-by-verse through a particular book. But any sermon which does not open up to us a portion of God's Word has no right to the name, however true or uplifting it may be in other ways. As a nineteenth-century wit put it, congregations come to hear the ministry of the Word, not the words of the minister, and we must be very careful to insist on that high standard as much as we can.

Secondly, good preaching is rooted and grounded in Christian doctrine. This is the aspect which I am giving special emphasis to in this lecture, but it must not be divorced from its context. Christian doctrine is the systematic exposition of Scripture, and its importance for preaching is that it provides the framework within which the particular passage and sermon being preached must be placed. It is not possible to deliver a complete guide to theology every time one stands up in the pulpit, but the true minister of the Word will always have their theological framework in the background to challenge the reading of the text in preparation for the message. What does this passage tell us about God? About who he is, what he is like and what he does? What does it tell us about humanity and its need of God? And what does it tell us about the way in which God has met this need? These are the fundamental points of theology, and they make a nice list of questions for the preacher to reflect on during preparation.

We do not often realise it, but the real effect of any sermon will lie in the degree to which it is theologically grounded, and theologically coherent. It is because so few preachers today have any real notion of these things that so much preaching is ineffective, even if it manages to be entertaining, erudite and encouraging. These three *es* are all very well, but it is the fourth *e* – effectiveness – which counts in the end, and that can only be measured by the substance of the message, in other words, by its theology.

Now I do not for a minute wish to suggest that, after getting a good theological education, a preacher has a licence to blind the congregation with erudition. This is the common failing of young theological college graduates, who can usually be detected a mile off. I have a personal rule about this – if a preacher refers to 'the meaning of the Greek' during the sermon, there is trouble ahead. Quite apart from the fact that it will probably be inaccurate, this sort of thing is not the mark of superior intelligence but of inferior digestion. I do not mean that the preacher should not study Greek, read commentaries and absorb as much of the background information as possible for the exposition. Of course any preacher should. The trick, however, is so to absorb this material that it becomes second nature, that it gets transposed in heart and mind

into something which is genuinely believed, and can therefore be expressed with conviction in the preacher's own words. The message, in other words, should come from the heart as well as from the mind, and the heart does not speak Greek.

What is true of a foreign language is of course equally true of registers of English which do not communicate. It is always a humbling experience to read a computer manual, even the kind expressly written for 'dummies', and to discover that one does not understand a word of it, even though it is in 'English'. Preachers have to remember that for most people, theological text books read in much the same way as a computer manual, and adapt them accordingly. It would of course be nice if everyone knew what an infralapsarian antediluvian postmillenarian apocalyptic Arminian is, since you never know when you might meet one, but surely there is a simpler way of explaining the concept?

Theologians fear simplicity because they think that it might be too simplistic, or detract from the majesty and the mystery of their high calling, but this is nonsense. The profoundest theologian of the NT is also the simplest – the Apostle John. Just listen to what he says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... In him was life, and the life was the light of men ... The Word became flesh and we beheld his glory ...'. A three-year old child can follow this without difficulty, but at the same time the most ancient of philosophers cannot plumb its depths. To put it another way, everyone is fed by these words, and not even the biggest appetite goes away hungry.

An incomprehensible theologian is a contradiction in terms, because his theology is unpreachable – nobody will understand it. I have to read more than my fair share of it, and if ever I get a chance – in a book review, for example – I always condemn it unreservedly, even if I happen to agree with what the author is trying to say. Indeed, perhaps I condemn it more severely in such cases, because there can be nothing more distressing than to find that the words of eternal life are being hidden behind a veil of obfuscation so thick that no-one can gain access to them. I am not suggesting that the answer is to simplify everything to the point of caricaturing the truth. What I want to see is clarity, comprehension and communication. Bear these in mind, and the good preacher will not go far astray.

Finally, the third element in a good sermon is application. If you have good exegesis and excellent theology but cannot apply it to the needs and concerns of your hearers, then you are not only wasting your time, you are confirming your congregation's worst fears – that theology and everything to do with it is basically irrelevant to everyday life. I believe that this has been a major problem in Britain over the past generation. If you want to know why so many Evangelicals have gone

charismatic, you really do not have to look any further than the so-called Neo-Puritan movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The greatest representatives of this school – Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, for example, or Dr Jim Packer – never had any trouble in gaining and keeping an audience. But their myriad disciples killed it with lifeless imitations. Often the only thing such people's sermons have in common with those of Dr Lloyd-Jones is their extraordinary length, and this is not what people want. Unable to find spiritual satisfaction in long-winded messages, they went for easier options – the quick-fix blessing and a licence to behave absurdly in public without attracting any laughter or negative comments.

An ability to communicate is essential to any good preacher, and it is the ultimate test of any theology. Is this, or is this not changing my life? If the answer is no, then forget it – it is not the real thing. It will be apparent from this, I hope, that the last thing I have in mind is pandering to the wishes of the congregation. No preacher is there merely to tickle the ears of his people or to satisfy them with the platitudes and prejudices which they already believe. True preaching must be a challenge – not a destructive, iconoclastic harangue which does nothing but reinforce the preacher's sense of spiritual superiority in their own eyes, and give the people the unspoken conviction that he or she is really a hypocrite, but a penetrating and positive analysis of the human heart which is primarily designed to heal and restore, not to uproot and condemn. This can only be achieved if the preacher is conscious that in the first instance preaching is always preaching to oneself, because the preacher needs to hear the word of grace every bit as much as those who come to listen do. Being convicted by their own words is the ultimate test both of truth and of communicability, for what will come across more than anything else is the sense that here we are dealing with a person of a humble and a contrite heart.

This is a tall order, but ultimately the only way to rescue theology, whether it is from the theologians or from anyone else, is to live it out in a convincing way. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and while none of us is perfect, each of us has the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts by faith, and therefore the potential for turning abstract theory into a living and vibrant reality.

Well, I have given you quite a bit to chew over and no doubt also more than a little to react to. My brief was to rescue theology from the theologians, or at least to point out how this might be achieved. Whether I have succeeded in offering a way forward, only time and experience will tell. May God bless you as you seek to serve him more deeply in your life, and as you strive to grow more fully into the image of him who alone is the way, the truth and the life.

The Old Testament: Text and Context

Victor H. Matthews and James C. Moyer
 Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson 1997,
 ix + 308 pp., hb., £19.99/\$29.95.

This is an introductory textbook to the literature, history and social world of the OT. It presents material in the context of the OT as a whole and of the Ancient Near East. The work is illustrated by maps, charts and photographs.

The first chapter introduces the student at a basic level to archaeology and the Bible, geography and climate of the Ancient Near East, and oral tradition and the development of the canon. The main body of the book is divided into four historical periods: premonarchic, monarchic, Persian and Hellenistic. Within this framework the order of the canon is followed except for the prophets. An introduction to Wisdom Literature and the Psalms is included, somewhat arbitrarily, in the section on the monarchic period. Four themes are singled out for more detailed treatment: covenant, universalism, wisdom and remnant. A brief explanation of each theme is given in the introduction and this is expanded in the appropriate contexts throughout the rest of the book.

Throughout the textbook there are references to ancient extra-biblical material and some comparisons with more recent events. For example, the book of Judges is compared to frontier life in America in the late nineteenth century, and the judges likened to 'Billy the Kid', 'Jessie James' and 'Wild Bill Hickok'. America is not the only source for such comparisons since Jael, who murdered General Sisera, is put in the same company as 'Lizzie Borden' and 'Mata Hari'.

Special features of the book include 'insets', shaded areas of text which draw attention to various topics that the authors want to underline. These range from an excursus on the authorship of the Pentateuch to an outline of ancient Israelite grief rituals. Technical terms associated with biblical studies are set in bold print throughout. Usually they are defined where they occur, and a complete list is also given at the end of the book. A list of study questions concludes each chapter. The student will find these questions helpful in identifying some of the main issues raised in biblical studies but comprehensive answers will not always be found in the textbook itself.

Views on issues such as authorship and dating of the literature tend to reflect modern scholarship. The issues are not discussed in detail and often only one view is expressed. Thus Daniel is 'most likely a Hellenistic work' (p. 256). There is very little bibliographical material. Students are referred to the main dictionaries, encyclopaedias, atlases and one-volume commentaries, but there is no guidance on further reading on specific issues.

In conclusion, this is a basic textbook introducing OT studies. It will assist newcomers to gain an overview of the subject and will introduce them to some of the technical terms employed.

James McKeown
 Belfast Bible College

Abraham in the Negev: A Source-Critical Investigation of Genesis 20:1 – 22: 19

T. Desmond Alexander
Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1997,
172 pp., £14.99

The study of the Pentateuch has for the last two centuries been dominated by historical-critical concerns: when was it written, by whom and what sources were used are the typical questions that scholars ask and undergraduates are expected to answer in essays and exams.

Very often the dominant documentary theory has been presented as the only scholarly option, even though in recent study it has come under sustained critique from a variety of scholarly perspectives. Because of the amount of material in Genesis it is very hard for the newcomer to the debate to be able to assess the validity of the arguments presented. However, by focusing on three chapters of Genesis Alexander is able to be both comprehensible and thorough: he treats Genesis 20 – 22 as a test case for the validity of the whole documentary theory.

Chapter 1 gives a review of the history of pentateuchal criticism, showing how the consensus view that the Pentateuch is made up of four major sources originated. Chapter 2 deals with Genesis 20 (the abduction of Sarah) and its two parallel stories in chapters 12 and 26. This enables Alexander to explore the two main arguments for source division, doublets, variant accounts of the same event and divine names. The J source is characterized by calling God, Yahweh (the LORD), whereas the E and P sources prefer to call God Elohim (God). Alexander shows that Genesis 12, 20 and 26 are not doublets but distinct traditions

about three different episodes. This means they could all come from the same source.

Chapter 3 looks at another alleged pair of doublets, Genesis 16 and 21, the flight of Hagar from Sarah. Again close inspection shows that these are very different stories and the supposed differences in vocabulary and divine names do not indicate diverse authorship.

Chapter 4 deals with the Abimelech treaty (Gen. 21:22-34), and chapter 5 with the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22). In the latter Alexander argues for the unity of the chapter instead of splitting it between two sources, and he ascribes it all to J.

In chapter 6 he surveys the distribution of divine names in Genesis, and argues on the basis of a retranslation of Exodus 6:3 that the use of Yahweh in Genesis does at least in some cases go back to the time of the patriarchs and is not merely a reflection of the editor's standpoint. Usually it is held that Exodus 6:3 shows that the Israelites first learned the name Yahweh in the time of Moses.

In chapters 7 – 8 Alexander shows how the present narrative about Abraham is coherent and progressive, so that it is unnecessary to posit multiple authors. It can all be the work of one writer. This leads him to conclude with the hope that in the new millennium scholars will concentrate more on understanding the final form of Genesis than on speculating how it may have been written.

All in all this is a most useful volume both for scholars and students, pointing to a sensible escape from the maze of bewildering theorizing that has kept pentateuchal studies from progressing in the way it could, if more time had been spent on the

final form of the text and its theological message. Most of the time I found myself concurring with his eminently sensible conclusions, but on the question of Exodus 6:3 and the knowledge of the name of Yahweh in patriarchal times, I still feel the argument favours the view that the name was not known before Moses. R.W.L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament* is worth consulting on this point, and I should have liked Alexander to have interacted with it.

Gordon Wenham

Cheltenham and Gloucester
College

Joshua, TOTC

Richard S. Hess

Leicester: IVP, 1996,
320 pp., pb., £9.99.

Richard Hess has written an excellent commentary that draws upon his expertise in the languages, archaeology and cultures of the ancient Near East. He argues that many of the details of the book 'cannot otherwise be explained than, or can best be explained, by tracing their origin to the second millennium BC' (26): the borders of Canaan, the reconnaissance by the spies, the list of nations to be driven out (3:10), the walls falling at Jericho, the robe from Shinar and the wedge of gold (7:24), the names of defeated kings (chs. 10 and 11), etc. But even then he does not try 'to "prove" the historicity of any part of Joshua' (31).

Students of Joshua will save valuable time by starting with Hess's introduction. The section entitled 'Composition' provides a good if brief overview of research since Noth's *Überlieferungsgeschichte Studien*. The discussion of theological themes is also helpful,

and provides the background for later discussion of these themes within the commentary. At the end of each major section a paragraph or two discusses how the material may be relevant to Christians. This will prove helpful to pastors and others looking for ways to preach and apply the message of Joshua. Seven mini-essays entitled 'Additional Notes' scattered through the commentary provide additional information, usually on archaeological topics.

