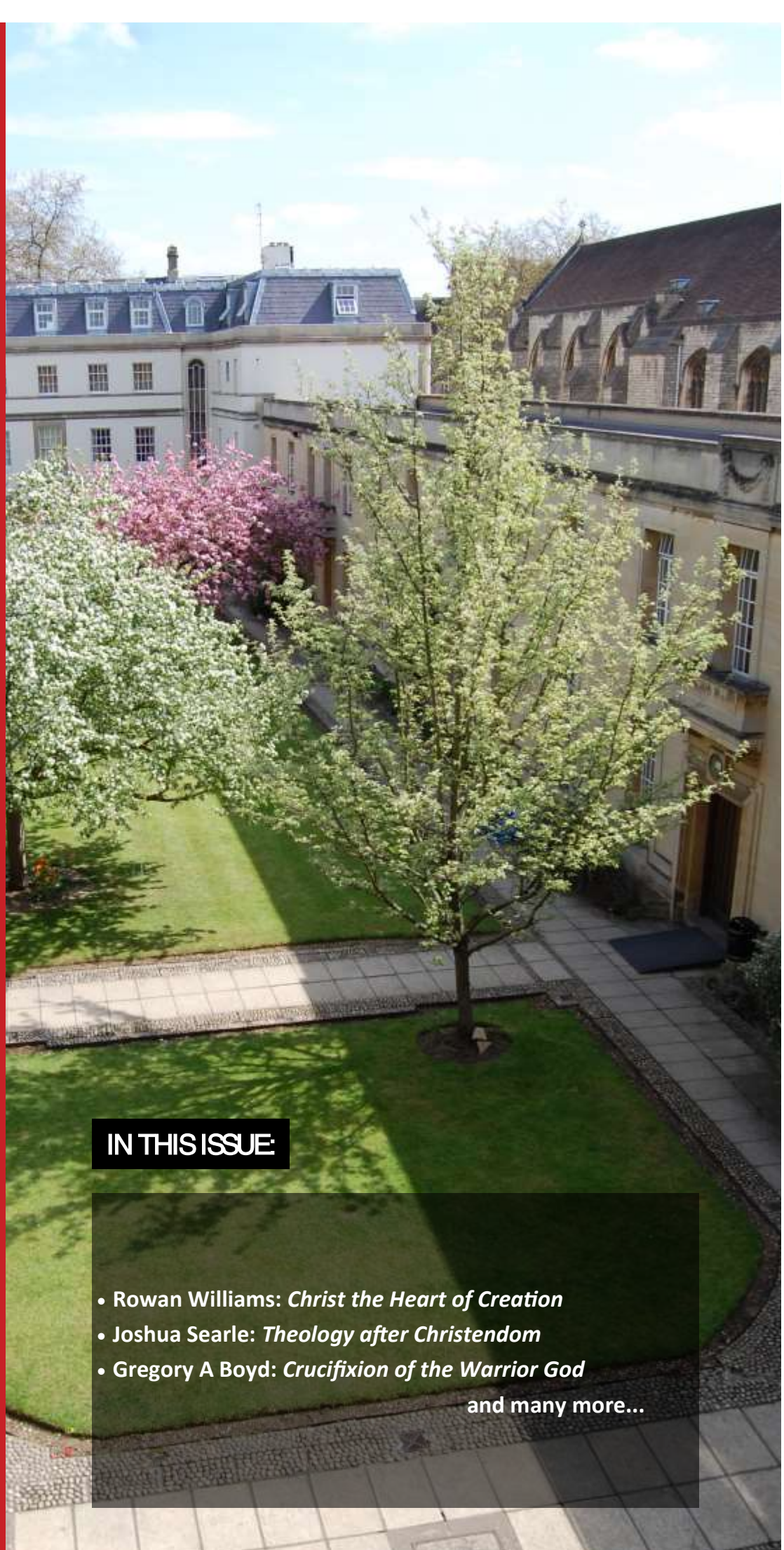


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Editorial

In this edition of *Regent's Reviews* there is an article length review of Greg Boyd's *magnum opus* *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God* by the Director of the new Centre for Bible and Violence, Helen Paynter. The Centre is based at Bristol Baptist College. Other titles under review include Rowan Williams on christology, Joshua Searle (Tutor at Spurgeon's College) on theology after Christendom, and Lauren Winner on the dangers of Christian practice.

Andy Goodliff
Editor

Gregory A. Boyd, *Crucifixion of the Warrior God*. 2 Vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

Greg Boyd begins his *magnum opus* by explaining the conundrum of Old Testament violence that drove him to write it. 'I am [...] caught between the Scylla of Jesus' affirmation of the OT as divinely inspired and the Charybdis of his nonviolent revelation of God' (p.xxix). He is motivated by a sense that all the attempts that have been offered to account for the violence of the OT were unsatisfactory.

In response to this conundrum, then, he writes this book, consisting of 1445 closely-argued, and occasionally rather discursive pages. In it he offers a novel way of reading the Old Testament, which he calls the 'Cruciform Hermeneutic'. He describes it in his introduction like this:

When we interpret these [violent] portraits of God with the resolved conviction that the true character of God is fully revealed in the crucified Christ, we are able to see beyond the surface appearance of these portraits (*viz.* beyond what mere exegesis can unveil) and discern the cruciform character of God in their "depth"... The driving conviction of the Cruciform Hermeneutic is that since Calvary gives us a perspective of God's character that is superior to what people in the OT had, we can also enjoy a superior perspective of what was actually going on when OT authors depicted God engaging in and commanding violence (p.xxxiv).

Essentially the Cruciform Hermeneutic is defined by the choice to use the Cross as the supreme lens for examining the rest of scripture. So far, so uncontroversial. However, this decision, as Boyd develops it, has three distinct elements.

First, just as at the cross God is both acting and acted upon, so the way that God 'breathed' scripture should be regarded less as a unilateral act of inspiration, but as a dialectical activity (pp.480ff.); a position that would not surprise those who are familiar with his allegiance to Openness Theology. This rather controversial-sounding suggestion is then boiled down to the rather more bland assertion that God does not over-ride the human authors but that their personhood remains intact in the 'inspiring' process. However, what this means, for Boyd, is that the revelation of God's character in the Bible can be so 'human' as to be utterly false.

If God "breathed" his definitive self-revelation on the cross by stooping to take on an appearance that mirrored the sin of the world on the cross, we ought to expect, and even look for, God to "breathe" the written witness to this revelation by sometimes stooping to take on literary appearances that mirror the sin of his people at the time. (p.488)

The second element of the Cruciform Hermeneutic is that the nature of the revelation is not in the text itself, but in the condescension with which God permits himself, in the OT, to be represented in ways that are so very other than his own character. Just as Jesus was crucified as a despised criminal, as one sinner among many, so God is represented in the OT as violent and abusive, and it is a measure of his condescension that he permits this misrepresentation.

The third element of the Cruciform Hermeneutic is that scripture contains both direct and indirect revelations of God. Thus,

To the degree that any portrait of God reflects a character that is antithetical to the cruciform character of God revealed on the cross, I submit that we must consider it an indirect revelation that bears witness to God's historic faithfulness in continually stooping to allow the fallen and culturally conditioned state of his people to act on him, as much as was necessary. And to this degree, the portrait can be understood as participating in the sin-bearing ugliness of the cross (p.502).

This then leads to the strikingly counter-intuitive assertion that,

The more a scriptural accommodation *conceals* God's true nature on its surface, the more profoundly it *reveals* God's true nature in its depths... we might say that the less a canonical portrait *directly* reveals God's true nature, the more it *indirectly* reveals God's true nature when interpreted with the depth perception of a cross-informed faith (p.651).

That is a brief summary of the first volume of Boyd's work. In the second, he sets out in much more detail how this hermeneutic then plays out in practice. Even more briefly, these are: (1) Cruciform Accommodation: God assumes a 'mask' that takes the form of 'a literary appearance that reflects the ugliness of his people's sin and curse' (p.634); (2) The Principle of Redemptive Withdrawal: divine judgment is simply a withdrawing of the protective presence of God, and a handing-over of people to the 'boomerang' effects of their own sin; (3) The Principle of Cosmic Conflict: God permits licence to the cosmic forces of evil and chaos and thus 'allow[s] one form of evil to punish another, always as a stepping-stone to the ultimate self-implosion of evil brought about by Christ's crucifixion (p.1146); (4) The Principle of Semi-Autonomous Power: When God grants supernatural power to an individual they retain some control over how they administer it, and thus divine power can be harnessed to evil purposes.

I will begin my analysis by stating that I very largely share Boyd's starting point. I also have surveyed the offered theodicies for the violent narratives of the conquest and found none of them wholly satisfactory. I also would affirm that our highest revelation of God's character is found in Jesus Christ crucified. And I also read the texts of the conquest with the conviction that, if I could but see it, 'something else is going on' (p.631 and *passim*).

There are elements of this book which I think are extremely helpful. The idea of the 'boomerang effect' of sin, whereby the consequences are permitted to rebound onto the offender is quite useful. Boyd likens this to the martial art of Aikido, where the opponent's aggressive energy is channelled back onto him. This is close to (but perhaps not identical with) the biblical law of talion (an eye for an eye) which underpins a great deal of the language of both Old and New Testaments. See for example, the Psalmist's plea, 'Repay them according to their deeds, and for their works of evil. Repay them for what their hands have done; bring back on them what they deserve' (Ps 28:4); the appeal against Babylon in Revelation 18, 'For her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Give back to her as she has done to others'. It is even to be found in the words of Jesus: 'Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down,

shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. (Luke 6:38) and 'forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors' (Matthew 6:11).

However, Boyd's exploration of the removal of divine protection is not unproblematic. For example he uncritically assumes that the divine presence always brings blessing; however, in Exodus (for example) it is shown to be both utterly desirable and at the same time utterly terrifying. Nonetheless, the idea of the removal of divine protection is a helpful one which may help us to account for some of the puzzling episodes in biblical history.

A second element which I appreciated about the book was his clear and helpful summary of the theme of cosmic conflict which weaves its way through both Testaments. I agree with him that this is a very significant and often underestimated theme that forms part of the worldview of the ancient writers and should shape our interpretation of these texts.

However, while there are elements of the book that I appreciate very much, I am unable to concur with the essential thesis of the Cruciform Hermeneutic for a number of reasons.

First, I cannot find that Boyd ever defines 'violence', and this is hugely problematic. Depending on the idea of violence that one is working with, violence can embrace structural inequality, coercive action, and inaction which leads to harm. By several of these definitions even Boyd's description of God might be said to be violent. And, indeed, do we really want a deity who is utterly meek? We certainly want parents who will stand up for us and defend us with words and—in an extreme situation—actions. We want parents who will thrust us violently out of danger. Flawed as these parallels are, I cannot find it in me to wish for a God who will never exercise power on my behalf.

For these reasons, Boyd's repeated assertion that God is totally non-violent does not appear to me to be borne out by (even) the New Testament. There are many examples of Jesus speaking of judgment, and violent images of judgment in Revelation. I am not persuaded that these can all be attributed to the divine Aikido and the cosmic conflict. Further, it does not seem to me that the removal of protection, or the permitting of evil can really exonerate God (if exoneration is required) from the charge of coercion. I'm not even convinced that Openness Theology (to which I do not subscribe) can wholly remove the issue. If God is the master strategist, the chess Grand Master who uses his superior wisdom to outsmart us despite ourselves (see pp. 267 – 274), can this truly be described as a non-coercive act? Job certainly didn't think so: 'If I summoned him [to court] and he answered me, I do not believe that he would listen to my voice. For he crushes me with a tempest... If it is a contest of strength, he is the strong one!' (Job 9:16-19).

Second, even if we were to concur that the 'New Testament God' is utterly non-violent, there is a huge difference between claiming that such a revelation needs to condition our reading of the Old Testament, and claiming that the New

Testament utterly trumps the Old Testament revelation. If we follow Boyd's argument to its ultimate conclusion, we can trust nothing that the Old Testament says unless and until it is validated by the New Testament. In other words there is no authentic, reliable revelation of God prior to the coming of Jesus Christ. This seems to me to be immensely problematic. For one thing, it is very derogatory of Judaism, which I would wish to affirm as having an authentic, though incomplete, revelation of the true God. Boyd refers repeatedly to Jesus repudiating parts of the Old Testament, for example the law of talion (p.71). I think this is based on a failure to appreciate the development of morality which both talion and Jesus' words represent. It is easy to look forward to the unattained concept of perfectly loving our enemy, and then look backwards at talion and so view it as a regressive move. In other words we see Jesus and talion pulling us in opposite directions. More appropriate, I think, is to view talion as a significant limitation to the custom of personal vengeance, and then see Jesus' instructions to love our enemies as a further move in the same direction. (Boyd does address a version of this suggestion on p.71, but I do not find his objections convincing.)

Third, there is an important difference between saying that the revelation of God is incomplete in the Old Testament—as it surely is even in the New—and claiming that the more evil God appears to be in the OT, the more it is in fact testifying to his goodness. There is something so utterly perverse about this that it would surely amount to a lie on a cosmic scale. Of course Boyd gets around this by his use of Openness Theology: God cannot control (and therefore be held responsible for) what is written in scripture, or what is done in his name. He is not sovereign, just a much better chess player than we are. But in the case of the Old Testament, he appears to have lost rather badly.

Fourth, it seems to me that Boyd has made the problem bigger than he needs to, and this is a pity. It is always a danger that a scholar who has a good idea tries to apply it to everything, and I fear that this is a trap that Boyd has fallen into. Biblical violence is a very broad category, and the diverse texts of violence cannot all be addressed with the same tool. I argue in my own forthcoming book that if we consider them carefully, quite a large number of incidents can be fairly easily explained, and the 'problem' thus reduced to a core of hard texts. (For example, the *description* of violent action without divine endorsement should not be regarded as problematic in the same way that the divine *command* to violence is.) Boyd does not appear to appreciate this. So, for example, he lists four 'violent' actions of God from Hosea, Jeremiah, Leviticus and Deuteronomy (p.651), with no apparent appreciation that they do not constitute the same type of speech act and therefore might require different tools to address them. In a similar vein, he uncritically assumes that the technical word *herem* means 'kill'. In actual fact the semantic field of this word is broad and complex. It is not helpful to collapse it down to its most problematic translational option. Indeed, at times, he seems perversely determined to think the worst of the difficult passages. For example he argues that in Numbers 25 the over-zealous Phinehas ran the couple through while they were in the act of pleading for mercy (p.311). They were in fact in the man's tent and their bodies were adjoined! It seems much more likely that they were engaged in another, less contritional act!

Finally, I feel that one of Boyd's core premises, that God is a sin-bearing God because Jesus was misrepresented on the Cross, is rather missing the point. Jesus certainly is represented as a sinner to the onlookers, but this is not the central feature of the sin-bearing at the Cross, at least in my own theological understanding. The point is not that Jesus takes on the appearance of sin, but that he bears the consequence for sin. I cannot see how this might translate back into a hermeneutic of cruciformity but to omit it surely suggests that the theory is not as watertight as it might be.

In summary, I am glad that I have read this book, though it represents a large investment of time. There is much that I appreciate about it, and I am always delighted to find a fellow-scholar who—like me—is committed to the goodness of God and the inspiration of Scripture, and who shares my determination not to let go of God or the text until we have wrested a blessing. May God continue to shed light upon his word for all who truly seek him there.

