

Reviews

Michael Horton, *A Better Way: Rediscovering the Drama of Christ-Centred Worship*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, 249pp. US\$19.99

I read this book soon after rereading Marva Dawn's *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). There is a lot of similarity between the two and, indeed, Horton pays tribute to Dawn in his book. Both are written from within the evangelical wing of the church. Both seek to expose the extent to which worship in the Western world has been captured by cultural forces that are contrary to the gospel. Both are committed to articulating a biblically-based theology of worship that moves beyond the polarizing debate about 'traditional' versus 'contemporary' styles.

It is a welcome endeavour to which parish ministers like myself can relate, but perhaps it was because I read the two books within such a short space of time that Horton's book failed to grab me. The most significant difference seemed to be one of emphasis, with Horton going into considerably more depth expounding particular passages of the Bible and developing an apologetic for the ministry of the Word and the ministry of the Sacraments, which, he says – quite correctly – stand at the centre of the Church's worship.

The resultant apologetic is Calvinistic in tone, reflecting perhaps Horton's own background as an associate professor of historical theology and apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary in California and president of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals. This Calvinistic tone is not a bad thing in itself, but it does betray a certain weakness that is characteristic of federal Calvinism and the Westminster tradition in general, namely a failure really to grasp the significance of the vicarious humanity and priesthood of Christ in relation to the act of worship.

One of the striking features of John Calvin's theology of worship was its strongly trinitarian emphasis: worship is an activity that stems from being in union with Christ through the Spirit, and constitutes an act of participation in the worship that Christ offers eternally to the Father in our name and on our behalf.

At the heart of this trinitarian view of worship, for Calvin, lay the mediatorial role of Christ, understood not only in terms of his death on the cross, but also in terms of his saving life and obedience on humanity's behalf and his continuing intercessions and worship. For Calvin, the incarnation and ascension of Christ were not the prelude and postlude to the atonement (on the cross), respectively. They formed an integral part of it. This meant that for Calvin, as for the early Scottish Reformers like John Knox and John Craig, to be united with Christ was not merely

a matter of benefiting from the non-imputation of sin through his sacrificial death; rather, it was to be actively joined to him by the Spirit in his life of faith, obedience, prayer and worship. Christ is the mediator, not only of salvation, but also of the church's worship.

Unfortunately, federal Calvinism and the Westminster tradition failed to uphold this insight into the nature of worship. There were several reasons for this. Due largely to the influence of Calvin's Genevan successor, Theodore Beza, there was a tendency to interpret Christ's mediatorial role almost exclusively in terms of his work on the cross, generally overlooking the atoning significance of the incarnation and ascension. Priority was thus given to the forensic over the ontological, the *ab extra* over the *ab intra*, and to the retrospective over the prospective. The vicarious humanity and priesthood of Christ was deemed to be relevant only in terms of what he accomplished on the cross (for the elect) and not in terms of the sanctifying union of the incarnation and, through the ascension, the lifting of our sanctified humanity into the presence of the Father and the offering of worship on our behalf.

This failure to give full acknowledgement to the mediatorial role of Christ was compounded by the rise of federal theology towards the end of the sixteenth century, which made a distinction between two covenants: the covenant of works (founded in creation, expressed in God's Law, and applicable to all human beings) and the covenant of grace (founded in the work of Christ, expressed in the forgiveness of sins, and applicable to the elect).

One of the effects of this twofold distinction, which presumed a doctrine of predestination, was the anxiety that it generated concerning one's eternal destiny: Am I one of the elect for whom Christ has died? Not surprisingly, with this question uppermost in people's minds, the dynamics of worship began to change. As James Torrance has noted in his essay, 'Covenant or Contract: A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth Century Scotland' (*Scottish Journal of Theology* 23 (1970), pp. 51–76), the focus of attention shifted away from what Christ has done for us and for all people, to what we must do if we would be in covenant with God.

For preaching, this meant that the emphasis fell less on the indicatives of grace and more on the imperatives of repentance, obedience and faith. For the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, this meant they were viewed not so much as seals of grace as seals of believing faith, or seals of one's repentance, confirming the interest of believers in Christ, marking out those who belong to him and obliging them to obedience.

Entirely absent from this view of worship and the sacraments was the mediatorial role of Christ, and the notion of the miraculous exchange that featured so prominently in Calvin's doctrine of worship. Moreover, as worship became more introspective, it was characterized by a loss of joy. The Lord's Supper became a feast of the converted, of the penitent, rather than an eschatological banquet for all humankind.

My main criticism of Horton's book is that in failing to address the above issues, he tends to perpetuate the failure of federal Calvinism and the Westminster

tradition to give sufficient weight to the mediatorial role of Christ in worship. This is evident in his section on the benefits of the Lord's Supper, where the predominant focus is on the assurance that believers have, through personal faith in Christ, of their acquittal and justification.

The portrayal here of Christ as the divine mediator of certain benefits, appropriated through faith by those who gather at his table, tends to obscure his humanity, and in particular the extent to which our humanity is sanctified and clothed in his as he, through the Spirit, lifts us into the presence of the Father, making us participants in his eternal life. Properly understood, faith is not something that we exercise to appropriate benefits from above; rather, it is something that Christ, through the Spirit, works in us and through us as our lives are joined to his in a reconciling union.

This has further implications for the way in which intercessory prayers are perceived. Where the mediatorial role of Christ is understated, intercessions tend to be regarded as something that we do, albeit assisted by, and even mediated by Christ, but still something that we do. The usual rationale for this, and one expressed by Horton, is that in praying for others we learn to look beyond our own interests and ourselves. It is a pragmatic rationale.

By way of contrast, when the mediatorial role of Christ is fully acknowledged, then he is more than the exemplar of prayer whose example we must follow; he is the ascended High Priest in whose life of intercession the church participates by the Spirit. As John McLeod Campbell expressed so eloquently in the nineteenth century, prayer is nothing less than the 'utterance of participation in the life of Christ'. As such, our task is not to pray for others in order that we might look beyond ourselves; rather, it is to seek the mind of the One who continually prays for the world he has redeemed, and to allow his prayers to become ours. Again, the emphasis here is on participation.

The tendency to separate the church's intercessions from those of Christ is further emphasized by a general confusion as to where the prayers of intercession are best situated in the Order of Worship. Horton follows many others in placing them early on in the service, as part of the pastoral prayer, and prior to the sermon. Calvin, however, following the practice of the ancient church, included intercessory prayer within the liturgy of the Eucharist, which followed the sermon, because it is in the Eucharist that Christ's role as High Priest and Intercessor is affirmed most strongly.

Rediscovering the drama of Christ-centred worship is a timely task that Horton calls us to undertake, and we should be grateful to him for offering a lead in this regard. Many parish ministers and students of liturgics in particular will value this contribution. I, however, was left a little dissatisfied, feeling perhaps that Horton has not quite gone far enough.

Graham Redding
Wellington, New Zealand

Colin E. Gunton, *Becoming and Being: The Doctrine of God in Charles Hartshorne and Karl Barth*. London: SCM Press, 2001, v + 258pp. £16.95

The fact that this important and interesting book, which was first published as a revision of the author's doctoral dissertation in 1978, is now being re-issued by SCM Press with a new Preface and an Epilogue situating his current thinking, is clear testimony to the fact that Colin Gunton has become one of the leading figures in contemporary systematic theology. Reading this carefully and rigorously argued piece of systematic theological reflection illustrates why that is so. And it is indeed a most rewarding experience to reread these pages in light of the historical changes that have taken place in theology over the last 25 years or so. Barth's theology has moved from the margins toward the center, especially because of his important trinitarian theology. Gunton's presentation of Barth's trinitarian theology would be enough reason to own this work, but there is much more to be found here. Unfortunately, there is one major production flaw: page 76 is printed twice while page 74 was omitted. Luckily I had the earlier version of this book and was able to read that missing page in context.

In a certain sense the first half of this book is nearly prophetic in that Gunton's presentation of Charles Hartshorne's thought exemplifies exactly the weaknesses of those later theologies that were fashioned in the likeness of 'Process Theology'. Process or panentheistic thinking has shaped much contemporary theology and has become rather popular in certain circles today. Indeed, I do not think it would be too much to say that the influence of this type of theology has led a number of contemporary theologians to polemicize against any kind of a doctrine of the immanent Trinity. Gunton's critique of its main weaknesses is extremely helpful because it illuminates the background for much of this thinking and illustrates just why a properly conceived doctrine of the immanent Trinity is so central to a theology that recognizes that human freedom stands or falls in so far as it is grounded in God's own free actions in the economy of salvation.

I must admit that reading the Hartshorne material was a bit tedious – not because of Gunton's style – but because of the rather convoluted arguments presented by Hartshorne himself for the existence and nature of his monistic God. One has the impression that Gunton paid very careful attention to the details of Hartshorne's arguments in order to treat him fairly. In the end, however, Gunton finds two fatal flaws. The first is that Hartshorne's God is indistinguishable from the world itself so that one could almost say with Whitehead that 'It is as true to say that God creates the world, as that the world creates God' (pp. 193, 223). Gunton invokes Barth against such reasoning: 'The creature who conditions God is no longer God's creature, and the God who is conditioned by the creature is no longer God' (p. 209). Gunton notes that process theology has been characterized as a 'sophisticated form of animism' which is therefore 'highly mythological' and also a type of idolatry because it is no more than a projection 'of a certain conception of human experience' (p. 223).

Gunton compares Hartshorne's 'neoclassical' view of God with Barth's view to show that (1) they both reject classical theism as embodied mainly in the Medieval Synthesis and (2) they both wish to conceive God in the language of 'becoming' and so reject the old ideas of God's changelessness and impassibility. The big difference, of course, between them is that Barth's understanding is dictated by the revelation of God attested in Scripture, while Hartshorne's is dictated by a kind of sentimentalized reading of human experience that draws God into the human experiences of suffering and love. For Gunton it is clear that the main difference between Barth and Hartshorne rests in what each thinker holds to be authoritative. For Hartshorne all reality is to be interpreted in terms of process. This is not an empirically derived notion but is a metaphysical intuition of how things must be that is justified 'by appeal to a certain understanding of human reason and its relation to extralinguistic reality, itself held on "faith"' (p. 118). His 'basic "creed" ... springs from the earth fully armed ... Its authority is the most rigid and unchanging imaginable: the authority of the mutual logical implication of a limited number of key concepts. Barth's "given" is not innate intellectual equipment so much as the gift of God in Christ' (p. 118).

But that leads to the second major flaw in Hartshorne's thought, which Gunton astutely identifies and rejects, namely, that a God who is dependent on the world for his becoming is not really capable of acting at all in relation to the world. He has lost his freedom. But, even more importantly, such a God cannot love either. So when Hartshorne attributes love to his 'dipolar' God, Gunton finds that this is a rather arbitrary move on his part and that it does not follow from his own presentation. What then can be learned from a detailed comparison of such important figures as Hartshorne and Barth? 'It shows clearly that the theology that wishes to stand on the intellectual feet of a philosophy is likely to remain a cripple' (p. 222). And 'Whatever the value of the exposure of the contradictions and moral shortcomings of the classical concept of God, it is of little benefit to overthrow a tyrant if he is replaced by an ineffectual weakling ...' (p. 223).

Gunton's succinct and careful account of Barth's theology represents a very helpful summary of the main lines of Barth's understanding of the Trinity, the divine perfections and analogy. He begins by properly linking Barth's theology to Anselm's influence and then shows how and why Barth described revelation as a veiling and unveiling by emphasizing that while God's being is in becoming, he retains his freedom: 'It is not the form, but God in the form, that reveals, speaks, comforts, works and aids ...' (p. 133). By appealing to 'the Bible's understanding of the historical events in which God is God' (p. 135), Barth was able to establish that revelation was the root of the doctrine of the Trinity. And this root was not to be equated merely with textual evidence of references to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but to God's activity within history in his Word and Spirit. One could learn a great deal by reading Gunton's account of Barth's theology and scrutinizing his comparisons of Barth to Hartshorne.

Gunton makes no secret of the fact that he thinks Barth's understanding of divine and human freedom makes far more sense than the neoclassical views

espoused by Hartshorne. I certainly agree with him in that regard. Barth's thinking explicitly opposes both monism and dualism in the interest of being faithful to the nature of the God revealed in Jesus Christ. Hence his doctrines of election and of the Trinity actually secure his analogical understanding of divine and human freedom. This was misunderstood by von Balthasar who, according to Gunton, misconstrued the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity for Barth's theology.

But what about Gunton's criticisms of Barth's theology? If anything they have intensified since this book was originally published. What are some of the main objections to Barth's thinking? First, Barth is said to have an inadequate doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Except as the Spirit relates to knowledge of God in Barth's theology, Gunton accepts Robert Jenson's judgement that 'Barth's discussions of the Spirit are not so convincing as his discussions of the Father and the Son' (p. 163). This weakness is said to lead Barth to locate God's activity 'in the past rather than in the present and future' (p. 163). When Barth discusses God's futurity as the redeemer, his thinking becomes ambiguous because he seems willing to speak eschatologically about those who have the Spirit, but not about the Spirit himself. Hence Barth seems to leave no room for divine futurity; 'all has been already decided in a timeless past' (p. 164). This affects his view of the doctrine of election by implying that all God's works have already been accomplished in a 'timeless' eternity, so that nothing more needs to happen now or in the future (p. 182). And the supposed ambiguity in Barth's thought is confirmed for Gunton by the fact that Barth can be defended against *apokatastasis* and accused of it at the same time. Moreover, according to Gunton, Barth's weakness in handling the doctrine of the Spirit, which causes his failure to give due weight to the eschatological dimensions of theology, needs to be corrected by saying not only that the Spirit perfects creation, through Christ, but that 'immanently he [the Spirit] is the one who, by perfecting the otherness in relation of the Father and the Son, enables that movement of the Trinity outwards to the other in creation and redemption' (p. 240). It would appear, however, that at least two problems are latent in this last suggestion: First, does the otherness in relation of the Father and Son need perfecting? Second, by saying that the Spirit enables the movement of the Trinity *ad extra*, does that not in some sense obscure the fact that this movement is the result of God's free decision, action and will?

