Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal

Spring 2023 — Volume 7.1

A quarterly journal for debate on current issues in the Anglican Communion and beyond

ISSN 2399-8989

ARTICLES

REVIEWS

Enquiries

Enquires to the Revd Dr Michael Hull
Scottish Episcopal Institute
21 Grosvenor Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 5EE
Scotland – UK
0131-225-6357
dos@scotland.anglican.org

Disclaimer

Copyright

Volume 7.1 — Spring 2023 — ISSN 2399-8989

Revised Friday 21 April 2023

Editorial

The vocation of the Anglican theologian is of ongoing interest to this *Journal*. David Jasper and Nicholas Taylor offer a variety of perspectives for our consideration. This number includes a reflection on Samuel Taylor Coleridge by Peter Cheyne to mark the 250th anniversary of Coleridge's birth as well as a plethora of book reviews by Nicholas Taylor and Harriet Harris.

The Vocation of the Theologian: Marginality and Vision

Nicholas Taylor
Rector, St Aidan's Church, Clarkston
Convener, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board

For many Anglicans, Richard Hooker (1554–1600) is the quintessential theologian — the author of the *Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity*,[1] which articulated the delicate balancing act of the Elizabethan settlement in England, and established Scripture, Reason and Tradition as the fundamental pillars of Anglican theology. Much of this is of course a myth, but one that has proved immensely powerful, so that Hooker's legacy is claimed by almost all parties across the Anglican spectrum, with the exception of those Anglo-Catholics who are more Roman than Rome and those evangelicals who are Anglican by accident or for convenience.[2] The reality is that Hooker was a marginal figure during his lifetime, and not at all representative of the deeply contested and far from 'settled' Church of England of the late sixteenth century. His writings became influential long after Hooker's death, when they were appropriated in the service of later ecclesiastical controversies. Nevertheless, there may yet be value in reflecting on the figure of Hooker and his distinctive place in the Anglican pantheon, and in considering the possible implications for the Church of the future.

Details of Hooker's life are known principally from the biography by Izaak Walton (1593–1683), best known as the author of *The Compleat Angler*. Walton was a royalist who survived the English Civil War, and drew upon and idealised such figures of the Elizabethan and Jacobean church as Hooker, John Donne (1572–1631) and George Herbert (1593–1633) as models for

---

[1] For a modern facsimile edition, based on the edition of Christopher Morris (London: Dent, 1907), see Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 2 vols (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003).

[2] Cf. Nigel T. Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005); Michael Brydon, *The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); John S. Marshall, *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition* (London: A & C Black, 1963); Charles Miller, *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 2006); Philip B. Secor, *Richard Hooker: Prophet of Anglicanism* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1999); Nigel Voak, *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

the church and its ministry under the Caroline restoration. It was not, however, until well after the publication in 1830 of Hooker's works by the Tractarian John Keble (1792–1866) that the momentum generated by the Oxford Movement propelled Hooker and the *Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity* to the pre-eminence in Anglican theology which came to be taken for granted through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.

Hooker was born in modest circumstances in the vicinity of Exeter but had an uncle with the right political and financial connections to obtain for him the patronage needed to study at Oxford. His sponsor was John Jewel (1522–1571), Bishop of Salisbury from 1560 until 1571, and author of *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* (1562), which was in many ways the precursor to Hooker's own work. In 1577, Hooker became a Fellow of Corpus Christi College,[3] where he taught Hebrew, but Oxford was not to remain his home or place of work. After ordination by the Bishop of London in 1579, to a position in the episcopal household, Hooker came to attention as a preacher at St Paul's Cross — a Sunday afternoon task in which recently ordained clergy were expected to declaim from the outdoor pulpit for two hours, except on great occasions when dignitaries would deign to grace these events. Hooker's appointment as Master of the Temple, where he served from 1585 to 1591, was deeply contested, and his position became untenable on account of opposition from entrenched Puritan interests. Although he began work on the *Lawes* during this period, it was in his ministry as a parish priest, at Boscombe in the Diocese of Salisbury (1591–1595), and then at Bishopsbourne and Barham in the Diocese of Canterbury (1595–1600), that Hooker's most significant works were written.

It was not as a professor of divinity, nor as a court chaplain, but as a rural parson that Hooker wrote the works which established his legacy and have intermittently influenced subsequent Anglican theology. Furthermore, although he enjoyed patronage, and protection in controversy with the Puritans, from powerful prelates — Jewel, Edwin Sandys (1519–1588), Bishop of London and subsequently Archbishop of York, and John Whitgift (1530–1604), Archbishop of Canterbury — Hooker was never appointed to episcopal office, nor did he receive any other preferment in church or university; during his last years the Regius and Lady Margaret's Chairs of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge were occupied by a motley variety of long forgotten, politically connected alchemists and ecclesiastical politicians who

[3] Hooker was ejected from his fellowship in 1580, during the course of a politically and theologically contested election to the presidency of the college, but was subsequently reinstated until the fellowship was forfeited on his marriage (*c*. 1588).

between them left not one original work of lasting value.[4] Even his position at the Temple Church proved untenable in the face of Puritan opposition, tolerated if not indulged by the hierarchies of Church, State and Bench. Although he was a faithful servant of the Church, Hooker was an outsider to the establishment — a useful pawn whose gifts and dedication could be and were exploited, but whose learning and theological insight were not truly acknowledged during his lifetime.

Hooker was not the only outsider to the establishment whose writings as a parish priest were to prove useful to the Tractarians. Joseph Bingham (1668–1723), of modest Yorkshire origins, was ejected from a fellowship of University College, Oxford for alleged heresy, and was rescued from penury by his more prosperous fellow alumnus of Wakefield Grammar School, John Radcliffe (1650–1714), with presentation to the benefice of Headbourne Worthy in the Diocese of Winchester. There he wrote his multi-volume *Origines Ecclesiasticae*, which was to prove a useful resource for the reconstructions of early church history upon which many of the claims of the Oxford Movement were founded. Bingham subsequently became Rector of Havant, then also in the Diocese of Winchester, but received no further preferment in Church or university, and his work has become largely forgotten.

A more recent outsider, partially and perhaps grudgingly admitted to the establishment, was (John) Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–1872). Like that of Hooker, his legacy has been intermittently appreciated by subsequent generations, and has been claimed by some diversity of Anglicans. The son

---

[4] William Whitaker (1548–1595), Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, was a prolific and polemical Calvinist, but his writings have not proved to be of enduring value. His successor, John Overall (1559–1619), who had broader Anglican sympathies, was a noted scholar in his day, and a royal favourite who became Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and then of Norwich. The Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity at the time was the French Huguenot Peter Baro (1534–1599), whose theological drift from Calvinism towards Arminianism led to loss of favour and, ultimately, of position. His successor, the courtier Thomas Playfere (1561–1609), retained the position despite suffering from mental illness. Thomas Holland (1549–1612), Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford University, was a royal favourite who later participated in the translation of what became the King James Version of the Bible. The Lady Margaret's Professor, Edward Cradock (*c*. 1539–1595), was an alchemist whose *magnum opus* was *Tractatus de Lapide Philosophico*, translated in English as *A Treatise of the Philosopher's Stone*; both versions were written in verse and dedicated to the reigning queen.

of a Unitarian minister, Maurice was raised in the same milieu as his contemporary James Martineau (1805–1900) — that is, the dissenting and highly literate emergent East Anglican middle class for whom the Octagon Chapel in Norwich was the intellectual and spiritual centre, fiercely independent but not dogmatically Unitarian. [5] Maurice's studies at Cambridge could not lead to the award of a degree; as a Dissenter he was deemed sufficiently sound to matriculate and pay fees, but not to graduate. Subsequent studies in Oxford, during which he was baptised in the Church of England, led to his ordination to a curacy in the Diocese of Lichfield in 1834. During his curacy, Maurice was nominated for the Drummond Professorship in Political Economy at All Souls' College, Oxford, with the support of some Tractarians. The nomination failed after this support was withdrawn, on account of differences between Maurice and Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800–1882) on the doctrine of Baptism;[6] at no stage does it seem that Maurice's competence or lack thereof in political economy was considered to be a relevant criterion for appointment. His career in London began with a chaplaincy to Guy's Hospital from 1836, and his reputation as a formidable, radical, visionary but controversial theologian was established with the publication of the first of many editions of *The Kingdom of Christ* in 1838.[7] This articulation of the catholicity of doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, in debate with various forms of Protestantism and with Roman Catholicism, remained controversial throughout Maurice's life, within the Church of England as well as without, but has subsequently become a valued theological resource ecumenically. Maurice became

[5] Jeremy Goring, *Where to Belong Religiously: Martineau, Maurice and the Unitarian Dilemma* (London: General Assembly of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, 1987); David Young, *F. D. Maurice and Unitarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). See also Geoffrey T. Eddy, *Dr. Taylor of Norwich: Wesley's Arch Heretic* (London: Epworth, 2003).

[6] Edward Bouverie Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford, old Etonian, and grandson of an earl and a viscount became active in the Oxford Movement with the publication of four *Tracts* in 1835, three of which (Nos 67–69, published in a single volume) comprised *Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism* (London: Rivington, 1836). After John Henry Newman (1801–1890) became a Roman Catholic, to be followed by others, Pusey became increasingly prominent in the movement, and his connections as well as his tenured position provided security in times of controversy.

[7] London: Darton & Clarke, 1837; London: Rivington, 1838, 1842; London: Macmillan, 1883, 1891; London: SCM, 1958; London: Dent, 1960; New York: Appleton, 1843; Cambridge: Clarke, 1959, among others.

Professor of English Literature and History at King's College, London, in 1840, transferring to ecclesiastical history in the newly created Department of Theology in 1845. He served concurrently as Preacher of Lincoln's Inn from 1846, and was involved in founding Queen's College for women's (initially governesses') education. Maurice was dismissed from King's College in 1853, largely for his advocacy of Christian socialism, with 'heretical' theological views providing a convenient pretext. He became Principal of the newly formed Working Men's College, and later also Perpetual Curate of St Peter's, Vere Street, in the City of Westminster from 1860. In 1866, Maurice was elected Knightsbridge Professor of Moral Theology, Casuistical Divinity and Moral Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Trinity Hall. He subsequently resigned his London charge for the Chaplaincy to St Edward's, Cambridge.

Despite his prodigious theological output, Maurice was a marginal figure in the Church of England, vulnerable to the political manoeuvring of well-connected and more politically and theologically powerful conservative figures. Yet his candidacy for a chair in political economy would be considered inappropriate by contemporary standards, so too were the grounds for opposition to his election. The years of contention that preceded Maurice's removal from King's College, London might well have ended differently had he enjoyed the same connections in political and ecclesiastical circles that alumni of the more prestigious public schools could — and often still can — draw upon to compensate for incompetence or to cover up financial or sexual misconduct. The chair at Cambridge came very late in Maurice's career, and he never received honours such as were to be bestowed on Martineau,[8] who remained a Dissenter, or on his morally rather more compromised Christian socialist colleague, Charles Kingsley (1819–1875).[9] Maurice's formative influence on the development of Christian

[8] Martineau received honorary degrees from several universities, including Oxford, Dublin, Edinburgh, Leiden and Harvard.

[9] Kingsley, like Maurice, was associated with the Working Men's College. However, Kingsley was a product of the establishment and an unabashed racist, an Anglo-Saxonist notorious for his anti-Irish views. With other supposedly enlightened figures, including Charles Dickens, Thomas Carlyle and Alfred Tennyson, Kingsley joined the Earl of Cardigan (of the Charge of the Light Brigade fame) in supporting the brutal suppression of the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica in 1866. Charles Darwin and Thomas Henry Huxley were among those who joined the prosecution of Governor John Eyre for mass murder. Both the criminal case and the subsequent civil case against Eyre were lost, and representative government in Jamaica was

socialism was scarcely appreciated by the establishment of his day, and his reputation as a theologian was revived only when the issues that he addressed challenged the Church of England with unprecedented urgency during the twentieth century, and ecumenism became fashionable.[10] It is remarkable also that Maurice combined his academic appointments with the Ministry of Word and Sacraments, exercising the cure of souls in congregations a great deal less elitist than the names and reputations of the institutions might suggest,[11] and addressing social conditions a century before this became tolerable, let alone fashionable, in the established Church. Hooker and Maurice were both outsiders to the establishment who nevertheless left a lasting theological legacy, more widely appreciated in different circumstances in later centuries than in their own day. Both placed Scripture at the centre of their exposition of Christian doctrine, in ways that merit closer consideration than is possible here. In both cases, their approach to the Bible would have to be regarded as pre-critical, but this is perhaps a more significant defect in Maurice's case, given developments that were already taking place in his day.[12]

Hooker was evidently conversant with developments in the study of the Bible associated with such Renaissance figures as Erasmus. He was a noted Hebrew scholar, and was well able to cite and expound passages from the New Testament and Church Fathers in Greek as well as in Latin. He was certainly conscious of differences between Roman Catholic and Reformed approaches to Scripture — even if he was also able to observe the analogy between Puritan and other Reformed theologians' use of Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis* and Catholics' use of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* as

---

abolished. See also Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire* (London: Verso, 2019); Gad J. Heuman, *'The Killing Time': The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica* (Knoxville TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1994). Kingsley was appointed Chaplain to the Queen (in 1859), private tutor to the Prince of Wales (in 1861), Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge (in 1860), Canon of Chester (in 1869) and Canon of Westminster (in 1873).

[10] Cf. Jeremy N. Morris, *F. D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Arthur Michael Ramsey, *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951).