Hess also seeks to apply literary approaches to the study of Joshua. He demonstrates that instructions are often given in summary form and then developed in greater detail as they are repeated to various people or implemented, and simultaneous actions are sometimes presented in sequential form (98). This helps to make sense of what appear to be multiple crossings of the Jordan in chapters 3 - 4. However, Hess does not note this technique in chapter 6, with its multiple occurrences of the commands to go around Jericho. I had also hoped to see more discussion of plot development: how do the major building blocks of the book work together to tell the whole story?

Very occasionally, omission of some relevant data leads to a questionable conclusion. For example, Hess interprets the curse on Jericho in 6:26 to mean that Jericho should remain uninhabited (135), but fails to mention that it was allocated to Benjamin in 18:21, or that it was later inhabited (2 Sam. 10:5). The curse only took effect in 1 Kings 16:34 when the gates and the foundations were re-laid, which implies that the issue was rebuilding the city as a fortification.

In summary, this is an excellent resource for students and others.

showing how the events of the book fit well into a second millennium context.

Terrance A. Clarke

Spurgeon's College, London

Ezekiel

Ronald E. Clements,

Westminster John Knox Press, 1996,

x + 211 pp.

After the basic introduction to the prophet, his background and his book, this commentary divides the forty-eight chapters of Ezekiel into ten sections varying in length from three to nine chapters. These divisions provide a helpful means of demonstrating the structure of what is acknowledged to be both one of the most fascinating and one of the most complex prophetic books. At the beginning of each section is an overview outlining, and with broad brush strokes explaining, the content and the historical background to those particular chapters. Within the main sections we are presented with the NRSV text in 'bite-sized' chunks, normally 20 to 30 verses long. These chunks are then explored in more detail. In the detailed explanations of the text the main emphasis seems to be on the political and historical implications of what is written. The commentator has a real interest in and a keen insight into the reactions of the exiled community, both to the political situation in which they found themselves and to Ezekiel's reflections on it. However, there is also a genuine attempt to bring out the three central themes of Ezekiel's prophecy which were clearly outlined in the Introduction - that is 'God's holiness, God's wrath against all human sin ... and God's unimaginable glory and power to shape and guide human

destiny'. Within all of this Ezekiel's complex character is analysed, although in a way which provides the reader more with a psychological case-study than an introduction to a real individual with an on-going relevant message.

The Westminster Bible Companion Series, to which this volume belongs, is aimed at the laity and 'seeks both to explain the biblical book in its historical context and explore its significance for faithful living today'. In the first of these aims it succeeds admirably. The style is clear and easy to read. There is perhaps a level of complexity and a demand for pre-understanding of questions relating to both literary and historical issues which may make it less easy for the lay person to use. However there is no doubt that first-year theology students would benefit from the overview of the historical and political circumstances surrounding Ezekiel's life and message which is provided here. In the second aim, Clements is somewhat less successful. There seems to be very little exploration of the 'So what?' type of questions which would allow Bible Study groups to work through the implications of the message of Ezekiel for their own lives. In other words, as a basic low-level academic commentary on Ezekiel, this volume is worth investigating. If one were looking to recommend a tool for Bible Study or House Group leaders, it would probably be better to look elsewhere.

Mary J Evans

London Bible College

Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey

Craig L. Blomberg
Leicester/Nashville: Apollos/Broadman and
Holman, 1997,
viii + 440 pp., hb., £16.99

Professor Blomberg has put students and teachers in his debt with this textbook which provides a fine resource for an introductory course on the gospels. Having used it in that way this year, feedback from my students on this book has been uniformly positive. What makes it good?

First, it covers the ground. There are five major parts: historical background for studying the gospels (political, religious and socio-economic); critical methods for studying the gospels (source, form, redaction and 'literary' criticism); introduction to the four gospels (taking each in turn, starting with Mark, which Blomberg judges to have been first); a survey of the life of Christ (working roughly chronologically and synthesising the gospels as he goes); and historical and theological synthesis (the trustworthiness of the gospels, summarising his earlier book, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, Leicester, IVP, 1987, and the 'theology of Jesus', considering what Jesus himself believed). Each section is well-proportioned and Blomberg has chosen the topics to include (and exclude!) judiciously.

Second, Blomberg is positive about the gospels. He tackles the arguments of the sceptics and shows that the gospels claim to present events that took place, and that there are good arguments for believing that they have succeeded. Of course, each writer had his own focus and point of view - Blomberg acknowledges and identifies such 'redactional' emphases - but he assumes that

the evangelists thought they were writing about *Jesus*. This is refreshing when many scholars propose that the gospels say more about the authors and their churches than about Jesus.

Thirdly, Blomberg writes clearly and accessibly. This material has clearly been taught, and taught by a man who is a good teacher. For example, he describes the two parts of redaction criticism as 'reading horizontally' (comparing the way a story or saying is reported across the different gospels) and 'reading vertically' (looking through a whole gospel to see the other uses of a key phrase or word, to find the author's emphases - pp. 93-95). The helpful diagrams which occur regularly are a further aid to grasping the content.

Fourthly, it is easy to find your way around. As well as the section and chapter divisions, there are good indexes of modern authors, subjects and Scripture references. It is also a delight to find a publisher who puts footnotes where they belong - on the page, rather than hidden away at the back!

Fifthly, Blomberg has provided excellent bibliographies at the end of each chapter, to lead the student into the wider field. More than that, he has divided them up into introductory, intermediate and advanced books.

Finally, there are useful 'questions for review' at the end of each chapter, which give readers the chance to check that they have understood the key ideas in the chapter. Some of these are factual and some invite further reflection. I liked: 'Given the emphases and probable circumstances of writing of Matthew's Gospel, in what settings in contemporary Christian living might it be even more acutely relevant than the other gospels?' (p. 139).

How might this book be improved? In places Blomberg skates over vast areas rather quickly, particularly in describing critical methods. There is little chance to interact with the original texts from the cultural and religious environment of the NT authors – such as key passages from Josephus, Philo or the Dead Sea Scrolls. In an ideal world such a book might also contain pictures to show the reader (e.g.) what the wilderness looked like. However these are small quibbles for a book that describes itself as 'An Introduction and Survey'.

This is a fine book, which deserves a wide readership. It provides students and teachers with a good textbook, and it would help an evangelical student studying in an unsympathetic college or university by filling in the gaps left by more sceptical teaching.

Steve Walton

St John's College, Nottingham

Goulder and the Gospels: An Examination of A New Paradigm (JSNT Supplement Series 133)

Mark S. Goodacre

Sheffield: Academic Press, 1996,
413 pp., hb., £55/\$85

It is a rare ability that allows one scholar to sum up the work of another. Yet, Mark Goodacre can do this with Michael Goulder's work and combine in his critique both appreciation of it, and an assessment of its weaknesses. Post-graduate students would do well to get hold of this book and begin to learn of Goodacre. This is a book that should be on all Gospel Studies reading lists. Why?

The first reason is that Professor Michael Goulder is a towering figure in NT scholarship, and his work is therefore to be understood and interacted with even when

disputed. The second is that Goulder's theories have never been appropriately assessed. Does Goulder really have a case for dispensing with the existence of 'Q'? How do we evaluate Goulder's Lectionary approach to Gospel studies? I am not sure I know of a significant article where someone has interacted with Goulder, except on the premise that Goulder is wrong, and he or she is right. Goodacre's dispassionate approach is refreshing. This made all the more so by his analysis of the detail of Goulder's work and thus inevitably a close study of the biblical text. Such pains-taking scholarship is regarded as *passé* as we approach the end of the decade – the broad-brush approach being the 'in thing'. Perhaps a plea for the start of the new millennium would be for more detailed analysis of the text. For these reasons this book is a rare treat.

However, I have one note of caution. Goodacre is guilty of not interacting with Goulder's bigger picture. His recent resuscitation of Baur's hypothesis is hardly interacted with. This is the hard part of dealing with Michael Goulder, his work is diverse and no one book will do justice to his work, but I, for one, am grateful that Goodacre has tried. Make sure your librarian has this book on order now!

Kevin Ellis

The Open Theological College

Romans: The Righteousness of God

Adolf Schlatter. Translated by Siegfried S. Schatzmann
Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995,
xxiv + 287 pp., £19.99/\$29.95.

Long the victim of unjustified neglect, particularly in English-speaking circles, the brilliant Swiss scholar Adolf Schlatter has begun to receive his due in the 1990s. Schlatter scholar Werner Neuer

has published a popular (ET 1995) and a critical (1996) biography; Andreas Köstenberger has translated Schlatter's two-volume NT theology; doctoral theses on Schlatter have been undertaken at Princeton, Oxford and Marburg. The appearance of an English version of Schlatter's Romans commentary marks a new stage in the Schlatter renaissance, as it is the first of Schlatter's nine critical commentaries to be translated.

A meaty forward by Peter Stuhlmacher furnishes a valuable précis of Schlatter's distinctive contribution to understanding Romans and Pauline theology. First, Schlatter's reading of Romans is ecumenical rather than narrowly confessional; Paul's message as Schlatter articulates it challenges both liberal and conservative dogmatists. Secondly, the centre of Romans, indeed of Paul's theology generally, is the righteousness of God (cf. Rom. 1:17; 3:5, 21, 25, 26; 10:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). This stands in contrast to current understanding of Paul à la Wrede, Schweitzer, and E.P. Sanders which sees God's righteousness and justification by faith as secondary Pauline concerns. Thirdly, the classic Lutheran law-gospel dichotomy, which so distances gospel from Torah that obeying God's commands is made to seem almost sinful in itself, is wrongheaded: 'Paul did in fact argue that the works of the law were the works of a sinner, but he did not say that they were sin' (p. 88). Fourthly, Romans' message demands that Christians move beyond the conception of 'God's righteousness' meaning no more than mercy and remission of sin, as grand as those truths may be; the gospel that reveals God's righteousness gives rise not only to saving faith but also to transformed and transforming Christ-likeness in those who embrace it. The goal of

Christ's work through the gospel is not merely faith but ultimately God-generated love! Until Christians embrace Paul's gospel call to a justifying cross that not only grants 'rest and comfort' but also galvanises into love and action', they have missed the point of Romans grandest soteriological theme (cf. pp. 22f.). Schlatter pressed this point not only in his Romans commentary but also in separate treatises on Luther and Lutheran scholasticism, sparking a spirited debate of continuing importance.

This commentary is not easy reading. Any subsequent edition could benefit from careful editing by someone well versed in German. Schatzmann's translation is not defective, but it could sometimes be sharpened and refined. Another editorial improvement might be restoration of Schlatter's original non-inclusive language. At points one fears anachronistic application of current English-language inclusivist convention.

Yet the effort to follow Schlatter's exposition will be amply rewarded. To read a section of Romans carefully, preferably in Greek, and then to engage Schlatter is to become party to high-level deliberations touching first-century Jewish thought, Pauline theology, early Christian history, and Greek exegesis with implications for dogmatics, ethics, and practical theology never far from the fore. The commentary is poorly suited for simplistic resolution of long-standing cruxes (e.g. Rom. 7) but rather demands careful and sustained interaction. It often drives the reader back into the OT or other portions of Scripture which Schlatter sees as explanatory of Paul's line of thought. In these respects it is much like Romans itself.

Robert W. Yarbrough

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School,
Deerfield.

Romans: Exposition of Chapter 10: Saving Faith

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1997,
400 pp., hb., £16.95.

The majority of readers of *Themelios* will still be familiar with the significant ministry of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Minister of Westminster Chapel. He is a man of stature when considering many different facets of the development of English evangelicalism in the post-war years. This book represents sermons preached by the Doctor at the Chapel between May 1963 and May 1964. While the present reviewer has much respect for Lloyd-Jones' legacy, I am not sure what to make of this exposition of Saving Faith. On the one hand, it is a must for those studying evangelicalism within a post-war context and, yet on the other, it is not an example of good Biblical scholarship. However, and I am aware of the feathers already ruffled, this was not what the Doctor was primarily about. He, and evangelicals of his ilk, were primarily concerned with communicating the *evangelion* rather than with the minutiae of textual analysis. In short, Lloyd-Jones' approach to Romans 10 would sit uncomfortably as a pattern of exegesis as we approach the Third Millennium. Why? Evangelical Christians are by and large asking different questions to that of Lloyd-Jones. It is doubtful whether an evangelical interpreter could exegete Romans 10 without asking some very serious questions about the place of Israel within salvation history. This was not on the Doctor's agenda, nor should we expect it to have been. It was barely an issue.

Having said this the book shows how an evangelist can relate ancient Scripture to the modern (or

post-modern) world. The Doctor's understanding of the world around him will impress readers of this commentary. Thus it (the book) will appear on the shelves of those interested in evangelical history, even in Gospel and Culture, although it will not appear on those who primarily are NT scholars

Kevin Ellis

The Open Theological College

Paul and the Parousia: An Exegetical and Theological Investigation

Joseph Plevnick
Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997,
xli + 351 pp.