For Barth, election could never be completely finished in God's pre-temporal eternity since, in accordance with his doctrine of the Trinity, God is simultaneously pre-temporal, supra-temporal and post-temporal. And one cannot be played off against the other, any more than one could play off Father, Son and Spirit against one another. Gunton's critique seems even more unwarranted when read against the background of Barth's stress upon the fact that the electing God is a living God:

If it is true that the predestinating God not only is free but remains free, that He does not cease to make use of His freedom but continues to decide, then in the course of God's eternal deciding we have constantly to reckon with new decisions in time ... developments and alterations ... are always possible and do in fact take place. (*CD II/2*, pp. 186–7)

And while it is true that Barth favours an actualist view of divine and human relations, his actualist concept is not dictated by anything other than the divine and human acts manifested in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In other words actualism does not define his thought about election; Jesus Christ does. This is why Barth can oppose both the activist and the static view of election: 'In so far as we see the mystery of the divine decision in the concrete person of Jesus Christ we are against the activist view. And in so far as we think of Jesus Christ as the decision of the eternally living God we are opposed to the static' (*CD II/2*, p. 187). Indeed, for Barth, Christian faith hopes for the redemption of the entire world because of what was accomplished in Christ's reconciliation of the world through his life, death and resurrection. But at the same time faith knows that universalism would remove from God the ability to judge and save as only he can; such a view would end the need for faith in the Father of Jesus Christ and in the redeeming Spirit, and make us self-reliant.

Second, it is said that there is a 'platonic' element in Barth's thought that suggests that instead of stressing 'historical actualism', Barth makes 'God's humiliation and the consequent elevation of man ... an eternal idea ... read out of the immanent Trinity' (p. 183). Gunton believes that this criticism must be taken seriously, and he explicitly links this aspect of Barth's thought with Augustine to speak of a modalist tendency, though he stresses that 'Barth is not a "modalist"' (p. 232); Gunton contends that Barth underplays the particularities of Christ's human life; that he seems to confuse the actions of the Holy Spirit with the actions of the incarnate Son (p. 235); and with his use of the term 'event' he appears to think of the Trinity in impersonal rather than personal terms (p. 238). This partially stems from Barth's emphasis on the principle *opera trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*.

Still, do we really want to say, with Gunton, that to conceive God as three and one 'it is necessary that the particularity of the persons be established as *beings*, centres of distinctive kinds of action' (p. 228)? Does that not open the door to just the tritheism Barth tried to avoid, as in the somewhat ambiguous remark: 'They are, if not divided, at least in a sense distributed, as for example in the Son's particular calling to become incarnate' (p. 230)? Indeed if the Son is 'called' to become incarnate, in what sense can he then be considered the subject of that event? Further, is it really true that person is 'the primordial concept in theology' (p. 238)? Is it not the triune God himself, one being, three persons, who gives special meaning to the personal and not the other way around? Beyond that, Barth's constant attack on any form of Ebionite and/or Docetic understanding of Christ's life, death and resurrection throughout the *Church Dogmatics* runs counter to the judgement that Barth underplays the particular events of Christ's life. And his stress on the reality of Christ's second coming certainly suggests a proper sense of futurity that is contingent on the future activity of the triune God that is not dependent upon history for its validity. Hence:

The Christ who comes again in glory is as near to His community as the Christ of the resurrection. As the risen Christ cannot fall behind it and become merely historical, so the Christ of the *parousia* cannot yield before it, so that it has

only a profane and empty future not determined by Him ... The community lives under the lordship of Jesus in the form of the Spirit. In the Spirit that double proximity is actual presence. (*CD III/2*, pp. 508–9)

Third, Gunton believes that Barth's view of time and eternity is unclear and possibly quite ambiguous: 'at times Barth defines eternity in the light of (temporal) revelation, while at others he opposes it to time' (p. 180). Barth intends to emphasize that God's triune nature is 'before, above, and after all things' (p. 180). God's eminent temporality must embrace all of these so that the Christian message about creation, reconciliation and redemption would make sense as acts of God's Word in history. But, according to Gunton, Barth has here attempted the impossible feat of uniting eminent temporality with timeless eternity. Gunton suggests that this problem might even be caused by the word 'revelation', which because of its past use prevents Barth from thoroughly revising his concept of eternity as eminent temporality. It seems then that the problem here is this: if revelation describes the 'timeless' breaking into time, then time and eternity are not just different but opposed. Then their relation must be conceived statically 'because the timeless is the static' (p. 182).

But there are two important possibilities, which Gunton underplays here. First, if created time is lost time, then in so far as it is lost, it is actually opposed to eternity and needs reconciliation by God (who does not suffer from the oppositions and limitations of created being) before it can be properly understood in its relation to eternity. Of course that does not mean that time is defined by opposing it to eternity. It means that created time is marked by sin and sin's opposition to God and can only be understood properly from, through and in Christ. Second, why must the timeless be conceived statically? There is evidence in Barth's theology that he does not so conceive God's timelessness (*CD II/1*, pp. 617–18). When he speaks of this he means to emphasize that God's eternity is not defined by events within created time. But God's time is uniquely his as the living God (*CD II/1*, pp. 615–16). And it is strange that some theologians who criticize Barth for not ascribing futurity to God, end up suggesting that God will not be fully who he is until sometime in the future. Gunton himself recognizes that this is hardly a proper trinitarian view of the matter, because it makes God's being and nature dependent upon future historical events, whereas history does not constitute the divine being and nature in a Christian doctrine of God.

Much else in this fine book is worthy of discussion. I have singled out only a few of the important issues that Gunton raises in his usually brilliant fashion while realizing that I cannot discuss all of the important concerns raised here. What should be evident, however, is that this book really is must reading. It is a thought-provoking, time-tested, original piece of scholarship that continues to challenge anyone who is interested in serious theology today.

Paul D. Molnar
St John's University, New York

Alister McGrath, *A Scientific Theology*, volume 1, *Nature*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001, 325pp. £25.00

We are witnessing a tremendous revival of interest in the relationship between natural science and spiritual issues. This revival usually goes under the title of 'the dialogue between science and religion'. Having written two introductions to science and religion, Alister McGrath has now produced a substantial volume on the concept of nature in his 'scientific theology' (a projected three-volume work). The first volume, *Nature*, discusses the history, theology and philosophy of the concept of nature in both Western science and Christian theology. Written in clear academic prose, and grounded in fine scholarship and serious theological reflection, McGrath has written what must be the best volume on this topic in print from a theological perspective.

Professor McGrath begins with 'the legitimacy of a scientific theology'. Many themes in this book will be familiar to readers of T.F. Torrance (McGrath has also just published an intellectual biography of Torrance). By 'scientific theology' Torrance and McGrath mean a theology that takes seriously the need to engage with and to interpret natural science. McGrath argues that 'a positive working relationship between Christian theology and the natural sciences is demanded by the Christian understanding of the nature of reality itself' (p. 21). Therefore, some Christian theologians must engage contemporary science and its interpretation if theology is to fulfill its vocation within the mission of the church. In developing his model of the relationship between theology and science, McGrath defends the medieval notion that the sciences are *ancilla theologiae*, that is, the handmaidens of theology. In discussing his approach more fully, McGrath rejects the 'essentialist fallacy' and the restriction of any 'controlling paradigms'. Finally, McGrath argues for realism in both philosophy of science and systematic theology.

In rejecting 'controlling paradigms', McGrath rightly objects to any prescribed and inhibiting pigeon-holes into which our analysis of either science or religion must fit. But McGrath goes too far in stating that 'the present work avoids precommitment to any of these models' (p. 70). He has in fact already spent many pages defending his medieval 'handmaiden' model, and insisting that only a realist epistemology will be fruitful in a scientific theology. How are these things not 'models' or parts of a 'paradigm' for understanding the relationship between theology and science? McGrath makes this mistake by missing the mood of systematic theology. He asserts that such models must be either descriptive or prescriptive. This is a false dilemma. The mood of systematic theology, when proposing a theory or model to the church, is neither purely indicative, nor imperative, but optative. The systematic theologian does not merely describe nor presume to prescribe what the church must believe, but rather is suggestive and seeks to persuade.

Chapter 3 of this work is an excellent discussion of the concept of nature. Drawing upon postmodern thought, McGrath argues cogently that the concept of

nature is a contested and constructed cultural artifact. In an excellent chapter on 'The Construct of Nature', McGrath traces the history of this idea from Plato to modern science. His main point is that 'nature' is an interpreted and socially mediated category, not a neutral ontological term. Which concept shall the Christian thinker accept and develop? McGrath argues for the concept of creation as the basic Christian idea of nature.

There follows an excellent chapter, which sets forth a Christian doctrine of creation. For the most part, McGrath follows Calvin, Barth and Torrance on this topic. He does briefly give the nod to those critics of Barth who complain about his separation of Christian theology from natural science (p. 176), before expounding Barth's views favourably. McGrath is much more concerned to criticize the 'quasi-deistical tendencies' of liberal Protestant theology (pp. 181–6).

A major contribution of this book is its defense of natural theology in a new key. If theology can and should engage natural science, then natural theology will once again become an important topic for Christian thought. Since the work of Karl Barth, natural theology has been very much on the defensive in the twentieth century. Much of the critique of natural theology, however, has been based upon an extreme separation of natural from revealed theology. Barth was critical of natural theology that sought to substitute for revelation. Among contemporary philosophers, Alvin Plantinga has criticized natural theology because it assumes that belief in God is unreasonable without evidential proof. In Christian history, Luther was also critical of reason and natural theology, when these set themselves against faith in Christ.

The final chapter of this book contains an excellent response to criticism of this sort. Following Calvin, McGrath shows that natural theology can work together with faith and revelation, as long as it is not a substitute for faith, nor seen as the rational foundation of faith. Both Torrance and McGrath want to reject natural theology as understood by its critics. That is, McGrath is at pains to reject natural theology as a foundational resource for Christian faith, independent of Christ and revelation. Instead, he argues for the importance of 'natural theology' understood as a Christian theological framework for the interpretation of the natural world, and therefore also of natural science. A better name for this approach might be 'the theology of nature', but under any name this kind of reflection is needed in today's churches.

In an important final section on 'Natural theology as discourse in the public arena', McGrath rightly points out that learned non-Christians will demand some response from the church to the natural sciences, and to the ever-popular scientific atheists of our day. To be true to its mission, the church must contend in public for a Christian understanding of the natural order and of natural science, over against popular science authors like Richard Dawkins who assume that science and religion are antithetical. For too long, church leaders have ignored natural science (while accepting the human sciences with open arms). At the same time, many people today, inside and outside of churches, still look to science and technology for meaning and salvation. McGrath is surely right to contend that Christian mission

and confession in a scientific culture require the discipline of a theology of nature, if not a 'natural theology'.

Alan G. Padgett
Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota

Edward Farley, *Faith and Beauty: A Theological Aesthetic*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001, x + 122pp. £42.50 hb., £17.99 pb.

Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological aesthetics, *Herrlichkeit*, runs to seven volumes and thousands of pages: Edward Farley's theological aesthetic is contained in a single volume of only 120 pages. Does this suggest that we should treat Farley's slim volume with less seriousness than Balthasar's mammoth achievement? By no means, for despite its size this is a significant book written by a distinguished scholar from a perspective very different from that of Balthasar. The most obvious difference is the 'placing' of the work in relation to the rest of the authors' writings. There is a sense in which Balthasar's volumes mark a beginning: they are the first part of a massive theological trilogy. For Farley, the entry into the realm of the beautiful is subsequent to the accomplishment of major work in theological construction, as he himself remarks in the preface to *Faith and Beauty*: 'The oddity of my theological project was that it almost entirely ignored this powerful aesthetic of my actual life. It was as if the most concrete way in which human beings experience their world ... had no place in the world of faith' (p. vii).

However, for all their differences, Balthasar and Farley share a starting-point: the awareness of the relative neglect of the concept (and experience) of beauty down the centuries by the great expositors of the Christian tradition. 'Beauty has never obtained the status of a central metaphor in the self-understanding of the major branches of the Christian movement ...' (p. 8). From a first chapter which attempts to provide an explanation for the puzzling absence of this realm the author goes on to give an account of the ways in which the concept has been treated in the Western intellectual tradition and then to offer his own construction of a theological aesthetic, that is to say, his own understanding of the place of the beautiful in the life of faith.

Farley insists on a somewhat arbitrary, though useful, distinction between a 'theological aesthetic': 'an aspect of human experience evoked by an immediate relation to what is beautiful', and 'theological aesthetics': 'a branch of philosophy or art criticism whose task is to understand the unity and features of works of art and the experience of art' (p. 117). (Balthasar's translators use the plural form, 'aesthetics' to denote what Farley means by 'aesthetic' – though it should be noted that in the original German title of Balthasar's *Herrlichkeit*, 'aesthetic' is in the singular, so perhaps there is some ground for Farley's distinction.)

What will immediately strike the reader as curious is the fact that so little attention is paid, in *Faith and Beauty*, to the massive and highly influential work of Balthasar. The Swiss theologian appears briefly in a short survey of 'Twentieth

Century Catholic Theologies of Beauty' in chapter 6 but is never referred to again. It is doubly strange in so far as Balthasar was acutely conscious of the problem that Farley identifies as the heart of this particular theological enterprise: 'Does beauty arise first of all in a theology of God, in an account of the Divine Trinity, or glory, or creation, or is it first manifest in the work and effects of redemption?' (p. 79). Farley believes, with some justification, that the first alternative has usually been the position of Catholic writers and that the second is that of Protestant scholars when they choose, on those rare occasions that they do, to address the matter. What makes Balthasar's exposition so interesting (though Farley does not investigate this) is that it is rooted in the first school, but is articulated with strong influences from the second. Farley belongs on the Protestant side, but is constantly aware of the necessity of taking the first into account. The position he eventually adopts has already been signalled in his remark on the third page: 'I can only grant the point. The ethical has a certain primacy.' And so he constructs his own answer in the most densely argued and theologically weighty section of the book: 'The Beauty of Human Redemption' (ch. 7). For all its attractiveness, the classical (Catholic) way will not be followed; his theological aesthetic will not be located primarily in the doctrine of God or creation, but will originate in the experience of redemption and the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Concepts of self-transcendence and redemptive transformation are crucial here and Farley's presentation is subtle and provocative. Beauty must have to do with the redemptive process of God's saving action in Christ rather than in the contemplation of the divine glory. This having been said, it cannot, he argues, reside only in the distant memory of the unbroken image, but in the restoration of that image by the self-giving love of the Father in His Son. It is at this point that the theology of Jonathan Edwards, discussed at some length in an earlier chapter, comes into play with the author's assertion that 'this compassionate going-beyond, this ethical self-transcendence of consent, is the primordial instance and meaning of beauty' (p. 89). It is at this point, too, that the reader will be justified in asking whether there has been a dissolving of the experience of beauty into the experience of love so that aesthetics has become ethics, or, at best, a branch of ethics. I do not think this is the author's intention; Farley seems to want to retain beauty as harmony, proportion, order, and the like and to construct an aesthetic which includes these properties, but I am not persuaded that he has actually successfully achieved the formulation of a theory that coherently relates these concepts to one another.