[11] Servants and their families, as well as barristers (at Lincoln's Inn) and fellows (at St Edward's), constituted the congregations for whom Maurice exercised a conscientious pastoral ministry.

[12] Cf. John W. Rogerson, *The Bible and Criticism in Victorian Britain* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009).

the definitive medium through which Scripture was to be interpreted and doctrine articulated: 'almost the very canon to judge both doctrine and discipline by'.[13] What has been of enduring significance is not Hooker's exegesis, but rather the sophistication with which he explores at considerable length issues concerning the authority of Scripture, in relation to human reason and the tradition of the Church.

Maurice, like most other theologians in Britain of his day, among whom Martineau was a conspicuous exception, did not fully embrace the developments in biblical scholarship that were pioneered in the German Protestant universities, exemplified by the work of J. S. Semler (1725–1791),[14] J. J. Griesbach (1745–1812),[15] F. D. E. Schleiermacher (1768–1834),[16] F. C. Baur (1792–1860)[17] and D. F. Strauss (1808–1874),[18] and later by A. B. C. Hilgenfeld (1823–1907)[19] and Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930).[20] This was most evident in his engagement in controversy with John William

[13] *Lawes*, Pref. 2.8.

[14] *Apparatus ad liberalem N. T. interpretationem* (1767); *Apparatus ad liberalem V. T. interpretationem* (1773).

[15] *Novum Testamentum Graece. Quattuor Evangelia complectens* (Halle, 1796; London: Rivington, 1806); *Novum Testamentum Graece. Actas et Epistolas Apostolorum cum Apocalypsi complectens* (Halle, 1806; London: Rivington, 1818).

[16] *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt* (Berlin: Reimer, 1830); *Hermeneutik und Kritik mit besonderer Beziehung auf das Neue Testament* (Berlin: Reimer, 1838).

[17] *Symbolik und Mythologie oder die Naturreligion des Altertums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1824); *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi, sein Leben und Wirken, seine Briefe und seine Lehre* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1845); *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien, ihr Verhältniss zu einander, ihren Charakter und Ursprung* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1847).

[18] *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1835–1836); *Der Christus des Glaubens und der Jesus der Geschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1865).

[19] *Die Evangelien: nach ihrer Entstehung und geschichtlichen Bedeutung* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1854).

[20] *Untersuchungen zur Kritik des alten Testaments* (Kiel: Schwers'sche, 1869).

Colenso (1814–1883), Bishop of Natal in southern Africa,[21] who in other circumstances might have been something of a kindred spirit.

Colenso's elevation from parochial ministry in the Diocese of Norwich to a colonial bishopric at a relatively young age belied his impoverished Cornish origins. His subsequent conflict, which continued for more than a decade, with his rather more patrician Metropolitan, Robert Gray (1809–1872), Bishop of Cape Town, was not without overtones of class and connections, and was to become a catalyst for the first Lambeth Conference, which took place in 1867. Although it has been fashionable to paint Colenso in somewhat anachronistic hues, and to overlook the paternalism and the Western cultural assumptions that shaped his approach to mission among the indigenous population of his diocese, he remains a figure who was radical and marginalised in his own day, but who has been viewed as enlightened and progressive by subsequent generations.[22]

Another example of radicalism forged in a context of 'overseas' mission would be Roland Allen (1868–1947), an Anglican priest and missionary in China, later resident in Kenya. His *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*[23] challenged the prevailing pattern of mission, in which the establishment of educational and healthcare institutions as well as church hierarchies, headed by European personnel, would serve to create alternative societies and cultures, into which converts would be adopted, alienating them from their indigenous societies and cultures and subordinating them to the guardianship and oversight of paternalistic missionaries. Based on his (somewhat pre-critical) reading of the accounts of Paul's missions in Acts, and reconstruction patterns of church foundation and governance, Allen advocated the immediate surrender of indigenous churches to indigenous leadership, trusting them to forge disciplines and patterns of worship appropriate to their contexts, independent of foreign oversight. There was little support for Allen's views until the British Empire imploded after the Second World War, and the costs involved in sustaining missionaries from Britain in exotic locations became untenable.

---

[21] John William Colenso, *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1862); Frederick Denison Maurice, *The Claims of the Bible and of Science* (London: Macmillan, 1863).

[22] Colenso also published, *inter alia*, a commentary on *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1861). Cf. Martin Jarrett-Kerr, *Patterns of Christian Acceptance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[23] Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (London: Scott, 1912). One of the numerous subsequent editions (1927) was published by World Dominion Press [*sic*].

Hooker, Maurice, Colenso and Allen have in common their modest origins and, notwithstanding Colenso's elevation to the episcopate, their continuing marginality and even alienation from the centres of power in the Church. Although it may be possible to identify Anglican theologians whose work has proved to be of enduring value over centuries, who were born into wealthy and well-connected families, able to afford to keep the requisite terms at Oxford or Cambridge, and whose entire lives were spent in the bosom of the establishment, with no preferment denied despite theological and political views at variance with establishment values, only two examples come to mind. The first is Charles Gore (1853–1932), founder of the Community of the Resurrection (also known as the Mirfield Fathers) while a Canon of Westminster, and Bishop successively of Worcester,[24] Birmingham and Oxford; his mother was an earl's daughter, and his father was an earl's grandson. The other example is William Temple (1881–1944), Canon of Westminster, Bishop of Manchester, and then Archbishop successively of York and Canterbury; he was the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, and the great-grandson of two earls, at least one of whom owned a slave plantation. In both cases it might be argued that they are remembered more for their example, and for the fact that they were prolific and controversial theologians, than for anything either of them wrote. The establishment in England has occasionally adopted significant theologians of modest background.[25] In Ireland, the politically connected James Ussher (1581–1656), Archbishop of Armagh, and the aristocratic George Berkeley (1685–1753), slave plantation owner and Bishop of Cloyne, would be rare examples of theologians of significance from a privileged background, even if few today would accept the former's dating of creation to the evening of 22 October 4004 BC. In the Scottish Episcopal Church and its precursors, established and disestablished, the liturgical scholarship of Bishop Thomas

[24] Gore was not the closest relation of the Prime Minister, the Marquis of Salisbury, to be elevated to the episcopate, but was appointed on his nomination. Salisbury's son, whom he had appointed Rector of Hatfield within a year of his ordination to the diaconate, later became Bishop of Exeter, appointed on the nomination of Prime Minister Asquith.

[25] Joseph Butler (1692–1752), Bishop of Bristol and subsequently Bishop of Durham, was born into a working-class dissenting family. He conformed to the Church of England in his youth, and obtained education, ordination, and preferment through episcopal, and later royal, patronage. The careers of Ian Ramsey (1915–1972), Bishop of Durham, and of Rowan Williams (1950–), Archbishop of Canterbury, both undoubtedly theologians with profound insight and a prophetic voice, may be seen by future generations to have followed similar patterns.

Rattray (1684–1743)[26] stands out as the only example of theological work of enduring value emanating from landed prelates.[27]

The theological writings of Hooker, Maurice, Colenso and Allen, informed by readings of Scripture which, in the case of Maurice and Allen in particular, were already becoming dated in the light of emergent critical scholarship, have proved of enduring significance, but have only intermittently been appreciated. It would seem that, notwithstanding the inadequacies which may be identified from a perspective of later developments in biblical scholarship, their theological insights from the margins have been incisive, and their relevance remains undiminished.[28] Although not the final word on the concerns that they discussed, their critique of the Church and society of their time has illuminated issues that have confronted later generations addressing analogous issues in their own day.

Theology that has proved prophetic must be recognised as necessary to the life and health of the Church today. Hooker articulated principles of Church order and of theological endeavour which have proved to be of enduring relevance, value and perspicacity in later circumstances that he could scarcely have envisaged. Maurice, in defending an Anglican ecclesial polity, provided a basis for ecumenical engagement a century later, as well as calling the Church to fulfil its obligations to the poor and marginalised in a polarised society. Colenso made the tentative but significant steps towards integrating critical scholarship and its findings within theology, and, along with Allen, laid the foundations for postcolonial approaches to theology and Church order in the Anglican Communion which evolved from the ruins of the British Empire. Of these two theologians, only Allen questioned the established status of the Church. Nevertheless, the issues that they all raised from the margins of the Church of their day, and the insights which they offered, have not been exhausted, as the Church continues to discern its calling, articulate its faith and order its life, at a time when its institutions and prelates find themselves increasingly marginalised in a changing world.

---

[26] *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem* (London: Bettenham, 1744).

[27] The preoccupation with antiquarian and liturgical matters in such scholarship as flourished in the antecedents of the Scottish Episcopal Church before the twentieth century, cf. also Alexander Penrose Forbes (1817–1875), Bishop of Brechin, who was the son of a Lord of Justiciary and the grandson of two baronets.

[28] This in itself raises questions about the role of biblical scholarship in theology, and in Anglicanism in particular, which will be addressed in a separate paper.

Notwithstanding its privileged position in the political and educational establishments and in society, the Church of England has been best served by theologians writing from the margins, frequently ignored or under-appreciated in their own day, if not actively harassed by vested interests with conflicting — and invariably more conservative — theological and political positions. Questions still need to be asked about the extent to which the same has been largely true of those member churches of the Anglican Communion that emerged from the various missionary initiatives of recent centuries, where the trappings of Anglican establishment have often survived political independence and the severance of formal links between church and state. Even in the USA, where the state is constitutionally secular, and Scotland, where another denomination has for more than three centuries enjoyed a privileged status akin to establishment, Episcopalianism has been associated with the wealthy, the well-connected and the powerful — but voices from the margins may yet be recognised by future generations to have been the authentic and prophetic exponents of the Christian Gospel to the Church of their day.[29]

[29] Cf. *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, ed. by Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-Lan (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2001); Robert S. Heaney and William L. Sachs, *The Promise of Anglicanism* (London: SCM Press, 2019).

The Anglican Scholar Priest in the Nineteenth Century

David Jasper
Honorary Professorial Research Fellow in Theology and Religious Studies,
School of Critical Studies, University of Glasgow

Although Stewart J. Brown has, quite rightly, warned us against adopting too simplistic a vision of the impact of the Oxford Movement on the Scottish Episcopal Church, nevertheless its presence was, and remains, clearly apparent and not without significance.[1] Our Victorian forebears in the Scottish Episcopal Church inherited from John Henry Newman, Edward Bouverie Pusey, John Keble and others a tradition of serious scholarship that was honoured not least by a succession of distinguished Scottish scholar bishops,[2] as well as other clergy. However, this short essay will focus primarily on the Oxford origins of the movement in the Church of England, arguing that for a relatively short period it produced a generation of Tractarian clergy, by far the majority of whom were parochial, who regarded serious scholarship as part of their calling as ordained priests. Far from viewing it as being in conflict with their parochial duties, they considered that such scholarship made an essential contribution to their pastoral work in their parishes.

Literature has often lampooned the 'Puseyite' and Anglo-Catholic clergyman as something of a comical figure obsessed with the niceties of clerical attire and excessive liturgical mannerisms. Undoubtedly in the later part of the nineteenth century there were some ritualist extravagances, which even resulted in the imprisonment of a number of 'ritualist' priests, although it must be recognized that many of them were devoted pastors, often prepared to work in the midst of great poverty and frequently beloved

[1] The tradition and the over-simplified view became widespread after the publication of William Perry, *The Oxford Movement in Scotland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933). Stewart J. Brown offers a short but valuable revisionary narrative in 'Scotland and the Oxford Movement', in *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World, 1830–1930*, ed. by Stewart J. Brown and Peter B. Nockles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 56–77.

[2] These included such people as John Dowden (1840–1910), Bishop of Edinburgh and graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. He was an able liturgist and historian of the medieval church in Scotland.

by their parishioners.[3] However, they will not be my concern here. I shall begin ten years before John Keble's Assize Sermon of 1833 — widely regarded as the beginning of the Oxford Movement — with a series of lectures delivered in Oxford in 1823 by the then Regius Professor of Divinity, Charles Lloyd (1784–1829), who was later to become Bishop of Oxford. His lectures were largely concerned with the origins and history of the Book of Common Prayer, and among the young men in the audience were John Henry Newman, Edward Bouverie Pusey, Isaac Williams and Richard Hurrell Froude. In one sense, Charles Lloyd was in a tradition of Anglican scholarship on the Prayer Book that stretched back at least to Hamon L'Estrange (1605–1660) in the seventeenth century, but his lectures offered something different — and much more scholarly. Lloyd set out to establish the ancient and medieval credentials of the Anglican Prayer Book, suggesting that it represented a continuity of worship in the 'English Church' that stretched back as far as Augustine of Canterbury and the early sixth century. Furthermore, he advised his students to study the medieval Breviaries and Missals of the Uses of Salisbury, York, Bangor and so on, and he led the way in producing scholarly editions of early Reformation texts, including the Bishops' Book of 1537. Oxford became a source of liturgical texts in critical editions produced by men such as Edward Burton (1794–1836) and Edward Cardwell (1787–1861), the Camden Professor of Ancient History. Lloyd's lectures were eventually to become the foundation of one of the most influential liturgical textbooks of the nineteenth century, namely William Palmer's *Origines Liturgicae* (1832).

This was not the early-nineteenth-century Oxford of common caricature — a decadent finishing school for the rich and privileged. It was a place of genuine and serious scholarship that was to fire the hearts and minds of the young men in Lloyd's audience in 1823, and which would result in a remarkable series of essays, the *Tracts for the Times*, which were published between 1833 and 1841. Much has been written about these papers, and I shall make only two general remarks here. First, their underlying purpose was clear. It was to establish the catholic and apostolic credentials of the Church of England even within the Anglican *Via Media* as initially proposed by Newman in *Tract 38* and *Tract 41*. Second, they were an extended defence of the Book of Common Prayer and the Anglican liturgy, with its roots in the Edwardine First Prayer Book of 1549 and its origins, above all, in the late medieval Use of Sarum (Use of Salisbury).