The return of Jesus is very much on the agenda of contemporary theology, and rightly so since it was highly significant for Paul's perspective on the Christian life. We have good reason, therefore, to be grateful to Plevnick for producing this volume that has its origins in the author's 1971 doctoral dissertation, but has been thoroughly revised and reworked.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one, which forms the bulk of the book, is exegetical in character, while the shorter second part develops the theological aspects of the subject. Plevnik first examines Paul's concept of the *parousia*, tracing it deep in the literature of Jewish apocalyptic, and challenging the view of A. Deissmann and E. Peterson that it draws on the visits of Hellenistic rulers. A full discussion of the Day of the Lord in the OT and Jewish apocalyptic writings is followed by brief treatments of 'apocalypse' and 'epiphany'. Since Plevnik assumes a limited authentic Pauline corpus, readers find only fleeting references to this latter term.

His detailed discussion in chapter two of the imagery associated with Jesus' return is helpful. Plevnik identifies numerous parallel passages in both the canonical and non-canonical Jewish writings that illuminate the language found in 1 Thessalonians, bringing out its theological significance.

The thorough exegetical chapters provide helpful analyses of 1 Thessalonians 4 and 5, 1 Corinthians 15, and Philippians 3:20-21. Throughout these chapters, Plevnik interacts frequently with contemporary scholarship. He also maintains a helpful emphasis on the pastoral impact of these passages on the communities that received them.

Part two draws on more of the Pauline material, examining the relationship between the Parousia and themes such as hope, judgement and the church. These theological essays are generally more accessible than the first part of the book, and many readers may wish to begin here in order to get their bearings before launching into the close exegesis of the earlier chapters. There is much valuable material to be found here.

Plevnik presents Paul as one who anticipated the return of Jesus in his own lifetime. While Paul does indeed speak of the Parousia with great urgency, it is not at all clear that Paul was as convinced of Jesus' imminent return as is often assumed, as Ben Witherington has argued. It is unfortunate that Paul's rejection of date setting is so easily played down in this regard. In a study that seeks to do justice to the nuance in Paul's thought, it is a pity that Paul is not credited with a little more caution.

Greek and Hebrew scripts are used throughout the book. These are normally transliterated and translated on their first appearance, but not thereafter.

This pattern is not always followed consistently, however, which may prove frustrating to readers without Greek and Hebrew. (See, for example, the Hebrew in note 22 on p. 8, and the Greek on p. 13 which is transliterated but not translated.) There are a number of typographical errors, particularly in the biblical languages. It is particularly unfortunate that the Greek form of the key theological term in the book's title is spelled incorrectly on the very first page of text!

This is a demanding text which the beginning student will probably find heavy going. However, it is also a text which emphasises the theological and pastoral importance of this theological theme, while providing an antidote for the reader against the excesses of millennial expectations as we approach the year 2000. It is to be welcomed as an important contribution to the discussion.

Alistair I. Wilson

Highland Theological Institute,
Elgin

**The Road From Damascus.
The Impact of Paul's Conversion on
His Life, Thought, and Ministry**

Richard N. Longenecker, ed.
Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1997,
xv + 253 pp., \$25.00.

This represents the second volume in the new 'McMaster New Testament Studies' series growing out of a colloquium at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario. Dr Longenecker also edited and contributed to the series' first volume, *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1996). For this volume of eleven essays on Paul's conversion, the editor has recruited top-flight Pauline scholars to address aspects of the topic in which they

are proven experts. The volume brings the best work of the academy to the level of intelligent lay-people, theological students, and working ministers.

Bruce Corley traces the history of interpretation concluding that most interpreters of Paul have seen the Damascus road experience as a true 'conversion' despite major modern objections.

Richard Longenecker considers how Paul's conversion affected his view of Jesus. Paul came to understand that Jesus was at the centre of God's salvific purposes for both the creation and humanity. The gospel is theocentric, and Jesus is Israel's Messiah, the Son of God, and the Lord of all - who acted as God's agent. Paul presents his conversion as a paradigm for subsequent Christians in terms of his radical reorientation of thought about Jesus and the life lived 'in Christ'.

Howard Marshall considers how Paul's conversion impacted his eschatology. Paul affirmed that with Christ's first coming the new age had begun, but God will consummate the arrival of this new creation at the second coming or *parousia* of Jesus. Marshall argues that Paul's conversion accounts for the development of Paul's essential eschatological convictions, though his argument for this connection is not well-developed.

Adopting the starting point of Sanders' 'covenantal nomism,' Terence Donaldson sees the origin of Paul's gentile mission in his conversion: once Paul came to see Christ replacing the Torah as the criterion for membership in the people of God, Paul saw the need for Gentiles to become full and equal members of Abraham's family.

On the topic of justification James Dunn argues, as we have come now to expect, that Paul's

experience on the Damascus road was more a rediscovery of his ancestral roots than a radical conversion from a legalistic Judaism to a grace-filled Christianity.

Seyoon Kim finds most plausible the thesis that Paul's metaphor of reconciliation also resulted from his theological reflections on his Damascus road experience, while supplementing those reflections with further exegesis from the Scriptures.

The editor's son, Bruce Longenecker surveys covenantal categories of thought in Paul, finding that Jesus Christ permeates every aspect. If the covenant between God and Israel dominated Paul's pre-conversion life, the focus has shifted after Damascus to what God has done in Christ.

Stephen Westerholm surveys the shift in Paul's perspective on the law of Moses after his epiphany of God's Son, and in eight theses summarizes Paul's Christian view of the law. One needs to read and evaluate Westerholm as one decides whether or not to jump on the 'new perspective of Paul' bandwagon. His essay presents a different perspective from that of Dunn (in this volume) and E.P. Sanders.

Growing out of his magisterial work on the Spirit in Paul (*God's Empowering Presence*), Gordon Fee surmises that Paul's 'received the Spirit' language is conversion terminology. For Fee only Paul's own reception of the Spirit at his conversion could account for the frequent and significant place of the Spirit in his theology.

In a fair and balanced way Judith Gundry-Volf sketches the tension in Paul's writing on women and gender and how this relates to the views of his non-Christian contemporaries. Perhaps surprisingly, she shows how some of Paul's Jewish contemporaries exhibited

similar tensions in their discussions of women and gender. She observes that Paul shares with these contemporaries both the more patriarchal and the more egalitarian features of his thought. Paul does not appear to be a maverick on this score. What difference, then, did his Christian experience make? Gundry-Volf finds Paul's ideal of one humanity without gender discrimination to be grounded in the reality of Christians' incorporation into Christ by faith – without 'a rejection of the body that bears the marks of gender difference' (p. 210). With more nuancing than is found in many discussions, Gundry-Volf rejects attempts to portray Paul as experiencing a radical transformation from patriarchy to egalitarianism, while recognizing at the same time that he can 'burst out of a patriarchal framework' (p. 210).

In the final essay Walter Hansen traces the impact of Paul's conversion on his ethics as found in Galatians. Paul's ethic of freedom declared the content of Christ's love displayed on the cross. The moral power for the ethic of freedom to love was provided by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Though the organizing topic of the essays is 'conversion,' the collection of essays, crafted by such an impressive line-up of scholars, will introduce the reader – whether student or ministry practitioner – to the current state of affairs on many key Pauline issues. For a 'what's important about Paul and what are they saying about it?' kind of short introduction, this is a fine collection. Its perspective is thoroughly evangelical. While its scope is limited, what it does, it does very well.

William W. Klein,
Denver Seminary, Denver

Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach (Revised Edition)

W. Randolph Tate
Hendrickson, 1997,
Peabody, Massachusetts, xxiv + 276 pp., hb.

This volume revises and updates Tate's 1991 'comprehensive exploration of the interpretative process'. After a brief introduction, he launches into the task of describing the breadth of hermeneutical activity from the three perspectives of author-centred, text-centred and reader-centred approaches before suggesting how these can profitably be integrated.

The three chapters of the first section, 'The World Behind the Text', review historical, linguistic and ideological influences. 'The World Within the Text', after considering literary forms, devotes a chapter each to Old and New Testaments, surveying their various genres and how they communicate as literature. The third section, 'The World in Front of the Text', first looks at 'what happens when we read', then, in a considerably lengthened chapter, assesses reader-response theories and the role of pre-understanding. Tate goes on to discuss how methodology affects the interpretative process, stressing that no approach is neutral or objective, and in a new chapter demonstrates ways in which all three perspectives can be applied in an integrated fashion to Mark's Gospel. His short conclusions highlight the perpetually tentative nature of the hermeneutical endeavour.

Tate certainly ranges widely across this complex field, as shown by the span of the 'Key Terms and Concepts' listed in the 'Review and Study' section that concludes each chapter. These are also usefully highlighted in the main text – though the omission of a subject

index undermines the book's otherwise high potential as a reference tool.

Such a broad review inevitably allows only limited consideration of all it covers. Even the lengthy text-centred section skates superficially across some areas. (Thus he considers parables only in terms of Jülicher's categories, omitting their potential to operate on more than one level, or through defamiliarisation.) One frequently wants to argue that topics are more complex – or more controversial – than Tate's smooth style admits. Often only the Study Questions that end each chapter hint at the more provocative issues at stake. The concluding chapters provide some caveats, but many could have been introduced earlier. (That authors/redactors tended to occupy privileged social status is surely a matter for 'the world behind the text', not just a concern of feminist approaches.) Greater attention to the historical background would have shed more light on the interplay between various schools of thought.

This work is a useful and comprehensive general introduction, but as with any primer it needs thorough glossing, whether through teaching that unfolds greater depths or further reading.

Evangelicals will want to consider two aspects more thoroughly. The first is the extent to which our horizons of understanding are open to revision or are constrained by our pre-suppositions. (In what ways might the theological stance of the RTSF and IFES and its interpretation be non-negotiable? How do we engage in productive dialogue, without falling into relativism?) Secondly, and more importantly, is the question of how Christian Biblical Hermeneutics relates to secular literary criticism. If we take inspiration seriously there is surely more at stake when

Christians and, for example, atheists interpret a Biblical text than merely applying two different worldviews. This is not analogous to, say, Republicans and Democrats reading with differing political perspectives. Tate briefly mentions faith as part of the interpreter's armoury, but the hermeneutical debate stands in need of a thorough and unashamed consideration of what doctrines of inspiration and revelation mean, in the process of writing, in the text itself, and in the act of reading and so in interpretation. Brueggemann and Goldingay have touched on this, but it needs to be put firmly on the agenda of hermeneutical studies. Who will demonstrate how the Holy Spirit, 'who will guide you into all truth', really makes a difference?

Sarah Rowland Jones

St John's College, Nottingham

Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation (Six Volumes in One)

Moises Silva (ed)

Leicester: Apollos, 1997,

688 pp., hb., £24.99

I can think of only one reason not to buy this book: you may already own it as a series of six smaller paperbacks put out by Zondervan in the US and IVP/Apollos in the UK between 1987 and 1994. For the price of about two of them you can now own six-in-one, providing an excellent survey of the issues involved in the problems of moving from the biblical text to contemporary understanding.

The book/series is thoroughly committed to an evangelical viewpoint, which makes for a robust treatment of some major current intellectual trends (e.g. relativism) and one would have to say that the degree of sympathy with non-evangelical perspectives

varies. But given that evangelicalism has traditionally understood itself as anchored in 'The Book', it seems likely that debates over how to interpret that book will remain near the top of the list of contentious issues for some time to come. Silva *et al* will lead the unwary through some of these interpretive minefields with grace and precision, eyes fixed firmly on the faithful application of the ancient text to the world of today.

Silva's opening 'Has the Church Misread the Bible' is a masterpiece in concise introduction to interpretive complexity, opening the collection with a panoramic survey of methods, and then engaging thoughtfully with the particular problems of how to read the biblical text through the lens of 2000 years of church history and doctrinal sophistication. His recommendation of the study of the history of interpretation remains timely, although perhaps one could go further and claim that without that mediating history of interpretation we are literally at a loss as to how to construe the biblical text in our own alien environment. Silva would likely disagree with this, even if it does only underline the usefulness of his own survey of the topic.