Even if I am not, in the end, convinced by the argument, I must still recognize that the book is an important contribution to the current debate about the nature and significance of theological aesthetics. It is because of its very importance, therefore, that I have to register my irritation that it is marred by silly grammatical and semantic mistakes: 'repulsed' instead of 'repelled'; 'disinterested' instead of 'uninterested', and by barbarisms that are the result of the author's determination to use gender inclusive language at all costs.

Brian Horne
London

Eberhard Jüngel, *God's Being Is in Becoming: The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth*, translated and with an introduction by John Webster. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001, xxvi + 142 pp. £19.99

Eberhard Jüngel's *God's Being Is in Becoming* is a fiercely learned, densely written treatise, reflecting an academic culture that likes to take its theology neat. It also happens to be a modern theological classic. First published in 1965, the book has taken its place as part of the essential literature of the twentieth-century 'Trinitarian renaissance'. Its appearance in a new translation by John Webster, who has also contributed a splendid Introduction to the work, is therefore welcome indeed.

The book opens with an almost forgotten debate between Herbert Braun, a pupil of Bultmann's, and Helmut Gollwitzer, very much the disciple of Barth. (Gollwitzer, a veteran of the Confessing Church, is perhaps best known for having been rejected as Barth's successor in Basel on account of his political views. He went on to become something of a hero to the left-wing student movement in Berlin in the 1960s and 1970s.) In his book *The Existence of God*, Gollwitzer argues that Braun and other Bultmannians treat God's reality as virtually a function of the human decision of faith. Against the existentialists, he defends the proposition that 'God is' quite apart from our human response; only so can God's entry into our lives be God's free decision and therefore truly gracious. Only a robust ontology secures the gratuity of grace.

In this late skirmish in the ongoing war between Barthians and Bultmannians, Jüngel sees an opening to be exploited. While he does not deny the need for a theological account of God's being, he does find fault with the flatness of the ontology proposed by Gollwitzer. 'God is', yes; but unless God's being is thought through in christological and trinitarian terms, we will end up with a featureless Sabellian deity, aloof from history and human suffering. The argument of Jüngel's book is that such a God is not the God of the *Church Dogmatics*, and that following the stringent logic of Barth's thought can help us toward a better grasp of the historicity of God's being – a being that is always 'in becoming'.

One of the great virtues of this work is that Jüngel helps us appreciate the complexity of Barth's doctrine of revelation, which is at the same time his doctrine of the Trinity. Jüngel correctly perceives that the doctrine's place at the beginning of the *Dogmatics* marks a '*hermeneutical* decision of the greatest relevance' (p. 16, emphasis in original). This remark hints at the mediating agenda pursued in Jüngel's book. Working within Barth's own trinitarian framework, he seeks to show that this framework itself does not ignore, but actually demands something like the concern for human language and history that mark the Bultmann school. We cannot ignore such questions if we are really to think through the trinitarian claim that God *speaks*.

On the surface, *God's Being Is in Becoming* advertises itself as a paraphrase of certain themes and arguments within Barth's thought about God. 'Paraphrase', however, hardly does justice to this rich work. Jüngel's own characteristic

preoccupations and concerns are very much in evidence here: the interest in language and analogy, the insistent concern for Christology, the fierce concentration on the death of Jesus as an event in God's own life. Here one sees an early indication of Jüngel's willingness to take certain 'Hegelian' risks, reflected much more fully in *God as the Mystery of the World*. Nonetheless, Webster rightly notes that *God's Being Is in Becoming* is not simply a vehicle for Jüngel's own ideas:

[L]ike nearly everything which he has written on Barth, it is interpretation of the highest order. Jüngel has a keen eye for the details of Barth's thought, as well as a clear appreciation of its overall shape and coherence, which means that he can make constructive use of Barth without simply plundering the Barth corpus for material to press into service in other causes. Moreover, his interpretation offers an important counterbalance to the more critical readings of Barth's trinitarian theology which have largely dominated reception of this aspect of his work in English-speaking theology. (p. xviii)

What Webster seems to have in view are those readings of Barth that fault his trinitarianism for being too Western, too modern, too committed to the picture of God as a single self-actualizing Subject. He cites Alan Torrance's *Persons in Communion* as the 'most fully and appreciatively critical presentation of this interpretation of Barth in English' (p. xviii, n. 8). While Jüngel's reading may well offer a counterbalance to such views – it would be interesting to know which authors Webster has in mind besides Torrance – it is too strong to say that this line has 'dominated' English-speaking reception of Barth's trinitarian thought. And while I share Webster's admiration for Jüngel, I would caution against pitting Jüngel's rich and subtle reading of Barth against the simplified interpretations encouraged by 'social trinitarianism', to use Webster's language (p. xix). 'Social trinitarianism' is a question-begging term; no serious theologian wants to be a tritheist, and any who were would presumably have little interest in engaging Barth. Perhaps a better shorthand for the approaches Webster has in mind would be 'neo-Cappadocian' or 'neo-patristic', a designation that would be acceptable to thinkers such as Gunton, Jenson, Torrance and Volf, all of whom have learned from Barth as well as from the Fathers.

Indeed, one of the major thrusts of Jüngel's work is a trait he shares in common with these neo-Cappadocians: a desire to think about divine being in closest relation to our thinking about salvation. As Webster points out, Jüngel – here reflecting in part his indebtedness to Bultmann – is strongly interested in the 'existential reality of God' (p. xx, emphasis in original). Jüngel understands that when theology finds itself engaged in battles between proponents of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity', as in the Braun–Gollwitzer debate, this is an indication that we are no longer thinking in properly theological terms. Jüngel helps us to see (and this is what he finds endlessly fascinating in Barth) that the correct way to engage these issues is in relation to the Trinity. We do not look for God's being behind the economy of salvation, nor do we think of God's action as sheer will proceeding from an unaffected divine essence. Rather, God's being *in se* 'corresponds' – one of

the key words in Jüngel's theological vocabulary – to his being *ad extra* and *pro nobis*. The cross is thus not a surrender of the divine being, but precisely God's freely chosen way of being God. Jüngel explores this overall theme in the three major sections of the book, titled 'God's Being Revealed', 'God's Being as Object', and 'God's Being Is in Becoming'. These amount to a virtual series of five-finger exercises in the theology of revelation, and display some of the most important moves in both Barth's and Jüngel's own thinking. Compilers of comprehensive examination reading lists, take note!

No one will be surprised by the christological passion that animates this essay, given both Barth's and Jüngel's characteristic preoccupations. I leave this for the reader to explore on his or her own. It may be useful to say a few words about the other two persons of the Trinity, however. As Webster notes, Jüngel 'has rather little to say about the person and action of the Holy Spirit' (p. xxi). He suggests that rather than reflecting a *lacuna* in Barth's own trinitarian thought, this should be attributed in part to the 'narrow focus of Jüngel's Christology, whose key moments are Jesus' speech-acts and his death, as a result of which the presence and agency of the risen one in the power of the Spirit are often not fully operative' (p. xxii). This is an interesting point; Barth's focus on the resurrection does seem to give him richer resources for pneumatology than Jüngel has at his disposal. Webster also comments that Jüngel's 'very sharp distinction between God's interceptive word of revelation and human historical processes', as seen for instance in his 'ethics, ecclesiology, and sacramental theology' (p. xxii), is another possible explanation for his relative silence about the Spirit. Here I am less sure that the problem can't be traced back from the pupil to the master himself. Jüngel gets his notion of church, sacraments and ethics as a series of human 'correspondences' to divine action directly from Barth; the pattern can be nicely seen in *Church Dogmatics* IV/4, especially the fragment on baptism.

Jüngel does better justice to God as Father, and here he reflects one of Barth's strengths: the majestic sense of the divine freedom, enacted precisely in the self-giving that is the Son's life and death. Jüngel, as I noted earlier, likes to take Hegelian risks. He is often criticized for importing too much historicity, too much 'becoming' into the inner life of God. Yet at least in this work, the theopaschite and death-of-God-sounding passages need to be qualified by remarks like the following:

However certain it is that revelation as God's self-interpretation is also God's self-identification, it is equally certain that, apart from the *event* of self-identification, there is no *identity* between the being of God and a being understood (but then only incorrectly) as revelation, a being in which the *alius*, *alius*, *alius* of the Trinity would be perverted into an *aliud*, *aliud*, *aliud*. (p. 39, emphasis in original)

Another important word in Jüngel's vocabulary is that of 'mystery', and here we see it in full force. Like Barth, he is concerned to prevent the dissolution of mystery in the two standard ways possible – either by refusing to acknowledge that

what we see in revelation is really God, or by denying that God can ever be truly revealed to us. The first way lies Arianism and subordinationism; the second way lies Sabellianism, or in its peculiarly modern form: the post-Kantian appeal to divine 'transcendence'. If Jüngel's worries about the latter cause him to stress God's involvement in worldliness much of the time, he does not lose sight of God's inalienable mystery. That Christ is among us is precisely the lordship of God and the mystery of God. There is no other God than this; Jüngel underscores this point in his helpful discussion of the doctrine of *perichoresis*, which he glosses as a doctrine concerned with 'the concreteness of God's being' (pp. 42ff.).

Students of trinitarian theology will want to take special note of this aspect of Jüngel's argument here. It explains why the doctrine of the Trinity is nothing less than the specifically Christian articulation of the *sh'ma Israel*, and that setting the Trinity in tension with the supposed 'monotheism' of the Old Testament is precisely to miss the point. God's gracious self-giving does not compromise his unity, but, so to speak, intensifies it. Eastern Orthodox theology tends to trace this unity to the Father as the *arche* and giver of the divine life as a whole. While this answer is not without its problems, it serves as a serious reminder that reflection on Father, Son and Spirit as distinct (whatevers – we will never find the right word) should lead to a deepened appreciation of the essential mystery that is God. Perhaps the question of the Father's *monarchia* could be a fruitful point of discussion between neo-patristic theologies and those more directly influenced by Barth.

When Webster says that the present work represents a 'complete revision' of the 1976 translation issued by Scottish Academic Press, the emphasis should fall on the word 'complete'. In fact it seems to be virtually a fresh translation by the scholar who perhaps knows Jüngel's work better than anyone else in the English-speaking world. Apart from a few inevitable infelicities – Jüngel's prose does not 'English' very easily – the essay reads with remarkable smoothness in translation. Armed both with this text and with Webster's characteristically insightful and balanced introduction, the reader has a clear path into one of the most important thinkers in contemporary German Protestantism.

This edition includes Jüngel's 1975 Epilogue to the work, which offers an interesting window into the European theological scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s. One catches hints here of the animated debate over Barth's socialism unleashed by Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt. An unfortunate omission is that of a subject index, which would have been useful for navigating the author's complex train of thought. Readers will have to make do with the name index provided.

Joseph Mangina
Wycliffe College,
Toronto School of Theology

John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas*, Radical Orthodoxy Series. London: Routledge, 2001, 144pp. £55.00

Truth in Aquinas, co-authored by John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, is the latest volume to appear in the Radical Orthodoxy Series published by Routledge. As the authors indicate in their preface, the book's thematization of the topic is spawned by the current 'crisis of truth' (Preface, p. xiii). The crisis is due to the various options of truth theories in the contemporary discussion which, according to the authors, reduce truth to redundancy (i.e. disquotationalism), cultural relativism, pragmatic interests, an esoteric private language or religious fideism, indefensible on scientific grounds (Preface, pp. xi–xiii). Given the common rejection of the truth as an objective and absolute value, the authors seek to rehabilitate this time-worn concept by outlining a complex theory of truth. To summarize the authors' proposed truth theory, truth as correspondence is ontologically grounded in a metaphysics of participation. This theory is built up in four layers; each of the four chapters addresses both the formal relation between faith and reason as integral to the argument, and the material trinitarian, christological, and sacramental claims of philosophical-theological truth.

Milbank and Pickstock work out their complex theory of truth in conversation with that *doctor angelicus*, Thomas Aquinas. Why is Aquinas consulted as the protagonist in this particular search to articulate truth? The simple answer is that Aquinas thematized truth in his *Summa Theologicae* (I, q. 16–17; II–II, q. 109–110), and wrote 253 disputed questions on truth between 1256 and 1259, recently reprinted in a three-volume text by Hackett (1994). The more detailed answer involves the programmatic nature of the book. Aquinas' commitment to God as absolute truth is related to the authors' aim to combat what they consider to be the nihilism of post-Scotian philosophy (which like any other thesis, should be open to historical-philosophical critique). By circumventing this nihilist trajectory, the authors claim that a theological metaphysics modeled on Aquinas' God, the transcendent *ipsum esse*, can guarantee absolute and objective truth. Furthermore, the authors promote an ontological interpretation of Aquinas in sharp contrast to standard neo-Thomist epistemological interpretations (e.g. Bernard Lonergan). With this move, Aquinas is interpreted from a neo-Platonic perspective, which both provides the ontological rationale for the participation of all beings in the truth and lays the ontological foundation for truth as correspondence. Furthermore, the appeal to the neo-Platonic Aquinas challenges the common view of correspondence as the agreement obtaining between a proposition and a state of affairs. According to the authors, correspondence is understood as the 'intrinsic *proportio* or analogy between the mind's intrinsic drive towards truth, and the way things manifest themselves, which is their mode of being true' (p. 17). The truth of beings corresponds in the sense of conforming to the divine source of truth in which these beings participate.