What the *Tracts* produced from the undergraduate students of Oxford was two generations of clergy, the brightest of whom had the benefit of

[3] For a taste of such ritualist practices, we might refer to John Purchas' *Directorium Anglicanum* (1858), later revised by Frederick George Lee.

studying in the Oxford of Newman, Pusey and Keble; some of them became formidable scholars in their own right.[4] However, this was not the age of the professional scholar. They were priests, almost all of whom were working in parishes. Yet, for many of them, their scholarship was not a distraction from their pastoral ministry but a necessary adjunct to it. Many were historians or liturgists who laboured to understand and establish the catholic and apostolic nature of their Church in order to direct the spiritual life of their parish churches and enliven the worship conducted there. Thus, without the considerable scholarship and translating genius of John Mason Neale (1818–1866), a Cambridge-educated student and the founder of the Camden (later Ecclesiological) Society, we would not have the treasury of ancient and medieval hymns, now rendered into English, that form the backbone of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861), ensuring that congregations sang in continuity with our Church of earlier times.

From the parishes of the Church of England emerged works of enormous and valuable erudition, including William Maskell's *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of England* (1844), W. E. Scudamore's monumental *Notitia Eucharistica* (1876), which was a two-volume commentary on the Anglican Order of Holy Communion, and T. F. Simmons' *The Lay Folks' Mass Book* (1879).[5] Meanwhile, the Pitsligo Press of Burntisland, Scotland, under the direction of George Hay Forbes (1821–1875), a priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church, [6] published the great *Missale ad Usum Insignis et Praeclarae Ecclesiae Sarum* (1861–1883), the first truly critical edition of a late medieval mass of the English use.

Such men were not avoiding a pastoral ministry via the escape route of the study. Indeed quite the opposite — they felt called as priests to a life of scholarship that necessarily fed and enriched the spiritual and liturgical life of their churches, as they sought to understand the nature of their Church and Prayer Book in order to make them better priests to their parishioners.

---

[4] I recently published an article in the *Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal* on one such clergyman. See David Jasper, 'Thomas Frederick Simmons: A Forgotten Victorian Clergyman', *Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal*, 5.3 (2021), 133–46. I shall shortly be publishing a full-length study of Simmons in a book co-authored with Jeremy J. Smith.

[5] William Maskell (1814–1890) was a parish priest in the diocese of Exeter until the Gorham Judgment of 1850 brought about his conversion to Roman Catholicism. W. E. Scudamore (1813–1881) was for almost all his long ministry the rector of Ditchingham in Norfolk. T. F. Simmons (1815–1884) was for more than thirty years rector of Dalton Holme in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

[6] Forbes' brother was Alexander Penrose Forbes, Bishop of Brechin.

Of course it is true that many, perhaps most, of these individuals were men of means and some affluence, yet they did not seek preferment, nor were their ambitions scholarly. Their ambitions were for the Church and its vision glorious.

Another slightly later Oxford Tractarian scholar was Mandell Creighton (1843–1901), whose story illustrates both the glory and the decline of the great scholar parish priest of the Oxford Movement and its aftermath. In 1874, after a period as a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, where he taught the then new and somewhat suspect subject of modern history, Creighton and his wife Louise (whom he had only recently wed, and who was later to be linked to the Suffragette Movement) moved to the remote village of Embleton, Northumberland, a living under the patronage of Merton College. Here Creighton laboured for ten years as a popular and successful parish priest, about as far away from Oxford as it was possible to be while still remaining in England. Yet at the same time he also produced two volumes of his finest work as a scholar, *The History of the Papacy* (1882). Then in 1884 his career takes us from the old world that we have been reviewing into a new world in which scholarship was the business of the university, and the Church was becoming too preoccupied with its own affairs to have much time for real serious study. In a move that would probably be impossible today, Creighton was called from the parish of Embleton to become Dixie Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Cambridge, and shortly thereafter he became Bishop of Peterborough (1891), and then Bishop of London (1897). His move into the episcopate seems to have spelled the end of his serious scholarly achievements. Quite simply, in that well-worn phrase, he became 'too busy'.[7] Wearily Bishop Creighton wrote to Lord Acton, who had invited him to contribute to the new *Cambridge Modern History*:

> Alas, life closes round me in ways which I do not wish, and I doubt if I shall have time to read or write again [...]
>
> Your prospectus is admirable and the book would be of enormous value. I hope that you intend to write much of it

[7] As Principal of a college in the University of Durham I forbade my secretary from telling anyone that I was 'too busy' to attend to them. I did not always achieve my ideal — one rarely does — but there are few things more demeaning than being told that your principal — or bishop — is 'too busy' to see you.

> yourself. I wish I had the chance of a visit to Cambridge, but you will conceive that I am very busy at present.[8]

In 1901, at the age of 57, he died — probably in large part from overwork. By the year of Creighton's death, the university world was changing, as was the 'training' of Church of England clergy. A succession of parliamentary acts in the nineteenth century had brought about a loosening of religious ties in a number of ways, not least by the modernising of the curriculum. In 1871 the Universities Tests Act opened all degrees and offices at Oxford, Cambridge and Durham to men (although still only men) of any religion and none; only Keble College, Oxford (1870) and Selwyn College, Cambridge (1882) were founded on essentially conservative principles to preserve Christian, and Anglican, education. However, the academic profession was rapidly becoming just that — a profession, with stricter standards and career path. In due course, people like Maskell, Simmons and Scudamore came to be regarded as amateurs. A modern medievalist has referred to the 'fey antiquarianism' of Simmons, but this is an unjust remark — he was simply a scholar from a different age.

Meanwhile the Church of England was engaged, with varying degrees of success, in setting up its own colleges for 'ordination training'. That term is significant, with clergy no longer being educated, it seems, but *trained* for their profession. The first colleges were not founded in university towns but in cathedral cities, beginning with Chichester in 1839. The college in Chichester modelled itself on an Oxford college in its requirements for academic dress and daily attendance at the cathedral, and also in terms of its curriculum. All students had to study a course of Anglican theology from Richard Hooker to Bishop Butler and William Palmer. They were also required to study Latin, Greek and Hebrew. The college was not initially a success, and it nearly had to close in 1854, before it recovered and went on to flourish later in the century. The colleges situated in Oxford, Cambridge and later Durham did not appear until the 1870s. (Cuddesdon was founded in 1854, but on a site five miles from the fleshpots of Oxford, and under the safe and protecting wing of the Bishop's residence.) However, changes were already happening. In 1953, John R. Moorman, at one time a Principal of Chichester Theological College (now defunct), and later Bishop of Ripon, wrote of his college that:

---

[8] *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, by His Wife, New Edition, Vol. II (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1906), p. 204. (I reference this according to the title page of the book. Nowhere is 'His Wife' identified as Louise Hume Creighton, even though she was a considerable author in her own right.)

> As a result of the more careful training of men for ordination […] young men went into their parishes far better prepared and with much higher standards, both devotional and practical, for the life and work of a priest.[9]

The language used is telling. There is no mention of theological standards, and one wonders to what extent Percy Dearmer, writing half a century earlier in *The Parson's Handbook* (1899), would have approved. He begins with a resounding sentence:

> The object of this Handbook is to help, in however humble a way, towards remedying the lamentable confusion, lawlessness, and vulgarity which are conspicuous in the Church at this time.
>
> 1. The confusion is due to the want of liturgical knowledge among the clergy, and of consistent example among those in authority.[10]

Inevitably, any portrait such as the one I have offered of the mid-Victorian scholar priest will have its exceptions. I have suggested that for a number of reasons — but primarily the changes in the modern university and the development (ironically promoted in some respects by the Oxford Movement itself) of 'ordination training' within the Church — such scholarly priests, for whom parish and scholarship were inseparable in their vision for the Church, have largely ceased to exist. Of course, it is possible to find examples of such people — now, thankfully, not only men — in our own time, but they are few and far between, and they have to work against the grain, often at considerable personal cost. The advent of speedier and cheaper travel and the more recent development of information technology have actually made everything faster, and life for everyone busier. And, as Bishop Mandell Creighton had already found in the later nineteenth century, diocesan life has become increasingly burdened with committees and structures that need to be administrated.

Thus, in the twentieth century, although it was certainly possible to identify formidably learned members of the episcopal bench, few of them spent much time in a parish, and almost all of them were, for at least some of their career, professional academics. William Temple (1881–1944) spent a mere three years as a parish priest in the First World War. Robert

---

[9] J. R. H. Moorman, *A History of the Church of England* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953), p. 375.

[10] Percy Dearmer, *The Parson's Handbook*, New Edition (London: Grant Richards, 1903), p. 1.

Mortimer, Michael Ramsey and Rowan Williams (among others whom one might mention) have all been distinguished university professors. However, the first- and second-generation Tractarian clergy in the nineteenth century — many of whom, admittedly, were people of substance and even affluence in a far more class-conscious society than our own — were a body of ordained men who were often content to serve faithfully and well as pastors in their parishes (many of them for decades in the same place), thus sustaining the idea of the Church of England (and, one might hope, Anglicanism more broadly) as a learned church, and learning itself as something to be pursued in service to the Church. This is an ideal and a vision that we have now almost lost, and more is the pity.

S. T. Coleridge, Becoming Prayer: A 250th Anniversary Celebration and Reflection

Peter Cheyne
Associate Professor in British Literature and Culture, Shimane University
Visiting Fellow in the Department of Philosophy, Durham University

This essay celebrates the birth, 250 years ago, on 21 October 1772, of the British poet, philosopher and theologian Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834). I shall present some general but key aspects of Coleridge's religious and philosophical thought, with links to biographical and poetic materials, with the aim of being helpful and accessible to readers who are new to Coleridge and those who are more familiar with his work. This essay consists of three sections. It commences with a brief biographical sketch and introduces some key thoughts from Coleridge's major philosophical and theological writings, especially concerning the imagination, symbolism, and his sacramentalist view of reality. For Coleridge, spiritual renewal must come from living symbols — powerful ideas reflecting the light of heaven through earthly subjects to recall the soul to the source of that light.

In the second section, I shall move on to Coleridge's criticisms of the church of his day, conformist and non-conformist, to focus on what he felt as 'the want of Church Fellowship'. For instance, he thought that Quakerism had become a hollow tree, and the Church of England, in terms of congregational community, a mere social convention. To invigorate the communal imagination, clergy must engage the parish and preach prayerful, reverent life within it. It is telling that Coleridge's technical synonym for the Holy Spirit was 'Community', as the interpenetrating, circulating love within the Holy Trinity.[1] Going beyond the already established clergy, Coleridge also called for a national 'clerisy' of learned people, 'whether poets, or philosophers, or scholars',[2] who he hoped would find offices to share knowledge and culture in every town and village around the nation. In closing the second section, I shall draw on twenty-first-century examples of churchgoing Christians cleaving to tradition but having reduced religious faith.

---

[1] Discussed in my book, Peter Cheyne, *Coleridge's Contemplative Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 287–91.

[2] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (1829), ed. by John Colmer (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 46.

In the third and final section, I shall move from critical negatives to the positives of Coleridge's philosophy and poetics of prayer. My aim is to analyse and explain his views to show how his thoughts and his sense of faith still carry an energy that may invigorate the Church and help to rebuild a renewed Christian community. For Coleridge, prayer is a divine contemplation that is open to everyone. It enacts a conversion of the soul and a transformation of nature and everyday human life by seeing things in a spiritual light. I shall show how Coleridge understood prayer as putting one's soul in order by freely placing oneself entirely before God. The highest attainment of this for Coleridge is what I call 'becoming prayer' — an ideal where not only is one converted in prayer, but also one's whole life itself *becomes prayer*.

Coleridge's life and thought

Coleridge was the youngest of ten children born to John and Ann Coleridge. His father, Revd John Coleridge, vicar of St Mary's Church at Ottery St Mary, Devon, was also Coleridge's teacher, as Master of the King's School. The subjects that Coleridge learned from his father included Greek and Latin (on which Revd Coleridge had published). This pious man also taught his son to wonder at the starry heavens. Walking with his father at night, as Coleridge recalled in a letter:

> he told me the names of the stars—and how Jupiter was a thousand times larger than our world—and that the other twinkling stars were Suns that had worlds rolling round them—& when I came home, he shewed me how they rolled round—/. I heard him with a profound delight & admiration; but without the least mixture of wonder or incredulity. For from my early reading of Faery Tales, & Genii &c &c—my mind had been habituated *to the Vast*—.[3]

When Coleridge was eight, his father died. On being sent to Christ's Hospital, a charity school in London, this Devonshire boy felt, unlike most of the London lads, sadly distant not only from his family but from nature itself. In his breathtakingly beautiful and meditative poem 'Frost at Midnight', he recalls how he:

[3] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 1, p. 354 (16 October 1797, to Thomas Poole).

was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.[4]

Yet this was no ode to self-pity, for the poem, which spirals up and beyond selfish concern, looks forward to Coleridge's young son, the 'Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side',[5] growing up not in the smoky city but in the glories of nature, God's alphabet book, some of the most illustrious pages of which are the Lake District. There he hoped that his son, Hartley, would have a freer, happier childhood than his own, and that he would:

see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.[6]

Coleridge later called nature 'another book, likewise a revelation of God—the great book of his servant Nature', and in a lecture, described how 'the other great Bible of God, the book of nature become[s] transparent to us when we regard the forms of matter as words, as symbols […] of the wisdom of the supreme Being'.[7]

A dissenter in his twenties, Coleridge became interested in Unitarianism while he was still a student at Cambridge, and soon afterwards he began to preach sermons (1795–1798). He even became a Unitarian minister for a brief period, only to be rescued in 1798 by a generous annuity from the brothers Thomas Wedgwood and Josiah Wedgwood II, sons of

[4] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight' (1798), in *Poetical Works*, ed. by J. C. C. Mays (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1, p. 455; 2, pp. 51–3.