Helen Paynter

Centre for Study of the Bible and Violence, Bristol

Rowan Williams, *Christ the Heart of Creation* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018)

This engaging exploration of key developments in Christology is dedicated to the memory both of John Bainbridge Webster and Austin Marsden Farrer, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the latter's death. Key writers, including Farrer, are introduced within the preface and Farrer's work, especially his Bampton Lectures, are further explored in the Introduction, and this with particular focus upon the principle expressed most famously by Nicholas of Cusa, that God is *non aliud* - 'not another thing' (xiv). Indeed, this maxim could be taken as the recurring litmus test throughout this study of the ways in which the person of Jesus Christ has been conceived. Though Farrer is used to introduce the Introduction, the chief conversation partner here is Thomas Aquinas and the manner in which Thomas follows through the *non aliud* principle (albeit long before its expression by de Cusa). In one sense the work of Farrer and Przywara top and tail Rowan Williams's discussion but in another sense the starting and ending point of the discussion rests with Thomas Aquinas and Dietrich Bonhoeffer: these are the writers with whom Williams most clearly identifies but their thought is utilised to bracket an impressively penetrating overview of the historical development of Christological understanding.

Following this Introduction with its appreciation of Thomas and its rather less appreciative account of his leading critics (Duns Scotus in particular), the book is divided into two parts, each with two sections: Formulating the Question; Refining the Vocabulary; Loss and Recovery; Christ, Creation and Community.

The first section, Formulating the Question, traces the development of reflections on the person of Christ from their New Testament origins, through Nicaea, to Augustine. There is nothing especially new in this analysis, nor either in the section that immediately follows, what is impressive is the extraordinary clarity

with which Williams penetrates the detail of debate without ever losing focus, not just on the big picture, but more fundamentally on the big issue.

The second section, Refining the Vocabulary, engages with the early Byzantine Theology that instigated and responded to the formula agreed at Chalcedon. Once again, the clear-sighted manner in which the refined and refining arguments of Leontius of Byzantium and Leontius of Jerusalem, Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus, are represented is exemplary. Having said that, I remain unconvinced by the diothelite arguments: while Maximus and John are clear that 'will', like 'nature', is not a 'something', in contemporary thought 'will' is a defining characteristic of an agent rather than an aspect of nature – if the term 'person' has been rendered unhelpful in Trinitarian debate through its contemporary connotations surely that same qualification should be recognised in relation to 'will'.

The third section (the first subdivision of the second part of this book) considers Calvin and the re-formation of Christology under the heading 'Loss and Recovery'. It is difficult not to conclude that, for Williams, the 'loss' relates not just to the nominalism of Scotus and Ockham, but also, to some degree at least, to Luther. What may be surprising to some is Williams's overwhelming affirmation of Calvin and the parallels he draws between Calvin and Thomas. Here I found myself rather less than convinced by Williams's (brief) analysis of Calvin's language of satisfaction – once again Williams prompts me to a re-reading of a text with which I had thought myself thoroughly familiar.

The fourth and final section, Christ, Creation and Community, is subtitled 'Christology in the shadow of the Antichrist' dealing briefly with Barth and at far greater length (and depth) with Bonhoeffer. Probably because it represents a current personal interest I found this chapter by far the most intriguing but also the most puzzling, and that in two respects. In the first place Bonhoeffer, like Thomas Aquinas at the other pole of this study, notoriously lends himself to radically different interpretations – all I can conclude is that I find the Bonhoeffer here rendered by Williams immensely attractive and persuasive. But in the second place (and having read the text several times) I haven't quite understood how the radical rootedness of Bonhoeffer's Christology in Jesus of Nazareth differs in essence from the interpretations of Karl Barth's rejection of any *logos asarkos* by McCormack, Jenson, and Jüngel (discussions with which Williams briefly engages earlier in this section and anticipates, to some degree, in the previous section).

The conclusion to the book is given the title 'Christ, the Heart of Creation: The Tension in Metaphysics and Theology' which itself concludes (p.250) with perhaps the most remarkable paragraph on ecclesiology I have ever encountered, but does so following an extended engagement with Erich Przywara. I have to confess that I have never read Przywara and consequently cannot tell whether the impenetrability of the early part of this chapter is down to Przywara or to Williams's account of Przywara.

The Appendix that follows the Conclusion carries the title 'Concluding (Untheological?) Postscript: Wittgenstein, Kierkegaard and Chalcedon'. Untheological it most certainly is not but rather, from a very different starting place, the chapter restates the principle identified in the Preface, that God is not 'another thing': 'Any qualification of the Chalcedonian insistence on the completeness of the two 'natures' will in fact compromise the grammar of God: it will imply that God acts in the world by displacing finite agency and thus cannot exist in the same logical space as finite agency. But if this is the case, then divine agency becomes a rival fact in the universe; and as such it cannot make upon us the unconditional claim that it purports to' (p.271).

There are a series of ways by which one can assess the significance of a work of this kind. Most simply (and crudely) one can count the number of quotations lifted from the text (thirty-three in this case though it could easily have been far more). More deeply a book can be measured by what one has learnt through reading it, especially if the areas covered are areas with which one is already familiar: time and again as I read through this work I was challenged in some of my assumptions and prompted to go back to sources and to read them again. But, similarly, one can assess the significance of a work by the degree to which it prompts one, having re-engaged the sources, to respond.

In response then, to what is a truly remarkable book, I would have a number of quibbles, some of which I have already identified within this review. It may be more of a reflection on the tradition than on Williams's account of the tradition but, other than in relation to Calvin, the Holy Spirit receives sparse attention, as if this Trinitarian relation was redundant in the relatedness of the Father to the Son and the Son to the Father, as if an understanding of the Spirit might help us not one whit to think through the dynamics of the life of the Son made incarnate. In addition I remain particularly puzzled by the title of the book since, notwithstanding points made within the Conclusion, an understanding of the relation between Incarnation and Creation features little in the body of the book. Gunton wrote much on this relationship but he receives no mention and neither (unless I missed it) does Irenaeus: perhaps there is something in Augustine's account of creation (and redemption) that should be challenged by the account of Christology with which Williams concludes?

The story of the development of Christological reflection is littered with futile attempts to understand the person of Jesus of Nazareth according to preconceived categories of what it means to be divine and what it means to be human rather than allowing this single person to define to us what it truly means to be human (not a something) and what it truly means to be divine (not a something else). It's a long time since I read any book that has prompted me to reflect on this principle of method in such a sustained and searching manner.

John E. Colwell
Budleigh Salterton, Devon.

Joshua Searle, *Theology After Christendom: Forming Prophets For a Post-Christian World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018)

This book by Joshua Searle is passionate, provocative and at times polemic. It is part of the *After Christendom* Series which was launched with Stuart Murray's, *Post-Christendom* in 2004, and continues very much in that vein. Searle assumes we are living in a post-Christendom era, with Christendom understood and portrayed in overwhelmingly negative terms.

It is passionate, and in this clearly reflects the author's own commitments and approach. Searle's overwhelming concern is for a passionate and missional church that engages dynamically with the contemporary culture. A central way the book considers the relationship between church and culture, as hinted in the subtitle, is that of the prophetic. Searle asks in chapter 2, 'Where have all the prophet's gone' and explores ways that the church might regain its prophetic voice in the public square. On this basis the book moves into quite a range of different areas. In many ways the book is really about the church as a missional community and the agent of God's kingdom, and then more specifically about how the church engages in theology and forms its members and then the contribution that theological colleges have to this process.

Searle sets out to write narrative theology or 'biography as theology', and a significant amount of the introduction sets out his own story and the way this has shaped his understanding, and this narrative approach is an engaging and helpful aspect of the book, and at times this means a more circular approach rather than linear argument. An Anabaptist heritage, the study of history as well as theology, the Northumbrian community and Eastern Europe all feature significantly. There is a sense in which Searle would understand himself first as a disciple, then as a theologian and then as currently a tutor in a theological college – the breadth of the book reflects the author as a person.

Searle draws very broadly theologically, which is another strength of the book. In terms of theological education, James K A Smith's insistence that we are fundamentally lovers rather than thinkers permeates the book. Nikolai Berdayev, the Russian political and existential philosopher is a key dialogue partner, reflecting Searle's knowledge of and interest in Eastern Europe. Then, for example, liberation theology, process theology and Anabaptist theologians are all drawn on and discussed throughout.

The book is also provocative, and clearly intentionally so. It is provocative in the way the book deals with the past. Much of the traditional and historical approach to the practice of theology is dismissed as irrelevant, discussing internal church issues rather than engaging politically and culturally. Theology, Searle rightly insists, must always be connected with life; therefore, the historical separation out of theological sub-disciplines, in a Schleiermarcean approach has been unhelpful. In this way the label 'Christendom' is used very broadly, at times I feel too broadly, as a way of putting to one side a negative, contaminated way of doing theology. Certainly at time the theologians of the church have been too inward looking, but questions about the nature of God are deeply formative and

relevant to a missional and prophetic church. The book is also provocative where it seeks inspiration and in the way it offers models. Marx and Nietzsche, for example, are offered as examples of more modern prophets, even though they have often been dismissed by the church.

There are times when the passionate and provocative case would benefit from some more careful argument. Generally this volume, as the wider series, sees a very abrupt and negative change through the 'conversion' of Constantine – the inverted commas are Searle's – whereas there is a case that some of these institutional changes were already beginning to happen in the church, and the broad brush strokes in the book at times paint the pre-Constantine church in too idyllic way. There are also moments when there is some uncertainty in Searle's argument. Justin, Tertullian and Augustine are all discussed (chapter 3) in terms of the relationship of philosophy to faith, and the impact of Christendom, but the briefness with which they are discussed makes any serious discussion difficult; similarly, the scholastic and mystical traditions are painted in very exclusive terms.

Finally, the book is generally polemic in tone. This is, in many ways, the lasting impression of reading the book chapter by chapter. Searle certainly does not pull his punches and offers some important and necessary challenges; those who would already be generally in agreement with Searle's approach will find much to help them, but I wonder whether a slightly less polemical style might help others to journey with Searle to see the world and the church in a different way. There is much in the book that will be of interest, value and challenge to a wider audience. Although there is a sense that this is the author reflecting on his own experience and practice as a theological college tutor this is much more than a book on developing theological education – although it is that as well. Searle is tutor in theology and public thought at Spurgeon's and his classes will certainly be lively discussions. The book's concern for a missional church that engages with the contemporary public square makes it something valuable for a much broader audience.

This reviewer would want to support the direction Searle takes us and I found much here to make me stop and think again. In general terms I would not want to be as polemic, or perhaps even as provocative – but maybe these are features of a prophet!

Anthony Clarke
Regent's Park College, Oxford

Steven D. Cone, *Theology from the Great Tradition* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 726 pp.

Steven D. Cone is Professor of Theology at Lincoln Christian University, IL, and the author of several books, including *An Ocean Vast of Blessing: A Theology of Grace* (Eugene, OR, 2014). From the most cursory glance online, two things stand out about him: first, a desire to foster engagement with historical theology,

acknowledging a living tradition; and, second, a loving commitment to teaching. Professor Cone's web profile at LCU begins not with professional credentials or a list of research interests, but a statement of enthusiasm and indebtedness to students. He is a thinking teacher, grateful for the questions which 'keep pushing me to help [my students] find better answers'. These two qualities are also the hallmarks of this book and must be borne firmly in mind in any attempt to assess its value. It is not a work of original or constructive theology, but that is hardly the point. It is a work of creative and accessible pedagogy, suitable for high school and entry-level undergraduate students, and probably helpful for resourcing teachers. It is a storehouse of theological wisdom from the Christian tradition, like the surfeit of memories contained within the human mind to which St Augustine refers in his *Confessions* (Bk 10).

The book benefits from a clear structure: fifteen 'modules', each subdivided into one, two or three theological explorations, and culminating in discussion of particular theologians in their historical contexts. The modules are: Theological Foundations, Theological Authorities, Doctrine of God, The Trinity, The Work of God, Human Beings, Sin, The Person of Christ, The Work of Christ, The Holy Spirit, Salvation, The Church, Ministry and Sacraments, Eternal Life, Christianity and the World Religions. The thematic approach is an undoubted strength, since it avoids the potential arbitrariness of periodisation, encouraging readers not only to think about the topic at hand, but also to enter a conversation already taking place within the tradition *as a whole*, between voices from different eras. For instance, in very short order, an exploration of faith and reason (II. 8, pp. 136-50) introduces Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Augustine, Aquinas, twentieth-century Reformed Protestantism (the Belgic Confession and the Barmen Declaration), James Cone, and Benedict XVI. Each thinker receives a short encyclopaedia-style synopsis which, though far from satisfying, largely succeeds in whetting the appetite.

It is especially welcome that the book includes a good number of female theologians, the neglect of whom in many college and university courses is both an injustice and an impoverishment. To Professor Cone's credit, he has included entries on Hildegard of Bingen (pp.286-88) and Mechthild of Magdeburg (p.289) from the Middle Ages, and Sarah Coakley (p.215), Mary Hayter (pp.291-92), and Kathryn Tanner (pp.662-63) from the modern era. There are also further references to female theologians, such as Catherine of Siena (p.288), in passing. Much more of this would have been welcome, as well as greater visibility for the defining female figure of the Great Tradition, the Virgin Mary; after all, Mariology is *the* hermeneutical key unlocking and safeguarding so much else, from the Incarnation to the Communion of Saints. In this book, Mary features mainly by accident (or, at best, by default) and if the Fathers had not chosen to include her name in early credal statements, one wonders whether she would have appeared at all. Even when a painting of the Assumption is used to illustrate a discussion of the Last Things (fig. 43.3, p.662), there is no exposition of its accompanying theology. The absence of Mary is a glaring and unfortunate omission. In fact, it is doubtful whether many of the theologians with whom Professor Cone is sincerely inviting his readers to engage, would themselves recognise the Great Tradition without the Mother of God at its heart, pointing to her Son.

Notwithstanding this, the book is a rich and accessible resource for anyone approaching historical theology for the first time, and it will undoubtedly be helpful to teachers constructing their own courses. It has been written by a teacher for his colleagues and students in an admirable spirit of inclusive pedagogy, introduced in the preface (pp. xxii-iv) and carried throughout. From the first, the tone is constructive and encouraging without being wet; for instance, whilst Professor Cone has opted not to use gender-neutral pronouns for God, he has provided a clear and generous statement of his rationale (p. xxiii). In turn, the presentation is unintimidating (something of a feat for a book of 726 pages), combining clear summaries and informative contextual notes, key ideas highlighted in bold and, at the end of each chapter, discussion questions and helpful indicative bibliographies. There are also many pictures, though they are not always used appropriately; for instance, to illustrate discussion of the *Spiritual Exercises*, an image of Ignatius of Loyola would have been preferable to that of Teresa of Avila (fig. 7.2, p.127). Finally, inclusivity is also the objective; namely, to uncover the Great Tradition for as many people as possible, especially Professor Cone's fellow Protestants, for whom he suggests that it can seem 'bewildering' (p.xxiv). It is indeed a treasure-trove, each glittering gem, whilst not wholly visible, inviting the reader to look more closely, with the promise of riches to come. It is not the whole story, but just enough to initiate and, hopefully, inspire.

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Christopher R. Baker and Elaine Graham (eds), *Theology for Changing Times: John Atherton and the Future of Public Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2018), 192pp.

In an age when the church in the west is in decline, it becomes a matter of urgency to ensure that the voice of the gospel continues to be heard in the public forum. Until his retirement in 2004, John Atherton was Canon Theologian of Manchester Cathedral, an honorary lecturer in Christian Social Ethics and secretary of the William Temple Foundation. He was the author of eight volumes of public theology, published at a time of great change in the public arena. The key events of his time included: the collapse of the Soviet Union, financial deregulation, Thatcherism, 9/11 and the early indications of the now more prevalent rise in nationalism and populism that is challenging liberal democracy in parts of the developed world.