Nevertheless, the appeal to a canonical figure in support of constructive claims involves a methodological decision. In historical theology and philosophy, there are

two major ways in which a canonical figure can be appropriated for the contemporary discussion of a topic. Firstly, a historical figure can be studied in order to pursue a topic in detail that, although perennial, is given a distinctive shaping by the author in question. To borrow from Schleiermacher's famous definition of hermeneutics, this path requires mustering an apparatus of interpretative tools (i.e. philological, hermeneutical, historical-critical) in order to understand a text (and its author) as correctly as possible. In view of this option, the reader will find errors in the interpretation of Aquinas. For example, on p. 14, the passive and the active intellect are reversed from Aquinas' order; for Aquinas, the species is received by the active intellect and then impressed upon the passive intellect. Secondly, a historical figure can be used as a springboard for launching contemporary concerns. With this option, correct interpretation is clearly not as important as making use of that figure to inspire a vision addressed to a present-tense audience. Clearly the intention of the book is this second alternative. Even errors are parasitic on truth, to mention another famous Schleiermacherian adage. Given this interpretative key, a charitable reading will evaluate the book according to its constructive merits in view of thematizing the truth question in the philosophical-theological context.

To be welcomed is this publication on a topic which is unfortunately a rarity in post-Enlightenment theological discussion. For roughly two hundred years, the truth question has been marginalized by theologians anxious to accommodate doctrinal truth claims to rational criteria established by non-theological science. In the wake of Jacobi and Schleiermacher, the propositional genre of theology has retreated to make way for an identification of truth with pre-reflective, experiential certainty. Only in recent discussion has it been explicitly thematized as a theological topic of interest. In chapter 1 'Truth as correspondence', Pickstock contrasts her position with Bruce Marshall who is incidentally one of the frontrunners in the theological discussion of truth, and has also written on truth as coherence in Aquinas [*The Thomist* 63/1 (Jan. 1999), pp. 1–49]. Pickstock then appropriates Aquinas' view of the true's convertibility with being (*ST I*, q. 16, a. 3), arguing for the *conformitas* between truth in beings and truth in God.

Once the theological-ontological understanding of correspondence is established, the authors undertake their next move: a discussion of faith in relation to truth and reason. If the relationship between theology and philosophy is to be taken seriously, then theology must engage with a philosophical discussion that has gained considerable sophistication in entertaining a plethora of truth theories. *Truth in Aquinas* contains such a discussion. The discussion in chapter 2 'Truth and vision' written by Milbank configures the relation between theology and philosophy as one of mutual complementarity. Against Gilson, Milbank argues that both theology and metaphysics participate in the higher science, the *scientia dei*. Furthermore, and against a model of an a priori linguistic horizon (cf. p. 46), Milbank explains how metaphysics is a necessary partner to theology that is considerably impoverished if theology is reduced to grammatical issues. The possibility of metaphysics is given in the human mind as the intersection between

the grace of divine disclosure in the intellect and the ascending orientation of the mind to God (cf. pp. 36–8). Nihilism is thereby avoided and a rational treatment of revelation is gained. Theology is metaphysics with intensity (cf. p. 36). On this basis, truth is accessible to the human mind by virtue of its intersectional location, and by virtue of the intellect's capacity to know the truth of beings that they possess by virtue of their participation in the divine truth.

The truth of creatures is, however, distorted by the fall. In chapters 3 and 4, the authors argue for a 'metaphysical revision' effected by Christ which restores truth by recovering paradisiacal participation in God. In chapter 3 'Truth and touch', Pickstock and Milbank argue for touch as the privileged sense in the restorative process. Redemption proceeds incarnationally in order that it might be fitted to the sensuous exigencies of creatureliness. On the grounds of a body–soul unity, the authors argue for the re-education of the senses in its intimate joining to the restoration of the mind. In chapter 4 'Truth and language', Pickstock poses the truth question of sacramental theology in conversation with Derrida. Against Derrida's semantic indeterminacy (pp. 90–92), Pickstock advances her own understanding of the doctrine of transubstantiation which she claims 'outwit[s] this difficult dichotomy of presence and absence' (p. 92). The eucharistic sign is 'conjoined to the infinite depth' (p. 94), thereby conveying divine presence with some degree of fixedness. In this way, the issue of truth is advanced in view of sacramental access to the divine truth.

Unfortunately the textual interpretation in all four chapters of the book is rendered difficult by rather unclear, often tortured literary communication. An important question which the book could have addressed is that of truth in the pluralistic context. In an age marked by religious, philosophical and scholarly pluralism, how is the truth question to be posed? If there is a unity to truth, then how can truth be defined in relation to the plurality of ways in which it can be construed without equivocating the term? This question is not suitably raised in this volume. A *desideratum* for further work on theological truth is to conceive the possibility of both a genuine plurality of ontologies informing theological reflection, and of dialogue with those theologies more heterodox in their outlook. If the truth is to truly set free, then it must free theology from an absoluteness in which it is merely privileged to participate, but which it cannot claim for its exclusive possession.

Christine Helmer
Claremont School of Theology

William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, eds., *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*. London: Routledge, 2000, £63.00

Most of the greatest theologians have not only been conversant with the philosophical movements current in their time (e.g. Neoplatonism, Aristotelianism), but have been highly articulate expositors and critics of them. However, most theologians today appear singularly uninterested in, if not wholly oblivious to, the reigning philosophical paradigm of naturalism. That is not to say naturalism is not affecting theology, for indeed it is. The work of naturalists like W.V. Quine, Wilfred Sellars and Richard Rorty has had a deep impact on contemporary theology. Every time a theologian argues that the correspondence theory of truth, a priori knowledge, or metaphysical realism is to be rejected, and every time it is argued that the only way to provide an epistemic justification of theological enquiry is to model it on scientific enquiry, one can be sure arguments originating in a naturalist worldview are nearby. But should it not cause us concern that naturalism, as Sellars summarizes it, is the view that 'science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not'? I would suggest that we need an in-depth reflection both on the impact of naturalism on theology, and more basically on naturalism itself as a philosophy. Fortunately this latter task has already been taken up in *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*, a rigorous and challenging collection of essays by a number of leading philosophers.

In the preface, the editors William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland define naturalism as including the following beliefs: the spatiotemporal universe of scientific study is all there is, first philosophy is to be rejected, and the universe is a causal continuum explained by the atomic theory of matter and evolutionary biology. Craig and Moreland summarize the price that must be paid for this view with the following dilemma which re-emerges in a number of the essays:

[E]ither naturalism involves an epistemic attitude and etiology that express strong versions of scientism, in which case naturalism suffers from some obvious defects (no account of proper functioning, denial of consciousness) or else it must weaken its ontology to adopt certain entities (abstract objects, mental properties), in which case it loses the unity of science and its right to claim a strong naturalist epistemic attitude, explanatory hegemony, and an adequate etiological account of the coming-to-be of everything. (p. xiv)

Put another way, the cost of consistent naturalism is implausibility, whereas a more plausible naturalism (one able to accommodate consciousness, intentionality, moral obligation, proper function, etc.) must surrender consistency by admitting non-material ontological realities.

The book is divided into four parts: epistemology, ontology, value theory and natural theology. The first three essays effectively demonstrate the epistemological impoverishment of naturalism. In 'Farewell to Philosophical Naturalism', Paul Moser and David Yandell point out that ontological naturalism entails that only material objects exist; the problem is that this is a global claim which cannot be

warranted on scientific grounds, which, on this view, are the only grounds on which one may make knowledge claims. This places the naturalist in the dilemma of espousing a criterion for knowledge which he does not himself meet, and so renders the naturalist thesis unjustified and perhaps self-refuting. In 'The Incompatibility of Naturalism and Scientific Realism', Robert Koons takes up the epistemological inadequacy of naturalism in grounding realism. Koons points out that while scientists depend on simplicity as a guide for theory choice, naturalism can offer no grounds to think simplicity is reliable for producing true beliefs, and so no ground to view science as providing knowledge. The ironic conclusion is that the more successful science is, the more evidence it provides *against* naturalism.

Dallas Willard's essay 'Knowledge and Naturalism', turns away from the more narrow issue of how naturalism relates to science to focus on the broader epistemic implications of this austere worldview. Willard argues that having knowledge is an objective state in which a subject matter is appropriately represented as it is; that is, knowledge requires a representation which matches up to the world under the correct conditions (e.g., not by chance). Since naturalism only allows for the existence of physical properties and relations, it can account neither for matching representations, nor for truth or knowledge. Since we clearly have knowledge, it follows that naturalism is false.

The section on ontology begins with J.P. Moreland's essay 'Naturalism and the Ontological Status of Properties'. Properties represent a prime case of an ontological reality which must be eliminated or conformed to a naturalist worldview, a fact which has been recognized by naturalists since the time of Plato (*Sophist* 246 A–C). Moreland critiques two attempts to reconcile naturalism with properties: Keith Campbell's reductive nominalism and David Armstrong's revised realism. Moreland points out a host of difficulties with each proposal while observing that in an attempt to respond to criticism, Campbell and Armstrong come close to a traditional realist reading of properties which would undermine naturalism. While naturalism offers no plausible account of properties, in 'Naturalism and Material Objects' Michael Rea argues that it cannot even provide a ground to accept the existence of material objects. This claim is rooted in the thesis that the identification of material objects requires us to identify 'persistence conditions' for those objects. To take one of Rea's examples, if Socrates is a material object, there must be some fact about whether Socrates could survive a trip through a meat grinder. While the non-naturalist can provide an a priori account of the knowledge of persistence conditions, the naturalist can only appeal to natural laws or proper function, both of which fail. And so naturalism provides no warrant to accept the existence of material objects.

Charles Taliaferro's essay, 'Naturalism and the Mind', attacks eliminative and reductive treatments of the mind/body problem. Eliminativism dismisses the mind as a 'user illusion', but this begs the question of what is the user. Identity theory, which claims that the mind is a set of brain states, is undermined by the fact that the mind bears properties not possessed by the brain. More recently a number of philosophers of mind have retreated to the claim that mental properties are distinct

entities which 'supervene' on the physical, but this places the naturalist in the dilemma of introducing immaterial objects into a naturalist ontology. While naturalists will continue to protest that body/soul dualism is too metaphysically extravagant, Taliaferro counters that this depends on one's worldview. Immaterial minds are much more plausible if we accept theism which sees all material reality as arising from God, the ultimate 'immaterial mind'. At the close of the essay Taliaferro provides a brief but helpful discussion of body/soul integration for those theologians and philosophers who fear dualism irrevocably sunders the person.

Stewart Goetz's essay 'Naturalism and Libertarian Agency' is a fitting complement to Taliaferro's. Goetz points out that naturalists cannot accept intentionality – that irreducible aboutness of our thoughts – and thus can only explain actions in terms of prior efficient causes. Goetz contends rather that actions are uncaused, and as such are explained not causally but teleologically, that is in terms of an intended end of the agent. (I move my arm because I want to pick up the chocolate bar, not simply because of prior neuronal synapses.) A number of naturalists have objected that libertarianism requires a 'self' (the soul by another name) which is the seat of the deep intentional features of the world and is able to act in the causal order. This raises the main objection naturalists invoke against dualism, the problem of mind/body interaction. Given the inadequacies with eliminativism and identity theory, a number of naturalists have recently defended the supervenience thesis that mental properties arise out of, and are determined by, physical properties. However, as Goetz points out, supervenience theorists face basically the same objection as dualists since they fail to explain the deterministic relation between microphysical properties and supervenient mental properties. What is more, this view is grossly implausible, as it treats consciousness as epiphenomenal, arising out of but incapable of affecting the material realm. Since we clearly do act on the basis of intentions rather than simply as a result of physical causes, we should accept libertarian freedom, and the body/soul dualism it implies.

The section on value theory is occupied by John Hare's essay 'Naturalism and Morality'. Hare argues along Kantian lines that there is a 'gap' which arises when we recognize that there is a moral demand placed upon our lives, and that we are naturally incapable of meeting it. The gap depends on the famous principle of 'ought implies can' which has received short shrift from some theologians who stress the human incapacity to do good; but as Hare points out, for the Christian theist, the 'can' only arises because of divine grace. Hence, if we are required to meet a moral gap, it follows that with God's grace, we are able to do so. Hare critiques naturalist attempts to eliminate the gap by claiming the demand can be met, denying that it need be met, or by invoking another principle (usually evolutionary biology) to traverse it. Since each naturalist attempt to traverse the gap fails, naturalism leads to the incoherence of positing moral obligations we cannot meet. The only way to meet the gap and restore coherence is by recognizing the divine source of morality and God's granting us the power to meet it.

The final section on natural theology begins with William Lane Craig's essay 'Naturalism and Cosmology', which provides a comprehensive survey of the

challenges Big Bang cosmology presents to naturalism. Naturalists have always tended to answer the vexing question, 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' by appealing to the universe as an eternally existent brute fact. However, with the rise of Big Bang theory which points to the entire space-time universe arising out of nothing a finite time ago, that escape route is no longer open. To avoid what smacks of special creation, naturalists have appealed to a growing list of ever more incredible and empirically unfounded theories of cosmic origin, including steady state theory, oscillating universes, and quantum fluctuations. Recently, some philosophers and cosmologists have even claimed the universe *creates itself*, while others have suggested that it arose *uncaused* from nothing at all. Craig takes apart each of these would-be theories while defending the axiom that whatever begins to exist has a cause. Since the universe began to exist, this would require, so Craig argues, an uncaused, personal creator who apart from the universe is without beginning or change and is immaterial, timeless, spaceless, and of great power. Craig concludes, 'And this, as Thomas Aquinas laconically remarked, is what everyone means by "God"' (p. 244).