Tremper Longman's 'Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation' is a tried and trusted companion to the growth in literary methods. Despite the necessary simplification when structuralism, reader-response theory and deconstruction are all allotted a few pages only, he succeeds admirably in orientating the biblical student in the literary terrain, with a fair analysis of its promises and pitfalls. He is helpful on genre, that much-overplayed hand, with a welcome modesty concerning the 'fluidity' of genre. Todorov gets a footnote here, but if one took Todorov's arguments seriously then the whole notion of

assigning interpretive regulation to genre is shot. This just shows the dangers of an introductory guide, I suppose. Longman scores heavily with some extended examples of engagement with the biblical text, as does V. Philips Long, whose 'The Art of Biblical History' overlaps considerably with Longman's concerns. Long suggests that the Bible's macro-genre has an overarching claim on truth, within which its local genres allow a more elusive relationship between text and history. Long's voice is sane and serene, a welcome antidote to some of the exaggerated claims made concerning historicity in the evangelical camp.

Silva is on more traditional ground with 'God, Language and Scripture' which plays to his great strength: a no-nonsense application of linguistics and its insights to questions of interpreting the Greek and Hebrew text. Vern S. Poythress, on the other hand, is on highly non-traditional ground with his idiosyncratic but fascinating study of 'Science and Hermeneutics' which, despite his title, is an extended engagement with Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigm shifts as applied to biblical interpretation. Apart from his list of further reading he interacts relatively little with other voices in this area (one would particularly like to see his view contrasted with Nancey Murphy's work on Lakatos and scientific reasoning in theology) but he is always suggestive.

Finally, the jewel in the crown, Richard A. Muller's 'The Study of Theology' attempts a disciplined study of the move 'from Biblical Interpretation to Contemporary Formulation'. The interaction of scripture and theology, so long treated as an embarrassing older relative whom evangelicals tried not to invite to the party, is

handled thoughtfully and fairly. For anyone who still thought that one read the Bible first and constructed the theology later then Muller gently runs rings around that position and, suitably avoiding trying to be new and startling, reorients the reader to undertake interpretation as part of the inherently *theological* task of reading as a Christian. This, surely is the way ahead and out of the interpretive confusion which threatens evangelicalism.

Questions remain, of course. First, the whole series fences with the ghost of inerrancy, wakened from its slumbers by some opening remarks of Silva, but never really discussed throughout, thus prompting the response: why bother raising it at all? Long's consideration of historicity does best here.

Secondly, irritatingly, we are given 'six volumes in one' as a 'comprehensive overview', but we are not given the original volume two of the seven-volume series, Royce G. Gruenler's *Meaning and Understanding: The Philosophical Framework for Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), which was every bit as helpful as these six volumes. One is left pondering any editorial significance of this absence, which would reflect unfairly on Gruenler's achievement.

Thirdly, some of the contributions are now over ten years old, and there is no up-dating. Perhaps a brief editorial foreword concerning how the issues addressed have moved on, if at all, would have been a help.

Fourthly, and evermore, studies of interpretation provoke as much as they enlighten, and I enjoyed the provocation. But Kant, for instance, discussing 'the sole evangelical, biblical method of teaching the people' (p. 84) is

not only being quoted from a translated introduction of a reprint to someone else (why?!) but surely did not mean 'evangelical' in the way that this book's implied readers will take it. Oh well. 'Hermeneutics through a glass darkly' it is then, but we should be thankful for even this, and I recommend it unreservedly.

Richard Briggs

University of Nottingham

Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle

Henri Blocher

Leicester: Apollos, 1997,
158 pp., pb., £11.99

This is an important book, but not an easy one. It is important because belief in original sin is widely ignored or derided by the liberal establishment and apparently taken with little seriousness even in some areas of biblical Christianity. How often in ethical argument, for example, have you observed the simple slide from, 'This is how I am', to 'This is how God made me' – as though no structural fault-line ran through the whole of humanity? It is important also because it is thoroughly up-to-date, by a writer who is not only learned in both biblical and theological disciplines but also conversant with the contemporary literary field. Written always with courtesy, it shirks none of the weighty objections to the doctrine, and succeeds in presenting an apologetically-edged restatement, including in part a fresh interpretation of Romans 5.

The book packs a great deal into its pages. The text is too content-rich to read fluently, and although translation and explanation are always provided, at times it assumes a depth of theological culture not always possessed by students and pastors in the UK (cf. the note on p. 85, 'The reader will easily spot here a "neo-Calvinistic"

orientation, with allusions to... Van Til... and Dooyeweerd'; would that more of us could do so!). Yet is supremely worth sticking with, and even wrestling with. In my judgement, it is far the most significant volume in the series 'New Studies in Biblical Theology'.

The first chapter seeks to show that the element of a doctrine of original sin are more plentifully and widely distributed in Scripture than is often claimed – that is, a sinfulness which is universal, natural (whose ambiguity in content Blocher recognises: 'Sinfulness has become our quasi-nature while remaining truly our anti-nature'), inherited and Adamic. The two central substantive chapters deal respectively with the Genesis account and Romans 5. Professor Blocher burkes no challenge, concluding that it does not prove overly difficult to fit Adam, as the first 'theological man' and the progenitor of (*homo sapiens sapiens*), into the schemes of palaeoanthropology. Our author is an undoubted expert in this apologetic territory, as his *In the Beginning. The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (IVP, 1984) demonstrated. Readers tempted to scepticism should first take the measure of this serious and sensitive case.

The chapter on Romans 5 has to be read with a New Testament (preferably Greek) open beside one. Blocher is uncomfortable with both dominant interpretations (broadly Pelagian and Augustinian), rejecting their common assumption that *either* we are condemned for our own sins (and Adam is little more than fountainhead) or we are condemned for Adam's sin (by the imputation of his sin to all the race, which Blocher argues is not explicit in Romans 5). Adam's experience established the sin-death connection, and so

paved the way for death to be inflicted on all subsequent sinners as penalty for *their* sins – because all of us are related to Adam as natural and legal head. This is a suggestive reading of the Pauline text, by which criterion alone it should be assessed.

The final chapter draws out some of the implications of this departure from the traditional federal or Augustinian position. I found the exposition profoundly satisfying. It is advanced with modesty, and with no claim to dissolve the riddle or mystery of original sin. Herein lies some of the attractiveness of this honest, sharply argued essay in biblical theology. Very highly commended.

D. F. Wright

Edinburgh University

The Return of Splendor in the World: The Christian Doctrine of Sin and Forgiveness

Christof Gestrucht, trans Daniel W. Bloesch
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997,
xxiv + 355 pp., £26.99/\$40.00

This volume is a translation of the 1989 German work, *Die Wiederskehr des Glanzes in der Welt*, by Gestrucht, professor of systematic theology at Humboldt University in Berlin. It is a classic exercise in traditional systematic theology, drawing upon psychology, philosophy, history, anthropology and biblical exegesis for its substance. It is structured in such a way that advanced students may interact with it in formulating and refining their own theology of sin and forgiveness. But it is not for the casual reader or beginning student; working through the content is laborious because of its German style along with its depth of thought.

The author has made every effort to be contemporary and practical.

He sets the stage for the endeavour with a series of meditations which suggest that the entrance of sin into the world has resulted in a loss of God's splendour (Gestricht's rendering of the Hebrew *labod* and the Greek *doxa*) in all of creation. He then examines pertinent questions arising from the contemporary situation: What relationship does sin have to therapeutic methodologies? Or to the sense of meaninglessness which pervades people? How can postmoderns understand God, sin, and evil, given present capacities for mayhem and destruction? Gestricht sees sin as a failure of the human will to harmonise itself with the will of God, although when one has delved somewhat further into the book, sin is more clearly defined as 'a human disrespect for God's being and work' (p. 63). The book concludes with lengthy suggestions for proclaiming and according forgiveness to humanity, the means of restoring God's splendour.

Evangelicals will be less than happy with Gestricht's work, for it is a volume which is in more of a neo-orthodox vein. Most, for example, would take exception to his admiration for Teilhard and subsequent declaration that 'the history of evolution and the history of salvation are ultimately coextensive' (p. 58). Nor would they agree that theology's task is to interpret the history of evolution theistically and his adherence to the documentary hypothesis in discussing OT passages is somewhat old-fashioned.

Nevertheless, the work has its thought-provoking sections. The author has done a solid job in discussing the history of the interpretation of Genesis 3 (the Fall); while most evangelicals probably would not agree with his conclusions (especially his seeing the biblical account as a myth setting out our first parents'

fall as prototypical of all humankind), their understanding of developments in the formulation of a doctrine of original sin would be greatly advanced. He uses the Genesis passage as a stepping-stone to Romans 5:12ff., from which he correctly surmises that inherited (i.e. original) sin cannot be deduced from the NT. In like manner, his discussion of the use of the sacraments in dealing with sin is helpful, even to those evangelicals who would tend to downplay them; Gestricht rightly observes that the Lord's Supper is not for the forgiveness of sins, but rather, one must be forgiven before coming to the Table! The Sacrament of Penance must precede the Sacrament of Communion.

Should this book be at the top of the list for someone interested in understanding the doctrine of forgiveness? Probably not! Instead I would commend to evangelical students Ted Peter's *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society* (Eerdmans, 1994) or my own, *With Willful Intent: A Theology of Sin* (Baker/BridgePoint, 1994). On the other hand, for someone with a solid understanding, interacting with Gestricht's work would provide much help and food for thought in fine tuning one's own theology of sin and forgiveness.

David L. Smith

Providence Theological Seminary, Otterburne

The Reception of the Faith: Reinterpreting the Gospel for Today

G.R. Evans

London: SPCK, 1997,
x + 229 pp., £15.99

Gillian Evans is the distinguished Cambridge historian, known especially for her work on Anselm and Augustine. She is also an ardent ecumenist of the high

church variety, and these twin foci of church history and ecumenical thought are brought together in this book. Packed with cameos from the history of Christianity, it is a delightful ride through unusual ecclesiastical countryside. What is its thesis?

That is quite a difficult question to answer. 'Reception' is a technical ecumenical term from the catholic tradition in its denominational sense. The term became quite well known throughout the distinguished work of the first Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission and its Final Report.

There we learned of the dialectic between the church and the episcopate, and in pyramidal ascent between councils and primate archbishops, the topmost point being occupied by the pontiff. The teaching office of the church, centred in the pontiff whose office includes moments of particular inspiration in defining dogma, is for the sake of the whole church, in that report. The laity 'receive' the teaching as time goes on – or not as the case may be.

Liberal catholic Anglican apologists still, for example, in dialogue with Roman Catholics, will appeal to a process of reception at work in the Church of England: thus it is technically possible that the ordination of women will not be 'received' by the whole church, the jury is still out. Or again, it is often pointed out that the Vatican encyclical *Humanae Vitae* banning artificial contraception has not been 'received' by the faithful – especially in Italy it seems. This in theory creates a problem: teaching has not been received: is the teaching therefore invalidated? The message does not seem to have got home, as yet, to Cardinal Ratzinger in Rome, but theoretically it might.

That gives a couple of interesting examples of the topic of the book, what the author is discussing. For Gillian Evans, and the WCC, 'reception means a continuing process of reinterpretation or appropriation of the Gospel in new circumstances'. This process is complicated, she rightly says, in the light of the divided state of the churches; there are now separated reception processes going on. Like traditions and Tradition, might there be said to be receptions and Reception? At this point one must pause to ask if the concept of reception is in fact being exaggerated in importance: it is not self-evident to the standard evangelical Christian, for example, that reception is such a key process. It may be a second order process perhaps, all part of new theological interpretations being developed and thrown into the rough and tumble of church life: issues such as the ordination of women, or the phenomenon of homosexuality, for example, are engaging the church's attention. But when the rough and tumble has settled down, who is pushing teaching down to the laity so that they can see if they like it or not? To the evangelical mind, the very notion of 'reception' is a hierarchical one likely to be confusing the gospel message with an ecclesiastical structure or magisterium, if it is seeking to address first order gospel questions.

To be fair to her, Gillian Evans does raise many examples of such church debate in seeking to define and clarify 'reception'. She speaks of the Reformation as the moment in church history when the church was faced with the question of justifying her teachings with reference to Scripture, which so became a deeply important criterion for any 'reception'. This principle should mean that even previously 'received' doctrines can

come under scrutiny if fresh interpretative light breaks out, hence 'reception' cannot confer status, it is rather the process of the history of doctrine and ethics. The church does not create truth but recognises it as given to her: many doctrines and practices were thoroughly 'received' by the laity from the official pastoral teaching of the church, now happily rejected – the charge of deicide against the Jewish people for example.

Is reception therefore a matter of 'reinterpreting the gospel for today', in a primary sense, as the subtitle of the book claims? In spite of the mass of interesting historical ecclesiastical narrative, I am not at all sure.