This collection of essays celebrates the values which Atherton promoted. The title is a deliberate homage to Atherton's *Public Theology for Changing Times*. He believed in the importance of the context of any theological reflection and that the remit of theology should range far beyond a narrow focus on church to consider society's contemporary challenges. In the 1980s and 90s, a major political preoccupation was with the free market. The Anglican report, *Faith in the city*, had attracted considerable opposition to the church's involvement in

political matters, not least from the government of the day. Yet Atherton was critical of the report for failing to offer a sufficiently hard-hitting critique of the prevailing political and economic attitudes of those in power. Atherton's work *Faith in the Nation* asserted the importance of a moral heart to economics and the concept of a common good. After an introductory essay by the editors, it is appropriate therefore that the first main contribution is an essay by Atherton himself, setting the scene on the ethics of material wellbeing from a Christian viewpoint.

The list of contributors is impressive. Largely British academics, there is an understandable preponderance of William Temple Foundation Trustees. Most are from an Anglican background although there is an essay on 'Flourishing and Ambiguity in UK urban mission' from Anna Ruddick, community theologian and Research Fellow at Bristol Baptist College. Lesley Atherton, John's daughter and administrative assistant for the latter part of his life, writes a preface. The editors are Christopher Baker, William Temple Professor of Religion and Public Life at Goldsmiths, and Elaine Graham, Grosvenor Research Professor of Practical Theology at the University of Chester (where Atherton himself held a senior post in the final part of his career).

Like the many books, essays and articles of the author honoured by this collection, the content comprises a deeply theological exploration of economics, social justice, industry, politics, government, social ethics and morality. The contributors echo Atherton's strong belief in making sense of theology as a public discourse for the re-shaping of society. Like him, they are willing to look ahead into what is emerging – for example, the further development of the digital economy and an attempt at a Catholic public theology for the future in Northern Ireland. In that sense, the scope of the topics covered by these essays is very wide indeed. This is fitting for an author who liked to see beyond narrow subject disciplines to take a more panoramic view of society, the church and theology. The editors bring the various strands identified in the essays together with an afterword. This explores the relevance of Atherton's legacy and desire for public theology in an age of Brexit and Trump, among many other signs of crisis in public, economic and political life in the west. Once again, the emphasis is upon context: connecting God to the contemporary world – a favourite theme of Atherton.

In his *Church Times* review of this collection, the Bishop of Worcester commented that this was a book 'which will not yield its fruit without effort'. That is a fair assessment: this is not easy reading. At a time when we are being offered polarised choices in the political world, this collection is a sobering call to look at the whole context and ask some searching questions – and to conduct our reflection in the public arena.

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Paul Avis (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ecclesiology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 649pp.

This is a significant and comprehensive dictionary as one would expect from a leading expert on ecclesiology, Paul Avis. He has assembled a team of 26 authors to cover this topic in both a historical and contemporary pattern of 28 chapters covering Biblical foundations, resources from the traditions, major modern ecclesiologists and contemporary movements in ecclesiology.

The bulk, but not all, of the authors hail from British academia with Durham and Oxford predominating. However, authors from Singapore, Strasbourg, Berlin, Miami, Waco, Heidelberg and Rome ensure that this volume has an international feel.

In an opening chapter Paul Avis informs us that ecclesiology has undergone a renaissance since the Second World War. He believes three factors have influenced this. He cites these as Karl Barth's monumental "Church Dogmatics" and his reaction to the challenge to German Protestantism through the rise of Adolf Hitler. His second source of impetus is the Second Vatican Council and the changes in the official attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement. His third source for renaissance is the ecumenical movement itself and the manifold pattern of bilateral and multilateral dialogues which have taken place and in which Baptists, along with many others, have joined.

Let me deal with the Baptist tradition first. Paul Fiddes has a chapter on Baptist concepts of the church and their antecedents. As we would expect from Professor Fiddes, this is an excellent overview exploring themes he has engaged with elsewhere about the covenant nature of classic Baptist ecclesiology. He explores both Separatist and Anabaptist antecedents, noting there must have been Anabaptist influence on the congregation of Smythe and Helwys in Amsterdam.

In classic form Fiddes ensures his chapter concludes with a statement on the dynamism of Baptist ecclesiology with the fluidity of authority within the local church and between the local manifestations of the church. The references and suggested reading at the end of the chapter provide an excellent reference point for those outside our tradition seeking to know more.

Paul Avis himself reviews Anglican ecclesiology, noting that Anglican theologians have sometimes struggled to identify what makes Anglicanism different from other major traditions. He has addressed that internal struggle he explores the question "is Anglicanism Protestant by any other name?" He helpfully suggests that it only makes sense to see an identifiable Anglican ecclesiology from a point somewhere in the first third of the seventeenth century, recognising that the earlier Church of England was subject to the whims of the Monarch. Helpfully, Avis engages with the terms "Anglican" and "Anglicanism" exploring what it means to be a global communion of thirty nine member churches, which he notes are ambiguously termed "provinces".

Ormond Rush, a Roman Catholic Professor from Australia, sets out Roman Catholic Ecclesiology from the Council of Trent to Vatican II and beyond. A shorter chapter than some others, he referencing and suggested reading are comprehensive and will benefit anyone seeking to understand contemporary Roman Catholic ecclesiology.

There are very readable chapters on the church in the Synoptic Gospels, the Johanine vision of the church, the shape of the Pauline churches and the church in the General Epistles. All carefully assembled by well-known Biblical scholars. Pentecostal ecclesiologies and contemporary movements such as Feminist critiques, Liberation Theologies, Asian and African ecclesiologies are also covered.

Has this book any deficiencies as a resource to turn to on matters ecclesial? I offer two. There is a single chapter on the church of the Magisterial Reformers written by Lutheran scholar, Dorothea Wendebourg of the Humboldt University in Berlin. Inevitably, the ecclesiology described and reflected upon is principally Lutheran. Here argument is that Luther provides the key element of the kinship of the classic Protestant Churches. Certainly, Luther and Lutheranism as developed by Philipp Melanchthon deserves a chapter in this Dictionary. However, the Reformed churches arising out of the work of Huldrych Zwingli and Jean Calvin receive only modest attention and Zwingli, himself, who conducted a major ecclesial reform in Zurich, receives no mention in the text, apart from one note by Paul Fiddes in the chapter on Baptists. If I was a reviewer for the Church of Scotland, the Dutch Reformed Church or the Reformed Church of Hungary, not to forget the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom, would I feel this Dictionary had explored my own ecclesial tradition? I suspect I would not. For instance, Eldership, so important in these traditions, is not a topic covered, but seems a key element of Reformed and Presbyterian ecclesiology.

My second area of deficiency relates to the chapters on "Major modern Ecclesiologists". Certainly, Barth, Congar, Rahner, Ratzinger, Pannenberg and Zizioulas all deserve chapters. Given that the editor is an Anglican, we would concede Rowan Williams should be there. However, I do not understand why Miroslav Volf is not included. As Jürgen Moltmann commented on the cover of *After Our Likeness – The Church as the Image of the Trinity*, "Volf is a match for his dialogue partners, Zizioulas and Ratzinger."

So, in summation, this is an impressive Dictionary which deserves to be in every seminary and college library. In my judgment it has a slight bias towards the Anglican tradition and is deficient in treatment of the Reformed/Presbyterian churches and fails in not having a chapter on a contemporary ecclesiologist in the baptistic/free church tradition, namely Miroslav Volf.

Keith G Jones
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George Hunsinger (ed.), *Karl Barth: Post-Holocaust Theologian?* (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 171pp.

Karl Barth had a complicated relationship to Jews and Judaism. Renowned as a great Christian theologian who opposed the Nazis and condemned anti-Semitism as a heresy; he also confessed his need to suppress an 'irrational aversion' and 'allergic reaction' in his personal encounters with living Jews. He taught that Israel and the Church are part of 'the one community of God' but also that 'Israel hears but does not believe the divine promise', and that Judaism is 'Yahweh-religion without Yahweh'. This volume faces up to these and other contradictions and offers a lively debate around the subject of Barth's contribution to the Christian encounter with Judaism.

In this book, George Hunsinger brings together nine excellent essays from leading Barth scholars. Each seeks in some way to engage with the work of Karl Barth in developing a Post-Holocaust theology. Six of the essays have appeared elsewhere but Hunsinger provides a great service in reprinting them in one place together with three completely new essays.

Three of the essays deal substantively with Barth's, *Church Dogmatics (CD) II/2* where Barth has much to say about Israel and the Church. The first is the now classic essay of Eberhard Busch that forms chapter 3. Busch defends Barth against those who have found in Barth's doctrine and conduct an underlying anti-Semitism. He then offers an appreciative reappraisal of Barth's exposition of Romans 9-11 in *CD II/2*. If there are anti-Jewish-sounding statements, they reflect the anti-Jewish-sounding statements of Paul. Yet Paul is developing the thesis that (1) God's covenant with Israel is irrevocable and, (2) the church's connection with Israel is indissoluble. For Barth, drawing on Calvin, there is one covenant in two dispensations. Thus, Israel and the Church bear witness to the grace of God in different but complementary ways. 'Instead of conducting a mission to the Jews, Christianity should stand in alliance with them and attest the gospel among the heathen' (p. 52). In Busch's reading, Barth is far from anti-Jewish because, for Barth, Jews and Gentiles, 'unmixed and yet inseparable' make up 'the one community of God' (p. 54).

Derek Alan Woodard-Lehman offers a less sympathetic reading of the same material but then proposes a solution. He accuses Barth of his own kind of structural, dialectical, supersessionism that 'resorts to all the standard tropes of the *adversus Judaeos* lexicon'. Employing Zygmunt Bauman's terminology, Woodard-Lehman finds Barth's teaching on Israel here not so much anti-Semitic as 'allosemitic'. 'It abstracts the concept of the Jew from empirical Jews' and treats actual living Jews with indifference (pp. 78-79). Woodard-Lehman's solution is to correct the Barth of *CD II/2*, §34-35 by means of the Barth of *CD IV/1*, §62.2. In "The Being of the Community" (*CD IV/1*, §62.2), Barth characterises 'the Jewish "No" historically rather than typologically'. He thus 'allows us to differentiate between *unbelief* before Christ, *disbelief* at the time of Christ and in the apostolic age, and present *nonbelief*. He also now assigns the blame for present Jewish nonbelief to the Church and its two millennia of persecution.' Woodard-Lehman asserts that, "The present Jewish "No" to Christ is

most basically a “Yes” to YHWH’. Further, the Jewish “No” that is also a “Yes” can provide a vital corrective to Christian ‘overly realised eschatology’ (pp. 80-82).

David E. Demson also wrestles with Barth’s exposition of Romans 9-11 in *CD II/2* but then seeks to ‘recast it from within’ for contemporary Gentile Christians. He identifies three lines of argument in Barth and transforms them as follows. (1) If Barth saw that those Jews who were disobedient to Paul’s gospel were (temporarily) excluded by it, we Gentile Christians are now excluded wherever we wish ‘to have the God of Israel without the Jews’. (2) If the history of Israel shows that Israel has always been disobedient, ‘the history of the church reveals that it has always expressed enmity toward Jews.’ This points to their damnation because, ‘To express any enmity toward Jews as Jews is to express enmity toward Jesus Christ’(pp. 95-96). (3) The hope of Romans 11 is that God will awaken obedience among the disobedient. For Gentile Christians this becomes ‘the hope that all the Gentile Christians will be awakened from enmity toward their Jewish brothers and sisters to affection for them’ (p. 97). By this rereading, Demson seeks to provide a Barthian reinterpretation of Barth that moves his original argument in a direction he would have approved.

Mark R. Lindsay’s essay (Chapter 1) compares Barth’s theology with that of Jewish Orthodox rabbi and theologian Eliezer Berkovits. Unlike Barth, Berkovits dealt explicitly with the question of whether faith in God is possible after Auschwitz. While Barth nowhere addresses this concern directly, his concept of the divine self-revelation might offer a possible approach to it. Lindsay finds common ground between Barth’s insistence that God’s self-revelation ‘is always a veiling as well’ and Berkovits’s concept of ‘the divine *Hester Panim*, the hiding face of God’. ‘Both perceive God, in the manner in which he becomes present within historical occurrences, to be both hidden and present, veiled and unveiled simultaneously.’ (p.12) Thus Lindsay suggests ‘an implicit, even if unintended, alignment between what Barth says about revelation and what some post-Holocaust theologians, including Berkovits, would wish to say about the hidden presence of God, even in the death camps’ (p.13).

The second chapter of this volume reproduces John Michael Owen’s introduction and English translation of Barth’s Advent 2 sermon of 1933. This is important because in his book, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 1996), Daniel Jonah Goldhagen charges Barth with anti-Semitism and cites the same sermon as evidence. Owen contends that Barth has been misunderstood, treated unfairly and misrepresented. He then sets Barth’s sermon in its historical context and provides his translation of the sermon so that English-speaking readers can make up their own minds. Barth’s text is Romans 15.5-13 and his treatment of it, in Owen’s translation, rewards careful scrutiny. To my reading, Barth’s sermon does employ anti-Jewish tropes. However, Barth calls on his non-Jewish hearers to stand in solidarity with their Jewish neighbours. In opposition to the German Christian movement, he insists that the divine Word constitutes the church. This is entirely of grace and ‘does not belong to the nature and character of any particular people or race’. Jesus was necessarily a Jew, for ‘salvation comes from the Jews’ (John 4.22). Still, Israel ‘rejected [Jesus] and nailed him to the Cross’ but in doing so it ‘behaved toward this its redeemer in no other way than all peoples of all

times and lands would also have done in its place'. In its rejection of Jesus, Israel put itself on a par with the other nations and by so doing 'Israel also put the other peoples on a par with itself. The closed door opened.' '[T]he covenant that God certainly concluded with his people, and with his people alone, has become manifest in that people's rejection of Christ.' Having welcomed 'us', 'the Heathen', non-Jews also into the covenant, Christ now commands that 'the Heathen and the Jews' 'welcome one another'. Aspects of the sermon may be problematic but Barth clearly argues that Christians should welcome Jews and oppose their mistreatment.

In chapter 4, Faye Bodley-Dangelo scrutinizes Barth's "The life of the children of God" (CD I/2, §18) and its treatment of the parable of the Good Samaritan. She does this because Barth prepared it in the early 1930s shortly after a time when he was publicly involved in opposition to the German Christian movement. She shows that Barth's depiction of the neighbour here subtly 'subverts the rhetoric of Volk, nation and blood' and undermines the 'orders of creation' framework that the German Christian Movement had utilised for anti-Semitic purposes. Barth's retelling of the parable is an invitation to his Christian German readers 'to see themselves in the self-justifying lawyer and in the injured Israelite, and to see Christ, their benefactor, in the guise of the ethnic other' (p.60). There may be a hidden call here for German Christians to love and support their Jewish neighbours. However, we may question with Bodley-Dangelo whether Barth's subtle argument is, in the end, *too* subtle (p.58).

Philip J. Rosato's 1986 essay traces the influence of Karl Barth on Roman Catholic theology about Judaism and is reproduced as chapter 7. In it, he argues that Barth's theology had some impact on Vatican II. He pays attention to Barth's criticism of *Nostra Aetate* for treating Judaism with other non-Christian religions instead of recognising its unique relationship to Christianity. He further sees the influence of Barth in the movement within Catholicism toward a greater appreciation 'of the continuity rather than the discontinuity between Judaism and Christianity'.