In the final essay, 'Naturalism and Design', William Dembski argues that the current scientific explanatory criteria of chance and necessity are inadequate; we must also invoke the concept of intelligent design. And this provides the basis for an impressive new teleological argument. Many philosophers still dismiss teleological arguments with a nod to Hume. But Dembski argues that we may now appeal to the rigorous criteria of complexity and specification culled from its pervasive pretheoretical use in numerous disciplines, to guide intelligent design theory. A design inference is warranted if an intelligible pattern is of sufficient complexity to preclude chance, and if it bears a precise specification or pattern. An excellent example is provided by Michael Behe's 'irreducibly complex' systems in biochemistry. These are biological objects and operations which depend for their function on a number of parts being in working order. Since the complexity of these systems precludes the possibility of their arising by chance, and they bear a precise specification, a design inference is warranted. Dembski adds that intelligent design will not quash scientific enquiry, but rather may guide the development of new research paradigms by eliminating false premises and focusing the goals of enquiry.

It is often the case that collections of essays by different writers lack an overall cohesion, but not so for *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis*. These essays are mutually reinforcing as the authors build a cumulative case against naturalism. While this is a mark of good editing, I must take issue with Craig and Moreland's editorial decision not to present a set of definitions on naturalism and its various cognates at the outset. As it stands, there are a bewildering number of naturalisms thrown at the reader through the course of the essays (e.g. metaphysical, epistemological, methodological); as such, a standardized set of terms observed through all the essays would have been very helpful. It must also be noted that while one cannot cover every pertinent issue in a book such as this, certain omissions are more noticeable (and regrettable) than others. Given the growing number of naturalist philosophers presently reconsidering a priori knowledge, an essay dedicated to the

centrality and anti-naturalist nature of aprioricity would have been timely. Further, an essay on the fine-tuning argument for the universe would have been a valuable complement to Craig's essay. But perhaps most unfortunate is the sparse treatment of value theory, particularly the lack of any sustained discussion of metaethics.

Granted *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis* is an important work, but is it important enough to command the attention of a busy theologian already spread too thin over systematic theology and related disciplines? While many may dismiss this book as too recondite, with a little reflection one can see room to raise important theological questions at almost every turn. For instance, if properties exist apart from their exemplification in concrete objects then what are they, divine thoughts? Should Calvinists find concord with the compatibilist arguments of naturalist philosophers, or is libertarianism as Hare defines it the only proper Christian view of the person? Is $t=0$ (the point of the Big Bang) of theological significance as Craig assumes, and if so, how?

The book also provides a significant challenge to the influence that naturalism has already had on theology. Take the example of body/soul dualism. It is well known that the soul has receded in discussions of theological anthropology in recent decades. Indeed, it has often been openly derided and rejected on what are alleged to be strong biblical and theological grounds. But ever since Gilbert Ryle derided the 'ghost in the machine', many of those reasons have also been philosophical and 'scientific', and these are by and large rooted in naturalist presuppositions. There is a good deal of confusion here as most theologians juxtapose 'dualism' with 'holism' as if they were contraries, when in fact the two may be fully complementary. In rejecting the soul, these theologians are not embracing holism, but physicalism. (And this is certainly no less a contentious thesis on biblical grounds than is dualism.) Now most anti-dualist theologians would be unhappy with the physicalist description of human beings as computers made of meat. But if they reject eliminativism and identity theory (and given the reasons put forth by Taliaferro and Goetz, they should), then they are left with a form of supervenience. But supervenience is best understood as a form of property dualism. This places the theologian in the dilemma of committing to epiphenomenalism and so denying that human beings act to achieve purposes. It seems then that free will appears to require substance dualism which brings us back to the basic anthropological position most theologians have espoused for two thousand years. There are many other points at which naturalism has adversely impacted theology, and many more at which it continues to undermine our contemporary culture. It is now time for theologians to confront naturalism straight on, and *Naturalism: A Critical Analysis* provides an excellent point from which to begin.

Randall Rauser
 Briarcrest Bible College,
 Saskatchewan, Canada

Theodor Dieter, *Der junge Luther und Aristoteles: eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung zum Verhältnis von Theologie und Philosophie*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001, 687pp., €148

The topic of Dieter's book is the reception of Aristotle in the works of the early Luther (until 1518); his book combines his dissertation and his *habilitation*. Dieter starts his inquiry with texts of Luther which mention Aristotle explicitly. He asks in what sense Luther uses Aristotle and relates the particular topics to Lutheran texts which fit thematically. Dieter concentrates on the material aspect of his question and does not scrutinize the formal role of the critique of Aristotle in the context of the reforms of academic life in Wittenberg.

In chapter 1, starting with the *probatio* of thesis 28 of the Heidelberg disputation, Dieter describes Aristotle's anthropological understanding of the soul and Luther's critique of it. Luther ascribes to Aristotle a view of human beings as acting in all respects for their own particular sake. Luther criticizes this statement as right with respect to the sinner, but wrong as an essential statement about human beings. However, in his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle does not see the striving for man's own interest in contradiction to the *quaerere quae alterius sunt* because to fail the ultimate end does not consist in acting as a rational being, but of acting as a sensual being. In the theologies of the Middle Ages the ultimate purpose is identified with God. Presupposing the biblical law of love (Deut. 6:5), Luther sees a contradiction between the two statements, because he does not relate the capacity to pursue to the human will, but to the whole human being. In Dieter's view, with this turn Luther left the area of ethics: anyone who does not love God entirely is nothing but a sinner. The alternative between loving God and loving one's self, though, is in itself ambiguous, because it is possible to use God as a means to the end of loving one's self. For Luther, this is the danger of the *theologia gloriae*. He tries to ward off this danger with the help of his *theologia crucis* implying that God is present only in *passionibus*. This implies that Luther replaces the concept of loving God with faith. It does not make sense to apply concepts like selfishness and selflessness to faith. Rather, the decisive alternative of faith consists in the distinction of trust/distrust, which is in itself unambiguous. Nevertheless, Luther's concept of faith integrates some aspects of the traditional concept of loving God. With respect to Luther's famous distinction between the love of God which does not find the endearing side in the other, but which creates it, and the worldly love of human beings which presupposes an endearing side in the other, Dieter notes that a similar conception can be found in the theology of Aquinas (p. 137). In Dieter's view, though, one does not have to agree with Luther's distinction between the worldly love on the one hand and faith which substitutes the concept of the love of God on the other hand, because *coram mundo* humans are also beings in need.

In chapter 2 Dieter analyses the question of whether, following Aristotle, the habitus of being good emerges out of repeated particular acts or whether the goodness of the person is prevalent in respect of the acts of a person. For Aristotle himself one has to pay attention to two statements: 'By acting righteously man

becomes righteous' and 'Whoever is righteous acts righteously.' Luther replaces the relation of conjunction between the two statements by a contradiction. Dieter points to the fact that Aristotle himself holds that it is impossible for a totally non-righteous person to act righteously. Furthermore, Aristotle is not able to show how a person who became unjust by habitualization will be able to become just by habitualization again. But Luther's dialogue-partner is not Aristotle, but rather reception of Aristotle by Biel and Buridan. To the Aristotelian conception they added the notion of free will. Consequently, they hold it to be possible to become righteous by the way of a meritorious habitualization. Dieter does not see this change in the theology of later scholasticism as an infiltration of Christian theology by Aristotelian philosophy, but vice versa as a modification of the Aristotelian doctrine by specific Christian *theologoumena*. As a consequence, Dieter does not hold Luther's historical analysis of the problem to be true. Concerning content, Dieter inquires into what exactly is meant by Luther's view that only a prevalent righteous person is able to act righteously – a view which presupposes an ontology of substances. Dieter observes that the quality of the works of a person is dependent on the person. The person is seen in the light of the alternative of 'old man/new man'. Furthermore, also the righteous – the new man – is *simul justus et peccator*. Consequently, the concept of the quality of works and the concept of 'work' itself becomes fundamentally unclear. The only way of solving the problem would be to provide an analysis of Luther's theology after 1518, but that is not Dieter's topic.

In chapter 3, Dieter describes the Lutheran reception of an epistemological Aristotelian theorem regarding the relationship between possibility and factuality in the *intellectus*. Luther uses this theorem for modelling the relationship of the believer to the word of God in an eclectic way.

Chapter 4 describes Luther's reception of the Aristotelian doctrine of motion in order to understand *simul* with respect to *partim-partim* between being righteous and being a sinner. Luther has to solve the problem that being righteous and being a sinner is a contradiction. Luther rejects the possibility of modelling this relation between righteous and sinner by an understanding of grace as *qualitas* or forma of the soul as substance. Instead, Luther's solution relies on an Aristotelian-Occamist understanding of motion: Luther understands the Christian existence as a process from being a sinner to being righteous in a way that every point of this motion is *partim in termino a quo et partim in termino ad quem*. Consequently, being righteous means becoming righteous in *via* without becoming perfect, because the more a person becomes righteous the more he or she knows what sin means. Therefore, the whole life of the Christian is penitence.

Dieter closes the chapter with an inquiry into Luther's Christmas Sermon from 1514, in which a reception of the Aristotelian doctrine of motion can be found. The Finnish Luther-research of the last twenty years has used this sermon in order to reconstruct a relational-trinitarian ontology. The result of Dieter's inquiry consists in the insight that one can find relational structures in this sermon and a dynamistic understanding of God, but that one cannot find a fully developed relational ontology.

Chapter 5 is concerned with Luther's understanding of logic. Dieter works with the Christmas sermon mentioned above and the disputation *contra scholasticam theologiam* in which Luther rejects the opinion that every theologian who is not a logician is a heretic. Dieter shows that the object of this sentence is a very specific problem in the framework of the doctrine of the Trinity: Pierre d'Ailly and others tried to combine syllogistic forms with particular propositions of the (Western understanding) of the doctrine of the Trinity. E.g. the following sentences are in a formal respect correct, but one has to reject them from a Christian point of view: (1) *Pater in divinis generat. Pater est essentia divina. Ergo essentia divina generat.* (2) *Omnis essentia divina est pater. Filius est essentia divina. Ergo filius est pater.* Luther names the different solutions by using a modification of the medieval concept of suppositions with the term *logica fidei*. Luther rejects the *logica fidei* because it is incompatible with both the Christian doctrine and the *logica naturalis*. The mistake occurs because the syllogistic forms are used without sufficient attention being paid to the decisive distinction between *terminus essentialis* and *terminus personalis*. The consequences are logical equivocations. Being aware of this distinction, one can only build trivial truistic propositions like *Omnis Pater generat. Iste pater est Pater. Ergo iste pater generat.* Luther's intention is neither to reject the propositions of the doctrine of the Trinity nor to reject syllogistics as a subclass of logic. In contrast to d'Ailly, Luther's answer provides a tenable solution, because he distinguishes between the syllogistic forms and the propositions of the Trinity. Consequently, the doctrine of the Trinity and logic are coherent. Luther aims to show that the trinitarian doctrine is free from contradictions. In a second step, Dieter explores the general Lutheran understanding of logic. The result is that Luther votes against a life-long study of logic for its own sake. But he votes for a fundamental study of logic as a necessary condition for theology.

Dieter's *habilitation* consists in chapters 1–5. Chapter 6 is Dieter's dissertation. The Subject is the last ten of the twelve philosophical theses of the *disputatio Heidelbergae habita*. In these theses, Luther's intention is to show that the theologians of 'scholasticism' misunderstood the Aristotelian philosophy of nature. Indirectly, Luther claims to be a better Aristotelian than the Aristotelian 'scholastic' theologians. Luther tries to prove this claim by an exegesis of Aristotle, not by the way of the *quaestiones*. One of his intentions is to show that the Aristotelian forma-distinction is not a distinction in reality and that it cannot be applied universally. Dieter shows that Luther's own opinion – to be free from the 'scholastic' interpretation of Aristotle – is mistaken. Luther presupposes the Occamistic interpretation of Aristotle in more than one way. Furthermore, Luther's argumentation is often incomplete. Consequently, Luther cannot give the proof for his claim. However, Dieter qualifies this result by mentioning two facts. First of all, the tradition of the text of the philosophical theses is unclear. Secondly, Luther did not write the *probationes* for the last theses. Consequently, the philosophical theses are only a preliminary manuscript.

Dieter's book is a thorough study of Luther's reception of Aristotle until 1518 with the help of inquiries into the theologians of later scholasticism (Occam,

d'Ailly, Biel, Truttveter and others). Dieter scrutinizes those arguments which Luther himself held to be Aristotelian and he follows up certain themes given by that inquiry beyond his threshold of 1518. The different chapters of Dieter's book can be read as thematic units of important dimensions of Luther's theology. Dieter shows that the referents of 'Aristotle' in Luther's works differ. Consequently, the relationship of Luther to both the Aristotelian philosophy itself and to the theologies of later scholasticism is to be described in a much more differentiated way than the older research thought (Ebeling, Grane and others). Dieter fruitfully walks on the way paved by the research of the 1980s and 1990s (Graham White, some of the Finnish research on Luther). Nevertheless, in a certain respect the restriction to the time before 1518 is not unproblematic. On the one hand, Dieter makes the influence of the reception of the philosophy of Aristotle for the development of the doctrine of justification transparent. On the other hand, readers have to remind themselves that by then the development of the doctrine of justification was not yet completed and that important aspects of this development begin only after 1518. All in all, Dieter's book is an important contribution to the research on the understanding of the early Luther in the framework of his historical, theological and philosophical context.

Markus Mühling-Schlapkohl
Ökumenisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg

Dirk-Martin Grube, *Unbegründbarkeit Gottes? Tillichs und Barths Erkenntnistheorien im Horizont der gegenwärtigen Philosophie*. Marburg: Elwert, 1998, 278pp, €29.80

The model of coherentist holism

In the first analytical part of his study, Grube investigates the development of the relationship between ontology and epistemology in the theologies of Paul Tillich and Karl Barth. As his basis, Grube does not use the intentional statements of Barth and Tillich regarding this theme, but rather scrutinizes their actual procedures. In the German period of Tillich's theology, epistemology precedes ontology. The material content of a theological internal perspective has to be justified according to the standards of a non-theological, general epistemology. In his American period, Tillich found a way to set epistemology and ontology side by side. With the help of his method of correlation he emphasizes the identity of the revelation in Jesus Christ in the perspective of the relativity of the particular historical frameworks of interpretation. Due to the fact that the distinction between scheme and content cannot be coherently conceptualized, the identity of the content is not a sufficient warrant against a constructivistic understanding of revelation.