Tim Bradshaw
Oxford

The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology

Jürgen Moltmann, Translated by Margaret Kohl
London, SCM Press, 1996,
xvii + 390 pp., £17.50

In the mid 1960s, Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* was hailed as a bold attempt to re-centre the entire theological enterprise in eschatological expectation. Now 30 years later, Moltmann has finally written a work that gives sustained attention to eschatology as a theological topic in its own right. It has been worth the wait! *The Coming of God* is probably the most impressive and creative treatment of 'the Last Things', to appear this century.

Published as Moltmann retired as Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen, this is also the fifth and final volume of his 'contributions to theology' series (which, he assures us, is not an exercise in Dogmatics). Given Moltmann's dislike of closed systems, this book, long as it is,

does not attempt to have the last word. Moltmann writes not only to clarify the mind, but also to move the heart and awaken hope. Theology remains subordinate to doxology. Theoretical insight is to be in the service of a vision of the Kingdom of God.

True to his earlier convictions, he prefers to see the subject matter of Eschatology not as an Ending but as the Beginning of the New Creation. It has four main horizons: hope in God for, (a) God's glory, (b) the new creation of the world, (c) the history of human beings with the earth and (d) the resurrection and eternal life of human people. These are treated in reverse order in Sections II-V. Moltmann thus moves from personal eschatology to historical, cosmic and ultimately Divine eschatology. Paralleling the way he sees the relationship between individuality and universality and between creation and God, the former horizons find their inspiration, source and destiny in the latter.

Consonant with the cosmic sweep of Moltmann's vision, he interacts with a very wide variety of sources, including patristic, mediaeval, Protestant, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish theologies, and modern secular cultural analysis. This breadth is evident in his very helpful survey of Section I which examines the eschatologies of Schweitzer, Cullmann, Barth, Bultmann, Bloch, Rosenweig, Scholem, Benjamin and Löwith. Later, he even interacts, albeit briefly, with John Stott's advocacy of annihilationism (a position which, as a universalist, he finds unconvincing). On this topic, he commends the discussion of evangelical theologian Stanley Grenz.

It is impossible to do justice to the riches of this book in a brief review. Standout features include the

enormous amount of secondary literature he brings to our attention (e.g. on Millennialism), the pastoral warmth and sensitivity of his discussion of the grief process, his fascinating explorations in the philosophy of time (which are the key, in my view, to the structure of his theology), his frequent references to the Biblical tradition, his social and ecological concerns and the Christian conviction that animates the entire project.

I remain unconvinced that his eschatological panentheism, in which creation is finally 'taken up' into the divine life of the Trinity, reflects a sufficiently robust doctrine of Creation. Moltmann has a persistent tendency to see finitude and transience as limitations that must be overcome as they are, in themselves, evidence of alienation from God. God's 'grace' simultaneously fulfils and negates created 'nature.' Thus, where the Scriptures speak of the restoration of creation's covenant *with* God, Moltmann's vision, when all is said and done, is of the world *in* God. But even where Moltmann fails to convince, he never fails to stimulate. This is a most impressive work. When read with a critical mind, it is highly recommended.

Nik Ansell

University of Bristol

Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus

Chris Sugden

Oxford, Regnum, 1997,
496 pp., pb., £29.99.

Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus is a critical and comparative analysis of two outstanding Asian missiologists, Vinay Samuel from the Church of South India and Wayan Mastra from the Protestant Christian Church of

Bali, Indonesia. The book consists of two parts. The first, which constitutes two thirds of the book, was originally presented as a PhD thesis in 1988 and compares the approaches of Mastra and Samuel between 1974 and 1983. The second part is intended to bring the discussion up-to-date by detailing developments between 1984 and 1996. The reader should be aware though that this is done only with reference to Samuel. Only four lines are devoted to Mastra and Indonesia is not mentioned. The sub-title to the book is thus somewhat misleading.

In Part One the first four chapters are devoted to an analysis of Mastra's missiology which is outworked on the Indonesian island of Bali, the only indigenous Hindu culture outside of South Asia. In his doctoral research Mastra critiqued the work of the Dutch Reformed missionary, Hendrik Kraemer, whose missionary strategy in Bali involved encouraging Christian converts to separate from a Balinese culture that was deemed irredeemably pagan. Mastra held that this demeaned Balinese dignity and sought a reformulation of the gospel that was appropriate to Balinese culture. Whereas Kraemer emphasised the discontinuity between non-Christian religions and Christianity, Mastra argues that the pre-Christian religious experience and perception of the Balinese is an indispensable tool with which to communicate the gospel.

In the following three chapters Sugden focuses on Samuel's work of developing evangelical social theology in the south of India. He reveals that like Mastra, Samuel is also working from the key category of dignity, in particular towards the powerless and underprivileged. Samuel stresses the role of the church in

establishing just structures in the areas of society, politics and economics. Again like Mastra, Samuel stresses the work of God outside the church and highlights the weakness of Western Evangelicalism to come to terms with the community aspect of Indian society.

The final two chapters of Part One contrast Mastra with Samuel and allow both to further critique Western evangelical theology. Sugden tackles the complexity of asserting transcultural truth from an intercultural reading of Scripture and reveals that Samuel is more concerned to relate Scripture to its original context whereas Mastra's approach is more subjective, intuitive and over-determined by his context to the detriment of supra-cultural reality.

Part Two of the work draws together material from Samuel that has been presented in a large variety of contexts, giving a systematic description of the progression of Samuel's thoughts between 1984 and 1996. The author is ideally placed for this since he has been colleagues with Samuel at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies since his arrival in the UK in 1992. Themes here include economics (market economy, Micro-enterprise development), wholistic mission, contextualisation, the role of the Holy Spirit in mission (in response to recent emphases on power evangelism, spiritual warfare and the Toronto Blessing), modernity, post-modernity and hermeneutics.

The role of the Holy Spirit in mission is dealt with in four pages and herein lies a limitation to the book - namely that there is no discussion of the huge impact on missions brought about by the Indian Pentecostal denominations and no real discussion of the missiological emphases that they regard as crucial for the conversion

of India. The author has followed his brief but the resultant omission is unfortunate.

In the final chapter entitled 'Gospel and Community' Sugden outlines Samuel's reflections on the corporate setting of Christian existence in its urban, ecclesiological and familial contexts. Sugden has also produced a useful bibliography of Samuel's writings which includes unpublished papers and lectures.

The footnotes are extensive (102 pp.) reflecting the original intention of the manuscript as a doctoral thesis. This work is not a light read and is not recommended for undergraduates who are coming fresh to the discipline of missiology. At times the book can be quite repetitive but the attentive reader will be rewarded with a detailed and comprehensive analysis of attempts to contextualise the gospel in the respective countries. This book will be illuminating to all who have an academic or practical involvement in missions to the Two Thirds world in general and India and Indonesia in particular.

Christopher Band
Dehra Dun, India

A Reader in African Christian Theology [SPCK International Study Guide 23]

John Parratt (ed.)
London: SPCK, Revised Ed., 1997,
xii + 163 pp., pb., £7.99

This reader was first published in 1987. All the extracts in the original edition remain in this new one but with the addition of three new extracts which take account of the growth of feminist and evangelical theology and the charismatic movement in Africa. Following a brief introduction by the editor to the context of African

theologizing the extracts from the work of African theologians is divided into three parts.

The first part entitled 'The Theological Method' contains 'What is African Theology?' by Harry Sawyerr, 'The Sources of African Theology' by John Pobee, 'The Task and Method of Theology in Africa' by T.Tshibangu, 'Black Theology and African Theology - Soulmates or Antagonists?' by Desmond Tutu and 'Doing Theology as African Women' by Isabel Apawo Phiri.

The second part entitled 'Aspects of Doctrine' has papers on 'The Doctrine of God' by Charles Nyamiti, 'Christology' by Kofi Appiah-Kubi, 'The Theology of the Cross' by Kwesi Dickson, 'Salvation as Wholeness' by Manas Buthelezi and 'Authentic African Christianity' by Tite Tienou.

The third part on 'The Church and the World' has extracts on 'Initiation, Traditional and Christian' by Marc Ntetem, 'The Church's Healing Ministry' by J. Ade Aina, 'The Church's Role in Society' by Julius Nyrere, 'An Ethic of Liberation for South Africa' by Allan Boesak and 'Charismatics and Community' by Irene John.

The volume is then completed with a conclusion on 'Current Issues in African Theology' by the editor, bibliographies, a useful glossary and an index.

This volume has been designed for use in theological colleges particularly in Africa but also opens a window for those of us outside on what is happening in African theology. It should be of interest to everyone to know how theology is being done in that part of the world where Christianity, in terms of church growth at least, is now at its most vibrant. Sadly, this reader does not present a very encouraging picture. It presents theologians that are still struggling

with the fact that Christianity came to them hand in hand with colonialism. When the extracts were being written colonialism was still showing its most ugly aspect in the cruel apartheid system of South Africa. Not surprisingly, therefore, the scene is dominated by the desire to find an African identity for Christianity in the face of cultural and political oppression. This is understandable, but the time must be coming when African theologians realise that Western theologians are also struggling against the oppression of Western culture.

It is also worrying that most of the theologians in this reader seem to be looking to the liberal tradition of Western theology for equipment to meet the challenge of the West while this is the theological tradition that has undoubtedly led to the decline of the church in the West in the last 50 years.

But the selection ends on a very hopeful note with the new section on 'Charismatics and Community' by Irene John. This tells of the rise of charismatic churches in Sierra Leone and the impact they are making in creating vibrant Christian community that is breaking down ethnic barriers, introducing moral behaviour into work, business and government and spearheading development through The Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone. Such revival movements may very well give birth to a theology that will be of significance to the world church in the next century.

Dewi Arwel Hughes

Tearfund

**Religious Radicalism in England
1535-1565: Rutherford Studies in
Historical Theology**

C.J. Clement

Edinburgh/Carlisle: Rutherford House/
Paternoster Press 1997,
xx + 425 pp., pb., £29.99

Serious students of Church history have long been aware that the popular picture of the English Reformation as a two way fight between Protestants on the one side and the upholders of medieval Catholicism on the other is a misleading simplification of a more complex reality. An examination of the Thirty Nine Articles, for instance, shows that as well as articles such as XXII and XXXI which are clearly directed against Catholic errors on topics such as purgatory and the sacrifice of the Mass, there are also articles such as article XVI on the subject of sin after baptism and XXIII on the subject of ministering in the congregation which are directed against errors to which Rome never subscribed. Clearly the mainstream Anglican Reformers were fighting on two fronts, against both Rome and against a radical form of theology coming from an entirely different direction.

Until recently not much was known about the people who were the source of this second type of theology. They have traditionally been lumped together under the generic title of 'Anabaptists' and have been seen as simply the English extension of that radical wing of the continental Reformation against which Luther, Zwingli and Calvin laboured so hard.

Dr Clement's book, which had its origin as a Cambridge PhD thesis, sheds much light in this hitherto murky area, and establishes that the kind of generalised picture of the radical wing of the English

Reformation which I have just described simply will not do. Drawing on documents and letters written by the radicals themselves as well as accounts of them by their opponents, Dr Clement argues that, although they were influenced by the Continental Anabaptist tradition, the English Protestant radicals were not generally Anabaptists themselves in that they did not normally practise adult baptism, and that they were in fact the heirs to the native English Lollard tradition.

Overall he presents a picture of a number of small and diverse groups of people who had an uneasy relationship with the Protestant mainstream. Sometimes they made common cause with the mainstream by, for example, joining the illegal congregations that stayed faithful to the Edwardine Reformation during the persecution under Queen Mary, and even in some cases being ordained into the ministry of the established Church. Sometimes they stood aloof from the mainstream in separatist congregations of their own, and sometimes they adopted the 'Nicodemite' option of outward conformity combined with a hidden spiritual life in underground conventicles.

These groups tended to be suspicious of the leadership of the mainstream English Reformation, and rejected large parts of its theology. In particular they emphasised human free-will over against the doctrine of predestination, and taught the possibility of freedom from sin in this life. Many members of these groups also played down the importance of the sacraments and rejected traditional beliefs about the Trinity and the person of Christ.

Dr Clement's book is not an easy read because the sheer amount of

detailed information provided sometimes makes it hard to follow his overall argument. It is not a book which I would recommend to students just starting their studies of the English Reformation. However, for the more advanced student who wants a fuller and more accurate picture of the religious life of 16th century England than a concentration on the Protestant mainstream can provide, this is a 'must buy'.

Martin Davie

Oak Hill College

Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity

Mark A. Noll

Leicester: IVP, 1997,
335 pp., hb., £11.99

Mark Noll's survey of key movements and moments in the two millennia of Christianity is well written and judiciously selected. The book is designed for the relative newcomer to church history and would be an interesting read for the oft cited 'educated person in the pew', that ecclesiastical equivalent to the man on the Clapham omnibus. The text is broken up with boxed quotations of significant texts and a prayer is printed at the end of each chapter so as to attempt a type of interactive mood of drawing the reader into the narrative rather than one of academic detachment. In all this the production is handled very well.