In chapter 8, 'Karl Barth, Israel and religious pluralism', Paul S. Chung contends that in spite of criticism to the contrary, Barth's work displays a Christological openness to religious pluralism that inspires interreligious dialogue and solidarity with all the world's peoples. This openness certainly extended to Judaism, the very existence of which was, to Barth, 'the single natural proof of God' and a sign of the divine reign.

In the final chapter, Rudy Koshar seeks to broaden the space occupied by Barth in the intellectual history of modern Europe. Acknowledged by theologians, Barth is largely overlooked by historians. Koshar argues for a greater appreciation of his influence and of his critique of ideologies of right and left, which were themselves exposed by the horrors of the holocaust.

These essays may not fully answer the question mark of the book's title. I am not sure whether we can think of Karl Barth as a post-Holocaust theologian. However, this book clearly demonstrates that Barth's theology can have a generative influence on the relationships of Christians and Jews for those who

read it carefully and critically. In a day when anti-Semitism is constantly in the news but rarely understood, this brilliant book deserves a wide reading.

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Lincoln Harvey (ed.), *Essays on the Trinity* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018), 240pp.

From about 1980 to the early 2000s there was a big emphasis on the doctrine of the Trinity amongst theologians, works by Moltmann, Jenson, Zizioulas, Torrance, Gunton, Volf, Cunningham, Fiddes being leading contributors to this 'revival.' 'Suddenly we are all trinitarians', Gunton would write in 1997. This interest was not just in the doctrine of God, but also how its implications for creation, personhood, salvation, eschatology. 'Everything looks different in light of the Trinity' was another comment from Gunton. Lincoln Harvey begins his introduction to this collection of essays by identifying something of a backlash against this theology in the last decade and a bit (p.4). There have been big questions asked of the projects of Gunton, Zizioulas, Volf and others. Harvey, was a student of Gunton at King's, which was a home from home for the likes of Zizioulas and Jenson, and so there is something personal in this for Harvey. Harvey's analysis are not shared by all the other contributors, and the book itself 'gathers together some current work on the doctrine of God' (p.8).

Contributors include Jenson, in what is one of his final essays, Jeremy Begbie, Chris Tilling, Lucy Peppiatt, William Hasker, Claire Louise Wright, Chris Green, Stephen John Wright, Gijsbert van den Brink, Julie Canlis, Douglas Campbell and Christoph Schwöbel.

Jenson short essay is typical Jenson, titled 'Choose Ye This Day Whom Ye Will Serve' it is a punchy argument for 'attributing decisive ontological weight to overall narrative character of the Bible and to the plot of the story that it does seem to tell' (p.14). This is Jenson's 'revisionary metaphysics.' Tilling and Campbell explore St. Paul as a trinitarian thinker, with Tilling arguing that he should be considered a Trinitarian, that is, Paul's understanding of God was trinitarian and Campbell exploring how Paul's trinitarian theology is also ethical. Canlis offers a sermon-like reading of trinitarian prayer and Schwöbel reflects on how Christian worship is trinitarian from beginning to end. Chris Green reflects theologically on his Pentecostal conviction that he expects to God in his life with a helpful conclusion in which he says 'we are no nearer to God awake than asleep, in strength than in weakness, in faith than in doubt, in success than in failure, in mercy than in judgment' (p.137). Clare Wright's paper is a delight. She offers a chapter on Gregory Nazianzus, reflecting on epistemology, language and Trinity, and with it comes an Afterword, which took me by surprise and opens up the essay in a whole new light.

Alan Torrance says in his commendation that the essays in this book are 'eclectic in mix, wide-ranging in scope, and rich in insights.' The best of them have a pastoral function, challenging us to consider how we speak of God as we lead

worship and prayer, preach sermons, offer pastoral care. I was left wondering afresh how trinitarian is the content of my ministry when I speak about God.

Andy Goodliff

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Lee C. Barrett (ed.), *T & T Clark Reader in Kierkegaard as Theologian* (London: T & T Clark, 2018)

Any person who has attempted to read Kierkegaard (1813–55) could be forgiven for the sense of bafflement and disorientation felt when engaging with this Danish thinker. His writings are a polyphony of voices, each challenging the reader to think for themselves, to take responsibility for their own beliefs, an authorship that “functioned as a pedagogy in freedom.” (p.280) Indeed, to read Kierkegaard is an act of theological wrestling, the desire of the reader to know the name of the God that Kierkegaard spoke of in almost contradictory terms at times; reading Kierkegaard is to be a thinking Christian, and thus, a limping Christian.

The brilliance of Barrett’s approach to Kierkegaard’s work is that he allows it to speak for itself, but offers us, the reader, windows into the text to help illuminate and make sense of the complexities suffused throughout Kierkegaard’s writings. Barrett, a professor of theology at Lancaster Theological Seminary, has organised this “anthology” of excerpts from Kierkegaard’s writings with the most obvious theological significance. Barrett’s desire is to show the uniqueness of Kierkegaard as a theologian, a theologian who has inspired thinkers across theological streams towards a depth and honesty of thought. Each chapter begins with the Editor’s introduction to the text, providing historical background to the specific Kierkegaardian text of the chapter, as well as providing a brief general description of the role of the specific theological topic in the sweep of Kierkegaard’s authorship. Barrett also provides a more specific discussion of each text, giving the reader a sense of “orientation” to the reality of Kierkegaard’s “complex and demanding” works. (p.15) Certainly then, this is not an exhaustive attempt at interpreting Kierkegaard, rather, it brings together the theological thoughts of the “Melancholy Dane” and makes it accessible. We, the reader, have the opportunity to read Kierkegaard and make of it what we will as thinkers and theologians. Barrett is very clear, the purpose of this book is to honour the way Kierkegaard approached theology, namely, not to offer a “definitive interpretation,” nor suggest a “univocal meaning.” (p.15). Kierkegaard believed that “any ecclesial factions insistence upon strict standards of doctrinal orthodoxy was symptomatic of spiritual cowardice.” (p.11) This is perhaps why theological tensions and even contradictions are found throughout his writings.

There are many highlights throughout this book, from Kierkegaard’s piercing observations on self-examination (pp.34–41), that to “need God is a perfection,” (pp.51–73), to exploring how life’s journey, when taken seriously, is fraught with “anxiety, ambiguity, and tension,” (p.105) noting in particular Abraham’s journey

to Mount Moriah and the intended sacrifice of Isaac, an act where Kierkegaard comments,

“The ethical expression for what Abraham did is that he intended to murder Isaac; the religious expression is that he intended to sacrifice Isaac.” (p.111)

The eight chapters provide the reader with a wonderful scope of Kierkegaard’s theological thought, guiding us through christology, soteriology, the experience of God, and Christendom, to name but a few. Each chapter ends with questions from Barrett, questions to engage the reader in further study, challenge, and reflection.

This is a worthwhile book for any serious reader of theology, to both challenge, learn, and inspire. But also, it is a book that reflects the passionate faith of Kierkegaard, a man who encouraged people to fall in love with God’s love, who believed in Christ everything had been gained,

“So take it away from him: wealth and power and dominion, the treacherous obligingness of false friends, the submissiveness of desires to the whims of wish, the triumphs of vanity over idolizing admiration, the flattering attention of the crowd, and all the envied grandeur of his appearance—he has lost all this and is content with less. Just as the world is unable to recognize him because of the drastic change, so he can scarcely recognize himself—so changed is he that he who needed so much now needs so much less.” (p.53)

If there ever was a theological word powerfully relevant for our current culture, then here in Kierkegaard we have discovered it.

Joe Haward
Newton Abbott

Michael Davies and WR Owen (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of John Bunyan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 681pp +index.

This is a heavyweight book in all sense. At 618 pages, it is not a slip in your pocket and carry around volume, but rather a collection of thirty-eight serious essays on the work and legacy of John Bunyan as an author. The essays are written by academics, and are concerned with understanding and exploring the various writings of Bunyan. Since the study of literature is an interdisciplinary one in today’s academia, the writers are lecturers and professors of English, of history, of religious studies and of cultural studies. This gives a wide variety of approaches to the material, and makes this a very rich feast indeed.

The book is in four sections; Contexts, which includes essays on theology, gender, the nature of church and the printing industry; Works, with essays on different parts of Bunyan’s writings and using different approaches to understand them; Directions in Criticism, in which the essays examine the various ways in which

Bunyan's writings have been explored and assessed, including using the very materiality of the books themselves to understand what Bunyan is doing, an essay in which the writer examines the place of marginalia and what the first and subsequent printed editions looked like and so were read, and finally, Journeys, essays examining the ways in Bunyan's writings, but particularly Pilgrim's Progress has "turned up" in various places and times since the late 17th century, and its impact on other writings, and on wider culture.

This is a specialized book, written by experts for experts. But because the writers are good communicators, the essays are accessible and of interest to those who have a passing knowledge of and want to know more about Bunyan's writings. In consequence, there are also fascinating insights into 17th century dissent, particularly when looked at from outside the tradition, the place of explicitly religiously inspired writing in a secular – and post-secular – context, and above all, the encouragement to take "text" seriously.

For any of us with an interest in and sympathy for Bunyan's theology, even if we don't share it, it is illuminating to read how such theology is encountered, puzzled over, dismissed or valued by those for whom it is not congenial, as well as, among some of the writers, encountering those who, because they too are interested and sympathetic, and are also knowledgeable, can help us understand it more.

Pilgrim's Progress remains one of the seminal works of English literature, even if not so frequently read today. This rich and varied exploration of it and other works helps us understand not only why it mattered so much at the time, but also to recognise what the introduction refers to as the "runaway metaphors" that are now so deeply embedded that all too often we don't see them for what they are.

Bunyan as a writer and theologian was controversial in his own time. The shape of the controversy has changed, but he remains the subject of debate and a challenge to understand. As "one of our own", however distant, it is good to learn more about him through this feast of learning.

Ruth Gouldbourne
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Ashley Cocksworth, *Prayer: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T&T Clark, 2018)

This particular 'Guide for the Perplexed' will not help anyone navigate their way into the pathways of prayer, but anyone who is already wandering in the labyrinth may find Cocksworth's study to be immense help in terms of getting the most out of being there. This is emphatically not a 'how to' manual, but rather a helpful distillation of the insights of those whose theology is profound because it has been rooted and grounded in prayer.

The first chapter focuses on Evagrius of Ponticus and his 153 maxims *On Prayer*, paying particular attention to 61: 'If you are a theologian, you will pray truly, and if you pray truly, you will be a theologian.' The second chapter deplores the way in which a wedge came to be driven between prayer and theology and explores how Sarah Coakley, Rowan Williams and Nicholas Lash set about integrating the contemplative and the systematic. Chapter 3 explores how prayer can enlarge our understanding of the Trinity, looking at Coakley's prayer-based model of the Trinity and the doxological Trinitarianism of Jürgen Moltmann, Catherine Mowry LaCugna and Alan J. Torrance. Cyril of Alexandria's commentary on Christ's prayer in John 17 follows in chapter 4, and in chapter 5 Cocksworth calls on the wisdom of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth to address the question of how freely-offered petitions have a valid role to play within God's sovereign, providential purposes. The final chapter focuses on the political dimensions of prayer with reference to Stanley Hauerwas, Samuel Wells and, among other liberation theologians, Leonardo Boff.

For those whose appetite has been whetted by Cocksworth's introduction to these prayerful theologians, there is a twenty-page annotated bibliography of selected sources on prayer and this is followed by an index which provides for easy navigation around the book.

Reading the book is the theological equivalent of one of those evenings where you spend time sampling fine wines and good food: the experience of savouring all these different portions is deeply satisfying. My favourite insight from the book is the idea that when we pray, we join in the eternal conversation going on between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Will my prayer life change as a result of reading this book? Certainly the superficial nature of much of my praying has been disconcertingly exposed. I think, for this book to have a lasting effect on my prayer life, I would need to set aside a week so I could read and reflect on a chapter a day, and so absorb it into my spirit. So, if you are thinking of reading the book that might be a good way to approach it. And if you start to delve into the bibliography, well, there's enough material there for a whole sabbatical.

Tim Carter,
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Ben Pugh, *SCM Studyguide: Philosophy and Christian Faith* (London: SCM, 2018)

Ben Pugh's new SCM Studyguide adds to the series' offerings on doctrine, ethics and philosophy (Pugh has also written a Studyguide on *Theology in the Contemporary World*, and there are several others in the same broad subject areas). This developing series, with its distinctive red covers, comprises textbooks 'designed for students, undergraduates, ordinands and clergy at theological colleges and universities or for those preparing for ministry' and are flagged as suitable for those with no prior knowledge of the subject.

I mainly teach pastoral care (from a theological perspective) and Christian doctrine; and I am often looking for somewhere to direct students for a basic outline of the thinking of key philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Kant. I think this book will be a useful addition to a basic reading list, perhaps along with Zagzebski's (2007) *Philosophy of Religion* and Simpson's (2016) *Modern Christian Theology*. Students are easily overwhelmed in this subject area and it is good to have a book like Pugh's which is, in places, appropriately chatty in style while delivering plenty of accurate and useful information, helpful terminology and glossary sections, and invaluable application to Christian faith today.

All the key thinkers are here, and the main sweeps of western philosophical engagement are helpfully addressed. I particularly admire two things in Pugh's approach. One is his commitment to stay away from the deliberate undermining of views with which he does not agree: 'I have an instinctive distaste for the idea of humiliating atheists in public debate', he offers in the introduction. This book is not ammunition for violent apologetics, but an offering of philosophy as a language to understand the movements underlying the shaping of today's Christian worldview.

The other thing I like is Pugh's use of 'time out' sections, in which he presses the pause button after giving input and invites the reader to reflect on a relevant question in ethics or the contemporary church. We are not allowed to consign philosophy to the category of 'abstract' or 'irrelevant'.

Although it is a wide-ranging book, I did especially like the chapter on postmodernism and will be recommending that to anyone who is struggling with it as a concept – or who needs to understand the ideas underlying current missiological conundrums.

My only question is whether the compact size of the Studyguide series has forced Pugh to cover too much too quickly. The arrival of terms and definitions is fast and furious in places – but it is very thorough, and the 'time-out' sections and glossaries which punctuate the book show that the author is aware of this and has tried to address it in a helpful way. In conjunction with a taught module this book is a super resource.

Sally Nelson
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Daniel L. Migliore (ed.), *Reading the Gospels with Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017)

Karl Barth's engagement in biblical exegesis is often characterised as the method outlined in his commentary on Romans, in which he called for a 'theological exegesis' rather than simply an 'historical-critical' method. However, his monumental *Dogmatics* and other publications show that he was deeply engaged with the whole canon of scripture, and that he urged 'minute attention' to the text alongside acts of 'bold imagination'. The essays in *Reading the Gospels with Karl Barth* explore how Barth's 'theological exegesis' and 'bold imagination' affected his exposition of the gospels. The volume's editor Daniel Migliore

observes that Barth's approach is Christocentric, attentive to narrative form, alert to the rich diversity and deep unity of the biblical witness, and based on an assumption that the Jesus of the text is also encountered in the lives of those reading and interpreting them.

This volume has an illustrious list of contributors, who each address an aspect of Barth's reading of the gospel narratives. In the first chapter, Jürgen Moltmann critically assesses Barth's renewal of the doctrine of predestination. For Barth, the doctrine expresses God's eternal desire to be with and for humans through Jesus Christ. Moltmann concludes by giving Barth's reinterpretation of predestination a political twist, suggesting that the irresistible call of God's grace is also a call to resistance to injustice.