[5] Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', 1, p. 44.

[6] Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', 1, p. 456; 2, pp. 58–62.

[7] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual* (1816), in *Lay Sermons*, ed. by Reginald James White (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 70; *Lectures 1818–1819: On the History of Philosophy*, ed. by J. R. de J. Jackson (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 1, p. 541. Coleridge probably draws from Augustine's idea of the 'great big book, the book of created nature', whereby 'God did not make letters of ink for you to recognize him in; he set before your eyes all these things he has made. Why look for a louder voice? Heaven and earth cries out to you, "God made me"', in *Sermons III (51–94): On the New Testament*, trans. by Edmund Hill and ed. by John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1991), sermon 68 §6.

Josiah Wedgwood, the famous pottery manufacturer of the same name. This enabled Coleridge to concentrate on his literary and philosophical writing.

Around 1814, he formally returned to the Anglican Church and Trinitarian Christianity, and in the years that followed he wrote his most important philosophical and theological works, including *The Statesman's Manual* (1816), *Biographia Literaria* (1817), *Aids to Reflection* (1825) and *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (1829). *The Statesman's Manual* is a short book that is effectively a manifesto on biblical hermeneutics and the interpretation of history. In it Coleridge also formulated his influential theory of the imagination and symbolism, holding metaphor, allegory and analogy to be dead, mechanical techniques that are always detached from their object, unlike the symbol, which he saw as an essential and organic part of what it symbolises. Analogies, for Coleridge, are lifeless, like 'the rattling twigs […] in winter, into which a sap was yet to be propelled'.[8] Unlike analogies, which are disconnected from what their imagery is supposed to enliven, the symbol is itself a flower of the tree that it represents. Coleridge's poetics of thought is sacramentalist because it views meaningful symbols as outward, visible signs of deeper or higher, invisible realities.

To explain how the symbol was essentially at one with the symbolised, Coleridge used the language of consubstantiality, adopting a theological term from the Nicene Creed, whereby the Son is consubstantial with — that is, of one being with — the Father. Unlike a metaphor or analogy, the symbol is truly representative of the more abstract and invisible reality that it conveys, and this is because it is a member of the class that it symbolises, as 'the same power in a lower dignity'.[9] The archetype of the living symbol is the Incarnation, where the Son not only *represents* the Almighty Father in human form, but also *is* God. In the symbol, which is accessible only by imagination, representation and being are one.

Shakespeare's famous phrase 'Juliet is the sun', on the other hand, is an example of metaphor, and one can go quite far with this, since, like the sun, she is in Romeo's mind when he wakes, she makes him warm, and she is radiant. However, as Coleridge noted, metaphors are analogies, and analogies always break down, the representation eventually becoming at odds with the being. To stay with the example from *Romeo and Juliet*, the metaphor cannot stretch indefinitely before it breaks into absurdity. Is Juliet really so distant? And so round? And all that hydrogen?

---

[8] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. by James Engell and Walter Jackson (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 1, p. 152.

[9] Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual*, p. 72; see also *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. by Kathleen Coburn and M. Christensen (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957–2002), 4, §4832 (1821).

By contrast, for Coleridge, living language with the power to cross from the seen to the unseen and from the immanent to the transcendent must come from symbols, and the greatest examples, he maintained, are to be found in the Bible: 'the Scriptures are the living *educts* [or produce] of the Imagination'.[10] Symbolic apprehension works by 'incorporating' intuitions of spiritual truths in 'Images of the Sense', and by organising the disarray of the sensory world into 'self-circling energies' and a 'system of symbols' that conduct eternal and life-giving truths.

It was in the Bible that Coleridge found a transcending symbol for symbolism itself, in its highest form, citing 'the Wheels that Ezekiel beheld, when the hand of the Lord was upon him, and he saw the visions of God'. Like the tree made supple and alive with the nourishing sap, God's blazing chariot in Ezekiel's vision was filled in every part with 'the spirit of the living creature'. The symbol is a part of what it represents, and not merely an analogue, and hence it represents by birthright, simply by being itself — and where the spirit goes, so also go the wheels (i.e., the symbols).

Coleridge continued his sacramentalism of symbol and imagination in *Biographia Literaria*, a work of philosophy and literary criticism that included elements of theology. In that book he explained, among other things, his own and William Wordsworth's accomplishment in the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), and he proposed his theory of the temporary 'poetic faith' in literary writing that is sustained through a 'willing suspension of disbelief', wherein we find ourselves curiously moved by stories that we know to be entirely fabricated.[11] Here he also argued for the importance of the imaginative effort by which one may remove the 'film of familiarity' and awaken the 'mind's attention from the lethargy of custom'.[12]

In this renewal of the ordinary, a kind of re-enchantment that is key to Coleridgean and Wordsworthian romanticism, one is called to be a vicar of the everyday, stirring oneself and others to the deep and vital symbolism that suffuses our ordinary lives. This is achieved negatively by removing the 'film of familiarity' and being alert to different viewpoints; it is achieved positively, if elliptically, by revealing or suggesting the shining out of the source of being in and through the existences around us. Importantly, for Coleridge, senses of transcendence in everyday life precede any great supernal visions and are not to be entirely eclipsed by them, the ordinary beauty and significance representing the extraordinary in humbler yet still deeply meaningful forms (again, 'the same power in a lower dignity'). Fittingly, *Biographia Literaria* ends with the 'upraised Eye' of contemplation

[10] Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual*, p. 29.
[11] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2, p. 6.
[12] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2, p. 7.

turned towards the 'starry Heaven' and the 'Suns of other Worlds' in an act of prayer to 'preserve the Soul steady and collected […] in inward Adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial Word that re-affirmeth it from Eternity to Eternity, whose choral Echo is the Universe'.[13]

However powerful it may be, this still does not touch on the most famous part of *Biographia Literaria*, namely Coleridge's distinction between mechanical, self-interested 'fancy' (or fantasy) and organic, truth-directed imagination. Here he sharply divides the mechanical or merely fabricating mind and its instincts and impulses from the spiritual, higher mind. The latter, the spirit proper, to which imagination belongs, frees itself from the gravitational pull of 'selfish solicitude'[14] and is drawn instead to the eternal truth of a divine reality that transcends the self yet also elevates it.

For Coleridge, the imagination is 'essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead'.[15] He was a champion of the organic, active, and living, as opposed to the mechanical, passive, 'fixed and dead', as well as of the imaginatively and spiritually intuited over the immediately visible and sensory. Thus he warned of 'the despotism of the eye' and the tyranny of the senses, from which we can be freed by divine ideas and symbols of the imagination.[16]

In a further distinction, leaving fancy to one side, Coleridge then distinguishes between what he calls the primary and secondary degrees of imagination. The primary imagination he saw as the foundational imagination that is shared by all human beings. In his view (influenced by Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism), primary imagination is an active power that enables us to perceive objects as having real existence beyond the circle of self and its needs and fantasies. In a sense, it is the faculty of perceiving modes of being, and Coleridge described this fundamental power of imagination in the most astonishing language, as 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I Am'.[17]

With this profound power in place, the secondary imagination is in essence the same but refined to a higher degree, more fully under voluntary control, and hence existing to a different extent in each person, with some barely using it and others pushing it to the level of genius. He saw this secondary imagination as 'an echo of the former' yet, because it is more fully conscious, it can create works of art, philosophy, cultural progress and

---

[13] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2, p. 248.
[14] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2, p. 7.
[15] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1, p. 304.
[16] Ibid., p. 107.
[17] Ibid., p. 304.

scientific discovery. Coleridge believed that this faculty of creative discovery performs an aesthetic and intellectual alchemy which 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealise and to unify'.[18] This imagination unites, fuses and sublimates the sensory *many* of experience into the more spiritually powerful and symbolical *one* of artistic creation and higher insight.

Coleridge's criticisms of the institutional Church

Coleridge's influence on the Church is well attested. In Anglican Church history he was a leading inspiration for the Broad Church Movement, influencing the Christian socialist F. D. Maurice, the Liberal William Gladstone, the conservative Cardinal (and now Saint, in the Roman Catholic Church) John Henry Newman, and the Oxford Movement in general. In his autobiography, which borrows its title from Coleridge's poem 'Apologia pro Vita Sua', Newman maintained that Coleridge laid the 'philosophical basis' for the Church of his age. Although he thought that Coleridge 'indulged a liberty of speculation', much of which he found 'heathen', Newman concluded that the poet-philosopher 'installed a higher philosophy into inquiring minds, than they had hitherto been accustomed to accept'. [19] Beyond his published writings, Coleridge's influence carried through his lectures on literature and philosophy and his Thursday seminars at Highgate, which were intended to develop promising young men destined for the clergy. His influence also spread through sharing ideas and friendship with people such as the theologian-poet Revd Joseph Blanco White of the Oriel Noetics, the pre-Tractarian 'school of Speculative Philosophy in England'.[20]

However, for much of his life, as we shall see, Coleridge felt a profound and unmet need for Christian fellowship. A greater lack of fellowship is far

---

[18] Ibid.

[19] John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 105. Coleridge's poem, first published in *Blackwood's Magazine* (January 1822), was a polished version of 'The Poet's Eye' (27 August 1800). Newman's hedging about Coleridge's 'heathen' tendencies was probably due to the poet-philosopher's intellectual sympathy with Plato and Plotinus — something shared, it must be added, with orthodox thinkers including the Church Fathers and Thomas Aquinas.

[20] James Mackintosh, 'Stewart's Introduction to the Encyclopædia', part 2, *Edinburgh Review*, 36 (1821), 220–67: 254 n. Blanco White's most famous poem, the sonnet 'Night and Death' (1828), was dedicated to Coleridge.

more evident today, 250 years after Coleridge's birth, as census results reveal 2022 to be the first year in which self-described Christians became a minority in England and Wales, numbering only half the population. Despite this current decline in Britain, globally Christianity is *growing*, and faster than at any time in church history. Current research suggests that one of the primary reasons for the rapid growth of Christianity in the Global South over the past few decades is the restoration of the centrality of prayer — 'abundant and bold prayer' — to daily religious practice, which is arguably lacking in Christianity in the Global North.[21] Clergy and parishes in Britain are clearly in need of inspiration, so it is fitting to reflect on Coleridge's thoughts on fellowship, imagination, sacramental symbolism, grace and prayer, not as ritual or exclamatory petition, but as the free expression and whole act of the soul.

Coleridge viscerally yearned for Christian fellowship, but he could not find it in a church. He thought that the Church in any denomination had seen better days and was, if it only knew it, desperate for renewal. For instance, he largely admired John Wesley, but was left cold by what he felt had become the empty shell of Methodism. His composing *Aids to Reflection* around a series of excerpts and aphorisms from the seventeenth-century divine Robert Leighton, Archbishop of Glasgow and Principal of the University of Edinburgh, was one of many marks of his respect and love for 'the spiritual, platonic old'[22] theology, which he deeply regretted had become replaced by Paleyan empiricism and utilitarianism. Instead of drawing from what he saw as such shallow sources, he drew inspiration from the mystic connection with the divine in the seventeenth-century pietist theologian Jacob Boehme and the church leaders he inspired, especially George Fox and William Law. Yet it is notable that mysticism is a solitary practice. Although it finds a sensual connection with God and divinity in the cosmos, it is not suited to the religious fellowship and community of ordinary life. Thus Coleridge found himself communicant with church life, but still somewhat lapsed.

In a notebook entry written in 1827, Coleridge meditates on St Cyprian, the third-century Bishop of Carthage, and his letters 'On the Lapsed' (*De lapsis*), relating them to problems of the institutional church in the Britain of his own day. Coleridge approves of Cyprian's arguments that the pope and councils

---

[21] Glenn Sunshine and Jerry Trousdale with Greg Benoi, 'Christianity is growing faster than any time in history. Why is the Church in Europe, America declining?', *Christian Post*, 15 March 2020 [accessed 15 February 2023]. Center for the Study of Global Christianity, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, '2022 Status of Global Christianity Report' [accessed 15 February 2023].

[22] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, 2, §2598 (May–August 1805).

are only *witnesses* to what Christians believe, rather than *authors and determiners* of that faith, with the church itself consisting of 'all the faithful'.[23] Cyprian was of course working in much more actively anti-Christian times than Coleridge's or our own, and the lapsed Christians whom he was arguing should be readmitted to communion were those who had fallen away due to intense and murderous persecution during the imperial reigns of Decius and Valerian. Cyprian himself was martyred at Carthage, beheaded by a Roman executioner's sword for refusing to deny Christ and sacrifice to the Roman gods.