Any such review runs the risk of criticism from the denominations, and those who claim to be 'not a denomination', of bias. Noll, to my evangelical Anglican mind, has done a good job and writes with appreciation of all traditions, without descending into that sugary mode of undifferentiated praise for everything bearing the label 'Christian'. Noll is a

Protestant and knows why, yet is self-critical of his own tradition as well as finding cause to admire and acknowledge the place, for example of the monastic movement and the Second Vatican Council.

What is the route of his bus ride through history? It takes us from the primitive church of Acts, to Nicea and Chalcedon thence to the monastic movement. The next stop is Charlemagne and papal Christendom and the split between East and West in 1054, when the Eastern church rejected papal claims to jurisdiction. The Reformation, English Act of Supremacy, and counter-Reformation provide the next stage of the journey before the Wesleys. We hit the traffic lights of the Enlightenment with the French Revolution and liberalism of all kinds, before the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1911 and a final chapter of twentieth century points such as communist oppression in the East, Vatican II, Pentecostalism, the new place of women. One does have to admire the sweep of the book as an introduction to church history.

The book is, however, a survey and has not the time for intricate discussion of points and that sense should not be relied on as a 'textbook' to replace treatments of particular historical topics. For example I would commend Stuart Hall's *Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church* as a necessary complement to the patristic material on Ignatius and Irenaeus. I am not sure the book quite captures the feel of the Anglican settlement, whose self-understanding was not a break from the Catholic church (p. 178), but rather a reformed Catholicism in England, hence the very careful retention of bishops duly consecrated, but a survey cannot encapsulate every such nuance.

'What counts as Christianity?' is a nice question. While Chalcedon

established the Christological definition accepted very widely, it also caused the exclusion of the Coptic Church and Oriental Orthodox, whom most today would accept as disciples who have suffered immensely for their faith. This is not a ground on which to criticise the selection of movements in such a book as this, but a plea for such worthy 'losers' by church historians.

Altogether this is a fair and interesting historical survey, attempting to do right by all brands of Christians, the one 'value judgement' I spotted being about Anglicans as 'wobbling (typically)' on page 17. I was pleased to see the book dedicated to Transylvanian Baptists and their Oradea Seminary in Romania, a worthy and dynamic college.

Tim Bradshaw

Regents Park College, Oxford

Science and the New Age Challenge

Ernest Lucas

Leicester: Apollon, 1996,
190 pp., pb., £10.99

As a former research scientist and current tutor in biblical studies, Dr Lucas is well placed to write a Christian critique of New Age appeals to science as a justification for their ideas. His thesis is that this appeal is usually superficial and often second-hand and that the so-called science referred to is generally muddled and mistaken.

After a description of the main elements of New Age thought, Lucas provides a brief sketch of the main figures in the development of Western science from Galileo to Newton; figures which New Agers denigrate as reductionist, mechanistic, deterministic, dualistic and rationalistic. He then describes the new perspective on the world

resultant from the development of the theories of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics. Lucas then questions the inference of various New Age theorists that the universe must therefore be a unified, interconnected whole, that human consciousness plays a part in creating reality and that we must abandon formal logic to understand it. If this were to be widely accepted, he foresees that the lamentable result would be 'that the current scientific laboratory will be replaced by a séance laboratory' (p. 30)! New Agers tend to argue that the discoveries of modern science provide evidence for the claims of Eastern mystics but Lucas seeks to demonstrate that a poor grasp of science is here wedded to a partial grasp of only one kind of Eastern mysticism.

There follows a more detailed treatment of the questionable theories of Teilhard de Chardin, F. Capra, R. Sheldrake and J. Lovelock. Lucas is not impressed by any of their theories from Chardin's noogenesis to Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields. He does give guarded approval, however, to certain aspects of Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis but maintains that New Age culture has taken it to unjustifiable extremes by postulating a conscious, purposive Earth goddess. Finally, Lucas contrasts the dangers of New Age ecology which so easily slips into animism and even occultism with a healthy, biblical Green Christianity.

There is much of value in this book from a clear overview of the history of science including the new physics of Einstein and Planck to an interesting survey of New Age writings and mentors. Some of the criticisms are impressively astute such as the observation that New Age holism is at variance with the reductionist contention that

matter is unreal because it is reducible to energy.

However, overall this book leaves me deeply dissatisfied. While competent as an expositor of science, Lucas is a less sure guide in other aspects of the material covered in the book. For example his chapter on New Age thought assumes a false homogeneity. New Age is a loose term for many disparate individuals who only bear a vague family resemblance to one another. Further, his knowledge of mysticism is superficial and even flawed – he cites Advaita as an example of a non-monist school of Hinduism (p. 55) but the word means 'non-dualism'!

Theologically too he oversimplifies. Process theism, for instance is summarily rejected because a developing God cannot be eternally perfect and is not the God of Scripture (p. 117) but in what sense can we say that the interactive God of Scripture is timeless? And cannot the incarnate God, while being a perfect boy and then later a perfect man himself not therefore truly develop in some sense? Further, Hebrews chapter two intimates that by incarnating, God was able to develop from divine sympathy to divine empathy through suffering crucifixion. A dynamic panentheist model is possibly more attractive in some ways than Lucas allows and if such a di-polar theism is illogical (p. 155) as he maintains, how is it that the doctrine of the Trinity 'enables us to hold together God's transcendence and immanence' without similar logical problems (p. 157)? Rather strangely, Lucas criticises Lovelock's definition of life as inadequate because it omits growth as one of the essential characteristics of living entities (and therefore Gaia cannot be truly living) (p. 127). By Lucas' definition

of life then, the God of his definition cannot be a living entity either.

Overall I find Lucas' approach somewhat entrenched and unadventurous. Many scholars, expert in science from J. Polkinghorne to P. Davies have found the vistas opened up by the new physics awe inspiring and creatively disturbing. Apparently, not so Lucas. He remains attracted to the idea of a rational God who runs a rational universe; not a dice playing God indeed. Having given T.S. Kuhn's philosophy of science short shrift (p. 24), he rejects the views of thinkers like Teilhard because they fail K. Popper's criterion of falsifiability. But he needs to meet the objection that the status of their interpretative views is the same as that of evangelicalism. They are neither verifiable nor falsifiable but are explanatory hypotheses. They are models of reality as Kuhn might have said. Is Teilhard offering us physics or metaphysics? Since we now recognise that all truth claims are value laden, the boundaries are indeed difficult to draw. To be fair, Lucas demonstrates some degree of awareness of the problem and he even offers a solution: 'It does seem useful ... to draw a line somewhere between the stage where the element of subjective interpretation is "imperceptible" and the stage where it is dominant, and reserve the term "science" for the former stage only' (p. 81). Ah, that it were so simple Dr Lucas!

Rob Cook

Redcliffe College, Gloucester

Alone in the Universe?

David Wilkinson

Crowborough, Monarch, 1997,
160 pp., pb., £7.99

David Wilkinson is a Methodist Chaplain at Liverpool University, England and also a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, having done research in Theoretical Astrophysics. He takes seriously the current interest in the possibility of extra-terrestrial life (ETL). At the popular level this is evidenced by TV series, films, books and magazines which deal with the subject. There are also scientist who are convinced that ETL exists and have given backing to multi-million dollar projects, such as the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence.

In the first half of this book Wilkinson gives a fair and balanced survey, at a popular level, of the scientific arguments and evidence for the possibility that there is ETL. He points out that what interests most people is not just extra-terrestrial life (bacteria on Mars, for example) but extra-terrestrial intelligence (ETI). Assuming a natural evolutionary process, there is no guarantee that the conditions which might give rise to simple forms of life would then allow it to develop into intelligent life. The scientific arguments regarding the probability of the existence of ETL are based on probability assessments, which themselves depend on assumptions which are based on very little evidence. The astronomers are more positive about ETI than the biologists. Wilkinson suggests that the biologists have a more realistic understanding of the probabilities.

There is then a brief, but telling, critique of claims of evidence for ETI based on UFO sightings, crop circles, and abductions by aliens from outer-space. The following

chapter deals similarly with those who, in the spirit of Erick von Daniken, try to explain the biblical record as the result of visits from outer-space. The chapter includes a brief defence of the orthodox Christian understanding of Jesus' birth, ministry, death and resurrection.

This leads into a discussion in the next chapter of the claims made by some serious writers on the topic that the existence of ETI would cause major problems for traditional religious, especially Christian, beliefs about the origin of life, humanity's special relationship to God, the significance of Jesus and our understanding of God. These issues are not new. Although Wilkinson limits his discussion to what Christian scholars have said in the 20th century, patristic and medieval theologians debated them, since the possibility of extra-terrestrial life was raised by both the Greek atomists and the Roman Stoics. Although discovery of ETI would raise difficult questions, the Roman Catholic theologian Stanley Jaki has suggested that it is only the theist who can look forward with confidence to such an encounter, trusting that both sides will have a common Creator and a sense of belonging to the same family. Wilkinson agrees with this, and argues that, far from undermining Christianity, such an encounter would 'open up even more of the glory and stunning creativity of the God revealed to us in Jesus' (p. 136).

The final chapter contains an analysis of the spiritual desires behind the current interest in, and in some cases longing for contact with, extra-terrestrial intelligence. There is a brief indication of how Christianity can satisfy these desires.

Opportunities to commend the gospel arise in unexpected places.

While we might be tempted to dismiss interest in UFOs and ETI as just too off-beat to be taken seriously, Wilkinson has shown that there is a spiritual hunger and a range of theological issues here which need to be taken seriously. He has addressed them well at a popular level. It is to be hoped that some theologians will be stimulated to take up the theological issues afresh and develop them at a level which could not be done in this book.

Ernest C. Lucas
Bristol Baptist College

A Time to Laugh

B.J. Oropeza,
Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995,
vi + 194 pp., pb.

This book, written by someone who is happy to describe himself as a charismatic insider, is an eminently readable account of what has come to be known as the 'Toronto Blessing'. In the first part of the book, Oropeza summarises the controversy surrounding the 'Toronto Blessing', traces its influence across the world and examines its roots. This part is essential reading for those who seek to understand the immediate historical background to the movement, its leading proponents and their teaching. Oropeza covers the ground thoroughly and with critical discernment. His chapters in this section on the teachings of Rodney Howard-Browne, the roots of the movement and the spirit behind the movement are particularly important contributions to the debate concerning the Toronto Blessing'. Although highly critical of Howard-Browne's writings and some aspects of his public ministry, Oropeza concludes that he is not 'a mass-hypnotist, charlatan or a cultist'. Oropeza's chapter on the

roots of the movement traces links to the aberrant 'Latter Rain Movement'; this chapter also raises crucial questions concerning 'Toronto Blessing' prophecies of an imminent end-time revival. In the next chapter, Oropeza examines some common criticisms of the movement including whether the 'Toronto Blessing' is a form of mass hypnosis and whether it leads to altered states of consciousness. He is basically sympathetic to the movement, concluding that it represents renewal rather than revival, but is critical of the disorderly conduct often exhibited at 'Blessing' meetings and urges ministers involved in the renewal to take steps to deal with such conduct. My main criticism of this section of the book is that Oropeza does not interact with the work of sociologists of religion such as F.D. Goodman, who demonstrates that groups can be taught both dissociation and glossolalia by a charismatic leader. This would have led to a more nuanced discussion of the question of mass suggestion.

In the second part, Oropeza discusses biblical and historical precedents. The first chapter in this section is a competent analysis of the biblical arguments used to support the phenomena associated with the 'Toronto Blessing'. He rightly concludes that biblical passages are either misused or are not intended to be normative. The next chapter examines the phenomena in the light of Paul's injunction in I Corinthians 14:40 that everything should be done in an orderly way. Oropeza argues that Paul's injunction should be read against the background of Dionysian ecstasy at Corinth. Although this position is too simplistic, Oropeza's conclusion is, in my opinion, correct. He concludes that Paul deals with the problem of ecstatic phenomena

at Corinth by exhorting the Corinthian Christians to behave in an orderly fashion. This is a very important observation given the disorderly nature of many 'Toronto Blessing' meetings.

In the next two chapters, Oropeza looks at phenomena in previous revivals in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. He demonstrates both that the phenomena experienced in the 'Toronto Blessing' have been seen in previous revivals and that such phenomena have been exceedingly problematic. In a balanced assessment, he concludes that revivals have always contained a mixture of good and bad. He argues that there have often (not always) been unusual phenomena accompanying past revivals but that wise revival leaders such as Jonathan Edwards insisted that such phenomena neither authenticated nor disproved a moving of the Spirit. In the light of this, despite Oropeza's recognition that the focus of the 'Toronto Blessing' has been on unusual phenomena, he fails to be sufficiently critical of that focus.