Richard Bauckham's essay examines Barth's exegesis of the prologue from the fourth gospel, particularly his insistence that the divine 'word' is to be understood as Jesus Christ. Eric Gregory takes an 'ethics' approach to the Good Samaritan noting that, for Barth, the parable bears witness to the surprising grace of God, rather than merely the imperative to help one's neighbour. Willie James Jennings sets Barth's exposition of the Rich Young Ruler against a context of Swiss banks and Nazi money, noting the influence of Barth's context on his exegesis.

Paul Nimmo suggests that Barth's reading of Jesus' compassion for the crowds offers insights for both anthropology and atonement theory, as Jesus' compassionate embrace is seen to encompass all people. Daniel Migliore, in addition to editing the volume, also offers a paper on Barth's treatment of the parable of the Lost Son in comparison with that of Hans Urs von Balthasar, suggesting that both interpreters speak to questions of Trinitarian theology and human freedom. Kendal Cox also addresses the Lost Son, holding Barth's reading alongside that of Julian of Norwich, noting that both see an analogy to Jesus in the Lost Son, and drawing from the conclusions about the nature of Christology.

Paul Dafydd Jones' essay looks at Barth's treatment of Gethsemane, focusing on the prayer 'not my will but thine be done' as an expression of free will and chosen obedience on the part of Jesus. Bruce McCormack focusses on Jesus' cry of dereliction from the cross, assessing Barth's reading of this as a cry of pain from the very heart of God. Beverly Roberts Gaventa offers an assessment of Barth's exposition of the Road to Emmaus, which notes that the moment of Jesus' revelation to the disciples is a moment of *self*-revelation. Gaventa shows how Barth's focus on the action of Jesus in opening the disciples' eyes to recognise him offers an otherwise overlooked point of continuity between Luke's gospel and the book of Acts, where by Barth's reading Christ continues to reveal himself through the witness of the disciples. Shannon Nicole Smythe offers an overview of Barth's exposition of the term 'handing over' within the New Testament, drawing out its implications for the doctrine of justification and for Christian mission today.

The final chapter, by Fleming Rutledge, is a powerful sermon offered in dialogue with Barth's theology, on how the light of Jesus continues to shine in a dark world. This volume is an enjoyable and thought provoking read. There is much here for those who know Barth's extensive canon already, but equally it will

open up his thought and exegesis to those who have not yet made themselves familiar with his writings.

*Simon Woodman,
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Sarah Melcher, Mikeal C. Parsons, Amos Yong (eds.), *The Bible and Disability: A Commentary* (Waco: Baylor University Press / London: SCM, 2018)

This book is a very significant contribution to both the fields of Disability Studies and Biblical Studies. In the past there has been a tendency to focus on 'difficult passages' with regards to disability, such as the Levitical 'ban' on disabled priests (Leviticus 21, 22) or the many healing miracles recorded in the gospels. One of the greatest strengths of this book is that it provides a broad perspective on how disability features throughout the Bible. The whole bible is covered in twelve chapters, written by biblical scholars who are familiar with Disability Theology: Genesis & Exodus; Leviticus-Deuteronomy; Joshua-Second Kings; First and Second Chronicles-Esther; Job, Proverbs & Ecclesiastes; Psalms, Lamentations & Song of Songs; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Twelve; Mark and Matthew; Luke-Acts; John, first-third John, Revelation; Paul; Hebrews and Catholic Letters.

The book is written from a US perspective and some of the scholars and the extensive references may be unfamiliar to UK readers. There are several brief discussions of sociological models of disability, which would have benefited from being addressed together in the introduction. In addition to this, a discussion of the 'Social Model' often assumes a US variant, the 'Minority Group Model' as used by Nancy Eiesland in her ground breaking *The Disabled God*. This is used rather than the Social Model that is widely used in the UK. The 'Cultural Model' referred to several times is closest to the 'critical realist' approach taken by Michael Oliver and others in the UK. The approach taken by the different authors varies and this is both a strength and weakness, providing different perspectives but making straightforward comparisons difficult at times. There is an assumption that the reader is familiar with the issues raised by Disability Theology and the wider context of Disability Studies. (This is a wide-ranging interdisciplinary approach to understanding disability that has been developed in the last 15 or so years in the UK and US.)

The authors are not afraid to acknowledge when the Bible presents problematic material but rather than accept these at face value they seek to determine if there are deeper influences shaping these. By doing this they expose and utilise aspects of the Bible which challenge some preconceptions of disability. One important theme is to point out that some concerns of the Old Testament, such as infertility, were socially very disabling in contrast to the contemporary situation where IVF and related treatments, together with adoption, have all but removed the social stigma for many people. There has been a similar transformation in the attitude towards people with a range of skin diseases, often labelled leprosy,

which are now treatable and no longer a reason to exclude people from the community.

The picture of disability that emerges is complex and it is clear that there are no easy ways to encapsulate a biblical approach to the subject. This book challenges the common tendency to read our understanding of disability back into the text and provides resources to gain a better perspective of the context in which the various parts of the Bible were first written. This enables disability to be understood as part of the rich diversity of humanity made by and in the image of God.

Nancy Eiesland's image of the disabled God focuses on the resurrected Jesus still bearing the marks of crucifixion, the marks of impairment, which he brings into the God-head. Some of the writers in this volume extend the concept of Jesus as the disabled God into his ministry through the identification of the attitudes towards him that counted him as an outsider along with disabled people of his day.

To my mind one of the aspects of this book that has the broadest application are the various discussions of the metaphoric language that both reveals and shapes how we understand disability and relate to disabled people. The way we use metaphors of sight, hearing, walking etc. can have a profound impact on how disabled people are included or excluded from church communities.

This book provides a rich and diverse perspective on disability that will enable a nuanced approach to disability and disabled people to be developed. It serves as a good companion to the previously published *Disability in the Christian Tradition* edited by John Swinton and Brian Brock.

Martin Hobgen
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Aaron W. White, Craig A. Evans and David Wenham (eds.), *The Earliest Perceptions of Jesus in Context: Essays in Honour of John Nolland on His 70th Birthday* (London: T & T Clark, 2018)

This volume in honour of John Nolland's 70th birthday contains a wealth of insight from an impressive line-up of New Testament Scholars. John Nolland's work, both as an academic and as pastor, is widely respected, and is reflected in the quality of contributors that make up this volume. Eighteen chapters is too many to cover in any detail, so it is with regret that this review leaves aside highly impressive input from such figures as N.T. Wright, Craig A. Evans, Darrell Bock, David Wenham and others. In what follows, I focus only upon three lesser known contributors whose chapters nevertheless deserve to be studied in detail.

Firstly then, Robert Brawley's account of Lukan characterisation of the Pharisees, rests upon a career-long interest in sociological analysis, hermeneutical rigour and astute political awareness. Whilst the Pharisees are often portrayed as Jesus' nemesis (at least in the early part of his career), Brawley makes the point that

seems blindingly obvious but is often ignored: namely, that each specific portrayal of the Pharisees has to be interpreted within its context of Luke's unfolding narrative. When such an approach is brought to Luke's writings, a noticeable, positive development in their portrayal is demonstrably clear. Taking the reader through each instance in which Luke reports interaction with Pharisees, Brawley brings to bear a wealth of research in order to present a lucid and nuanced reading. This enables him to show how to avoid the twofold danger of treating the Pharisees as a single, homogenous in-group that can be discussed always and everywhere in terms of their group identity, and of treating the Pharisees always as a negative, antagonistic entity. The picture that emerges (and the reading of the Gospels it opens up) is one of a rich, thoughtful Lukan narrative whose characters cannot be reduced to the all-too-tempting sloganized depictions of 'goodies and baddies'. Instead, Brawley's work presents Luke as a sophisticated writer, sensitive to the complexities of human character and human action.

Secondly, Form Criticism has been enormously influential in Biblical Studies, but from a contemporary perspective feels increasingly naïve, casting unwarranted doubt over the reliability of certain traditions, and (unwittingly) demanding unjustifiable certainty concerning the reliability or otherwise, of other traditions. Whether the Jesus Seminar (one descendant of the movement) was the high or low point of this approach, the demise of this very modern movement is indicative of the reality that Form Criticism as the interpretive model for Biblical Studies is no longer fit for purpose. One alternative that appears to be gaining traction in Biblical Scholarship, is termed 'Social Memory Theory', an approach assessed by Thomas R. Hatina in relation to how scholars deal with quotations attributed to Jesus. At its best social (or collective) memory embraces an original community's preservation of tradition (it selects, remembers and safeguards events and actions that are pertinent or controversial). Simultaneously, this very act of remembering is itself a filtering system at source. (For instance, multiple news outlets today show the same highlighted edits of political debates and speeches, independently of one another, because the memes they report encapsulate wider arguments and concerns). In turn, a community that receives such a tradition, is also subconsciously selective with that tradition — but since it seeks to honour that tradition, this does not mean it is creative with its history. Social memory rather, suggests that 'what the past actually was... can never be separated from its reception. We cannot arrive at a 'pure' past that was later 'contaminated' (279). In sum, the Gospels can tell us only what the Evangelists understood Jesus to have done and said. However, the movement – still in its infancy – is likely to yield new and exciting insight into the route by which tradition became text.

Thirdly, Eeva John's magnificent chapter on Theological education seems to imply that the Christian education is largely shaped by the secular, exam-driven higher education system designed for economic purposes that may even be at odds with Christian education. Using examples from Luke, she proposes a model of education that embraces far more than might be expected of modern teaching. Often teaching is subconsciously regarded as the boffin at the front of the class distributing correct information, without which the students would

otherwise be unenlightened and ignorant. Updated methods to teaching often maintain this approach, changing it solely by becoming more interesting and more effective at disseminating their correct information about the world. Even whilst the language of transformation has become a tedious necessity, transformation tends still to mean that people will be better and happier once they agree with the teacher. Eeva is a believer in both performative and transformative models of teaching, that engage questions that matter to students, encouraging interruption and interaction, rather than merely attempting to ensure the teacher has got their point across. 'Leaving students with unanswered questions, at least for a time, may be a means of enabling deeper, more transformative learning to take place' (p.277). Eeva's approach to teaching dovetails well recent research on synagogues (see especially Jordan Ryan). The Palestinian synagogues of Jesus' day were structured as debating chambers rather than as preaching-houses, and their place in society was more akin to the town hall than the church. If Jesus is the model teacher, then 'as Eeva has rightly argued — good teaching addresses the tough, 'no-go' areas of the day, believes in a future beyond 'the exam', and does not necessarily offer answers so much as reveal the substructure of people's physical, mental, spiritual, social and emotional patterns of thought.

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James Maston and Benjamin E. Reynolds (eds.), *Anthropology and New Testament Theology* (London and New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018)

'What are human beings, that you are mindful of them?' Jason Maston ponders Psalm 8:3-4 in his introduction to this summary of New Testament anthropology. Matthew and Mark get a chapter each, while Luke is combined with Acts, and John's gospel with the Johannine epistles. Other chapters look at Paul, Hebrews, James, Peter and Jude, and Revelation respectively. These NT studies are prefaced by three essays exploring wisdom anthropology, aspects of anthropology in early Judaism, and Graeco-Roman perspectives in the period from 800 BCE to 200 CE. The collection concludes with an overview of biblical anthropology which takes the son of God as its theme, and an essay from a systematic theologian which uses the body as a lens to explore anthropology. The collection succeeds in its aim of providing a good way in to looking at the anthropology of any NT book, but the essays are all quite succinct, ranging from 12 to 22 pages in length, and so do not offer a comprehensive analysis of NT anthropological themes.

The editors did impose any framework on the contributors, encouraging them instead 'to follow the text where it leads and trace the anthropological themes that it raises' (p.4). This allows the distinctive voice of each text to emerge, without being forced onto the Procrustean bed of a set agenda. This has also granted the contributors the freedom to develop their own insights, some of which are closely aligned, others are very distinctive. One can glean some idea of each author's approach by the title of their chapter.

Anthropology is a broad subject: in his concluding essay, Radner notes that 'the human body as a fundamental and normative given' is not highlighted in the majority of the essays in the book (p.245). He also lists other aspects of anthropology: 'birth, lifespan, survival, physical order and relationship, sex, procreation, toil, pleasures, suffering, weakening and death' (p.249). In his study on Revelation, Ian Paul cites Charles Cameron's list of the key categories of a Christian theological anthropology: 'creation, sin, salvation, divine calling, human response, personal transformation, the mind and understanding, emotions, the will and social transformation', and then adds the broader categories developed by Mark Cortez of *imago Dei*, sexuality, mind and body, and free will' (p.207).

Some of these themes are addressed in some of the essays, and the additional theme of memory is helpfully explored in Karen Jobes' essay, based on Peter and Jude. A thematic index, to complement the indices of authors and ancient sources, would greatly have enhanced the usefulness of this book for anyone wanting to explore a particular facet of anthropology, particularly given the editors' expressed hope that the volume might help scholars from other disciplines understand how the NT contributes to present-day discussions (p.4). It may be that some of the burning issues of today are passed over in this volume, but the NT has its own range of perspectives on anthropology and this volume introduces these effectively.

Tim Carter

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Susan Grove Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017)

In *Paul and the Person*, Eastman seeks to explore what Paul says about people in the context of other ancient thinkers as well as contemporary thinkers. Eastman notes there is a puzzle about Paul's understanding of the person. In two places Paul speaks of the self no longer acting, but others dwelling in me. In Galatians, it is Christ living in me, and in Romans it is 'sin dwelling in me.' What we notice, says Eastman, is 'the self is never on its own', that is, it is 'always a self-in-relation-to-others,' (pp.8, 9) which raise a whole number of questions. Having identified this puzzle, Eastman offers a three way conversation between Paul, Epicetus (a Stoic) and contemporary philosopher Shaun Gallagher. These three chapters, on each thinker, are technical and require careful reading.

It is part two of the book that I have most helpful. Here Eastman offers three chapters that look at three different Pauline passages — Romans 7, Philippians 2, and Galatians 2. The first looks at the impact of sin (relationality gone bad), the second the introduction of Christ (divine participation) and the third what it is to be in Christ (the saving relation). It should be noted that Eastman sits within the apocalyptic Paul 'school', she is a disciple of Lou Martyn, and this comes across strongly in the way she understands Paul's language of sin and the impact of Christ. Eastman provides a fascinating interpretation of these three texts that get to the heart of what Paul is saying (in her view) about the person and how they

relate or might be understood in light of contemporary conceptions. These are complicated passages, but Eastman navigates in clear ways their implications. I finished reading these chapters wanting at some point to do a three-week sermon series on each these passages with Eastman as my guide. How sin, Christ and redemption are often understood fail to do justice to what Paul says. As Eastman argues, 'Paul's vision of the person; his diagnosis and analysis are global and radical' (p.125).

The books ends with some tentative ways the argument that Paul sees the person always in relational and participatory ways might be developed. Eastman's chief claim is that she has pressed the reset button on Paul's anthropology, that what Paul says about the person must be seen not in individualistic notions, but in how we participate in 'realities larger than the self'. For Eastman 'redemption is ... a matter of ... liberation from one realm of power to another, from the rule of sin and death to life in Christ.' (p.177).

Getting to grips with Paul's theology is never easy. I suggest Eastman, along with others like Beverly Gaventa, Douglas Campbell, and John Barclay are excellent guides. You will be greatly rewarded by reading *Paul and the Person*.

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Peter J. Leithart, *Revelation*. 2 vols. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018).