It is not through such terrors that modern Christians become lapsed. Yet today, overwhelmingly more than in Coleridge's day, the spiritual service of priests to their parishes shows great need of renewal. A priest is meant to be — is ordained to be — the pastor, the server of communal and spiritual sustenance, to a parish that has been entrusted to him or her to tend. Are not the lapsed, the lost sheep, the greatest prize within a flock? Reflecting on excerpts from Cyprian, Coleridge considered his own low record of church attendance and interrogated what he felt to be the impoverished spirit of fellowship at the established and dissenting churches:

> Am *I* or is the non-existence of a Christian Community, in fault[?] God knows how much I feel the want of Church Fellowship! But where can I find it? Among the *Methodists*? *Vide* the Cuts & Frontispieces to the Methodist, Arminian, Evangelical &c Magazines.[24]

The ever-prayerful Coleridge felt the need for Christian fellowship but was unable to find it. Since then, wariness of organised religion has only grown. Coleridge, however, continued to love the ideal of the Church in its Trinitarian denominations, and, although sympathetic to mysticism, as we have seen, and a thoroughgoing proponent of spiritual contemplation, he could not wholeheartedly recommend the Plotinian 'flight of the alone to the Alone'.[25] An old hand of the imagination (which approaches divine truths through sensuous symbols), with a critical suspicion of the fancy (which often uses sensual images to gratify self-centred desires), Coleridge knew only too well that a solitary pursuit of religion and the spiritual all too easily mistakes idiosyncratic quirk for universal truth. As he noted:

---

[23] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, 5, §5636 (November 1827).

[24] Ibid. The *Evangelical Magazine* used portraits of individual clergymen to illustrate articles.

[25] Plotinus (Louth's translation), quoted in Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition from Plato to Denys* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 51.

> seeking in the Feelings and the Fancy for a more intimate knowledge of God and the Soul than the Understanding or even the Reason can impart […] is unworthy the name of mysticism (except—pardon the Pun!—as a Misty Schism from the Church of Common Sense).[26]

Yet equally importantly, and to return to his thoughts on lapses in Christian communion, the clergy must still, more than ever, be concerned with those 'who feel the want of Church Fellowship' but do not find it there. Coleridge continued his rattle through the denominations: 'The *Quakers*?—I want the heart of Oak—& here is *the Rind* & Bark in wondrous preservation, counterfeiting *a tree* to the very life/—'.[27]

Although he was sympathetic to Plotinus's mystical *hénōsis* (union with the divine One) and to George Fox's belief in the inward light as Christ in the heart, he later described how he found 'Modern Quakerism […] the whole inside hollow and rotten'.[28] This image is perhaps appropriate, since it is easy to imagine how the expectant silence and reverent openness of an authentic meeting of the Society of Friends can degenerate through formalism into a mere hollowness. The problem, Coleridge's criticism suggests, is how to find appropriate ways to foster and maintain spiritual aims within the support of congregational fellowship. He continues:

> The *C. of Eng*?—The Churches, and Chapels? O yes, I can go to a Church, & so I can to a Theatre—& go out again—& know as much as [or of?] my fellow-goers in the one as in the other.

Surely this criticism is as valid — and even more pertinent — today as it was 195 years ago, when it was written. One can go to a church in the same way as to a theatre, and go out again — the observation is as telling and diagnostic as it is pithy. Churchgoing can all too easily become a shallow social engagement, offering some aesthetic satisfaction but precious little spiritual community.

---

[26] Coleridge, *Marginalia*, 5, p. 795. In Coleridge's famous distinction, reason is the spiritual intuition of eternal truths and divine ideas, whereas understanding is the human (and indeed animal) faculty of strategy and concept manipulation (*Aids to Reflection*, pp. 207–36). I discuss the far-reaching importance of this distinction in Peter Cheyne, 'S. T. Coleridge and the Transcendence of Reason', *Heythrop Journal*, 63 (2022), 349–66.

[27] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, 5, §5704 (November 1827).

[28] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Table Talk*, ed. by Carl Woodring (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 1, pp. 458–9 (3 January 1834).

After his return to the Anglican Church in 1814, Coleridge retained a warm attachment as well as an intellectual one, although it was not until Christmas Day in 1827 that he 'Received the Sacrament', as he wrote in his notebook, 'for the first time since my first year at Jesus College /Christ is gracious even to the Laborer that cometh to his Vineyard at the eleventh hour—33 years absent from my Master's Table/'.[29] Yet he also sometimes expressed an attraction towards pietistic Moravianism.[30] Nonetheless, he could not pursue the attraction very far, objecting to what he saw as soporific sentimentalism as well as dogmatism that had become stuck in its ways:

> The Moravians?—If any where, among them […] But I fear, that every fancy is tolerated among them but the fancy of free enquiry and the free use of the Understanding on subjects that belong to the Understanding—I fear, a […] wilful Stupor with the sacrifice of Reason under the name of Faith, instead of a Faith higher than Reason because it includes it as one of its Co-partners—I fear the Tyranny of *Dogmas*.[31]

Reason for Coleridge is a spiritual intuition, tracking truths in experience through a kind of instinct for meaning and value. This intuition traces ideas such as freedom, justice, the infinite, goodness, beauty, and so on, and leads to an openness to the divine ideas — the 'eternal verities'[32] and their ultimate source in the will of God. Might it be true that the nourishment of this spiritual intuition is the very pastoral sustenance that is most wanting in the Church? The links of parishioners to a tradition of values, to an impressive catalogue of hymns and time-honoured rituals, and to an aesthetic continuity of Christian celebration are still vibrant, but something, surely, is wanting.

Many modern churchgoers, especially in British congregations, express their faith with a sense of gentle sadness or of only moderate hope. The gently sad types (think of Roger Scruton,[33] for example) are often cultural

---

[29] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, 5, §5703 (25 December 1827).

[30] The original Protestant denomination, founded by followers of Jan Hus in 1457.

[31] Coleridge, *Notebooks*, 5, §5704 (November 1827).

[32] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend*, ed. by Barbara E. Rooke (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), II, p. 104 fn. (28 September 1809).

[33] Roger Scruton, *Gentle Regrets: Thoughts from a Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006); Roger Scruton, *Our Church: A Personal History of the Church of England* (London: Atlantic Books, 2012); and in Mark Dooley,

conservatives who regret that the old ways have gone or are going, and who find in Episcopalian institutions a raft of tradition and familiarity. The moderately hopeful (Mary Warnock,[34] for example) are more liberal and less regretful about the increasing abandonment of the traditional idea of God, since it has always been Jesus's words on charity and on loving one's neighbour that has attracted them. The two groups share the pews almost indistinguishably. They love the hymns and cherish Christianity as a mode of profound human expression. They are moved by the calls and responses, but they do not believe in a literal sense what is being said. Holding on to the beauty and traditions of the church, these groups represent a shifting and a lessening of faith.

Warnock held on to a Christianity of love, and that is deeply important. Scruton's faith was sadder, by his own admission, as he had accepted a kind of reluctant pessimism that adored the story and the idea of hope in Christianity, but neither believed in it nor held it in faith. These are among the kinds of people that the Church must inspire today. These examples of the gently sad and the only moderately hopeful are not special intellectual types. Rather, being intellectuals, Warnock and Scruton more clearly articulated what many feel yet struggle to explain. Although both of these philosophers were influenced by Coleridge,[35] especially by his writings on the imagination and on the appreciation of nature, I think that what they missed, and what could have given their gentle Christianity greater vigour, was a true sense of the utterly non-naturalist, entirely supernatural qualities of the spirit — not spirit in some humanistic sense, but the immortal spirit. The fullest commendation of prayer, understood by Coleridge as the composition of one's spirit before God, is, I propose, a good way to reach such yearning, dissatisfied souls.

Conversations with Roger Scruton (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 151, Scruton disavows belief in the afterlife, stating 'I think this life is probably enough'.

[34] 'Mary Warnock's Confessions – Morality, God and #MeToo', interview with Revd Giles Fraser [accessed 15 February 2023]

[35] Mary Warnock, *Imagination* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1976); Mary Warnock, 'Foreword', in Peter Cheyne, ed., *Coleridge and Contemplation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. i–viii. Roger Scruton, 'Fantasy, Imagination and the Screen', in *The Aesthetic Understanding* (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 127–36; Roger Scruton, 'Imagination and Truth: Reflections after Coleridge', in *Coleridge and Contemplation*, pp. 77–87.

Prayerful life

One often encounters in Coleridge the idea of conversion through prayer. In a poetic sense, this even leads to being converted *into* prayer, so that, increasingly, one's life itself *becomes prayer*. For instance, he describes his poetic character Christabel as:

> Like a youthful Hermitess,
> Beauteous in a Wilderness,
> Who, praying always, prays in Sleep.[36]

The ideal is to pray always, so that one's acts themselves become converted into prayer. Through prayer, body and soul unite and are directed to God through the world, in a heaven-bound circuit of love and praise. Thus:

> Prayer *is Faith* passing into act––a union of the will and the Intellect […] It is the *whole* man that prays; less than this is wishing, or *lip* work, a charm, or a mummery. Pray always:–– says the Apostle––i.e. have the habit of prayer, turning your thoughts into acts by connecting them by an act with the idea of the Redeemer God, and even so [reconverting] actions *into thoughts*.[37]

'It is the *whole* man that prays', for prayer requires fullness of the soul and commitment of spirit, all else being subordinated to willing that God's will be done. Prayer enacts a process of ordination — in answering the call, the vocation, one puts oneself, body and soul, into order. Thomas de Quincey recalls how Coleridge:

> told me as his own particular opinion that the act of praying was the very highest energy of which the human mind is capable; praying, that is, with the total concentration of the faculties; and the great mass of worldly and of learned men, he pronounced absolutely incapable of prayer.[38]

The idea of prayer as enacting self-unity relates positively to Coleridge's definition of faith as '*Fidelity* to our own Being as far as such Being is not and

---

[36] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Christabel' (1798), in *Poetical Works*, 1, p. 493; 2, pp. 320–2.

[37] Coleridge, *Marginalia*, 1, p. 702, note on the Book of Common Prayer.

[38] Thomas De Quincey, *Tait's Magazine* (September 1834), p. 515; reprinted in Thomas De Quincey, *Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets* (1862) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 60.

cannot become an object of the sense'.[39] Our inmost, 'own Being' is something beyond the senses ('supersensuous', as he put it), and is therefore a matter of faith that may be rejected by empiricist or sensualist scepticism. This inner reality includes an intuition of our free will, which is known in and through being and is maintained through faith, but which cannot be proven to a sceptic. Free will is, nonetheless, a prerequisite for knowledge, genuine inquiry, morality and the possibility of good and evil, as opposed to all history being some deterministic sequence of events.

Prayer is the apex of faith that sets body and soul in order before an omniscient God. As Coleridge expressed it in a poem, 'to pray / […] silently, by slow degrees, / My spirit I to Love compose'.[40] Complementing his thought in the 'Christabel' poem, where 'praying always' one *becomes prayer*, these thoughts also show how for Coleridge, in an elegantly evolving progress, it is through prayer that one most fully becomes oneself, one's regenerate self.

In another great poem, Coleridge describes one of his own experiences of this wonderful sense of becoming prayer. He had just heard Wordsworth recite his epic autobiography, composed to a plan on the formation of the poet's mind that Coleridge himself had suggested. At that time, it was known as the 'Poem (title not yet fixed) to Coleridge'; only later, posthumously in 1850, did it receive the title of *The Prelude* from Mary Wordsworth. Composing through the night, Coleridge responded with his 'Poem to a Gentleman' (January 1807), later titled 'To William Wordsworth'. Listening to his friend recite the philosophical poem whose inspiration he provided, Coleridge entered almost unaware into a deep contemplation, and he ended his reply-poem with the lines:

> Scarce conscious, and yet conscious of its close
> I sate, my being blended in one thought
> (Thought was it? or Aspiration? or Resolve?)
> Absorbed, yet hanging still upon the sound—
> And when I rose, I found myself in prayer.[41]

Such prayer is an unselfconscious, contemplative state. It is a reverie that accompanies reverence. Rapt in silent attention, one attends to an ideal, transcendent object or to the higher aim or virtue that some earthly form

---

[39] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Essay on Faith' (1820), in *Shorter Works and Fragments*, ed. by H. J. Jackson and J. R. de J. Jackson (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 2, p. 834.

[40] Coleridge, 'The Pains of Sleep' (1803), in *Poetical Works*, 1, p. 753.

[41] Coleridge, 'To William Wordsworth' (1807), in *Poetical Works*, 1.2, p. 819; ll. 108–12.

suggests. This reverence born of contemplation is intimately related to the experience of grace.

Few scenes in British poetry are as graceful as the contemplative image with which 'Frost at Midnight' closes. Concluding his meditative poem, taking in his own lonely and bereaved childhood past and imagining a brighter future for his infant son, who he hopes will learn God's grace through the joys and grand appearances of nature, Coleridge circles back in place and time to imagine the snow-water on his wintry cottage roof:

> whether the eave-drops fall
> Heard only in the trances of the blast,
> Or if the secret ministry of frost
> Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
> Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.[42]

The same sublimely hanging note hovers at the endpoint of both poems — 'And when I rose, I found myself in prayer' and 'Quietly shining to the quiet Moon'. Yet 'endpoint' is not quite the right word, as the 'end' in both of those poems is a not a point but a taper that continues with a suspended mood of quiet awe. In the poem to Wordsworth, we are, with Coleridge, 'Absorbed, yet hanging still'. And in the moonlit cottage, the silent icicles hang, 'Quietly shining'. The suspense is attentive. It is also reflective, reflecting back to its source — a perfect image of grace and the prayer of thanksgiving for that grace. The virtuous circle of the whole is a 'rondo, and return upon itself'.[43] Contemplative vision unfolds into expansive enlightenment. As Coleridge notes elsewhere, writing of divine reason intuited in life and in nature perceived symbolically: 'Each individual must bear witness of it [*sc*. Logos, divine reason] to his own mind, even as he describes light and life: and with the silence of light, it describes itself'.[44] Grace often follows reflection and a desire for goodness, yet it is a divine gift, which means that it cannot be brought about by human will. At the crucial moment, then, grace is a spontaneous moment of unreflective gratuity. This pattern is memorably and effectively conveyed in a celebrated scene from 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1797–98), when the protagonist, with his crewmates dead, and himself now desolate at sea, and suffering the wrath of offended nature

---

[42] Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight' (1798), in *Poetical Works*, 1.1, p. 456, ll. 70–74.