In the second edition of Barth's *Römerbrief* one finds a strict diastasis between theological content and general epistemology, because the divine reality – conceptualized as *totaliter aliter* – renders the human cognition of God impossible. But in the *Unterricht*, Barth conceptualizes the divine reality as a subject of action. Consequently, man's ability to discern God becomes an implication of divine action. Later on in the *Church Dogmatics*, Barth uses the doctrine of the Trinity in order to solve this epistemological problem. This is a pursuit which functionalizes the Trinity and which leads to an overemphasis on the economic Trinity. Already in his *Fides quaerens intellectum* Barth tries, not only to superimpose theological ontology onto theological epistemology, but also to reintegrate the universal external perspective by reconstructing the external perspective within the framework of the internal Christian perspective. With the help of this argumentation, Barth claims the universal validity of the internal Christian perspective and avoids traditionalism and fideism. The appropriate characterization of this methodological argumentation is an antifoundationalist coherentism. This contradicts the Barth-interpretations of Pannenberg and Härle who consider Barth to be a foundationalist. Grube's final judgement about Barth's position is that it does not lead to a problem of foundations, but to a problem of demarcation between premodernism and postmodernism. Accordingly, Barth's rejection of philosophy only implies the rejection of a philosophy which aims at properly basic foundations, not the rejection of all philosophy.

In his second, synthetic part Grube tries to take on board the decisive insights of both Tillich and Barth. So he tries to combine the adherence to realistic truth claims with the rejection of all foundationalist methods. Both aspects are integrated into his own coherentist holism. Grube critically debates the understanding of foundationalism of A. Plantinga, the 'Reformed Epistemology' and the falsificationism of H. Albert. In a more receptive way he discusses the epistemologies of N. Rescher, H. Putnam and W.V.O. Quine in order to combine coherentist and realistic claims. Coherentism is right to claim that there is no pre-linguistic access to reality. On the other hand, this does not necessarily imply a relativistic position. Rather whole sets of sentences or propositions refer to reality and are tested by pragmatic justification. This addition of pragmatic justification to coherentism is necessary because the concept of coherence itself is a syntactic concept. The criteria of pragmatic justification have the task of fulfilling the semantic side of realistic claims. If the pragmatic justification of a system or a set of sentences fails, one does not have to reject the whole system, but one has to modify it under the postulate of 'epistemic conservatism': 'Amongst the alternative possibilities of modification choose that one, which rejects not too much of your whole system too quickly.' In regard to religious systems of belief the relationship between explanation and action and therefore their pragmatic justification consists of their ability to enable human action. Coherentist holism can be compared with a fishing-net: it has to be coherent, that means the network has to be without gaps. But if a fish is caught, it will be impossible to say in which particular mesh it was fished.

At the end of his book Grube designs a specific theological coherentist holism in critical discussions with the Barth-interpretation of T.F. Torrance, with Tillich,

Lindbeck's postliberalism, the conceptions of revelation of W. Pannenberg and of Eilert Herms in order to model the Christian experience of disclosure by the metaphor of the Kuhnian concept of paradigm-change. Grube tries to avoid the Barthian dilemma between premodernism and postmodernism by interpreting the fundamental implication of epistemology by ontology in equivalence to a universal epistemology. Grube uses four theses to explain this state of affairs:

1. One has to abandon the last foundations of Christian claims.
2. Circular argumentation serves the coherence of an argument and is not to be discredited (as a *circulus vitiosus*).
3. Barth holds a realistic, but eschatologically broken theory of reference.
4. One has to conceptualize the theory of reference without epistemology and to conceptualize the theory of truth without ontology.

In a critical development of Tillich's apologetic intentions Grube tries to design not an absolute, but a relative apology, which he explains also by the use of three theses: (1) One has to show relative plausibility in comparison with other views of reality. (2) In accordance with Pannenberg one has to understand the certainty of Christian faith as fallible. It is not impossible that other views of life will be more plausible than Christianity. (3) The pursuit of a Christian, relative apology has the mark of contingency, corresponding to the contingency of God's trinitarian self-disclosure. Justified by God's grace, one neither has to dramatize contingency in a postmodern attitude nor to fight it in a modern attitude, but one has to accept it.

Another set of four theses regards the question of the truth of Christian faith and the question of its connection:

1. In the whole set of dogmatic sentences or statements, some have reference to the reality. Dogmatics is not just a meta-linguistic pursuit. This is possible, because the notion of coherence only serves to give reasons, not to define truth. In order to define truth, one can still use the classical term 'correspondence', because one can – according to Pannenberg – understand correspondence as a species of coherence.
2. As far as it is possible, the traditional question concerning the definition of truth is to be given up.
3. It is not an isolated Christian statement, but Christian doctrine as a whole which refers to reality.
4. Consequently, claims to verify or to falsify particular statements of Christianity, like the statement that Jesus is raised, are mistaken in principle.

The statement about Jesus' resurrection is not a fundamental belief on which to build the Christian doctrine, as is attempted in the early theology of Pannenberg. In observation of the rule of 'epistemic conservatism' one has to hold that it is not possible to ascribe to the statement about Jesus' resurrection the truth value 'wrong' by a method of pragmatic justification. This does not mean that it necessarily has the truth value 'right'. It rather has the truth value 'neither justifiably right nor wrong'. Consequently, Grube votes for a three-valued logic in

the framework of his Christian coherentist holism. The Christian system of beliefs is constituted by disclosure-experiences, which discloses a 'subjective quality of objective certainty' to believers. On principle, the certainty of Christian faith is both fallible and challenged. This is the criterion through which it differs from all forms of fanatic belief systems. The disclosure experience of Christian faith can be portrayed in analogy to the Kuhnian concept of paradigm change:

1. Religious revelation is all-encompassing.
2. Truth and reference are equally disclosed. Quantification of revelation is impossible.
3. Revelation is spontaneous.
4. The revelation to the first believers of Christian faith and the change of the understanding of 'messiah' implies a change of reference (Jesus Christ) and content (not a political, but a religious concept). It is a 'normal revolution'.
5. Proofs of historical continuity or discontinuity are not to be applied directly to the problem of how to warrant the claims of Christian faith.
6. One has to be sceptical about positions which attempt to use historical material in order to solve normative problems.
7. It is relatively correct to understand history in the perspective of the new paradigm, e.g. to discover christological concepts in the Old Testament.

The significance of coherentist holism and the search for a theory of truth in Christian perspective

Grube's book is an important contribution to the discussion of Tillich and Barth and he corrects more than one prejudice. He shows that the theology of Barth both has roots in philosophical presuppositions (e.g. in neo-Kantianism) and delivers philosophical implications for a general epistemology. The specific achievement of Grube's research on Tillich and Barth is in the way he uses Barth and Tillich to look for a middle way between foundationalism and relativism. It is surprising to see that the interpretation of Barth and Tillich on the one hand and of contemporary Anglo-American philosophies on the other hand provides a fruitful road for an appropriate theological epistemology. It is highly interesting to see that Grube does not fight empiricist philosophies (such as the one represented by Quine) in an apologetic attitude, but that he recognizes their constructive potential for systematic-theological problems. Grube's own way of solving the epistemological problems – to design a coherentist holism – includes some positive aspects. First of all, we have to value Grube's rejection of foundationalism and the search for an operational holism. Holism avoids the theoretical problems of foundationalism and fits much better to the character of Christian faith and its roots in concrete life. We also have to value the use of the criterion of coherence. Coherence is a syntactic, necessary condition of truth and it belongs in the area of criteriology. It is not necessarily to be used in order to design a definition of truth. What strikes me as

especially important is that Grube maintains realistic claims which are not dispensable in theology and all scientific inquiry alike. Grube is right in saying that the semantic dimension of language is only reconstructable in an operational way by using the pragmatic dimension of language. On the one hand, the criteria of his 'epistemic conservatism' and the fallible character of Christian faith – how it differs from fanaticism – proves that scientific theology is possible. It shows that theology has much more to do with other scientific endeavours – sciences and humanities alike – than commonly accepted. On the other hand, Grube's concrete descriptions of the pragmatic criterion as justification with respect to the human capacity to act avoids relativistic consequences given in a coherentist but non-realistic approach.

Nevertheless, the concrete shape of coherentist realism bears a few problems. We will concentrate on three of them: First of all: if Grube is right and all forms of foundationalism are to be abandoned, we will have to use the notion of a theological internal perspective – but then it does not make sense to use the term 'external perspective' in the singular. If we use 'external perspective' in the singular, this fits Tillich's attempt to offer an absolute apology. It entails foundationalist tendencies. If we modify the concept of Christian apology to a relative apology, we will have to use 'external perspectives' in the plural only.

Second: Grube rightly insists that it is impossible to understand the whole set of dogmatic sentences as a metalinguistic grammar. Parts of the dogmatic set refer to reality, although they might not be identifiable. If a set of beliefs is coherent and the system as a whole is pragmatically justified, one has to ascribe the truth-value 'right' to all statements of the set until problems in the process of pragmatic justification arise. According to the principle of 'epistemic conservatism', in the context of a disclosure experience one has to avoid modifications which make the truth-value of particular and crucial statements 'wrong'. For different reasons, though, it is very problematic to vote for a three-valued logic including a third truth value, which is 'neither right nor wrong'. If we interpret this third truth-value as 'not decidable', this will imply a pure epistemic interpretation of all three truth-values – including 'right' and 'wrong' – and consequently not a semantic or ontological interpretation of the truth-values. This renders it impossible to maintain realistic claims and reference to reality. Therefore, all three truth-values are to be interpreted in an ontological manner. Here an alternative can be stated: the three-valued logic has to be used in all fields of human knowledge or it has to be used in the fields of religion or ethics only. The latter case has to be excluded, because it entails a diastasis in reality, maybe into an area of freedom and an area of necessity or into an area of sciences and an area of anthropological constants. These two areas stay apart from each other, because it is impossible to mediate between them. Such a split in reality contradicts a philosophical concept of one reality and it contradicts the Christian concept of creation which holds God to be the creator of all creatures. Consequently, the only way to use a three-valued logic consists in applying it to all fields of human knowledge. But this is neither the way our everyday language works, nor the way most scientific or technical inquiries work.

Further, this presupposes complex logical operations. Additionally, it entails problems for the concept of an all-encompassing coherence. For, in this case, in a holistic system there are statements which neither contribute anything to the coherence of the system nor anything for its pragmatic justification. Here the question arises whether this set of statements is without a function for the system. Consequently, one should use in the framework of a coherentist holistic realism a traditional two-valued logic. Crucial statements like the statement of Jesus' resurrection could only be 'right' or 'wrong' in dependence on the whole system. This does not imply the relapse into foundationalism. Crucial statements like 'Jesus is raised' are not properly basic in an epistemological way, but they are *identity markers* of a belief-system. Nevertheless, a modification by pragmatic justification to the truth-value 'wrong' remains possible. But this modification implies a paradigm change from a Christian belief-system to a post-Christian or non-Christian belief-system. In principle, the Christian view of life *in via* has to face this danger. Maybe we can formulate a Christian version of the principle of epistemic conservatism: 'Choose under the alternative possibilities of modification that which rejects not too much of your whole system too fast and which is no identity-marker – or convert!'

Third: Grube's view that a theory of reference has to be designed without epistemology and that a theory of truth has to be designed without ontology is to be judged as extremely problematic. Equally, we have to criticize his view that one should withhold from giving a definition of truth. For if one holds realistic claims, implicit ontological commitments and presuppositions will be implied in the internal perspective of the system. These implicit ontological presuppositions themselves imply propositions of what truth really is. If Grube is right and not only the Christian belief-system, but all belief systems with ontological relevance are anti-foundationalist, it will be possible to give definitions of truth in the framework of different perspectives only, relative to the particular ontologies of the different views of reality. So it seems to be a very meaningful undertaking to reconstruct a theory of truth from the internal perspective of Christian faith. Thereby it will be possible to show how the criterion of pragmatic justification is able to depict reality. Therefore, such an argument will be an important step to show the internal coherence of the Christian belief-system.

The main issues of such an understanding of truth can be stated in the following lines: The action of God is either a *necessary* condition or a *necessary and a sufficient* condition for all of reality. The action of God is to be understood as an event, and its results – reality – also consists in events and enables events in the world (like, e.g., human action). Part of the genus of human action is also the human recognition of the event-like reality by the way of speech acts. In the framework of such a Christian event-like ontology of speech acts, we can reformulate the classical truth-theory of correspondence by avoiding its contradictions because both *relata* of the classical theory, human language and reality, belong to the same set of objects. Both are events of speech acts: reality is the events of the divine speech acts, language the events of human speech acts.

Thereby, both can be set into a relation of correspondence or adequation. If we pay attention to the categorical difference between *actio dei* and *actio hominum*, we should reconstruct the relation between both *relata* itself not as correspondence, but as accordance: *Truth is the accordance of creaturely-personal speech-acts with divine speech acts and its event-like results*. This definition of truth is conceptualized in the Christian internal perspective, but it is able to reformulate the intentions of non-theological aspects of the understanding of truth in a theological perspective. It is not only a theory which enables definitions, but it also enables the explanation for why the only possibility of an operational realistic proof is the way of pragmatic justification. Furthermore, it enables the explanation why these pragmatic criteria of justification can only be necessary, but not sufficient conditions for truth: for this definition provides an ontological description of the framework of relations between different kinds of *action* and consequently it is an *ethical* theory of truth including the perspective of the fall of creation and the atonement, with respect to an understanding of law and gospel. The human search for truth and its finding – in all fields of recognition of reality – depends not just on the creative, but also on the redeeming and perfecting action of Father, Son and Holy Spirit implying an eschatological reserve. The impossibility of designing a non-perspectival and non-contradictory definition of truth and the possibility of a non-contradictory, but perspectival definition of truth is a coherent depiction of this eschatological reserve and an important contribution to proving the coherence of a Christian coherentist-holistic realism.

All in all, Grube's book should be valued as an impressive discourse in philosophical theology.