This two volume commentary sits within the T&T Clark International Theological Commentary Series, which explicitly aims to reconnect with 'the ecclesial tradition of biblical commentary', and to reflect on the Bible as Holy Scripture and as a 'witness from and of the triune God of the gospel'. (General Editors' Preface, p.vi) Attention is paid to the creedal and confessional heritage of the church, and the objective of the commentary is to illuminate the text for confessional readers.

This is a long and detailed commentary, with the two volumes coming in at over a thousand pages, making it unlikely (despite the author's plea to do so, p.53) that most readers will read all of it. Rather, it is designed to be used; so in addition to the sequential analysis of the text, there are extensive indices of both subjects and biblical references. The introduction covers the usual ground: the complexities of reading Revelation in the contemporary world, its status as one biblical book among many, an introduction to New Testament eschatology, the dating of Revelation (early: c.63-4 CE), and structure (epistolary). Leithart notes that his commentary offers a 'unified' reading of the Apocalypse, 'as a coherent prophecy of events that were (mostly) about to happen to John and his original readers'. He suggests that he is able to 'demonstrate a coherence that others have missed', offering both 'coherent unity *and* theological substance' (p.52).

The analysis of each passage includes a fresh translation of the text, followed by a wide-ranging essay covering themes, background and theological

interpretation, rather than verse-by-verse analysis. This has the benefit of releasing the author from following an overly proscriptive format, but it also makes finding specific comment on an individual verse less straightforward. There are interesting insights to be found in this commentary, but this reader found it hard on occasions to work out who the intended audience would be. It is too detailed for a lay readership, and too confessional for an academic readership. It's intended audience might be those preaching Revelation, but even here the jump from commentary to homiletics is a big one.

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Lauren F. Winner, *The Dangers of Christian Practice: On Wayward Gifts, Characteristic Damage, and Sin* (London: Yale University Press, 2018).

In recent years the Protestant church has seen, claims Lauren Winner, a recovery of the idea of 'practices' as a means of fixing something in, or for, the Church. Theologians such as Stanley Hauerwas, William Cavanaugh and Eugene Rogers frequently extol the virtues of key Christian practices and their ability to be a means of resistance to other practices (whether internal to the Church or external) and thereby a strategy of 'recuperation, repair, and reform.' (p.180). The problem, as Winner sees it, is that Christian practices themselves are subject to deformation and distortion, and therefore can often end up perpetuating damage as well as good. Moreover, this damage should not be considered as extrinsic to the practices but intrinsic: characteristic deformations which flow out of the nature of the practice in and of itself rather than from any external force.

By way of example, Winner focusses on some of the ways in which the Eucharist, prayer and baptism have become distorted. For the Eucharist, she describes how the increasing veneration of the host in the Middle Ages, along with the increased sense of communal identity derived from consuming that host, led to a growing contempt towards Jews in society. Accusations of 'host desecration' became a reason (or excuse) for violence against Jews. It is in the Eucharist that the tension between consuming Christ's Jewish flesh and the on-going relationship between Jews and Christians is most keenly felt. The violence, therefore, '...is connected to the Eucharist not by happenstance [but rather depends] on the centrality of the Eucharistic symbol. It was not incidentally Eucharistic but intrinsically Eucharistic.' (p.35).

For prayer, Winner points to the diaries of slave-owning women in the American South, in which they repeatedly ask for God's help in controlling and disciplining their slaves. Too easily, Winner notes, prayer can become deformed from being a place of intimate communion in which we become attuned to the will of God, to being (in the mind of the one praying at least) a reinforcement of 'divinely ordained' hierarchies of power.

Baptism, Winner suggests, '..operates in the cleft between extracting the baptizand from her locality and affirming that very locality.' (p.115) It becomes

deformed when it fails to maintain this balance and emphasises either the extraction (focussing on incorporation into the body of Christ) or, as is more often the case, affirmation (not severing but forming or reinforcing familial and social ties). The latter was the case, claims Winner, in the rapid growth of private christening parties in the nineteenth century.

The preceding argument would appear to point towards an understanding of these practices as being irredeemable, and therefore a call for their rejection. This is not, however, the case Winner wants to make. Instead, her stated aim is that in helping the Christians to recognise the ways in which practices can easily become damaged and distorted — ‘de-pristinating them’, to use her words — the Church might come to a place of confession, repentance, lament and reform (whilst recognising that these acts themselves have the potential for deformation). The Eucharist, prayer and baptism are all gifts from God, which are damaged not in the giving but in their reception by broken and sinful people: ‘...a recipient like *this* cannot help but damage a gift like *that*.’ (p.143). This will be the case until the eschaton, as only then will humanity be able to receive God’s gifts without sin. Until then, recognition of the ways in which these gifts *can* become deformed helps the Church to guard against such deformation, but also helps us to situate their reception within the flowing cycle of repentance and forgiveness and thus receive these gifts despite their damage: ‘Giving an account of a gift’s damage is one needful response to damaged dominical gifts. Another response is anticipating that even damaged gifts make possible goods that would otherwise have been impossible.’ (p.163)

This is a short but fascinating book. Whether one finds Winner’s argument is compelling is up to the individual, and certainly there are moments when it felt like the brevity of writing came at the expense of layers of nuance in the argument. This reader couldn’t help but wonder if Winner’s case would have been strengthened by choosing less extreme examples of deformed practices, and instead focussing on some of the more subtle and insidious ways our practices can shape us, for example in the inherent individualism of communion or the power dynamics at work in prayer. Nevertheless, Winner’s ability to challenge and provoke opens up a number of questions and avenues of exploration, and hers is a voice which needs to be heard in the ongoing conversation about the practical implications of the liturgical life of the Church.

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Christopher Deacy, *Christmas as Religion: Rethinking Santa, the Secular, and the Sacred* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

If you do judge books by their cover, then this is a festive delight! Christopher Deacy’s yuletide hard-back book is beautifully bound, adorned with jolly red ribbon pattern topped with a golden star. Inside we are treated to a thought-provoking analysis of the nature of Christmas as celebrated in the western world. Deacy’s research interests of theology and film are well displayed as he uses

various forms of media to uncover our expressed and underlying beliefs about Christmas.

After presenting a historical overview of films and novels related to Christmas such as *A Christmas Carol* or *The Santa Claus*, he moves across to the annual BBC Radio 2 programme – *Junior Choice*. Deacy charts the move of the programme in the 1970s when it was a regular programme to its current status as a nostalgic special broadcast on Christmas Day. He highlights how Christmas secular songs have perpetuated particular value systems, such as Chris Rea's '*Driving home for Christmas*' where the gathered family at home is prized above all. He argues that the songs played across media outlets at Christmas time reinforce the meaning of a non-Christian Christmas but equally religious (p.80). For Deacy he recognises the radio, film and TV of Christmas to be a new and alternative religious site as opposed to other scholars such as Restad (p.83) who believe it to be an increased secularisation of Christmas.

Sociology and anthropologists such as Turner and Eliade are used by Deacy to explore the theme of *communitas* which he sees is present in *Junior Choice*, and liminality between ideas of sacred and secular Christmas ideologies. Chapter 4 outlines the idea of implicit religion as proposed by Edward Bailey whereby religion is present in ordinary secular life but unacknowledged (p.125) but Deacy ultimately decides religion can be seen in everyday life and therefore is present rather than hidden. The final chapter provides a short analysis of the materialism of Christmas in which he analyses more modern Christmas films, like *Elf* or *Miracle on 34th Street* where he concludes while films are made for profit, 'their narratives are bound up with the importance of generosity, wonder, miracles, joy, belief, fellowship, giving, celebration, community, love and even redemption' (p.200).

While this book does not include any in-depth discussion around other potentially rich areas for research such as the value of gifting, food and feasting, excess consumption or the important of family gatherings, it has caused me to reconsider how religion is perceived and expressed by those outside the church. I enjoyed reading the book greatly, and it became apparent indeed that this is surely a perfect stocking filler for any 'awkward to buy for' person on your list. It would make an ideal gift for ministers, theologians, film buffs or free-thinking adults curious about our expressions of religion today.

Ruth Moriarty
Christchurch, New Southgate, London

Peter Tyler, *Christian Mindfulness: Theology and Practice*, (London: SCM Press, 2018), 177pp.

That mindfulness has rapidly become a commonplace concept throughout society and increasingly in churches in recent years can be shown by two examples. The first was a donation received three years ago by the Christian manager of a church charity shop of some mindfulness meditation materials. They were immediately discarded because anything of that nature was assumed

to be covertly Satanic in origin. Yet only this week I have seen an invitation published on social media by a traditional Baptist church for a mindfulness day they were organising.

The definition of mindfulness in Tyler's work is that offered by its pioneer Jon Kabat-Zinn: 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally.' Mindfulness is now often seen employed in schools, hospitals and major companies and indeed is apparently being taught to over 200 MPs to help them cope with the pressures of Brexit!

Peter Tyler's book is, therefore, topical and timely. With mindfulness so well accepted in the mainstream of psychiatry, healthcare, schools, businesses and self-help, the church rightly needs to evaluate any reflex that dismisses all meditation as demonic in origin. To what extent does such a rejection offer a fair and missional response to those who have found the practice helpful? Might this be one more instance of the church withdrawing from life as actually experienced by those outside the church?

The author is Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spirituality at St Mary's University London. He is a registered psychotherapist, a contributor to the current dialogue between spirituality and psychotherapy and serves as co-editor of *Vinayasadhana*, a journal for Psycho-Spiritual formation. He brings expertise to bear on the topic from both a Christian as well as a Buddhist perspective. This is relevant to mindfulness in the UK setting because the concept most frequently experienced here has its most immediate basis in Buddhism. Tyler explores the extent to which there may be more explicitly Christian roots to meditation and mindfulness that may authenticate the practice as something appropriate and wholesome for followers of Christ.

Each main chapter covers a historical movement or influence that may enable Christians to take the back-bearings and find the roots of mindfulness in the practice of the church through history. Each chapter concludes with some practical exercises in mindfulness. Tyler begins with the Desert Fathers of the 3rd and 4th centuries, noting that it would be almost impossible for modern humankind to replicate their literal wilderness experience in an age of mobile telecommunications. So the exploration is adapted to the desert within: a mindful psychology of the desert. This is followed by a review of the practices of the Iberian school between 1500 and 1700AD, in particular drawing attention to the practice of *Oración mental*, which he defines as relating less to mental prayer than to mindfulness as we understand it now. The exploration then progresses to consider the works of St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross and how the *oración*, in contrast to a more usual practice of vocal prayer, can be integrated into a life of Christian devotion and discipleship.

The exploration continues with a review of the contribution of Thomas Merton and his responding to the call of silence. Merton's withdrawal into a Trappist community gave him the 'desert' opportunity to write about practices related to mindfulness. That Merton was a complex figure is confirmed by reading his

work. His experiences draw not only upon the Desert Fathers but also from Sufism, Hasidism and Zen Buddhism.

The final main chapter relates to living a mindful life in the Indian tradition. To someone coming to the concepts described here from beyond the culture of south Asia, this offers some immediate obstacles to understanding, requiring a glossary of new terms as well as unfamiliar concepts to be explored.

I found this book puzzling. Mindfulness is now a concept to which the church must relate. I welcome an approach to placing mindfulness in the context of historical Christian thought and practice and I find it helpful to learn from the experience of those from other faiths and churches in different cultures. However, I cannot really say if this work is for the academic, the student or the pastor. I doubt it would find a wide readership in the pew or as a practical companion to a Christian exploring the place of mindfulness in their discipleship.

Ivan King
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James M. Houston and Jens Zimmerman (eds), *Sources of the Christian Self: A Cultural History of Christian Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 692pp.

In his classic work of a similar name — *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989) — Canadian philosopher, Charles Taylor, argued for an inherent link between identity and morality, delineating and analysing elements of modern identity (thereby, the sources of modern morality) partly through a kind of archaeology, digging into the lives and beliefs of thinkers such as Plato, Augustine and Descartes. The fact that James Houston and Jens Zimmerman have chosen a similar title for their book is more than mere window-dressing; it is a critical endorsement of Taylor's work. They have accepted his fundamental point about the significance of narratives of identity, as well as his rejection of the modern 'subtraction narrative' that 'human progress entails the demise of religion'; they, too, argue that religion has something to offer the modern world (pp. xvii, xxi-xxii). At the same time, though, they suggest that Taylor did not go far enough in analysing the 'social and ecclesial contexts of seminal Christian thinkers' (p. xvii). The purpose of Houston and Zimmerman's book, then, is twofold: to contribute to 'the construction of...a cultural and social history, exploring what it has meant for women and men to identify with Christ in very different contexts' (pp. xvi-xvii), and to foster 'hope and confidence' by encouraging others to see their own lives in relation to a meaning-giving metanarrative greater than themselves (p. xxiii).

In seeking to follow Taylor, Houston and Zimmerman have set themselves no small challenge; *Sources of the Self* has been described in a review by Allen Wood, as at once 'massively learned, philosophically sensitive, and often original'. Yet, standing at nearly 700 pages, *Sources of the Christian Self* has at least surpassed Taylor's book (a mere 600 pages) in length! Its range is also impressive. It

consists of forty-two historical biographies, gathered into seven sections: Old Testament, New Testament, Early Church, Middle Ages, 'Age of Reform', Modern World, and Twentieth Century; it is unclear why section five is not simply 'Early Modern', since no period has a monopoly on ecclesiastical reform. In turn, the contributors comprise a variety of highly-qualified, interesting, and even eminent scholars, including Markus Bockmuehl on St Peter (pp. 69-83) and Janet Soskice on Dante (pp. 353-66) (full list, pp. 683-90). For the most part, the editors must be congratulated for choosing from many thousands of possible subjects and matching them with knowledgeable and sensitive story-tellers. At the same time, however, it is problematic that a book purporting to showcase and analyse Christian identity from many angles, has so little coverage of the lives of Christian *women*. There are just four chapters devoted to women — Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, Anna Maria van Schurman and Jeanne Guyon, and Christina Rossetti — each of which has also been written by a female scholar. The latter is not itself intrinsically problematic, but it does raise questions about the editorial process; women have written about male experience, so why not the other way around? It is much more disappointing, and significant, that there is no Esther or Ruth, The Virgin or Mary Magdalen, St Monica, Hildegard of Bingen or Catherine of Siena, Thérèse of Lisieux or Teresa of Calcutta.

A further criticism is that the collection lacks uniformity. Some diversity of style was inevitable, and probably also desirable, but it would have felt more coherent if essays had at least adhered to a uniform structure. As things stand, for instance, the reader of Houston's contribution on Bernard of Clairvaux (pp. 293-311) may well be disappointed, having just read Steven Porter's essay on Anselm (pp. 294-311), which explicitly applies lessons from the subject's own narrative to Christian life in the present-day (pp. 291-92). Both are interesting, but Porter's seems to be more in the spirit of this exercise. He marshals the evidence of Anselm's life and thought behind a unifying narrative, the 'integrated identity' (p. 277) of a 'humble, passionate, prayerful, God-thirsty theologian' (p. 284). I have been studying Anselm for several years myself and in this portrait, I recognise him. Moreover, I appreciate the Anselmian principles Porter has extracted as lessons for today: to hold together prayer and study; to reflect on reasons as a *spiritual* discipline; to discern vocation, seeking only that which God desires for us; and to cultivate virtue-giving friendships.