[43] Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, 1.1, p. 456, where the editor quotes from a manuscript copy of the poem in which Coleridge has added an explanation of how the circular effect of the poem was aided by the way that he handled the ending.

[44] Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual*, p. 70.

spirits, tries at last to pray, yet fails. And then, unexpectedly, he succeeds. This happens when he looks on the water-snakes, those glossy black and iridescent eels writhing slimily atop the slimy ocean, creatures many recoil from, seeing them as vile and ugly. Yet the despondent mariner saw the beauty in these lively creatures and 'blessed them unaware'. Here we read of God, perhaps hearing the intercession by the mariner's 'kind saint [who] took pity' on him, rewarding the expression of remorse and unselfish love with the ability to pray. In all of this, it is beautifully put that prayer is not the means, but the end — not the petition, but the prize.

The mariner's unreflective blessing of the water-snakes is momentous as a gracious act of the heart. It wins his salvation and reverses the curse he incurred by slaying with his crossbow nature's good omen, the albatross, for no reason other than idle sport. The gratuitousness of ill will and sin is then reversed through the grace of spontaneous love directed towards even the meanest of God's creatures:

> O happy living things! no tongue
> Their beauty might declare:
> A spring of love gusht from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware:
> Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
> And I bless'd them unaware.
>
> The selfsame moment I could pray;
> And from my neck so free
> The Albatross fell off, and sank
> Like lead into the sea.[45]

This spontaneous prayer is the turning point between near despair and a love deeper even than hope. The mariner's benevolence releases him and becomes the first act of a new and redeemed nature. Bringing a spiritual conversion, on blessing the 'slimy things' that 'crawl with legs / Upon the slimy sea', his saving grace comes when:

> A spring of love gusht from my heart,
> And I bless'd them unaware.[46]

Continuously with his poetry, Coleridge's philosophical and theological writings take this contemplative attention and openness to transcendent

[45] Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798–9), in *Poetical Works*, 1.1, pp. 393–4, ll. 282–91.

[46] Ibid., part four, penultimate stanza.

ideals to be a sense for the spiritual. This power of spiritual intuition finds symbols of the divine ideas in the tapestry of life and nature. Thus, he says, 'the Creator has given us spiritual senses, and sense-organs—ideas', such as 'the idea of the good, the idea of the beautiful, ideas of eternity, immortality, freedom', from which we are drawn to 'infer the existence of a world correspondent to them'.[47] These ideas he held to be luminous — we do not so much see them as see by the light of them. They illuminate our world and our understanding with spiritual clarity and insight. Although our reality is usually veiled by the 'film of familiarity' that pervades our socio-economic modes of being, it becomes transfigured in the light of divine ideas, revealing an ultimately spiritual existence.

Coleridge identifies these ideas as refractions of the divine light of the Logos. Inhering in the Word, the ideas are many rays from the divine one. In the sense that 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us',[48] the sense of Incarnation, these divine ideas become human, yet they are always perfect and pure. The Logos itself is rooted in the unfathomable, divine Will, which Coleridge called 'abysmal', in the profoundest sense of being 'depthlessly deep'. The divine Will of the Father becomes somewhat more knowable, less abysmally obscure, when, as the Father in the Son, it is reflected in the purity and light of the 'co-eternal Logos',[49] the idea of ideas, to intercirculate in the triunal compassion of the Holy Spirit.[50]

---

[47] Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*, p. 176; 47 fn.

[48] Jn 1.14.

[49] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Opus Maximum*, ed. by Thomas McFarland and Nicholas Halmi (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 232; *Marginalia*, 1, p. 679.

[50] Recommended introductions to Coleridge's thought (in addition to works already cited): Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972); J. Robert Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1969); Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); David Jasper, *Coleridge as Poet and Religious Thinker* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), which observes that the 'notebooks of 1827–34 are the prayer of a man […] whose desperately won faith in the Divine mystery was the culmination of a life-long intellectual struggle' (p. 134); and Mary Anne Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy: The Logos as Unifying Principle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Biblical Scholarship, Theology and Ministry in the Anglican Tradition

Nicholas Taylor
Rector, St Aidan's Church, Clarkston
Convener, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board

The Ordinal appended to the Book of Common Prayer (1662) of the Church of England includes the question to those to be ordained priest:

> Will you be diligent in Prayers, and in reading of the holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?

Barring two variations in capitalisation, the Ordinal included in the Scottish Prayer Book (1929) includes the identical question:

> Will you be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?

In the *Scottish Ordinal 1984* (amended in 2006), the question is revised as follows:

> Will you devote yourself to prayer, to the reading of Holy Scriptures, and all studies that will increase your faith and deepen your understanding of the truth?

Two changes are of particular significance. First, the expression 'devote yourself' is at the very least an intensification of 'be diligent in', implying quite clearly that study, like prayer, is not an optional extra to the clerical routine, but an integral and crucial aspect that requires intellectual and emotional commitment, as well as investment of time and resources. Second, the repudiation of 'study of the world and the flesh' (not to be confused with pursuit of carnal knowledge) is replaced by an implicit recognition that all areas of human knowledge may potentially be useful in building faith and grasping truth. This does not mean that appropriating managerial jargon without regard for its ideological premises is a substitute for theology. 'Holy Scriptures' are quite explicitly singled out and, at least implicitly, prioritised as an area of clerical study. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to expect that clergy in pastoral ministry will dedicate a significant proportion

of their working time to the study of Scripture, Christian doctrine and related subjects relevant to ministry, and to their understanding of the context in which they are serving and the issues with which they are being confronted in the lives of the people in their care. This extends far beyond a perfunctory scrutiny of commentaries on the passages in the coming Sunday's lectionary and requires that bishops ensure that all presbyters with whom they share the cure of souls undertake such studies, and have access to the resources necessary for them to do so.

It has long been a truism that Anglican theology rests upon the three pillars of Scripture, Reason and Tradition, with Scripture enjoying some degree of pre-eminence. Richard Hooker's *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Polity* (the first five volumes of which were published during the last decade of the sixteenth century, and the remaining three during the decade following his death in 1600) is traditionally identified as the definitive statement on this position.[1] Notwithstanding Hooker's worthiness, and undoubted embodiment and expression of these principles, not only have his reputation and influence fluctuated with the ecclesiastical and political fashions of the Church of England through subsequent centuries, but on a good day so many divergent and conflicting parties are determined to claim him for their own that he is seldom permitted to speak for himself.[2] It is not the aim here to join the battle for Hooker's legacy, but rather to recognise that we live in a rather different world to England during the closing years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth (I of England), shortly before the union of Scottish and English crowns, and the unleashing of mercantile capitalism under the Commonwealth, which drew Britain into violent competition with

[1] There have been several impressions of these volumes over the centuries, and renderings of the sixteenth-century text into more contemporary English with standardised spelling, etc. Many of these include the first five books only. An accessible version is the Folger Library edition, edited by W. Speed Hill (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1977, 1981), and a version with modernised spelling, edited by Arthur Stephen McGrade (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[2] Cf. Nigel T. Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005); Michael Brydon, *The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); John S. Marshall, *Hooker and the Anglican Tradition* (London: A & C Black, 1963); Charles Miller, *Richard Hooker and the Vision of God* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. Ltd, 2006); Philip B. Secor, *Richard Hooker: Prophet of Anglicanism* (Tunbridge Wells: Burns & Oates, 1999); Nigel Voak, *Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

other European powers, and with indigenous rulers, for control of the trade routes between Europe and Asia, and increasingly into the transatlantic slave trade which will forever be a blight on Britain's history, alongside the simultaneous extension of the Empire across every continent. During the course of this process, the theologically pliable and politically reactionary Church of England became the nucleus of an unplanned global Communion, whose multicultural identity has become increasingly apparent during the post-colonial period. This must have serious implications for how theology is done, both across the Anglican Communion and within member churches, as the issues of the day are addressed in theological exploration and reflection and in pastoral practice.

However, many Anglicans espouse the mantra 'Scripture, Tradition and Reason', and however vehemently they do so, precisely how each of these pillars is understood, how they relate to each other, how they function in the life of the Church today, and how they can shed light on contemporary issues with the potential to define ways forward into the future for the Church, remains uncertain and contentious. Platitudes about Scripture, Reason and Tradition will accomplish nothing as long as the controversies and divisions within the Anglican Communion over the ministry of women and the issue of human sexuality (to cite two prominent and long-running examples) demonstrate very clearly that Anglicans do not agree about what these terms mean, how they relate to each other and how they function in the life of the Church.[3] That these issues are keenly felt within, and not only between, member churches is evident in the continuing controversies regarding sexuality, not least within the Church of England; the fissiparous force of such controversies may have been experienced somewhat differently in Scotland, but they have not been avoided altogether.

There is clearly a need to explore further, on a pan-Anglican basis, just what we mean by Scripture, Reason and Tradition, and to understand how

[3] Cf. Paul D. L. Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism* (London: T & T Clark, 2008); Paul D. L. Avis, *In Search of Authority* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Timothy Bradshaw, *Olive Branch: An Evangelical Anglican Doctrine of the Church* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1992); Mark D. Chapman, *Anglican Theology* (London: T & T Clark International, 2012); Christopher J. Cocksworth, *Holding Together: Gospel, Church and Spirit – The Essentials of Christian Identity* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008); James E. Griffiss, *The Anglican Vision* (Cambridge MA: Cowley Publications, 1997); Robert A. K. Runcie, *Authority in Crisis? An Anglican Response* (London: SCM Press, 1988); Nicholas H. Taylor, 'Some Observations on Theological Method, Biblical Interpretation, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Current Disputes in the Anglican Communion', *Theology*, 111 (2008), 51–8.

they work — in relation to each other — in the life of the Church. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that the notion of 'authority' underlies every aspect of these issues, and that this will also need to be confronted.[4] The report commissioned by the Anglican Consultative Council, *Deep Engagement, Fresh Discovery: Report of the Anglican Communion "Bible in the Life of the Church" Project*[5] may have been a necessary start to this process, but it has not identified, let alone resolved, the outstanding issues. Although Anglicans may be in broad agreement about the parameters of the Canon of Christian Scripture, and ambivalence about the books that constitute the Apocrypha may in itself cause little disagreement on points of doctrine, this does not address the more technical issues of exegesis and quite fundamental issues of theology in interpretation. As competence in the ancient languages becomes ever rarer, with consequent dependence on translations, and little comprehension of the complexities of the translation process or the theological agenda that governs investment in Bible translation, it is increasingly unlikely that exploration of Scripture and discussion of key texts on matters of controversy will be informed by sound scholarship. This is a far from productive basis for rigorous discussion, let alone for realising any convergence of views, especially when a vacuous appeal to 'the clear meaning of Scripture' has become a recurring mantra for intransigent adherence to what are at best received traditions, if not uninformed opinions. Yet, if such processes are not ventured, with the active participation of scholars from all parts of the Communion who have sufficient learning, time and resources to dedicate to the task, there is no prospect of substantial progress on contentious issues. It is therefore imperative that the cataclysmic decline in Christian learning, frequently bemoaned over the past century or more, should be reversed. Alternatively, if the reality is that theological illiteracy has always been endemic, and scholarship exceptional, nostalgia for a past golden age should be abandoned and efforts concentrated, and time and money invested, in

[4] Cf. Paul D. L. Avis, *Seeking the Truth of Change in the Church* (London: T & T Clark International, 2003); Alan Bartlett, *A Passionate Balance* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007); *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, ed. by Ian T. Douglas and Kwok Pui-lan (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2001); Rowan A. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture* (New York: Crossroad, 2006); Nicholas H. Taylor, 'Some Observations; The Anglican Heritage in a Global Communion', in *Faithful Disciple and Servant Scholar*, ed. by McGlory T. Speckman and Gerald O. West (Johannesburg: Anglican Church of Southern Africa, 2022), pp. 124–31; Stephen Ross White, *Authority and Anglicanism* (London: SCM Press, 1996).

[5] London: Anglican Communion Office, 2012.

nurturing Christian learning — which must emphasise biblical scholarship and Christian doctrine in preference to neoliberal business and marketing skills.