Markus Mühling-Schlapkohl,
Ökumenisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg

Markus Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000, 314pp. £24.95

Bockmuehl's thesis in this learned and closely argued – although still preliminary – study is that 'the Jewish tradition of moral teaching for Gentiles, rooted ultimately in the Torah, consistently determined much of the substance of ethics in the mainstream of emerging Christian orthodoxy' (p. vii). Furthermore, it was this dynamic, he contends, 'that allowed Christianity to blossom into a faith for the world, with a clear and distinctive yet truly universal ethic' (p. xv). Indeed, some recovery of this ethic is imperative if a clear moral debate is to take place today – 'Where a shared foundation of morality cannot be assumed, how can one speak about right and wrong?' (p. 145), Bockmuehl states, having just quoted from Alisdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*. This would be something of a return to the Constantinian situation, which lay ahead of the early church and, in a curious

parallelism, lies behind the church today. In keeping with his basic thesis, Bockmuehl argues that Jesus was consistently Torah-observant (as against being a proto-Protestant, or even crypto-Marcionite), and the early church leaders, often portrayed by scholars as in conflict, were also essentially unified in their approach, although differing at times over applications. That approach consists, primarily, in the criticism of idolatry and concomitant recognition of the true, creator God, and in the condemnation of violence, and most especially of murder. (A dietary proviso is a slightly more ambiguous point, namely, that meat should not be eaten with blood in it.)

The study pursues this agenda in three parts. The first part begins with three chapters that focus largely on Jesus, contending consistently for his faithfulness to Torah in terms of particular readings of the day. After a statement of the general thesis that Jesus' ethics are best understood in *halakhic* terms, two chapters deal with two problem texts: Jesus' teaching on divorce (cf. Matthew's exception clauses in 5.32 and 19.9), and his saying 'let the dead bury the dead' (Mt. 8.22; Lk. 9.62). Bockmuehl contends that these difficult sayings do not invalidate the overall thesis. Chapter 4 in Part 1 then tables some preliminary theses on the role of James in the early church, and especially in relation to the celebrated dispute that resulted between Peter and Paul at Antioch (see Gal. 2:11–14). (There is a degree of confusion here. The Preface ascribes this chapter once to Part 2, which is perhaps where it more naturally belongs, as the Jewish moral heritage is applied to the Gentile mission.) This complex chapter merely hints at a much more developed history from Bockmuehl of the church during the advent of the law-free Gentile mission. He essentially endorses an interesting territorial view that emphasizes agreement between the major leaders involved. Paul evangelizes the Gentiles, i.e. West of Tarsus, at which point James' – and presumably also Peter's – jurisdiction over the promised land of Israel (which extends up through Syria just past Antioch, and also Cilicia) ceases, and all the leaders remain interested fundamentally in Israel's 'national redemption'. Any conflicts later on, notably with Paul, are therefore caused by renegades. So the early church's application of Jesus' agenda, and its obvious Jewish response to the Gentile mission, remained in fundamental concord.

Following this, Part 2 traces, in three chapters, 'natural law' through Second Temple Judaism and the New Testament – 'natural law' is to be distinguished, although not separated, from 'natural theology' or 'natural revelation'. Chapter 7 then focuses specifically on the Noachide Commandments. Bockmuehl argues that a fully articulated position 'does not predate the second century' (p. 173), but an earlier, less crystallized, tradition, although not the *theological* key to New Testament ethics, does 'provide an essential clue to the specific *rationale and content* of early Christian ethics, as well as its criteria of selection in the use of OT laws'. Hence '[i]n practical and political terms, Jewish concepts of a universal law for Gentiles proved indispensable for the development of Christian ethics' (p. 173).

Part 3 devotes two chapters to the beginnings of a Christian 'public ethics' or discourse within the Roman Empire, tracing developments from the later parts of

the New Testament, especially Luke, through the earliest Apologists, with special attention being paid to Aristides and the *Epistle to Diognetus*. Bockmuehl argues that essentially the same material that the Jewish *halakhah* concerning Gentiles focused on, tends to resurface here: an attack on idolatry with concomitant demands to recognize the true and creator God, and condemnations of immoral practices, especially violence and murder ('bloodshed').

The readers of this journal will probably be especially interested in some of the major theological questions posed by this study rather than its detailed textual interpretations. Bockmuehl is aware of all of these broader questions, although not all are addressed in detail in this study. And this disavowal seems quite acceptable within the constraints of an already wide-ranging treatment. Nevertheless, such issues must be addressed at some point if Bockmuehl's programme is to prove ultimately persuasive, so I note them here for future consideration. I would want to raise six queries about the basic structure of Bockmuehl's programme:

1. *The relation between the two laws.* On the one hand, Bockmuehl argues for a universally recognizable ethic and, on the other, for a more specific programme grounded in revealed Mosaic legislation. While the sources do not necessarily recognize tensions here, it nevertheless needs to be explained to the modern reader how these two different programmes – one far more specific and detailed than the other – relate to one another under the general rubric of the revealed divine will. Put succinctly, is circumcision (etc.) something that we all should do or not?, *because it cannot really be both*. Indeed, is it a good thing to join God's chosen covenant people or not? This is not just a matter of categorization. It is a tension built into the very notion that two different systems of ethics can be revealed by God as binding on two different constituencies. One suspects, rather, that either God views an action as good, and hence as one that ought to be performed, or God doesn't.
2. *The role of Christology.* Although Bockmuehl acknowledges the point, he does not really address in detail the issue of the degree to which Christ influences New Testament ethics – and also, to what degree he should. Included in this concern, then, is the question whether Christ has influenced the Jewish *halakhah* on Gentiles that Bockmuehl views as so fundamental. It might be argued that this tradition is not especially influenced by Christology in the New Testament – but that it should be!, at which point significant reformulation might also have to take place. We would also have to sort out, when applying Christology to New Testament ethics, the respective roles of Christ's example, his teaching, his atoning death, and his person and nature, because not all of these have the same status or function. In the end of the day, it is difficult to imagine an ethical programme in the New Testament laying claim to legitimacy that is not primarily grounded in and legitimized by Christology. So Bockmuehl's programme is, at the least, currently quite exposed on this front.
3. *Paul's supersessionist thrust.* In close relation to the foregoing, Bockmuehl possibly does not give sufficient weight to the abolitionist and supersessionist

tendencies in Paul, and in other parts of the New Testament; the sense that certain things – good in and of themselves and for a time – have been left behind. Paul's rejection of Mosaic law-observance amongst his Gentile converts is, it seems to me, grounded in an eschatological contention based on Christ; a sense that the new age has arrived, and that Mosaic law-observance is not a part of it, expectations notwithstanding (ethics most certainly is, but this is a different point). And it will not do to dismiss this reading of Paul as 'crypto-Marcionite', because it isn't. Profound continuities still remain with elements of the previous age, both created and specifically Jewish. But profound discontinuities are also present, and it is unfaithful to the New Testament witness to ignore or to under-emphasize them. In short, the criteria with which Paul, and the New Testament as a whole, struggle – precisely to recognize the differences between these two situations namely, discontinuous and continuous elements – is, it seems to me, a crucial question that Bockmuehl's analysis does not address. Of course, he does not *have* to address it here in his study of a tradition of continuity in ethics. However, if his programme is to have broader Christian ethical validity, he must do so at some point.

4. *The precise epistemological situation during the discussion of public ethics.* I also seek further clarification from Bockmuehl concerning the exact epistemological structure of the discussion of universal truth, which devolves into the endorsement of his basal Jewish ethical programme. At times the broad public programme seems grounded in revelation, at which point one wonders why the rest of that revelation's specific recommendations cannot simply be introduced – if the whole thing is grounded in Torah, then why not just introduce the Torah? However, on other occasions the basic programme seems to be very close to an innately recognized ethical system, that allows in turn for a discussion to take place within a universally acknowledged, objective, framework. But this would be a non-christological theological, epistemological, and ethical vestibule to the gospel; a foundationalist programme. Bockmuehl never quite says this, as far as I can tell, but if he is not saying this *or* advocating the former position, what *is* his exact claim concerning this ethical package and its usefulness for a shared, universal, public discourse concerning ethics? What is its status and legitimacy?
5. *Public ethics as critical to the Christian mission.* Bockmuehl suggests that this tradition, and its proclamation, was very important for the ultimate success of the Early Christian mission – and this makes a clear answer to query 4 above all the more pressing. But it also seems a little dubious in its own right. That *something ethical* was probably crucial to the astonishing growth of the early church under the Principate may be granted, that is, a certain set of practices seems to have contributed centrally to the church's rapid growth. But the elision of this thesis into Bockmuehl's position concerning specific proclaimed ethical injunctions about idolatry and sexual relations is to my mind something that requires rather more elaboration than he has the space to give here. And *prima facie* I do find it counter-intuitive to suppose that it was a proclaimed

public ethic that led to Christian growth – I do not see any obvious historical analogies for such a view. (That this would *result from* growth and success is, conversely, entirely understandable.)

6. *The ambiguous role of culture.* There is also possibly a dark underbelly to Bockmuehl's programme that warrants further exploration. The universal ethical programme endorsed by Bockmuehl clearly possesses an important relationship with culture; here, specifically Jewish culture. But culture always requires critical evaluation, and where this is lacking, the consequences have often been disastrous. That is, culturally mediated values can often function like a trojan horse, releasing deadly enemies into the heart of the Christian city by stealth. So vicious ambiguities concerning slavery, gender and race, have at times haunted the proclaimed public ethics of various church traditions through history. Now there is clearly no overt endorsement of such things by Bockmuehl, but is a clear critical *condemnation* of them also possible on the ethical basis that he proposes? (How would one, for instance, condemn slavery?) And, furthermore, does Bockmuehl's programme supply the necessary controls on the appropriation of culture that will enable us to avoid an analogous imposition in the future?

Again, it should be emphasized that Bockmuehl is not addressing these programmatic issues in the present study. But if this study's thesis is to become a wide-ranging programme, then at some point these issues must be negotiated.

In conclusion, although I found myself unpersuaded by one or two of Bockmuehl's specific – and highly ingenious – suggestions (most notably on the shape of early church history), I was very helpfully instructed by the majority. There is much to learn from this book. But I continue to have anxieties about the viability of its fundamental programme, largely because of the concerns just expressed. Hence I await Bockmuehl's response to these concerns with great interest. Finally, it must be emphasized in closing that I remain deeply impressed by this book's many marvelous qualities. It is an immensely learned, detailed, and insightful work, written with exquisite clarity, every page testifying to the penetrating intelligence and erudition of its author.

Douglas A. Campbell
King's College, London

Leander E. Keck, *Who is Jesus? History in Perfect Tense*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark/Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001, 207pp., £14.95/\$21.00 pbk. Originally published in hardcover by the University of South Carolina Press, 2000.

Leander Keck addresses the question 'Who is Jesus?' in a series of engaging essays consisting largely of selective but sustained theological reflection on the continued

meaning of the historical Jesus. As such this book is neither a full-blown New Testament Christology (this is promised at a later date), nor a thoroughgoing historical study (unlike other contributions to the 'Personalities of the New Testament' series). Rather, these essays are 'but responses reached on the road toward understanding [Jesus]; they are an invitation to join the journey' (p. 21). All interested in theological interpretations of Jesus and the New Testament gospels would do well to take up the offer because both Keck and his subject prove to be profound and provocative companions along the way.

The programmatic opening chapter, 'The Presence of the Past', introduces and explicates the principal theme: the contrast between the Jesus of the critical historians and Jesus as depicted in the Gospels. This subject is subsequently explored from four distinctive perspectives in the ensuing essays. At this stage Keck shrewdly observes from various angles a worrying irony entailed in the often competing critical estimations of the historical Jesus: namely, that the deconstruction of the transcendent theological element so integral to the Evangelists' understanding of Jesus finds poor compensation in often dubious and ultimately dissatisfying detailed historical and socio-economic reconstructions of his life setting. This often radical refurbishment makes major demands on both history (viz. to provide a robust Jesus worthy of commitment) and Christianity (viz. to radically rework central doctrines concerning Christ). By attending especially to fundamental features of the gospels' portrayal of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, Keck himself intends to integrate the historical and theological elements so that the ongoing significance of Jesus (his 'History in Perfect Tense') may be the more fully appropriated.

In an informed and insightful second chapter, 'The Permanent Particular: Jesus the Jew', Keck surveys and critiques certain scholarly estimations of Jesus in relation to his Jewish context. He observes that Gentile attempts to distance Jesus from a purportedly narrow and barren Judaism sit awkwardly with the Gospels' own desire to show how he actualizes Old Testament promises, and have been countered by the efforts of Jewish scholars to reintegrate Jesus into 'mainstream' Jewish history. That the latter is now being undertaken by more recent Gentile scholarship (e.g. Chilton, Horsley, Wright), demonstrates that Christian identity is significantly shaped by its understanding of 'the particular kind of Jew [Jesus] was and was not' (p. 47). This leads Keck to surmise the sort of Jew Jesus might have been, before reflecting more fully on the impact that Jesus' focus on Israel had upon his first Gentile followers. Gentiles adopted the story of Israel and its God not by becoming joined to Judaism but by believing a gospel conveyed by Jews who were convinced that Jesus' obedience and divine vindication (via the resurrection) had brought about the Old Testament attested rule of God.

From an incisive range of interrelated angles, chapter 3, 'The Embodied Future: Jesus the Teacher', considers the ways in which Jesus' life was animated and unified by his understanding of the kingdom of God. In Jewish tradition, to acknowledge God as king is to affirm his identity as the Holy One of Israel, and the Gospels claim that this is ultimately exemplified in Jesus' obedient vocation which

embodied the impinging reign of God. Moreover, Jesus' vocation is vindicated in a resurrection which is no mere resumption of its antecedents, but rather entails a Jesus transformed into a new mode of existence which anticipates and ensures the complete actualization of the new age. In sum, 'the kingdom of God energizes those grasped by Jesus' vision and shaped by his vocation because it refers to God's own rectifying energy that does not rest until God's will is "done on earth as it is in heaven"' (p. 122). Such is the one whom the scriptures call the living God.

In the fourth and perhaps most stimulating chapter, 'The Fractured Prism: Jesus' Death and the Living God', Keck focuses on the ongoing significance of Jesus' death for our understanding of God. Revealed in Jesus' crucifixion, climactically in his cry of dereliction, is the mysterious and powerful holiness of a God who is simultaneously present and absent in dealing with and turning away from humanity's sin. This is the living and Holy One of the Old Testament who, in resurrecting the crucified Jesus, enables Gentiles to participate both historically and (especially) theologically in the actualization of the reign of Israel's God. Indeed, Jesus' cross is both paradigm and promise for all those who follow his way of embodying the kingdom, living out 'his way of being in the world' (p. 147).