If there is one deficiency in Porter's account, it is the lack of explicit attention to Anselm's *public* face, about which Sally Vaughn and others have written much over the years. On this point, Houston's essay on Bernard is more satisfying, though it is also guilty of some distortion in presenting the twelfth-century Cistercian abbot as a proto-Protestant, ignoring the tenth and eleventh-century roots of the reforms he championed. In fact, throughout Houston's portrait there is a noticeable lack of appreciation for the *Roman* dimension of Bernard's identity. In Houston's (admittedly very welcome) exposition of Bernard's Mariology, for example, there is no mention of his true reason for opposing the feast of the Virgin's conception at Lyons (pp. 309-10); namely, lack of approval by the Holy See. Instead, Houston co-opts Bernard as a forerunner of the Reformation, opposing what he describes as 'the diverse Mariological heresies of his contemporaries' (p. 310). For this and other reasons, the essay has a

reductive quality, so unlike Porter's essay on Anselm and somewhat alarming, since Houston is credited as the main 'creative mind' behind the entire book (p. xxv).

This comparison of just two portraits is not meant to condemn Houston, whose essay covers much interesting terrain, and even less to detract from the collection as a whole. It is both rich and fascinating, reflecting and refracting the Christian identity through many compelling, embodied narratives, unfolded in the presence of God. As an academic resource, it is both accessible and informative, equipping the reader to delve deeper into specific narratives by providing rich, up-to-date footnotes. The critique of Houston's Bernard is merely an invitation to readers to be on their mettle; to engage critically and discover for themselves, using the resources signposted, what lies behind and beyond these portraits. This will undoubtedly yield many more lessons for Christians striving to live the good life in the world today.

Matthew J. Mills
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Myk Habets, *Heaven: An Inkling of What's to Come* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018)

I think I might make good use of this short book with students — even though its target group is families, for parents to use with their children. Although initially I wasn't sure how it would sit within the landscape of books on heaven and resurrection, I ended up feeling that it could make a suitable entrée for those ministerial students who might struggle to be thrown directly into the complexity of key books such as N.T. Wright's *The Resurrection of the Son of God*.

Habets' stated aim is how to 'talk about Heaven in ways that are both faithful to Scripture and helpful for life'. He presents a summary of scriptural information about heaven and the life to come; he stimulates family discussions around the questions that children pose; and he challenges some of the unbiblical assumptions that are widely held even in the Christian community. Habets teaches doctrine at Carey Baptist College in Auckland and his ability to convey theological concepts clearly is very good — the book is remarkably direct, which is why I think it might help students in early stages. It is very readable.

Habets' method is a kind of extended theological reflection. Each chapter begins with a key question that has come from children — what is heaven like? who will be there? *etc* — and is explored in three sections: *Let's Listen*, in which the Bible is heard; *Let's Talk*, in which the material is explored and unpacked theologically, and *Let's Play*, which considers practical application. There is a helpful summary of the main ideas at the end of each chapter, and at the end of the book there are study sections for families and for adults. Throughout the book there are questions and comments for children of different ages, which focus the mind on the real issues arising within a family discussion.

For example, 'How will we recognize each other in Heaven?' asks Sydney, aged 9. The discussion here includes an exploration of the bodily resurrected Jesus's physical and non-physical continuity and discontinuity, coverage of whether we are resurrected at the age at which we die and what that might mean for 'ageing' and developing in heaven; and some comments on disabilities (a particular interest of my own and about which Habets has written elsewhere). I loved this sentence, responding to Sydney: 'I would like to think that in the new heavens and earth we will know people instinctively, not simply by sight but relationally, by the Holy Spirit'.

In such a book, decisions inevitably have to be made about theological nuance — and not everyone will agree with Habets on everything. The discussion on hell, for instance, is more robust than that which one would commonly hear from many UK pulpits these days, and the overall direction and citations are from the more conservative end of possible theological sources — yet all such points are defended from scripture in a non-confrontational and accessible manner. I really liked the discussions of judgement and of 'rewards' in heaven, which I thought were helpfully argued and biblically defended.

In summary, in addition to the book's intended use within families, I think it has a place as an entry-level book for teaching on resurrection and heaven, read alongside Paula Gooder's *Heaven and Body*, to provide a base point for accessing more substantial texts such as Wright and Thiselton.

Sally Nelson
St Hild College, Yorkshire

Celia Deane-Drummond, *A Primer in Ecotheology. Theology for a Fragile Earth* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2017), pp. xiv + 1-167.

Deane-Drummond does not set out to write a comprehensive text on Ecotheology, but rather produces a taster and a preview of what can be explored. The book comes complete with a glossary of the key words frequently used by those writing in this field. There is also an appendix of various networks involved in Christian environmental activity. She decides to explore climate change noting that when scientific data is invented or altered that it ceases to be science. She then rehearses the evidence for global warming, loss of biodiversity, and she sees one answer in agrarianism – a sympathetic working with nature in farming.

To support this thesis, she challenges us to read the Bible ecologically and to follow the last Adam and not the first. She draws from Job that God's wisdom and truth are revealed in creation, and that the whole of creation is redeemed and reconciled in Christ. She observes that the intrinsic value (it's value to God) of creation is an important factor; the interconnectedness; the kinship between nature and human beings; the shared God-given purpose; and the call on human beings to care for creation.

Deane-Drummond notes that Pope Francis and liberation theologians such as Leonardo Boff take the side of both the marginalised of society and of the world itself, summed up by linking the cry of the poor with the cry of the earth. In a similar way, ecofeminist theologians such as Mary Grey, see ecofeminist spirituality arising from the margins and out of the concrete concerns, which link the devastation of the earth with the threats posed by the globalisation of human societies.

As a Catholic, the author speaks warmly of Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which calls for an ecological conversion through which care of creation is an essential part of the Christian faith. But the strongest argument for our Christian discipleship comes through her exploration of the incarnation (John 1:1-5, Christ both the Word of God and the Wisdom of God), which she expresses as being inclusive of other beings in the sense that 'Christ shares the social and geo-biological conditions of the whole cosmos' (p.75) and concluding that 'if Christ identifies with the whole suffering earth, including evolutionary and ecological aspects, then there is a shift to a sense of divine solidarity in suffering' (p.77).

This leads us into understanding our discipleship in relationship with the land and other animals. Deane-Drummond maintains that human beings occupy the middle ground both spatially and historically, bearing the divine image and embedded in a life with others.

Thus, she concludes that from an ethical position, acknowledging all creatures as gifts to one another, rather than instrumental objects for human use, shifts the ethical discourse away from management towards appreciation and care. She does not believe that we can place a monetary value on environmental good. Ecological concern places us as fellow citizens with creation rather than an economic market approach which finds us as consumers of it.

Her final challenge comes in terms of our worship – confession of guilt and our share in the failure of human societies in caring for creation; the importance of the Church expressing these concerns in the public square; building a collective conscience; and taking practical steps to change our own lifestyles. This text provides an ecologically and biblically based foundation for our thinking about the care of creation as Christian disciples.

John Weaver
Bedford

Celia Deane-Drummond & Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser (eds.) *Theology and Ecology across the Disciplines. On Care for our Common Home* (London: T & T Clark, 2018), pp. xii + 261.

The editors address the urgent environmental questions from a multi-disciplinary perspective. They take their inspiration from Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, which calls for care of our common home. Each of the essays makes reference to this encyclical and it is the hope of the editors that the

various contributions of the book will inspire deeper engagement between the disciplines in addressing the pressing environmental issues of our day. The various authors consider the science of climate change; natural theology as a way of exploring God's involvement with creation; social history of the land; ecology as a means of earthing theology; an emphasis on the incarnation, where God identifies with the whole of creation; the ecological conversion of the world of business; more radical approaches to the protection of creation; the role of peacebuilding in the face of ecological violence; the challenge of Liberation Theology in addressing the cry of the poor/cry of the earth; the voices of women in the exploration of environmental degradation; sustainable development in politics and the market; the restoration of the ecosystems; and the importance of water and food security. Each of these themes offers important insights, but a few offer significantly new thoughts for our theological discussion.

David G Kirchhoffer (chapter 3, pp.53-63) identifies four ways in which theology might benefit from ecology. The empirical observation of needs and harms gives ecology a descriptive and explanatory power. Context and praxis are important as in the facts of human-induced climate change, the focus is on the potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation rather than on ideological and political principals. Roles and their functions can also be a useful lens through which to address theology. While the transcendence of God is important in defining God's essential nature and the essential nature of human beings created in God's image, ecology helps us to focus on the immanence of God in creation and history and God's role of salvation of human beings within history. The context of religious thought and belief is important in relationships. While we can confirm truth as an objective reality it is known and experienced in and through history. Ecology allows us to see contingency in moral norms. Norms may develop over time in the light of changed roles and relationships.

Denis Edwards (chapter 4, pp.65-76) explores the importance of the Incarnation for our thinking about ecology, noting that in Protestant thought the three-fold relationship of God, human beings, and creation has been replaced by humans, God and human redemption in Christ. It is right to recognise that a fully Christian approach to the natural world cannot be limited to a theology of creation, but must involve both creation and salvation in Christ, but the promise of a new heaven and a new earth shows salvation for the whole of creation. This author goes back to Athanasius, finding a robust theology of incarnation, 'where the Word in whom all things are created is also the Word of the incarnation, the Word on the Cross.' The Word made flesh is part of human evolutionary history, and God with us is part of our biological existence and the systems of the natural world. He helpfully concludes with a quotation from Thomas Torrance (*The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being Three Persons*): 'God has decisively bound himself to the created universe and the created universe to himself, with such an unbreakable bond that the Christian hope of redemption and recreation extends not just to human beings but to the universe as a whole.'

Through the lens of the social sciences a number of authors offer helpful insights into the global market economy, the voices of radical protest, and the call for sustainable development, challenging us to see the flaws and failings in these

arguments. Pope Francis called for an ecological conversion, but there is no prospect of this without reform of the purposes and governance of companies and corporations. Mark Hayes (p.86) observes that the corporate mindset has little concern for the environment nor the vulnerable members of society and calls for the cult of shareholder primacy to be dethroned and replaced by the corporation as a community of enterprise.

In contrast to much western thought Liberation Theology hears the cry of the poor and affirms that the love of God must be expressed through love of neighbour, and address environmental issues as social realities not separated from ecological realities. Globalisation has seen the continuation of a disparity between wealth and power and the ecological crisis has emerged alongside material poverty. Daniel Castillo (chapter 8, pp.119-131) and John De Tavernier (chapter 10, pp.149-163) discuss the flaws in the approach of sustainable development to tackle such disparity. Both see the Brundtland Report (1987) as providing weak sustainable development alongside economic growth. Like the World Bank it has become embedded in the elite power networks and has controlled the discourse on sustainable development, with the result that environmental movements, which have called the growth imperative into question, have been silenced. Along with Pope Francis these authors challenge the consumerism of a global system that prioritises sustaining growth over sustaining the resiliency capacity of Earth.

Radical environmentalism rejects anthropocentrism and replaces it with ecocentrism and deep ecology, which sees the Earth as sacred and worthy of reverence. The more militant groups advocate direct action in defence of the Earth, but fail to recognise that ecosystems evolve and that there is no pristine condition to which the world can be returned. In contrast, Michael Yankoski (chapter 7, pp.103-118) offers the reader the channel of peacebuilding in addressing the ecological crisis. He identifies ecological destruction as 'slow violence' where apparently innocuous actions in the short term have devastating outcomes in the longer term. These are different to newsworthy reports of violence which are event focused. The ecological violence of the Anthropocene (the modern era of humans, identified as the most recent geological era) emerges as direct, structural and cultural violence extended over long periods of time. He advocates addressing the situation through the model of conflict transformation (rather than the more unique case approach of conflict resolution), which seeks to attend more holistically these underlying incompatibilities.

Rebecca Artinian-Kaiser (chapter 11, pp.167-177) takes up the theme of ecological restoration through a complex suite of practices encompassing wide-ranging ecological goals and techniques corresponding to a diversity of degraded environments. She recognises the need for a multidisciplinary approach recognising the complexity of human engagement with landscapes over time. This will involve trade-offs and costs in terms of human behaviour and public involvement.

Redemption, as conceived by restorationists, sees returning to the past as a way to bring absolution and healing. But for Christians it is God who brings about

redemption. She helpfully quotes Oliver O'Donovan (*Resurrection and Moral Order*) who suggests that the resurrection (a) affirms the goodness of creation (as having its own meaning and purpose) *and* (b) holds forth the promise that "all shall be made alive" one day. It is through resurrection that creation is both restored and transformed and moves forward and is enlivened in new ways.

The challenge throughout these essays is the recognition of the world as a gift from God and not a commodity to be used and abused. Everything has intrinsic value and food, for example, is a material expression of God's love and eating is humanity's participation in the extension of this divine love in the world. In John 6 Jesus refers to himself as the 'bread of life', and in the succeeding paragraphs he points out that what is needed is not the food that temporarily satisfies, but the food that reorients their life altogether so that together they will become people who care for each other and provide for each other's needs. This requires a life of discipline and care. It is the love of God in Jesus that redeems and reconciles the world. Thus, our participation in the Eucharist repositions and reorients humanity in the world. This implies that we have to: 1) accept responsibility for the harm that is being done to the land and creatures; 2) have a more educated approach to eating; 3) that Christians should be mobilisers of change.

This text offers a range of useful concepts and challenges, which are well worth exploring as we search for ways to address the challenges of global climate change.

John Weaver
Bedford

Aaron P. Edwards, *A Theology of Preaching and Dialectic: Scriptural Tension, Heraldic Proclamation and the Pneumatological Moment* (London: T&T Clark, 2018), 245pp.

In this book the author seeks to provide a theology of preaching. It is a theology which can give preachers confidence to proclaim on any one occasion a timely, immediate, and authoritative message from God. This type of preaching is something they should be able to do despite the reality of Scriptural dialectics, when where different portions of Scripture appear to contradict one another. To do this, he brings into conversation, the nature of Scriptural dialectics, the notion of the preacher as a herald, and the operation of the Holy Spirit in the preaching event.

In chapter 1, Edwards introduces his central topic of how a preacher can know the specific message that God wants to say *now*, in the light of the many Scriptural options available and the potentially conflicting views (dialectical) found in different Scriptural passages. In chapter 2, he argues that Scriptural dialectics, such as the apparent tension between the significance of faith and works as seen in Paul and James, exist within a fundamental canonical and theological unity and clarity. In chapter 3, he surveys various philosophical and theological understandings of dialectics. From this survey, he identifies four

primary dialectical modes: paradoxical, harmonized, hierarchical, and antagonistic. The tensions in Scripture, he maintains, can be interpreted at any one point in these various ways. In chapter 3, he argues that the concept of the preacher as an authoritative 'herald', sent with a message from God through the exposition of Scripture, is a theological reality. He posits this in contrast to what he sees as the diminishing of this understanding of preaching through the anthropological emphasis of the New Homiletic. He then illustrates how the previously identified Scriptural dialectic between faith and works could be variously interpreted by heraldic confidence. In chapter 4, he discusses the role and activity of the Holy Spirit in such heraldic expository preaching. This activity, he maintains, while retaining close attention to the exposition of Scripture, means that preaching should be understood as a pneumatological moment specific for the circumstances and context.

This book is a detailed, rigorous, and copiously referenced and footnoted presentation. In this and in style, it demonstrates its basis in a PhD thesis. It addresses several quite significant issues in homiletics. I resonate strongly with a number of these. These include, the importance of preaching as a practice in the Church. The necessity for a theology of preaching. The holding together of Scripture and Spirit. The refusal to fully identify teaching and preaching. The concept of a specific preaching moment that does not seek to harmonise differences in some systematic explanation but to deliver a particular, 'prophetic', message.