Reason is integral to any and every culture, and the British appropriation and development of Hellenistic–Roman models mediated through the European Renaissance and Enlightenment is neither monolithic nor normative, for Anglicanism any more than for any other global or multicultural religious movement. Irrespective of the cultural context in which a particular intellectual tradition evolves — with its implicit conceptions of reason and knowledge, assumptions about authority, and cosmology within which human relationships are located and managed, and religious and other truth claims articulated and debated — it will in some respects reflect universal human experience, while at the same time maintaining distinctive traits that influence perceptions and interpretations of experience and reality. Scripture is interpreted and complex cultural contexts, in which the assumptions of those who introduced the Christian gospel to the community have quite fundamentally shaped the received tradition, but have variously been negotiated, adapted, challenged, subverted and reinterpreted as the Gospel has become enculturated and the local church has asserted its independence of imperial and missionary authority. This has taken place within an ecumenical climate in which biblical scholars and theologians are less committed to the historical and confessional foundations of their denominations, and more concerned with urgent issues of socio-economic justice and Christian mission in an increasingly post-Christian world. Distinctive Anglican approaches to biblical interpretation, or to theological issues, tend to be important only in the context of intra-Anglican power politics, in which human sexuality and gender roles tend to be the presenting issues. The issue for the Church of the future will be whether authentic indigenous intellectual cultures will prevail, or whether traditions inherited from missionaries and the schools that they established will continue to be internalised.[6]

---

[6] Anglican initiatives to interpret Scripture and articulate an African hermeneutics and theology include John S. Mbiti, *New Testament Eschatology in an African Background* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); John S. Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986); John S. Pobee, *Persecution and Martyrdom in the Theology of Paul* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 1985); John S. Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1979); John S. Pobee, *Who are the Poor?* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1988); John S. Pobee, *Giving Account of Faith and Hope in Africa* (Eugene OR: Wipf &

Tradition, similarly, is not monolithic but mutates constantly and in different ways in different contexts. Therefore, even where a common source can be identified, different cultural and environmental forces will influence its development in different ways. Even the limiting of Tradition to that of the Catholic Church until ad 451 (the Council of Chalcedon) or 1054 (the Great Schism) fails to take cognisance of Christian communities beyond the eastern borders of the Roman empire which had developed their own theological and liturgical traditions, social customs and modes of interaction with neighbours and rulers before imperial authority attempted to impose uniformity on the Church as an organ of the empire.[7] The ways in which tradition evolves, and where authority lies in discerning how such developments should be managed or controlled, and deciding when changes are acceptable and how they are to be implemented, will inevitably vary, so that a common heritage may come to be understood and interpreted in quite different ways. Furthermore, tradition is all too easily cited to justify recalcitrance, and to exclude any reading of Scripture or exercise of reason that might challenge vested interests. This has been particularly apparent in recent Anglican controversies over human sexuality, in which particular traditions of interpretation of selected passages in Scripture have been elevated above the text of Scripture itself. The contexts of prescriptions, the meanings of Hebrew and Greek words, and the relationships referred to

---

Stock, 2017); Harry A. E. Sawyerr, *Creative Evangelism* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1986); Harry A. E. Sawyerr, *God: Ancestor or Creator?* (Hoboken NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970). South Africa's distinctive history has stimulated liberationist hermeneutics rather than the emphasis on inculturation that is characteristic of other parts of sub-Saharan Africa; cf. McGlory T. Speckman, *A Biblical Vision for Africa's Development* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2007). Similarly, in the Palestinian context, Naim Stifan Ateek has employed western scholarship and liberation hermeneutics to articulate a Palestinian liberation theology: *Justice and Only Justice* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1989); *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2008); *A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2017). An East Asian Anglican biblical scholar who has articulated a post-colonial feminist hermeneutics is Kwok Pui-lan: *Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1995); *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005); *Postcolonial Politics and Theology* (Louisville KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021).

[7] Cf. Jehu J. Hanciles, *Migration and the Making of Global Christianity* (Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021); J. Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007).

have been ignored in favour of entrenched positions informed by missionary positions and particular experiences of the Church in a particular place.[8] Scripture, Reason and Tradition are therefore all complex and contested concepts in the global Anglican Communion of today. This raises particular challenges for the theological vocation, especially if communication, sharing and some measure of unity are to be sustained in a post-colonial world. Understanding the positions that others hold, and the cultural influences and received traditions that have shaped the Church in different places, is essential if Scripture is to function, at the very least, as a common heritage and symbol of God's revelation in Christ. The alternative is that Scripture becomes a battleground over which increasingly antagonistic conflicts of interpretation are fought, with all parties claiming some unique custodianship over doctrine and discipline.

Critical scholarship, as developed in the Protestant (and mainly Lutheran) theology faculties of European (and particularly German) universities, is very much the product of the European Enlightenment, notwithstanding the great proliferation of contested methods and theories that have developed from it (mainly in secular North American academic settings, the centre of gravity having shifted across the Atlantic on account of the numerical and financial power of the American institutions rather than any higher quality of scholarship). Nevertheless, the increasing independence of scholarship from ecclesiastical authority has enabled scholars with different backgrounds to interact and collaborate in ways that they could not have done when they were constrained to defend ecclesiastical positions. This has borne fruit in ecumenical dialogues, in which Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant scholars have been able to

[8] See further Nicholas H. Taylor, 'Some Observations on Theological Method, Biblical Interpretation, and Ecclesiastical Politics in Current Disputes in the Anglican Communion', *Theology*, 111 (2008), 51–58. The particular example is that of the Church in East Africa, and especially Uganda, where the charismatic movement of the early decades of the twentieth century, known as the East African Revival, the enduring authority of conservative evangelical missionaries, and, perhaps most powerfully, the martyrdom of young male converts who had resisted sexual exploitation by the reigning monarch, the Kabaka of Buganda, have shaped the way in which that part of the Church has interpreted relevant passages of Scripture, and excluded all other possibilities. Homophobia has been given theological legitimation, to the point that some bishops and clergy have publicly supported legislation to impose the death penalty on even consenting adult homosexuals. This is a particularly striking example of abuse of Tradition, to which Scripture is effectively subordinated — by conservative evangelicals.

assist their churches to reach convergence on many hitherto contentious and divisive issues. [9] Furthermore, it has become possible for biblical scholars of Jewish heritage to engage fully in academic debates on issues in both the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament. The time will surely come when Muslim scholars will take their place alongside Jewish and Christian colleagues in exploring issues that relate to their common heritage.[10]

Ecumenism, and the commonality which is inevitably stronger among Christians who inhabit the same cultural context and face much more similar social, economic and political questions in their daily lives than they might with adherents of the same ecclesial tradition living on other continents, may raise questions about the enduring value of global denominational bodies such as the Anglican Communion. Nevertheless, the reality is that human beings do not live in isolation from people of other cultures, and migration is a significant factor in sustaining the life of the Church in many places, particularly western Europe, including Scotland. The need for biblical scholars and theologians, committed to the ministry of the Church, who are not merely conversant in developments in scholarship and theology across some diversity of disciplines and in different parts of the world, but are also equipped to be critical of their own background and heritage, and appreciative of those of others, has never been greater. Finding the time and resources required to sustain this competence while engaged in pastoral ministry is a challenge to scholarly clergy as well as to the Church that they serve.

Whether or not a distinctive Anglican approach to the issues of today and of the future will prove either feasible or relevant, the reality for all Christians is that Scripture is interpreted within living communities, in which theological, liturgical, artistic and social traditions have evolved over centuries or longer, and the heritage of the faith is interpreted and reinterpreted within intellectual currents and cultural conventions beyond the control of ecclesiastical authority. Sustaining Christian mission in this climate will require academically competent clergy who are rooted in

---

[9] Although Anglicans were not directly involved, the 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification', agreed by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation in 1997, is a particularly significant example. A twentieth-anniversary edition was published in 2017, including statements from other denominations, among them the Anglican Consultative Council Resolution 16.17 (2016).

[10] 'Scriptural Reasoning' is undoubtedly a significant phenomenon, but the engagement between members of the different faith communities is not conducted with the rigour of academic scholarship.

pastoral ministry, but who have the time and the resources, and the intellectual freedom, to engage fully in biblical scholarship and theological discourse.

.

REVIEWS

Fraser Watts, *A Plea for Embodied Spirituality: The Role of the Body in Religion* (London: SCM Press, 2021). 230 pp. ISBN 9780334060079.

Fraser Watts wrote this book with both the theoretical aim of enhancing our understanding of the significance of the body in religion, and the practical aim of enriching the ways in which religious people use their bodies in the practice of their religious lives. These objectives are well addressed throughout the volume, and Watts hopes that his readers will take from the book the realisation that our 'spiritual lives will flourish better if we make good use of our bodies' (p. 161). Most readers will develop this realisation cognitively, through Watts' guidance, and many will feel encouraged to realise it bodily, too, in their spiritual practice. In his concluding reflections, Watts invites us to consider our posture when we pray or meditate. He makes the disarming acknowledgement that 'For me, as for many religious people, my spiritual life exists primarily in my mind' (p. 159). Here sits an enticing and provocative invitation to all of us to ask to what extent the whole of our self is involved in our worship, prayer and discipleship.

In many ways this volume is bemusing. It covers a vast range of topics, including trance, dance, asceticism, the nature and role of emotions, posture, liturgical enactment, healing, apparitions, and Christian faith and hope in bodily resurrection. Overall, I feel I have gained a lot in terms of being given much to think about, but I am left feeling unsure of the ground upon which suggestions rest. Indeed, the book is more suggestive than it is argument based. Very little evidence is provided for stances taken, although the secondary literature cited is extensive. Watts' tone is conversational, and this is fairly welcome, except that it is also disconcertingly general. For example, on the laying on of hands, he writes that 'There is probably a range of views about why hands are used in this way, and what effects they have. Some probably see it as merely symbolic while others see it as efficacious in some way' (p. 84). He also conjectures that there may be a distinctive pattern of brain activity associated with word-based meditation (p. 91). Paragraphs throughout the volume contain general musings about what is probable or 'seems likely'. Nowhere is this conjecture more frustrating than where Watts discusses appearances of the risen Jesus in 'recent decades, for which there is apparently quite strong corroborating objective evidence' (p. 150); he provides no examples or discussion of such evidence. The reader is therefore left unsure how much to invest in the book in terms of grappling with the issues.

That said, we are introduced to a wide range of literature, to trends in research from the nineteenth century onwards, and to the current state of play in, among others, the following interesting areas: neurological findings about the benefits of asceticism; how spiritual practice can improve immunity by promoting the release of endorphins; studies of posture in private prayer and in liturgical enactment; and consideration of the qualities of the perceiver when discussing apparitions. The discussion of emotions as physiological but not only so is particularly strong. Watts points out that prior to the rise of psychology in the mid-nineteenth century, Christian tradition distinguished between passions (which can toss us about) and affections (which can helpfully guide us or be guided by us), and he suggests that this distinction contained insights that are lost once we adopt 'emotion' as a catch-all term (p. 109).

Watts' discussion of resurrection is also interesting. He puts the resurrection of Jesus on a par with other post-mortem experiences of appearances, not in order to argue that Jesus returned as a ghost, but to cast his resurrection appearances as spiritual-body appearances, in alignment with the theological argument that 'Jesus objectively changed the framework within which such appearances occurred ' (p. 154), either as the redemption of time and space, following T. F. Torrance, or as the healing of the relationship between matter and spirit, following Rudolf Steiner.

The volume ends with a helpful appendix by Sara Savage on 'The Body in World Faith Traditions'. This is such a broad topic that Savage is able to provide only brief coverage, but she invites us to consider how people's gait, posture and movement change when they enter a church building (p. 176), how in ritual we move upwards towards purity and divinity and downwards in submission and detachment, and how Buddhist meditation increases the links between 'different parts of our neo-cortex and the more primitive parts of our brain, and its direct links to our bodies', thus addressing the problem we humans experience of a sense of inner division or self-alienation (p. 191). Savage's description of this meditative process also captures part of what Watts is aiming to convey in this volume — that in our divided state 'we do not know what deep emotions are or that our perceptions of self and others may be distorted […] To bring all that we are into consciousness is a humanizing process' (p. 191).

Harriet Harris
University Chaplain and Head of Chaplaincy Service,
University of Edinburgh,
Convener, Doctrine Committee of the Faith and Order Board

A. J. Berkovitz and M. Letteney (eds), *Rethinking 'Authority' in Late Antiquity: Authorship, Law, and Transmission in Jewish and Christian Tradition*. Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018). xiv, 226 pp. ISBN 978-1-138-48022-3.

This collection of essays addresses issues relating to the transmission of authoritative texts and oral traditions during the early centuries of the Common Era. The contributors represent a range of expertise, including rabbinic Judaism, patristic Christianity, and the Graeco-Roman world in which these movements flourished. Given that Islam had come to dominate the eastern regions of this world by the end of the period under scrutiny in this book, some consideration of how these issues were perceived and addressed in the Muslim world, and in the Syrian, Mesopotamian and Iranian cultures in which oriental Judaism and Christianity had evolved, would have complemented what is already a significant contribution to scholarship. Although some chapters may consolidate developments over the past few decades, others indicate ways in which fruitful enquiry may be prosecuted in the future. Our understanding of the rabbinic literature, and of authoritative figures and jurisprudential processes in the communities in which it evolved and accumulated, will certainly be refined. Similarly, the oral and written transmission of the Christian gospels, and the significance of the names associated therewith, and the proceedings of the ecclesiastical Councils of the period, will be understood in new ways. Perhaps most significantly for the Church today, the judgement passed on figures such as Tertullian, Origen and Pelagius, and perhaps even Arius and Nestorius, will need to be reviewed.

This is a welcome contribution to scholarship, and it is to be hoped that it will stimulate further research in the areas scrutinised.

Nicholas Taylor
Rector, St Aidan's Church, Clarkston
Convener, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board

Robert S. Heaney, *Post-Colonial Theology: Finding God and Each Other Amidst the Hate* (Eugene OR: Cascade, 2019). xvi, 195 pp. ISBN 978-1-5326-0220-7.

Robert Heaney has in recent years made numerous important contributions to theology, which reflect both the breadth of his sympathies and experience, and his profound insights and generosity in collegiality. A priest of the

Church of Ireland with deep roots in Ulster Protestantism, he obtained his first doctorate from the (Jesuit) Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy in Dublin, and a second doctorate from Oxford University, where he was attached to (Baptist) Regent's Park College. He subsequently taught at (Anglican) St John's University of Tanzania, Dodoma, before becoming Director of the Center of Anglican Communion Studies and Professor of Theology and Mission at (Episcopal) Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria.