The last noted theme is developed significantly in the final chapter, 'The Authorizing Judge: Jesus in the Moral Life', with particular reference to the accountability and cost entailed in following Jesus. The impinging kingdom requires complete resolve with entrenched practices and patterns yielding to an entire life lived 'for Jesus' sake'. If a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus is important, it is the image of Jesus in the Gospels which provides the defining traits that must be activated holistically and habitually within the Christian community.

Anyone desiring a comprehensive and systematic treatment of the subject matter will have to adjust their expectations to the aims and arrangement of these evocative essays. In so doing it will become evident that Keck has managed to integrate effectively a wide range of crucial and complex material – spanning early Judaism, the New Testament Gospels, the historical Jesus, and Christian theology and ethics. The resulting synthesis echoes, complements – and carries forward recent work (one thinks of Bauckham, Hays, Seitz and others) which has likewise attempted to correlate biblical exegesis and theological reflection in informed and imaginative ways. The outcome is a critically challenging yet spiritually satisfying study which should command the attention of all interested in locating a living Jesus within a biblically-shaped constructive Christian theology.

S.A. Cummins
Canadian Theological Seminary

Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life. Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, xi + 199pp. £12.95

One of the prevailing characteristics of modern theological reflection on the church has been the tendency to focus almost exclusively on its ideal or abstract nature to the exclusion of any sustained reflection on its concrete historical reality. The resulting ecclesiologies have been predominantly theoretical and systematic, describing the church almost entirely with reference to being rather than to agency. This tendency to distinguish sharply between the nature of the church and its mission has impoverished ecclesiology. Any ecclesiology that reflects upon the nature of the church in isolation from a critical assessment of its performance of the task to which it is called must fail to reflect adequately upon the concrete church.

This assessment has prompted Nicholas Healy to offer a considered, scholarly and innovative study of the methodological issues that confront current ecclesiology. *Church, World and the Christian Life* is a recent addition to the Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine series. Subtitled, *Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*, Healy's work contributes significantly to the task of this series: it engages critically with the traditional doctrine of ecclesiology and with those doctrines which ground ecclesiology, namely the Christian confession of the Triune God, the Lordship of Christ and the life in the Spirit; and it considers these doctrines in light of contemporary theological and secular concerns, namely the influence of modernity upon theological method and the current issues of pluralism and inclusivism. Healy succeeds well in this twofold project, in large part because he is alive to the theological context in which ecclesiology must be located. In turn, these theological commitments provide the latitude with which to engage questions of theological method and the wider range of questions posed by those other traditions of inquiry concerned with examining human activity, such as sociology, history and cultural analysis.

Methodologically, on Healy's account, it is the shift from an 'epic modernist' horizon to a 'theodramatic' one which holds open the space for fruitful ecclesiological reflection (p. 154). Indeed Healy's argument revolves largely around 'clarifying some of the differences between the methodological traits of modern ecclesiology and the practical-prophetic approaches'. He finds in Hans Urs von Balthasar's theodramatic theory a particularly sympathetic dialogue partner:

Balthasar contends that theological discourse should reflect the true nature of revelation and Christian existence prior to the eschaton. The relations between God, world and church are best conceived, he believes, as something rather like a play. The play can be described in terms of one or other of two main types of Christian horizons and theological styles, the epic and the dramatic. Dramatic theology [t]akes the perspective of a participant in the drama, of one who lives entirely within the movement of the play. [I]n contrast, epic

theology steps out of the drama to take an external, spectator's perspective upon the completed play. (pp. 53–4)

While not identifying the 'dramatic' with his own 'practical-prophetic' approach, nor identifying the concepts of 'epic' and 'modern', Healy nevertheless suggests that there are sufficient parallels between them to make the dialogue with Balthasar productive. Healy's affinity for the theodramatic horizon resides in its capacity to display 'the tensive and conflictual nature of Christian existence, reflecting in its very form the ongoing dramatic struggle that constitutes discipleship'. Correspondingly his suspicion of epic theology revolves around its tendency not to recognize new developments in the drama: '[I]n ignoring or dissolving the tensions inherent in our existence as Christians, epic theology may become so "static" or "essentialist" that it distorts its account' (p. 54).

There are certain clear theological pre-understandings which provide the dynamism and structure for Healy's work and which influence his appropriation of a theodramatic horizon. Pivotaly, the identity and the uniqueness of the church is given in its 'Spirit-empowered orientation to Jesus Christ and through him to the Triune God' (p. 17). Ecclesiology is not formulated for theoretical purposes; it is to serve the task of the church. It is to 'assist the church in reforming its concrete identity to accord with Paul's rule, namely to glory (only) in Jesus Christ' (pp. 154; 7ff.). When ecclesiology does its job well 'it enables the church to argue forcefully that it is reasonable to witness to Jesus Christ as the ultimate truth, and that it is possible to embody that witness in truthful discipleship' (p. 154). Christianity is not simply an abstraction, a system of beliefs. Rather, it is best described as

a distinctive way of life, made possible by the gracious action of the Holy Spirit, which orients its adherents to the Father through Jesus Christ. By schooling its members, the church makes this orientation a present possibility for them. The Christian way of life is distinctive because its Lord is a particular person and because its God is triune. Its life takes concrete form in the wake of social practices accepted and promoted by the community as well as in the activities of its individual members. (pp. 4–5)

There are a number of obvious consequences that follow from this description of Christianity as a distinctive way of life. The church must be described first 'more in terms of agency rather than in terms of being'. And the description of the activity proper to the church is twofold, it is both divine and human: the apostolic task given to the church is both the real responsibility of the church – it is *our* task – while at the same time, it is utterly dependent upon the work of the Spirit. The job therefore of ecclesiology is to reflect theologically upon the church's identity which is 'constituted by action' where 'action' itself is constituted both by 'the activity of the Holy Spirit without which [the church] cannot exist' and by the 'activity of its members as they live out their lives of discipleship'. The norms and criteria that govern this reflection are those that should govern our assessment of the activity of the church itself, namely, 'the effectiveness of witness and the truthfulness of

discipleship' (pp. 5–6). Such an ecclesiology does not collapse inward upon itself but turns outward to engage with the concrete and complex concerns of human living. Ecclesiology, as theological reflection upon the activity of the church, becomes not narrowed but expanded.

The extent to which ecclesiology succeeds depends in large part upon how it develops a *concursum* between divine and human action. This is precisely the strength of Balthasar's theodramatics – 'everything is located within the sphere of God's creative and redemptive activity [y]et because of our location within the theodrama we are truly free to play our part' (p. 66) – and hence the theodramatic horizon becomes ecclesologically the most helpful. 'A theodramatic horizon, with its strong conception of the *concursum* of divine and human action, indicates that we receive truth by two means, both of which are necessary: by the activity of the Spirit, and through our active engagement with views different from our own' (p. 105). Without wanting to labour the idea of the dramatic, nor the similarities between epic and modern ecclesiologies, Healy is clearly interested in developing an ecclesiology which describes the church not 'in terms of its final perfection' but as it is concretely 'within the confusions and complexities of a particular ecclesiological context' (p. 54). Yet he is also clearly committed to a 'traditioned understanding of religion and truth' (p. 154) and finds in Balthasar's theodramatic horizon a suitable 'counterweight to the epic tendencies of modern ecclesiology' which allows for the retrieval of 'traditional resources' (p. 60) and in so doing 'encourages rather than hinders the development of an expanded ecclesiology' (p. 53).

Healy's development of his argument is careful and measured. There is neither a full scale endorsement of Balthasar's theology, nor even of his ecclesiology, nor a naïve rejection of modernity. Rather there is a carefully constructed presentation of the need for ecclesiology to be alert to those ways in which certain modernist tendencies hinder its task, and there is a critical appraisal of Balthasar's theodramatics in so far as this might furnish an appropriate horizon for a practical-prophetic ecclesiology. Practical-prophetic ecclesiology is theological reflection upon the life of the church which is focused not on an ideal, future perfection, but which instead is concerned with the church *in via*, with its 'confused and sometimes sinful daily life', and which is willing to engage with 'other traditions of inquiry' (p. 155).

Church, World and the Christian Life opens by setting forth its parameters. It is 'rather more *about* ecclesiology than it is an exercise in the discipline'. Its aim therefore is not primarily 'to make a set of ecclesiological proposals' but rather 'to clear a space within the discipline of theology for some new and more challenging forms of ecclesiology' (p. 1). In this Healy has succeeded admirably. The result is an ecclesiology marked not by arrogance but one shaped decisively by the call to humility, repentance and conversion.

Jennifer Cooper
Keble College, Oxford

Amy Plantinga Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002, 200pp. £15.99

This work by Amy Plantinga Pauw has received the well-deserved accolade that it is ‘the fullest treatment of Jonathan Edwards on the Trinity in perhaps a century’. This is a thoroughly researched and well-written account of an emerging theme in Edwardsean theology, that of the Trinity as a window into Edwards’ theological thought and his understanding of the Christian life and piety. A significant marker in the development of contemporary Edwardsean scholarship, I believe this book will indeed serve to point to Edwards’ trinitarian thought as a resource for contemporary theology.

Pauw articulately and succinctly covers the main themes and the complex of influences and tensions in Edwards’ trinitarian thought – the prominence of the love of God in his theology counter-balancing the more popularly documented power motif in Edwards; the tensions between the psychological and social traditions of the Trinity; his attempts to use the psychological Trinity to close the gap between the immanent and the economic Trinity as it is expressed in the outworking of redemption; his desire to raise the profile of the Spirit in his Reformed heritage; his ascribing of full personhood to the Persons and his moving beyond this into incipient tritheism; his affective and mystical understanding of faith; his recognition of the link between the Trinity and union with God through Christ as a significant factor in soteriology; above all the integration of the philosophical, theological and pastoral dimensions of his life under the rubric of the Trinity as ‘the supreme harmony of all’.¹

Perhaps one area for further reflection in this text is with respect to the first issue mentioned above. According to Pauw, the ‘ambidextrous’ Edwards in his trinitarian thought is a product of two influences: Augustine’s psychological Trinity, and Richard of St Victor’s social Trinity. Interestingly, Pauw suggests that he held them in tension in the manner suggested by Hans Urs von Balthasar, who, with reference to the two models, social and psychological, is convinced that our understanding of the Trinity ‘can only be developed in two opposite lines of being and thought that point to each other’.²

Whilst in agreement that Edwards is influenced heavily by Augustine, I suggest that this is more extensive than Pauw or other writers indicate. Credit is given to Edwards, for example, for his articulation of the Spirit as the immanent nexus of divine love (pp. 13–14) as if this were original to him, when in fact it is as ancient as Augustine. The tendency of certain contemporary writers such as Robert

1 Thomas A. Schafer, ed., *The Miscellanies, a–z, aa–zz, 1–500, The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 13 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 329 (no. 182).

2 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. III, *The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), p. 525.

Jenson, Sang Hyun Lee and Stephen Daniel to ascribe the development of a theology of relations to Edwards seems also to neglect this accomplishment in Augustine. It is acknowledged that Edwards went beyond Augustine in that his use of psychological categories in his trinitarian theology is driven by the desire to remove the 'distance' between the *theologia* and the *oikonomia*, and also in his comfort with the use of the category of 'person'. What is well-documented by Pauw is Edwards' departure from Augustine into consideration of a social Trinity (the 'family of three') and perhaps beyond that, to such an extent that he cannot escape the charge of tritheism, where the 'persons' appear to be more like 'individuals'. Pauw's description of the Edwardsean covenant of redemption as 'salvation-by-committee' as a case in point is well expressed (p. 115).

Evidence of the influence of Richard of St Victor on Edwards is, on the other hand, extremely scant and circumstantial at that. It seems more logical to assume that Edwards would have been familiar with the Cappadocian Fathers as major contributors to historic trinitarian thought rather than a relatively obscure theologian simply because he is in the Western tradition. Richard is acknowledged by Pauw to be a product himself of Cappadocian thought, a fact which further makes his putative influence on Edwards seem inconsequential anyway. Pauw's suggestion seems all the more puzzling in that she even documents evidence of Edwards' awareness of the Cappadocians, something she is unable to do for Richard. Her motivation likely arises out of her reasonable thesis that the group of Cambridge Puritans known as the 'Spiritual Brethren' (Sibbes, Cotton, Owen, Goodwin) did influence Edwards significantly and that they may owe a debt to Richard, or else that Richard is the theologian of the West known for his challenge of Augustine.

In addition to underestimating Edwards' Western-Augustinian entrapment, Pauw does not present in any detail the alternative Edwards might have adopted of a Trinity of divine 'persons' rather than individuals (the Cappadocian persons defined by their very nature as 'persons-in-communion', and therefore not as 'individuals'; cf. Barth's 'modes of being', used in preference to 'persons' only because he feared that 'persons' could not fail to be understood as 'individuals' in his Western culture) which would have given him the model by which his desire to elevate the Spirit in his personhood and role in the economic Trinity, could have been satisfied. No mention is made of the great philosophical innovation of the Cappadocians or of its development by contemporary European theologians such as Colin Gunton, T.F. Torrance, James Torrance, Alan Torrance, John Webster and John Zizioulas. Thus there is no mention of the elevation of the category of *hypostasis*, of a unity based on the Father, and of the definition of divine persons as 'persons-in-communion'.

This work is nevertheless a remarkable gift to the Christian community because of its clarity, balanced even-handedness and creative turns of phrase such as the title of her concluding chapter which aptly catches the flavour of the subject material – 'A Cobbled Trinitarianism'. There are also frequent touches that, appropriately for the consideration of Edwards, give affective inspiration for the

pursuit of a passionate and trinitarian spirituality. Not the least of these is reference to Sarah Pierpont, Edwards' wife, in which Pauw states that 'his yearnings for earthly anticipations of trinitarian harmony proved hard to satisfy, except in his marriage with Sarah Pierpont' (p. 3), whose mystical piety provided him with subject material for trinitarian experience.

Ross Shaw
University of St Andrews