The final chapter, after warning against divisiveness and pride, ends with a passionate plea to those in the church who are so concerned about personal renewal that they fail to reach out to the marginalised. Oropeza rightly argues that genuine revival will have tangible socio-political implications. My main concern with the second part of the book is that Oropeza, whilst recognising the mixed character of revivals, appears to be insufficiently critical of the concept of revival itself. It seems, at least to this commentator, that revival language is too closely linked to an ideology of power and, as such, is highly problematic.

In conclusion, this book is a significant contribution to the 'Toronto Blessing' debate.

I commend it particularly for its analysis of the roots of the movement and for Oropeza's insightful critique of prophecies that claim that the 'Toronto Blessing' heralds the beginning of an end-time revival.

Lloyd K Pieteresen
University of Sheffield

Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views

Wayne Grudem (ed.)
Leicester: IVP, 1996,
368 pp., pb., £8.99

It is unfortunate to note that the disagreement over the work of the Holy Spirit in the contemporary church has tended to produce more heat than light but this very helpful book does not fit that pattern.

The format of the book is sensible and straightforward. There are four contributors who each reflect a different theological background. Richard B. Gaffin represents the 'cessationist' case. Robert L. Saucy develops a framework under the title 'open but cautious'. This particular position is probably the most popular among evangelicals today and yet is also the most ill-defined. C. Samuel Storms writes from the perspective of the more recent charismatic movement now often referred to as the 'Third Wave'. Finally, Douglas A. Oss presents the traditional Pentecostal viewpoint. Each contributor writes a lengthy statement of their own position and the other contributors have their opportunity to respond. Gaffin opted to make a single response to both the Third Wave and Pentecostal accounts in order to avoid repetition. The book is completed by a short concluding statement from each contributor and from the editor, Wayne Grudem.

The discussion is marked by the obvious desire of the participants to understand, respect and interact with alternative views. While significant differences remain, all the contributors make clear their sense of working within the same evangelical confession and being part of the same body. The book forms a useful and perceptive text on miraculous gifts and is complemented by an exhaustive set of indexes. There is no bibliography but the copious footnotes provide an excellent reference to further reading and secondary sources. It will be of most use to ministers or undergraduate students concerned with pastoral issues.

The aim of the book is very specific and does not wander from its concern with the gifts. This narrow focus reflects a major debate among evangelicals and this book will certainly clarify that particular debate. However, one may wonder whether it would be more fruitful to engage with the broader question of the work of the Holy Spirit in Scripture and in history. More interaction with wider theological issues such as the Spirit in the world and the relationship to other religions would have helped to clarify the implications of these four views to contemporary questions. Further reference to the work of non-evangelicals and a discussion of the treatment of the Spirit in Church history would have brought the positions into sharper relief. The concern with spiritual gifts is very pressing and understandable but it seems inevitable that such a discussion will produce little fruit.

Gaffin's cessationist account of the gifts is quite distinct from that of the other contributors who otherwise differ from one another more as a matter of degree than of kind. The differences between

these latter writers being primarily the extent to which certain gifts should be actively sought and expected in the normal life of the church. There is some helpful clarification of how these different perspectives shed light on the meaning of prophecy, tongues and Spirit baptism in the NT.

Chris Sinkinson
Bournemouth

The Story of the Atonement

Stephen Sykes
London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997,
Trinity and Truth Series xiii + 177 pp., £9.95

Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God

Philip Sheldrake
London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998,
Trinity and Truth Series xvi + 246 pp., £12.95

Holy, Holy, Holy: Worshipping the Trinitarian God

Christopher Cocksworth
London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998,
Trinity and Truth Series xii + 244 pp., £12.95

Without a doubt discussion of the Trinity is the current 'in-thing' of systematic theology. Indeed, as trends go, it has been in vogue for some time, and perhaps may begin to be on the move. However, instead of disappearing from the theological agenda, the indication is that exploration of the doctrine continues, and this generally can be no bad thing. Such exploration is witnessed to by the growth of the *Trinity and Truth* series, edited by Stephen Sykes. It aims to provide the best of theological thinking on key subjects accessible to a general readership. As such they are introductory texts, intended to be open to non-specialists, relating themes in doctrine to an

understanding of the Trinity. As the preface to the series makes clear, this is 'a series of theological books written by authors convinced that there is truth to be spoken about God, and that such truth is best explored when we speak about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit'. Certainly it is a positive thing that the theological climate makes such an orthodox aim permissible.

The first offering, by the general editor, attempts to present not a theory of the atonement, but to examine how Christians live within the story of the atonement. Examining the nature of the atonement, justification by faith, difficulties associated with ideas of merit and reward, the challenge presented by other faiths, and the practical issues of Eucharist and evangelism, Sykes skilfully guides the reader through a large number of issues. He helpfully attacks Aulen's criticisms of the uselessness of theories, but progresses to develop his thinking in terms of the popular (and sometimes over-used) concept of narrative. Thus there are 'a plurality of narratives for atonement' (p. 17). Although Sykes is keen to speak against postmodernism and claim that there is a story, a meta-narrative, it is unclear where the 'no exit' signs for this narrative exist.

Centrally, although Sykes goes a long way to account for and understand the evangelical insistence on penal substitution, he surely puts words in the mouths of the likes of Packer when he interprets their use of 'metaphorical' applied to penal substitution in the following way:

This important concession is bound to imply that, in certain respects, the application of a theory of specific penal exchange to the death of Christ is not appropriate to the atonement,

and there remains a dimension of mystery. In other words, the narrative of our salvation is not, in a literal sense, one of penal substitution; by itself the importance to a sound Christian theology of justification by grace to be received by faith does not give such a theology of atonement a normative status (p. 52).

Although mystery remains, the evangelical insistence has been on the grounding of the narrative, the foundation for the metaphors, and the basis for the other theories. Is one understanding normative? Not for Sykes.

On the issue of other faiths, Sykes follows a familiar inclusivist path, which may leave open the question of the nature of evangelism. He picks this up in a later chapter, and argues for an evangelism based on love, rather than fear of damnation. At least he is sufficiently sensitive to ask the question as to how this love is defined (p. 151). Evangelism, in the end, becomes 'the process of issuing an attractive invitation to a life made up of praise in every part' (p. 159).

Positively, Sykes makes some helpful contributions, such as the role played by a proper understanding of Christian eschatology in debates concerning merit and reward. However, in the end this is a disappointing contribution, which although opting for the use of narratives rather than theories, seems to be in danger of emptying the baby with the bath water (a danger which Sykes sets out to avoid early on by holding on to the grounding which the unique story of Jesus provides (p. 18)).

The second in the series, by Philip Sheldrake, examines the practice of living before a Trinitarian God - that is, spirituality. In one way this work is a great relief, for here

is an attempt to hold together two disciplines that are often in danger of being compartmentalised, spirituality and theology. Sheldrake opens with an analysis of the Christ and Culture issue, in the context of postmodernism, and although he never seems to justify why he opts for the middle path between Christ versus culture, and Christ assimilated by culture (p. 12), proceeds to offer some helpful pointers in this area. The majority of the first half of the book is concerned with the history and rationalisation of the split between theology and spirituality, and there is much here to learn from and sympathise with. There is some use of terms which are loosely defined ('rationalist', for example), places where assumptions are made ('deification' as the basic vocation of humanity, pp. 26 and 83), and instances where the obvious is missed out (the concept of revelation in our use of language about God), but generally some extremely helpful lines are drawn to bring the two disciplines together (for example, his claim that Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian* and Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* are 'fundamentally essays in "spiritual theology"', p. 46).

The second half of the work acts in dialogue with historical figures – Julian of Norwich, Ignatius Loyola and George Herbert, and also with the concepts of place and human identity. The studies of figures are extremely helpful in providing examples of theological spirituality, particularly the emphasis brought through Ignatius Loyola and Herbert that God loves us even as sinners. The section on place would have been enhanced by a discussion of the role of land, place and temple in the Biblical narrative (especially the relationship between Jesus and the temple). Finally, a conclusion brings a number of strands together,

criticising the modern desire for spirituality, and outlining the church's role to bring Christian and Trinitarian spirituality to that world.

Finally, Christopher Cocksworth's contribution to the series offers an examination of worship, using worship as a way in which to view, learn about and live in the Trinitarian God. After an introduction, Cocksworth examines the origins of Christian worship (the shape and patterns of the NT church), and the role and theology of worship amongst the church fathers. Cocksworth avoids the temptation to find creedal Trinitarianism everywhere he looks, and so provides a much more solid case for the nature of the Trinitarian God being revealed through and by the worship of the early Christians. The second half of the book then examines the structure of worship, exploring the glory of God, the invitation of Christ, and the searching of the Spirit.

This volume is a joy to read. Steeped in the language and imagery of the early church and examining some of the background to worship (including attributes and figures of God, and the place of the temple) Cocksworth rightly challenges our understanding of worship as an act. In fact, his approach is rather simply summed up by the comment of an ordinand he knew, who said when replying to the question, 'What is worship?', that it is 'joining Jesus as he praises the Father' (pp. 32, 159). The church desperately needs to understand this distinction, that the thrill of worship is being invited by the Son to take part in his worship of the Father and his glory, and the role of the Spirit in worship bringing fellowship, the humanity of Christ, the proclamation of the Word, and the future to the here and now.

Cocksworth closes the book with a challenge concerning the relationship between worship and mission (a closing theme common in some way at least to all three works).

In conclusion, these three very different books provide the backbone to a useful series. From this reviewer's perspective, the series is improving as it progresses, and the most important and useful to the student will be Sheldrake's and Cocksworth's. It is a tribute to the publisher and the series editor that they have embarked on such a project, and the hope is that further helpful volumes will appear.

Tony Gray
Leicester

Hyperchoice: Living in an Age of Diversity

Graham Cheesman
Leicester, IVP, 1997,
155 pp., pb., £6.99

There was in his world no evil or good save what he set up as such. All around him things had formed a circle and waited without making a sign; he stood alone in the midst of a monstrous silence, alone and free, without recourse or excuse, irrevocably condemned, condemned to be free.

J-P. Sartre

Living at the end of the twentieth century presents us, says Cheesman, with an unprecedented array of choices, whether it is which item of food to buy from Tesco's or which church to belong to. What's more, our relativistic post-modern culture seems to have taken from us all the old guidelines which helped us make our choices, whether they were social, cultural, ethical or religious.

So choosing – and we have to do lots of it – is hard. How do we cope? And, in particular, how do we cope as Christians?

One thing we must not do, says Cheesman, is retreat into our evangelical culture, and let that shape our decision making. Nor must we take refuge in the traditional evangelical interpretation and application of the teaching of the Bible. Rather, we must make Christ the centre – of our lives, our theology, our decision making, our mission, and our culture.

The book ranges over sociology, ethics, missiology, theology and a number of other areas. It introduces us to the background to our current culture, the sources of diversity, our view of ourselves, and the pressures of pluralism, relativism and postmodernism. It seeks in particular to lay a basis for Christian decision making in four specific areas: ethics, theology, mission and Christian unity. In the first and third Cheesman develops a Christ-centred response, though he rather leaves us to work that one out for ourselves in the other two.

I found Cheesman's central argument well presented and convincing. That's not to say I agreed with everything he says. I can't accept his claim that 'soon every household will have a personal computer with multimedia'; I'm afraid the poor will continue to exist among us. Nor am I sure about his statistic that there are two and a half times as many Roman Catholics as all Protestants put together; the figures I've seen put the Catholic community at 963 million and all Protestants together at 608 million.

A more significant area where I would question Cheesman is his apparent acceptance of the view that evangelicalism is a product of the Enlightenment. I accept that

on many occasions evangelicals have adapted their presentation of their position to the prevailing Enlightenment culture, doing just the thing Cheesman urges us to do today in our post-modern culture. But claiming that the Enlightenment produced it is hardly fair on the rich history of evangelicalism, parts of which were a definite reaction against Enlightenment thinking. Early evangelicals, for example, in an age when religion had become a matter of intellectual beliefs, stressed decidedly non-cerebral aspects of human personhood like the heart, feelings, will, emotions and even bodily manifestations. I fully agree that as we move out of the Enlightenment culture evangelicalism must drop its Enlightenment baggage, but I don't think that involves dropping the heart of evangelicalism which can remain, to use Cheesman's words, 'Christ as revealed in the Bible'.

I liked this book. I liked the Christ-centred emphasis. I liked the wide range of topics covered. I enjoyed the easy-to-read style. Especially helpful are the end-of-chapter summaries, which don't just sum up the argument, but challenge us to action.