This biographical information is important because of the ways in which Heaney uses his own background in the colony misruled by England, and then by Great Britain, for longest as a window into the experience and insight of others. The Ulster Plantations, with concomitant dispossession of the indigenous population, created a predominantly Presbyterian Scots-Irish ascendancy, and one of the few places in the world where Anglicanism has been a church of the working classes — set against, and used against, the Roman Catholic population. Heaney engages with W. B. Yeats, an Anglo-Irish Protestant of rather different temperament, piety, morality and political sympathy, to explore some of the ambiguities of his own background in a colonised society.

Heaney proceeds to explore issues in post-colonial theology in Africa, with particular attention to Kenya, and in dialogue principally with John S. Mbiti, and also with Jesse Mugambi, Lamin Sanneh and Itumeleng Mosala. In addition, he makes reference to Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian novelist (and Anglican), and to Max Warren and John V. Taylor, luminaries of the Church Missionary Society. The inadequacies in the approach of the former are acknowledged, and Taylor's longer period of immersion in Africa is recognised as having made possible a far deeper empathy with the culture, and with the spirituality and theological insights arising from it. Mbiti's lasting importance, as an exegete as well as in articulating the problematic nature of missionary Christianity and in pioneering an African theology rooted and expressed in African cultural categories, is emphasised.

After considering a range of issues in a context in which he has some experience, Heaney proceeds to clarify the concepts and issues that he is exploring and developing. In interaction with Edward Said and James Cone in particular, he examines the notion of coloniality, with useful reference to Ireland, the USA and the polities that preceded it, Andalucia, and the eastern Mediterranean under Roman rule.

The Korean-American theologian Wonhee Anne Joh is Heaney's next major dialogue partner, her *Heart of the Cross* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006) providing particularly fruitful insights born of Christian engagement with the troubled history of Korea, American imperialism and the white supremacism which pervades the USA. The creative possibilities

of Minjung theology, for all Christians, are emphasised, even if these are difficult for readers unfamiliar with the philosophical and cultural context in which this tradition emerged. Explorations in film, and the contributions of John P. Keenan and Sarah Coakley, provide helpful illumination of many of the more complex issues.

Heaney turns next to the Native American experience and the theological responses that it has elicited, with particular reference to Randy Woodley. Given the levels of wilful ignorance of the scale of dispossession and cultural genocide, and the information which continues to come to light on the role of Christian denominations in operating boarding schools in the United States and Canada, this is particularly important for a book published in North America — but also relevant to the country from which many of the colonising immigrants travelled. Quite apart from the enduring issues of racism, dispossession and discrimination which Christians need to acknowledge and address, and the questions that this continuing history raises about what may have happened elsewhere in the world, particularly where British imperialism was involved, there are insights to be gained from listening to Christian voices emanating from different cultural contexts, not least into the ecological crisis to which western Protestantism has made a very significant contribution.

This book testifies to theological processes that are only just beginning. The prevailing and often unacknowledged Eurocentrism in much theology remains an impediment to embracing the breadth of insight, healing, reconciliation and renewal of communities available in global Christianity today. There are also vested interests that are resistant to any dismantling of white patriarchal structures and assumptions. A significant part of the theological task in the world today is to challenge these, and to bring about the social and economic changes necessary to create just societies. Heaney's courageous examination both of his own background, with its collective memories, contested history and inherited enmities, and of the cultural baggage he has carried to his encounters with others is an excellent example of what is possible — and points the way to what is imperative and urgent for theology and the Church today.

Nicholas Taylor
Rector, St Aidan's Church, Clarkston
Convener, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board

Helena Kupari and Elina Vuola (eds), *Orthodox Christianity and Gender: Dynamics of Tradition, Culture and Lived Practice* (London: Routledge, 2020). x, 214 pp. ISBN 978-1-138-57420-5.

A request to review a book with this title was certainly intriguing, and might have aroused some degree of scepticism. In fact this collection of essays proved illuminating, in some cases encouraging, and in others sobering.

Unusually, but appropriately given the subject matter, the editors identify themselves as Finnish Lutherans. Several of the authors self-identify as Orthodox, some by conversion, the majority are laity and the majority are women. The studies are mostly based on recent fieldwork in Finland, Russia, Estonia, Ukraine, Belarus and Greece, and one study from the USA. The scope is limited therefore to Orthodox churches of Chalcedonian allegiance, and is heavily weighted towards those in the shadow of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part, entitled 'Negotiating Tradition', consists of four studies. Brian Butcher, a Canadian in the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic tradition, provides a theological survey, beginning with theological anthropology; in dealing with questions of relationship and identity, he reveals a theological field that is very much more diverse and contested than is often perceived to be the case. Nadezha Beliakova discusses the changing role of women in Russian society during the decades preceding the Bolshevik Revolution, and its impact on the Russian Orthodox Church. She identifies significant developments in monastic communities, especially among educated women in urban areas, and debates about the order of deaconesses; this provides a glimpse into what might have been if the suppression of religion under Communism had not provoked reaction in a Church in which voices as progressive as any in western Europe at the time had previously been heard. Katarina Husso discusses the role of women icon writers in the Finnish Orthodox Church, which has had to negotiate its relationship with Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church as well as with secular and historically Lutheran Finnish society. Peter-Ben Smit reminds readers about the Orthodox–Old Catholic theological consultations, which in 1996 resulted in a report stating that there was no impediment to the ordination of women. Although this document has not been endorsed by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, its interpretation of the doctrine of the Incarnation, reflected in the title 'What has not been assumed has not been redeemed', has yet to be answered by those who are fixated on the idea that possession of male genitalia is a prerequisite for representing Christ at the altar.

The second part of the book, entitled 'Lived Orthodoxy', contains reports on three studies. Andreas Kalkun reflects on the Orthodox culture of Seto women in Russia and Estonia, giving particular attention to issues of

ritual impurity relating to the female body, and the beliefs and observances that such perceptions have generated. He also addresses the sensitivities involved in discussing such matters during fieldwork, especially for a male researcher. Sarah Ricardi-Swartz discusses gender roles in Orthodox parish and family life, in a setting where the majority are converts to a church in which the Russian Orthodox tradition predominates. The final chapter reports on a collaborative project into what might be described as a 'new monastic' initiative in Helsinki, in which a solitary nun and a chapel in a converted shop form the nucleus of a nebulous and largely transient community of lay people.

The third and final part, entitled 'Crises and Gender', explores the role of gender and religion in popular responses to existential crises. Heleen Zorgdrager discusses the long-running political and economic crisis in Ukraine, aggravated by friction with Russia and war against separatists, and reflected also in schisms within the Church. Women's peace activism and other initiatives transcend confessional divisions. Eleni Sotiriou discusses the impact of the long-running social and economic crisis in Greece on religious observance, noting that there has been something of a revival among younger men and, conversely, rising anticlericalism among younger women. Elena Romashenko explores the role of vernacular art, and its interaction with canonical traditions of icon writing, in responses to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in the former Soviet Union, with its continuing effects on the lives of communities, and particularly on women's health, in Belarus and Ukraine.

The picture of Orthodoxy that emerges from this book, however limited its scope, is diverse but far from moribund. Church hierarchies are often peripheral to the studies, and their responses to issues are not always reported favourably, probably not without reason. Notwithstanding entrenched theological positions and vested economic interests, Orthodox churches in societies that have undergone rapid social change over the last century or more are having to respond to a variety of social, economic and political issues. It is lay people, and women in particular, who are being shown to be the initiators of these responses. Although many find that they are able to do so within traditionally ascribed gender roles, others are redefining those gender roles both in secular society and in church-related activities. The issue of ordaining women to the apostolic ministry is raised in only two chapters, as a theological proposition rather than in agitation for change. Although this is a matter which is very unlikely to go away, the Church is the whole people of God, and Orthodoxy is shown to be in ferment even in what are supposedly deeply conservative societies. Whether or not the Orthodox churches will respond creatively and assertively to crises, with or despite their hierarchies, they do have the resources and the resilience to

do so. However, it is to be hoped that clergy will be found who are able to articulate such responses theologically, and to ensure that the worshipping lives of their communities sustain and empower the laity through the challenges of the years ahead.

This book is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Church today. Many of the issues discussed occur in other parts of the world, and are confronted by churches in other traditions. Our ecumenical encounters need to be informed not only by theological posturing by clerics and theologians, but also by the ways in which lay Christians are responding to crisis and change in the societies in which they live. We may not find all the answers in this book, but readers will certainly learn a lot of the questions that need to be asked, and discover ways in which these might be fruitfully explored.

Nicholas Taylor
Rector, St Aidan's Church, Clarkston
Convener, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board

Gesila Nneka Uzukwu, *The Unity of Male and Female in Jesus Christ: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 3.28c in Light of Paul's Theology of Promise*. International Studies on Christian Origins, Library of New Testament Studies 531 (London: T & T Clark, 2018). xxii, 250 pp. ISBN 978-0-567-68310-6.

The Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy (DMMM) are a religious congregation founded in Nigeria during the third quarter of the twentieth century. This book, written by one of the Sisters, is a revised version of the first doctoral thesis by an African woman to be defended in the Theology Faculty of the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium, an institution which has invested enormously over the past 100 years or so in providing opportunities in higher research for Roman Catholic clergy and lay scholars from Africa and around the world. That the author lectures in a Major Seminary, training aspirants to the priesthood, perhaps gives the subject of the book added significance.

Galatians 3.28 has long puzzled scholars, while at the same time having been seized as a slogan for emancipatory causes to which there is very little evidence that Paul was at all committed. One explanation that has been offered is that Paul is quoting an early Christian creedal formulary, perhaps used at Baptism, and already known to the Galatian Christians, to illustrate his point. This could explain why the slave/free and male/female dichotomies are apparently left undeveloped in Galatians, as Paul was

concerned principally with the first of the dichotomies, namely Jew/Greek. The same and similar dichotomies are cited in extant Greek and Jewish texts, and survive to the present day in Orthodox synagogue liturgies. This study demonstrates that none of these texts can be dated with confidence to a period antecedent to the writing of Galatians, even when they cite more ancient authorities, as in the case of Plutarch's attribution to Socrates and Plato. Similarly, the rabbinic traditions which are reflected in synagogue worship cannot be shown to preserve traditions more ancient than the first Christian century.

Of course, this does not prove that Paul created the formulary in Gal. 3.28, as seems to be implied, but the fact remains that it has entered Christian Scripture through a letter he wrote. This study seeks to demonstrate, at some length, that the verse is integral to Paul's argument in Galatians 3–4. It does so quite persuasively, but seems to overlook his analogy of the household, and the laws of inheritance, which in the host society favoured freeborn male biological descendants of the *oikodespotes*, the legal owner of the property, including the servile members of the household.

The figure of Abraham in Galatians 3 is treated at some length, before it is insightfully demonstrated that the figures of Hagar and Sarah in Galatians 4 are just as relevant. Both are women, but Hagar is a slave, and is identified as an Egyptian in the Genesis narrative. She is also portrayed as the more godly of the two women. This may not be helpful for Paul's argument in Galatians, preoccupied as that is with establishing that Jesus, a descendant of Sarah, is Abraham's ultimate heir, but it is of course important in Islamic interpretation, in the *Qur'an* and elsewhere. Sarah is described as a Jew, which is more than a little anachronistic — it would have been more accurate to describe the mother of Isaac as a proto-Jew or proto-Israelite. This study does not resolve the somewhat convoluted logic of Paul's argument, but it is unlikely that any study will be capable of doing that.

Care is taken to clarify the meanings of the terms used in the three dichotomies. It is certainly appropriate that Paul's usage be interrogated, but this might perhaps usefully have been done earlier in the book, rather than in the penultimate chapter. It is shown that superficial assumptions about their meanings are deeply problematic, as these and other terms are used quite variously in the ancient languages; it is also demonstrated that wilful manipulation of their meanings has potential implications for contemporary issues, not least questions of anti-Semitism in the New Testament. Any denial of Paul's polemic against the Judaism that he had abandoned, at least as interpreted by those whom he opposes in this letter, is likely to employ arguments which in turn question the Jewishness of Jesus, which is rather more anti-Semitic than recognising the vehemence with which Paul had

repudiated his ancestral heritage. The connotations of the term 'Greek' are perhaps not investigated with the thoroughness that is required, and it needs to be asked whether in Galatia (however defined) this term would have been recognised as applying to all who are described, in what has become common Judaeo-Christian parlance, as Gentiles.

Slavery was ubiquitous in the ancient world, and was protected in the legal systems of the day. It is therefore scarcely necessary to argue that the Galatian Christians would have been familiar with the institution, and that Christian households would have included slaves. Although the concept of freedom is explored, that of servitude might have benefited from further discussion. Manumission did not bring freedom, which is more than relevant to interpretation of this verse and other references to slavery in the early Christian literature.

There is no discussion of modern and postmodern notions of sex and gender in relation to this text. Anachronistic as this might have been, it would have helped to illuminate the issues surrounding the apparent abolition of the dichotomy, and to explain the nature of the unity between male and female to be found in Christ. Although the parameters of doctoral research impose some limitations on the scope of the study, and the outstanding issues are recognised, it would have been helpful to be able to understand more clearly just what the formulary would have meant for the Christian communities of Galatia, their life as a church, and their lives as Christian households.

This is a significant study of a text which is likely to challenge exegetes and disturb the Church for a long time to come. This book will prove immensely helpful to scholars and theologians who are addressing the outstanding issues, and is to be warmly welcomed as an addition to the libraries of students of the New Testament and Christian origins, and of clergy and lay Christians who take the study of Scripture seriously.

Nicholas Taylor
Rector, St Aidan's Church, Clarkston
Convener, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board