The above said Edwards does make two important acknowledgements. One of these is that the issue he seeks to address is only particularly pertinent to those who accept the theological reality of the preacher as a herald. This acknowledgement highlights a more general point that while his work is undoubtedly coherent, it will not be entirely convincing to those who do not accept some of his theological claims. So, for example, I do not share the idea that preaching can be reduced to the one dominant image of the herald, even when claimed as a theological reality, nor do I fully share his critique of the New Homiletic. This, of course, does not make him wrong and me right, it is, however, to acknowledge that these are contested issues and that there can be more than one theological approach. The second acknowledgement is that his work is intended to be conceptual and theological rather than practical. I certainly agree that we need writing on preaching that goes beyond the 'how to'. Yet, at times I found myself asking, but what does this actually look like in practice beyond the conceptual understanding offered and the references to the preaching 'greats'? I also found myself resisting what appeared to be a least the implicit argument that if somehow the practice does not measure up to this ideal, then by definition it is not preaching properly, theologically understood.

This book is a work which seeks to engage a variety of themes not least preaching and dialectics and to do so in a way that treats seriously and theologically Scripture and Spirit. Whether or not readers will accept all of his arguments, it is a book that requires the attention and respect of those who would wish to develop their own theology of preaching. This is the case not merely for the answers it provides, but the issues it raises, and the detail in which he discusses them.

Stuart Blythe
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Timofey Cheprasov, *Like Ripples on the Water: On Russian Baptist Preaching, Identity, and the Pulpit's Neglected Powers* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 152pp.

In recent years the English-speaking world has been opened to the important developments which have taken place amongst the baptistic communities of the old Russia Imperial Empire and its later manifestations in the Soviet Empire and beyond that in the free and independent states which emerged in the aftermath of the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the early 1990's.

Prior to that and beyond the borders of the Soviet Empire, the global north had only a limited understanding of the virtues and practices of the oft-persecuted baptistic communities which continued to exist and, in many cases, develop, despite the best efforts of Joseph V. Stalin, Nikita S. Krushev, Leonid I Brezhnev and the Soviet politburo members to crush, suppress and eliminate them.

Some knowledge of the real lives of these believing communities was possible through the valiant efforts of western Baptist leaders such as E A Payne, D S Russell, Denton Lotz and Gerhaard Claas, who took every opportunity to get behind the "iron curtain" and meet baptistic believers. Today, the ecclesial life, work, worship and mission of these baptistic communities through a long period of one hundred years has become accessible to us by authors from the west such as Walter Sawatsky, Mary Raber, Albert W. Wardin and Gregory L. Nichols, many of whom have been intimately associated with the International Baptist Theological Seminary, located in Prague from the mid 1990's, through until the mid 2000's, when it relocated and was re-formed as the International Baptist Theological Study Centre associated with the Vrije University in Amsterdam .

Thanks to the untiring efforts of the academic team at IBTS there has been raised up a generation of younger scholars from Russia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Estonia and elsewhere who grew up in the old Soviet Empire as believers in these baptistic communities and are now devoting themselves to the task of understanding, analysing and offering to a wider readership respectable and authentic accounts of the life and nature of the believers churches during a period of repression and persecution. Lina Toth (nee Andronovienè), Toivo Pilli, Meego Remel, Constantine Prokhorov, Leonid Mikhovich, Alexander Popov and others have deeply enriched our appreciation of believing communities in the local setting Soviet by their dedicated research and publications.

Timofey (Tima) Cheprasov is another of this younger IBTS generation of able scholars now serving as minister of Bury Baptist Church in the North West Baptist Association. He grew up in a Baptist home in Voronezh in western Russia and was baptised into the church. Having a skill with languages, he played a crucial role in the development of a School of Preaching formed at the request of the Russian Baptist leadership by the International Baptist Theological Seminary,

then based in Prague, in 1999 and which worked out of Bryansk in south west Russia under the inspired leadership of David M Brown, a member of the IBTS Faculty and an authority on preaching. The book developed out of that preaching school, *Transformational Preaching*, continues to be widely used as a text book in Russia. It was translated from David's English manuscript, by Tima. David's influence and encouragement led Tima to study at IBTS in Prague, where he gained a Masters degree in theology and later a Doctorate, on which this book is based.

For Tima an important question has been how the church in Russia has been formed and shaped over the past one hundred years by the weekly exposition of the Word in the main Sunday service. The common practice amongst most Baptist communities in Russia has been (and for many it still is) to have three sermons preached in the principal two hour act of worship. This exposure to preaching has been formative in shaping the believing communities. He has experienced first hand week by week the worship and preaching of a Russian Baptist church, but in his research he has sought the help of others, fellow students at IBTS, churches in Russia by both quantitative and qualitative research to explore the relationship between the preaching ministry and the virtues and practices of the communities in which the preaching takes place.

In this recently published book Tima seeks to explore the identity of local Russian Baptist communities based on his own experience, research and mature reflection of the present realities. Tima explores the way Orthodoxy is built into the Russian spiritual community and he picks out several key themes of theosis, sobornost and charismatic preaching to reflect on the way baptistic communities developed. Tima's reflection interacts with the theological discourse of J W McClendon, Junior, and his notable three volume Systematic Theology and the influence of McClendon's writing and of his friend, Parush R Parushev, can be seen in Tima's work.

Tima searches for insights as to how this heavy dose of Russian sermonising both shapes, and is shaped by the believing communities. He comes to the conclusion that the practice of preaching, filled with inherent dangers, is offset by the support of Bible reading communally and the development of communal hermeneutics guided by the Holy Spirit.

Most British Baptists experience only one sermon a Sunday. Nevertheless, perhaps we need to reflect on even the dangers of one twenty minute monologue if it exists apart from a community where communal hermeneutics are practiced?

Inevitably, whilst this book opens up in a remarkable way important aspects of Russian baptistic life at the grassroots. I believe it provides vital material for reflection for all who engage in the work of formation for those seeking to minister to believing communities not only in Russia, but also elsewhere.

Keith G Jones
Baptist Historical Society

John Hughes and Andrew Davidson (eds.), *The God We Proclaim: Sermons on the Apostles' Creed* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017)

This collection of sermons were originally delivered at Jesus College in 2013. It's a second collection of sermons from the college, an earlier set gathered together under the heading *The Unknown God: Sermons Responding to the New Atheism*. (For another example of similar kind of collection see also *Heresies and How to Avoid Them*). This collection features Janet Martin Soskice, Simon Gathercole, Anna Williams, Christopher Cocksworth and Sam Wells amongst the preachers.

The idea of a set of sermons on the Apostle's Creed is not novel, many preachers will perhaps have done a similar kind of exercise. And this book will sit on my shelf next to various other reflections on this Creed, joining most recently Benjamin Myer's excellent short account. This short book would make an excellent gift to a new Christian, and would also the aid preacher next time they come to do that series on the Creed. Teaching the faith is a vital task in any generation.

Andy Goodliff
Belle Vue Baptist Church, Southend-on-Sea

Stanley Hauerwas with Robert J. Dean, *Minding the Web: Making Theological Connections* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018).

People keep inviting Hauerwas to speak or preach and so he keeps publishing the results. Here then is another book of essays and sermons. Sermons have increasingly become one of the key modes Hauerwas does theology (see *Disrupting Time, The Cross-Shattered Church* and *Without Apology*). Alongside the 22 sermons in this collection are essays on Jean Vanier, Bonhoeffer, Kierkegaard, John Howard Yoder and a response to Trump. The essays on Yoder and Trump many will have already online (they were posted on the ABC Religion & Ethics website).

The title of this new collection comes from Robert Dean, who had edited this book together and provides an introduction and epilogue. (Dean wrote his doctorate on Hauerwas and Bonhoeffer.) The introduction compares Hauerwas with Peter Parker/Spiderman, bitten by the theology bug. Dean argues that Hauerwas' work is best understood as apocalyptic — centred on Jesus Christ. Dean picks up Hauerwas use of the metaphor of the web as a description of theology, so another reason to call him a 'kind of Spiderman'! The revelation of Jesus has created web, and Hauerwas understands the task of the theologian as one which tends to that web — 'to repair, discover, and mark articulate the connections necessary for Christians faithfully to make their way in the world' (p.11). Dean has provided a helpful service in highlighting this way of doing theology in Hauerwas.

In the epilogue Dean compares Hauerwas' style of preaching to those of Andy Stanley, founding pastor of North Point Ministries, Inc. Stanley argues for preaching that majors on application and inspiration, which of course are both sorely lacking in the sermons of Hauerwas. Dean names Hauerwas as delivering 'pointless preaching' in that Hauerwas believes preaching needs to be attentive to the biblical text (and often with the lectionary more than one text). Hauerwas' sermons are based on the conviction that in scripture is a word we need to hear and that the triune God makes us holy, that is, as he has already said, his sermons are the best demonstration against the claim that Hauerwas doesn't do theology. While Stanley's sermons seek to help the individual transform their lives, Hauerwas sees that the transformation of our lives is the work of scripture re-defining our lives through the story it tells.

The essays and sermons are then just another example of Hauerwas seeking to make theological connections with the exemplar ministries of Vanier and Bonhoeffer and in the context of Yoder's abuse and Trump's politics. While there has been something of a backlash against Hauerwas — in particular the response to the Yoder essay has been divided — I still find him one of the most interesting theological thinkers and writers.

Andy Goodliff
Belle Vue Baptist Church, Southend-on-Sea

Richard Harries, *Haunted by Christ: Modern Writers and the Struggle for Faith* (London: SPCK, 2018) 240pp.

Richard Harries will be known to many as formerly Bishop of Oxford and someone with a broad range of interest in theology, medicine, literature and, from his seat in the House of Lords, human rights. He is a contributor to Radio 4. In this latest work, he selects a slate of twenty significant authors of his choosing who addressed matters of faith in their writings. By "modern" he includes writers spanning Dostoevsky to Marilynne Robinson. He looks at each author through the lens of one or more of their writings to set down how they presented key issues

The advance copy that I received carried what I assume was a working title "Why are we here" on the front cover, followed by the subtitle, and the published title as above on the spine. (Presumably *Haunted by Christ* was the more arresting). But taken together, they neatly capture the three main types of writers presented: those who broadly write from within the Christian tradition even if not always uncritical (C.S. Lewis, Elizabeth Jennings and T.S. Eliot); those who write from *Dover Beach* in the ebb tide of traditional belief (R.S. Thomas, Marilynne Robinson and Flannery O'Connor) and those outside the tradition yet who are still "haunted by Christ" - or at least pursue themes traditionally associated with faith (Samuel Beckett, Stevie Smith and Philip Pullman).

These short essays offer a brief introduction to the writer followed by analysis of faith themes that have gripped them. Lord Harris is a perceptive commentator,

illustrating his points from the texts. It is good to be reminded that theologians, historians and pastoral commentators do not have a monopoly on the search for meaning in a sometimes apparently random existence, exploring the seriousness and joy of the human condition. If there are no surprises in the choice of subjects, nonetheless it is good to revisit authors or maybe find for the first time. These have wrestled with the contours of the human condition: of sin and grace, of temptation and redemption, of holiness in the everyday and the exceptional - even if they did not always use accepted religious terminology.

As ever in any collection it is invidious to identify one essay against another but I found the explorations of less anticipated gems like Stevie Smith, Shusaku Endo and William Golding caught my attention. A book to dip into rather than read in one sitting, Lord Harries brings a thoughtful appreciation to his subjects.

All but two of the authors are dead. This volume to me cries out for a successor (maybe it has already been commissioned) that will move from modern to contemporary writers, where the influence of faith has further receded in Western civilization and yet still finds those who wrestle with the great themes of faith in their own context by story or poetry. Maybe Benjamin Zephaniah, Margaret Atwood or J.K. Rowling, (Regent's Park College's alumnus) Michael Symonds Roberts, or perhaps the late Dennis Potter would be candidates. Contemporary songwriters might also be thought worthy of inclusion in such a volume, or maybe deserve one by themselves — although probably not by Lord Harries.

Stephen Copson
Central Baptist Association

Paul Beasley-Murray, *Retirement Matters for Ministers* (Chelmsford: College of Baptist Ministers, 2018)

Paul was spurred into action by conversations with retired Baptist ministers who felt marginalised. He set out to conduct a qualitative survey based on 17 face-to-face interviews with ministers from the Eastern Baptist Association and a further group of 36 from associations across the southern half of the country, who completed an extensive questionnaire. Three of those who answered the questionnaire were women, although all the face-to-face interviewees were men. Paul states that the Eastern Baptist Association has only one retired woman minister, who is not in good health.

The first section of the book recounts the face-to-face conversations. Paul describes these ministers as 'heroes of the faith' who have experienced the highs and lows of ministry and of life. While many of these insights are valuable, overall, I felt that they expressed a great deal of negativity. We recognise that our reflections on life and ministry will always be affected by our individual experiences. I am aware that my own positive experience of life and ministry has shaped my own reflections. This is not to say that I have not experienced some of the more difficult situations recounted, but I have seen these as places for further

growth and reflection. The concern about the pastoral support and friendships experienced by these ministers seemed one-sided. While they said that they rarely got invited to the homes of other people, the author did not ask how often these retired ministers invited people into their own homes. As one of the respondents said: 'It takes two to tango!'

It is difficult to analyse relationships between ministers and churches, which are often complex and affected by power struggles and theological positions, and we might wonder how much the experiences recalled by these ministers reflected their own personalities. It would also be interesting to know how different the answers to many of the questions about relationships and friendships would have been if asked while the respondents were in ministry as opposed to when retired. It is well attested by other authors (such as Albert Jewell's works: *Spirituality and Ageing*; *Grow old along with me*; *Ageing, Spirituality and Well-being*; James Woodward, *Valuing Age. Pastoral Ministry with Older People*; and Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward. A spirituality for the two halves of life*) that retirement brings a loss of status, position and *raison d'être*, which may well be reflected in the more negative answers about church and relationships.

The second section of the text discusses the retirement experience. The author certainly lays the foundation for challenging the Union and the Associations to explore and put into practice our Baptist concept of covenanting together. Readers might usefully give time to exploring the nature of 'covenant' and examining how this is understood and what are its implications for the relationship between ministers and churches, Associations, and Union.

Maybe another area that might have been given more attention is the understanding of ordination, whether this is functional or sacramental. If calling and ordination are seen as sacramental then other aspects such as covenantal relationships and continuing ministry follow, which some of the respondents recognised. In conducting the interviews, I believe that an opportunity was missed. For while the spouses of these male ministers were present, their own reflections and feelings were not sought. This could have taken the form of a second interview, and would have given an added depth to the analysis.

The third section of the book explores the challenge presented by these interviews for those with pastoral responsibility for retired ministers. The sense of discontent and being ignored by the wider Baptist family needs to be addressed. The challenge to learn from the Anglican pattern is helpful: preparation for retirement and the deployment of retired clergy, especially at a time when many churches are without pastoral ministry.

Paul's survey reveals some disturbing pictures of relationships between retired ministers and the regional/national Baptist leadership. I do believe that we need some degree of honest criticism of the way in which our Union and Association structures have developed in recent years. We might ask whether we have replaced covenant with the trappings of management: contractual arrangements, organisation, power, authority, and control?

This text is a useful snapshot of retirement from a small sample of retired Baptist ministers and is a challenge to ministers in pastoral ministry, who have retired ministers in their congregations, and to those regional ministers in whose pastoral care they reside. To all of these respondents, together with us the readers, I would unreservedly recommend *Falling Upwards* by Richard Rohr, which takes a positive look at growing old and retirement. I would also recommend Rohr's work to all in ministry, encouraging us to reflect on the meaning and purpose of our lives in Christ, before and after retirement.

John Weaver
Bedford