After all, this is a book about choice. It isn't a detached objective study of a cerebral concept. It's a call to make choices, truly Christian choices, relevant to our age and faithful to Christ. And that's got to be good.

Peter Hicks

London Bible College

The Way Forward? Christian voices on homosexuality and the Church

Timothy Bradshaw (ed.)

London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997,
229 pp., pb., £8.99.

This collection of essays is intended as a response to – in the sense of a critical interaction with – the St. Andrews Day Statement, which was published in November 1995. This was drawn up by a group of evangelical theologians at the request of the Church of England Evangelical Council. The Statement, we are told, 'was produced by a group of theologians concerned at the fevered conflict over homosexuality gripping the Church' (p. 1). It sought 'to provide some definition of the theological ground upon which the issue should be addressed and from which any fruitful discussion between those who disagree may proceed' (p. 5). Of particular concern to the group were two matters: 'the claims that quasi-marital relationships between people of the same sex be given legitimacy and that practising homosexuals should be allowed to proceed to ordination'.

The essays seem to fall into two main categories. Some directly address the Statement itself whilst others, more indirectly are directed to the situation, cultural, social, exegetical, in which it was framed. An example of the first category is the contribution of Rowan Williams. He suggests that there needs to be 'some recognition of the fact that those who want to argue what I have called a revisionist position on the possibility legitimacy of 'sexual expression' for the person of homosexual inclination may, like their opponents, be trying to find a way of being faithful and obedient to the givens of revelation' (p. 19). But the authors of the Statement do not wish to be pulled in this direction, for they recognise

marriage and singleness as the only two legitimate vocations in which life can be lived (p. 9). Yet when they immediately go on to call for 'a certain flexibility' in pastoral care may they not have opened the door to the revisionist position? This is a point picked up by Gerald Bray who asks how flexible can we be? He suggests that those who advocate liberalising the Church's official teaching and practice 'are not looking for pastoral care and sympathetic care and sympathetic understanding from evangelicals' (p. 43).

Martin Hallett and the late Michael Vasey, in their respective contributions, illustrate how problematic the call for 'a certain flexibility' is. The former, who became a Christian from a homosexual life-style, writes that when he became a Christian, 'I felt many of my emotional and therefore sexual needs were fulfilled through special relationships with Christian men. The boundaries we set meant no sex, but I did feel able to love and be loved' (p. 129). Michael Vasey, on the other hand, argues that 'a general Christian ethic does not require the rejection of non-marital forms of social affection. Nor does it require the same ethical evaluation of genital acts for those who are able and those who are not able to conform to the gender patterns prevailing in the culture' (p. 69).

Other essays in this symposium, as I have already pointed out, address wider issues. Most notable in this category are the contributions of Oliver O'Donovan and Anthony Thiselton. Professor O'Donovan feels that there can be a fruitful theological debate on the issue of homosexuality and he suggests ways in which it might proceed. However, he warns that so long as the Christian gay

movement 'is content to present itself in the guise of injured protest, armed with a list of rights it has been denied, then, whatever does happen, a meeting of minds will not happen' (p. 36). Professor Thiselton addresses the pressing issue as to whether hermeneutics can ease the deadlock over the disputed biblical passages and advances three provisional models of more sophisticated hermeneutical approaches. I found his essay the most helpful in the book.

I envisage that this collection of essays will provoke at least two reactions. Those who are fighting to preserve the Church's traditional teaching will feel that in its overall thrust it is too concessive. Those who want to permit stable homosexual relationships within the Church will regard the symposium as unduly cautious, even though viewpoint does find clear expression in the volume. So the debate will continue.

David Kingdon
Cardiff

Why do Christians Find it Hard to Grieve?

Geoff Walters
Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997,
viii + 204 pp., £12.99

Almost 30 years ago this reviewer was angered and saddened at the funeral of a prominent Christian surgeon where the person beamed as he said: 'Isn't this a glorious occasion?' while the widow and family were openly sobbing and grieving for the premature loss of someone who could not be replaced. Since then I have often asked the question: 'Why do Christians find it hard to grieve?' There are many books on grief, bereavement counselling and

the Christian's attitude to bereavement, but Geoff Walters, who is a Baptist minister, is surely right when he says: 'Whatever else might be said about the Christian literature on bereavement, it is usually soundly based on psychological theory ... but reluctant to tackle head on the sense in many Christians' minds that the relationship between belief in life after death and bereavement is more complex than it might be'.

Dr Walters is at pains to point out that this is not just another book on bereavement counselling, but a serious attempt to look at what the Bible says about grief and to explore how various philosophical and psychological studies have influenced the thinking of Christians about the after-life which in turn has influenced Christian writing and preaching about how western Christians approach grief.

The thirteen chapters are divided into five sections. Part 1 reviews accounts of grief in the Bible and in contemporary non-biblical accounts. He detects the beginnings of conflict in the *Apology* of Aristeides, a second century Athenian. In part 2 he traces this conflict to the influence of the Athenian philosophers, in particular Plato, who developed the idea of the immortality of the soul as a way of coping with grief by diminishing the impact of physical death and loss and enhancing the superiority of the soul which continues after death. He demonstrates how this view, in part arising out of Plato's own grief at the death of Sophocles, deeply influenced some early Christian thinkers, Augustine in particular, who grieved appropriately for the loss of his close friend in youth but on later reflection felt that this display of grief had been inappropriate in a Christian, so much so that he chastised his

young son who wailed at the deathbed of his grandmother, Monica. Part 3 seeks to explore the difference between the view derived from Greek philosophy that the soul was immortal compared with the biblical emphasis upon the unity of our personhood, body and soul, which are transformed in resurrection life. His thesis is that the Platonic/Augustinian attitude to death and grief leads to a minimising of the loss which death inevitably and irrevocably entails. While this may bring some comfort with the assurance that the deceased has 'merely moved into the next room and that all is well', to paraphrase Henry Scott Holland, it does not answer nor give meaning to the anguish of grief and the reality of the loss experienced. Accordingly, there is a dissonance between the belief that 'all is well' and the reality of loss. It is this 'death denying' subterfuge which is at the heart of many so call pathological grief reactions. There is a brief but excellent discussion here of other death denying preoccupations of our modern Western world such as the current interest in reincarnation, channelling, near death and after death experiences. Part 3 illustrates how much of current thinking on grieving has arisen from the writings of psychiatrists. Beginning with Freud, who coined the term 'grief work', to Bowlby and Murray Parkes, there has been an attempt by clinicians to understand what 'healthy' grief is and why some people are able to make progress through the process while others become trapped and enmeshed in a process of grieving which is seen to be pathological and destructive. Walters, I think rightly, tries to outline the dynamics which hinder a healthy grieving in Christians which includes the tendency to use words of comfort which derive more from a philosophy of

immortality of the soul than a theology of resurrection. Robust quotations from Barth, Küng, and Thieliicke support his contention.

Part 5 is an excellent review of how Christians view grief, the afterlife and bereavement today. Although somewhat sharp in its comments on contemporary writings and books published for a Christian readership, there is much salutary comment on the vapid content of some, inconsistencies in others and total psychological plagiarism without Christian comment in a few. By contrast in his critique of *A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis, Walters infers that Lewis was too good a theologian to accept the concept of survival of the immortal soul, hence the poignant description of the pain of grief working along with a hope based on the nature of God himself. In the final chapter there is first of all an attempt to work out a 'theology of grief?', which he believes must be based upon the biblical view of creation of human beings which sees body and soul as personhood and a psychosomatic unity. Secondly grief must be Christ-centred. Thirdly, 'death is death and will remain so unless and until God intervenes'. Fourthly, our sufferings must reflect the sufferings of Christ as we take on his mantle of suffering. Fifthly, the Christian doctrine of the resurrection must mean 'restoration to life of the whole person'. Our hope as Christians is of resurrection of full personhood but meantime we grieve as we adjust to the irrevocable loss of some aspects of relationships within this life which will not be replaced in our resurrection life.

While the author reiterates several times that this is not another book on counselling, there is much of value for the Christian pastor and anyone who is involved in the counselling of grieving people.

It has the marks of a Ph.D. thesis reordered for more popular circulation in that there is a tendency to be polemical in order to make the case. Likewise there is no reference to the thinking and writings of the Eastern Orthodox churches where the dichotomy between body and soul is less marked and Augustinian thinking less influential. That is perhaps a major omission in a work of this depth and when many contemporary Western popular theologians admit their indebtedness to Orthodox Christianity, As a psychiatrist I am wary about his espousal of specialists in counselling the bereaved within church fellowships, which can lead to a deskilling of those who have a natural gift for counselling and a minimising of the need for the whole fellowship to be helped to have a fuller theology of suffering and resurrection hope. It is an axiom that the more complex the relationship in life, the more complicated will be the grieving process following a bereavement. Dr Walters certainly has gone some way to outlining that the less adequate and robust our theology and teaching about death and the after-life, the more ineffective and inadequate will be our counselling and enabling of healthy grieving. This is a book which challenges pastoral platitude and hopefully prepares for something which can translate this material into preaching and pastoral language. Nevertheless it is the best attempt I have seen in trying to tackle the question of how 'we do grieve, but not as those without hope'.

Montagu G. Barker
Bristol

William Grimshaw of Haworth

Faith Cook

Edinburgh, Banner of Truth, 1997,
xx + 342 pages, hb., £18.95.

For those who know a little of the remarkable work of the Spirit in England in the mid-18th century and would appreciate a much more specific understanding of that work in one particular locality, Faith Cook's biography of William Grimshaw is 'a must'. Having long had an interest in the ministries of Wesley and Whitefield, I quickly became engrossed in the story of an Anglican clergyman who was visited frequently by such luminaries as John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Henry Venn and John Newton. Mrs Cook draws her material from earlier biographies as well as from hitherto unpublished manuscripts and letters. We are indebted to her for giving us not only a well researched book but also for the account of a life of extraordinary fruitfulness - literally thousands came to saving faith through Grimshaw's tireless labours.

Born of humble peasant stock, Grimshaw entered Cambridge as a sizar, securing a scholarship at the end of his first year. Although resolved to enter the Church of England, he soon learned from fellow-students 'to drink and swear and become as vile as the worst'. Nor was his lifestyle in his early ministry any different. However, in 1739 (a significant date for those who know of the beginnings of the 18th century revival), when he was thirty-one years old and shortly after the death of his first wife Jane, the young curate was converted through reading Thomas Brooks' classic, *Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices*. His ministry radically changed as the gospel of redeeming grace became his consuming passion.

In 1742 he left Todmorden, the scene of his 'follies, bereavement, his travail of soul and his new birth', for the small Pennine town of Haworth (since made famous as the home of the Brontes), and the greater part of the book is an account of the transformation effected by his ministry in both the town and its wider hinterland. Faith Cook gives us penetrating insights into Grimshaw's spiritual growth, his fiery Gospel preaching, his pastoring of his spiritual children and of the fierce persecution he underwent at the hands of unregenerate clergy (though his bishop who came to Haworth personally to investigate their complaints was profoundly impressed by the manifest work of the Spirit through this eccentric, anointed man).

Two chapters recount the painful disagreement within early Methodism between those loyal to the Church of England and those who saw a break as inevitable. Grimshaw himself sided strongly with the Wesleys (especially Charles), who never wanted to leave the Anglican Church. Increasingly reluctant to become embroiled in the controversy, he remained lovingly open to all who were true 'gospel men', refusing to dissent from the church into which he had been ordained. The book concludes with a moving account of his death, funeral and the repentance of his renegade son. There are also three valuable appendices with Grimshaw's letters, the 'covenant' he made with God and his 'Creed'.

This is a book well worth reading by those who are pastors (or intending pastors) of any denomination. While some aspects of the Anglican ministry of the 18th century are no longer relevant today (such as the immense authority a parish minister wielded over his people), the Haworth story

powerfully illustrates timeless principles which are indispensable in any fruitful ministry. Among many I mention only four. First, the importance of a disciplined devotional life which keeps the fires of love for Christ burning. Secondly, the total commitment to congregation and parish essential in any minister, without which the work soon becomes an unwanted burden. Thirdly, the need to disciple diligently those who come to living faith in Christ, this Grimshaw achieved through house groups for prayer and Bible study.

Fourthly, the painful cost of ministry as the corn of wheat dies that others may live.

The book must also be recommended reading for those who never enter the ministry for it will give an appreciation of the pathway to fruitful service. Every pastor needs such understanding and fellowship in the gospel from the mature in his flock. Thank you Faith Cook for this most valuable volume.

David C. Searle
Rutherford House, Edinburgh.

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