In this issue

Editorial: A model for theological students? 3

‘Who is the prophet talking about?’ Some reflections on the New Testament’s use of the Old 4
Richard N. Longenecker

The priority of Jesus: a look at the place of Jesus’ teaching and example in Christian ethics 9
Melvin Tinker

Conversion: a comparison of Calvin and Spener 19
A. N. S. Lane

Towards an analysis of cult 21
N. A. D. Scotland

Book reviews 26

An international journal for theological students
75p
Vol. 13 No. 1
Editorial: A model for theological students?

In many circles theology has a bad name: theologians and their ideas are seen as being at best irrelevant, and at worst a dangerous and spiritually corrupting influence. Unfortunately theologians have often deserved this reputation, and it is up to those of us who are now theological students to take care that we are faithful ministers of God’s truth, who further the work of God and build up the church of Christ.

How can we ensure that we do this? We could do much worse than look to Luke, the author of his gospel and also of Acts, to help us set our priorities.

Our first and central priority must be Jesus the Saviour. It is easy for those studying theology to get so tied up in theological theories and ideas that they lose sight of Jesus. Luke was excited and enthusiastic about Jesus: his gospel starts with joy at Jesus’ birth and ends with joy at his ascension. Among the things that excited Luke about Jesus were, on the one hand, his care for the poor, the needy and the lost, and on the other hand, the well-attested fact of his resurrection from the dead (cf. Acts 1:3). This caring, historical, risen Jesus is still exciting today, and we need to keep him central in our thinking and theology.

Luke does not see Jesus as a solitary historical figure, but as the centre point of God’s purpose and plan for the world. So he emphasises Jesus as the fulfilment of the OT Scriptures (cf. Lk 4:21; 24:14,34), and as continuing his saving work through the Holy Spirit in the church. Both emphases are important for us in an age that tends to doubt the Bible and ridicule the church. Luke reminds us of Jesus’ own love and use of the Bible: ‘Did not our hearts burn within us when he . . . opened to us the Scriptures?’ (24:32). And although Luke is well aware of imperfections and problems in the church, he believes in the practical power of the Holy Spirit leading the first Christians to a common life of sharing, of prayer, of overcoming social and racial barriers, of bold and effective mission to the world.

Of course, if we are to be effective theologians it is not just Luke’s ideas that we need, but his own practical commitment to those ideas. If the author of Luke/Acts was the companion of Paul, as is probable, then he was involved practically in the mission of the church himself, no doubt at real personal cost. And his writing of Luke/Acts, which must have involved a lot of research and hard work, was itself an act of faith: he wanted Theophilus to ‘know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed’ (1:4). If anyone wants evidence of the value of historical and theological work and thought, Luke has given it to us in his writings.

Faithful and effective theologians like Luke are not a thing of the distant past. In this generation Colin Hemer, who died of cancer this year, greatly enriched Themos. As one of our most valuable reviewers and authors, was such. Like Luke the physician he moved into theological study and writing from another profession, in his case from school-teaching. He took up NT research at Manchester University when he was well into his thirties – an encouragement to some Themos readers! – and proceeded to produce an important and original thesis on the seven churches of Revelation, published recently under the title The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in their local setting (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986). In this, as in the other work he went on to do, he applied his thorough knowledge of Greek and Roman history and archaeology to the NT, being convinced that Scripture is best understood, and defended from attack, by patient, honest historical work. When he died, he was well advanced with a work on the historicity of Acts, which will hopefully see publication in due course and which may well be a definitive work, significantly furthering our appreciation both of Acts and of the NT as a whole.

Colin was committed not just, or even primarily, to the academic study of the NT, but above all to the good news and service of Jesus Christ. This commitment was expressed not only in his work and in his gentle and humble manner, but also in his involvement with people, especially with overseas students visiting Britain, many of whom he befriended and helped.

Colin had a lot in common with Luke: his concern for the outsider, his self-effacing manner – Luke indicates his own presence in the Acts story through the ‘we’ passages, but talks about Paul, not himself – his expert interest in things historical, especially in the history of Jesus and the church, his involvement in mission, his belief in the gospel and his confident hope in the resurrection. Luke and Colin show that theology and theological study can be profitable. Our prayer must be that ours will be also.

TSF Bulletin

With its May-June issue the American TSF Bulletin ceased publication after ten vigorous and useful years. Professor Vernon C. Grounds, the editor of the Bulletin and President Emeritus of Denver Seminary, has agreed to become an International Editor of Themos. We welcome him warmly, and also subscribers to the TSF Bulletin who are now receiving Themos. We hope that to some extent at least the good work done by the Bulletin will be carried on by Themos.
Editorial: A model for theological students?

In many circles theology has a bad name: theologians and their ideas are seen as at best irrelevant, and at worst a dangerous and spiritually corrupting influence. Unfortunately theologians have often deserved this reputation, and it is up to those of us who are now theological students to take care that we are faithful ministers of God’s truth, who further the work of God and build up the church of Christ.

How can we ensure that we do this? We could do much worse than look to Luke, the author of his gospel and also of Acts, to help us set our priorities.

Our first and central priority must be Jesus the Saviour. It is easy for those studying theology to get so tied up in theological theories and ideas that they lose sight of Jesus. Luke was excited and enthusiastic about Jesus: his gospel starts with joy at Jesus’ birth and ends with joy at his ascension. Among the things that excited Luke about Jesus were, on the one hand, his care for the poor, the needy and the lost, and on the other hand, the well-attested fact of his resurrection from the dead (cf. Acts 1:3). This caring, historical, risen Jesus is still exciting today, and we need to keep him central in our thinking and theology.

Luke does not see Jesus as a solitary historical figure, but as the centre point of God’s purpose and plan for the world. So he emphasizes Jesus as the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures (e.g. Lk. 4:21; 24:44-45), and as continuing his saving work through the Holy Spirit in the church. Both emphases are important for us in an age that tends to doubt the Bible and ridicule the church. Luke reminds us of Jesus’ own love and use of the Bible: ‘Did not our hearts burn within us when he ... opened to us the Scriptures?’ (24:32). And although Luke is well aware of imperfections and problems in the church, he believes in the practical power of the Holy Spirit leading the first Christians to a common life of sharing, of prayer, of overcoming social and racial barriers, of bold and effective mission to the world.

Of course, if we are to be effective theologians it is not just Luke’s ideas that we need, but his own practical commitment to those ideas. If the author of Luke/Acts was the companion of Paul, as is probable, then he was involved practically in the mission of the church himself, no doubt at real personal cost. And his writing of Luke/Acts, which must have involved a lot of research and hard work, was itself an act of faith: he wanted Theophilus to ‘know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed’ (1:4). If anyone wants evidence of the value of historical and theological work and thought, Luke has given it to us in his writings.

Faithful and effective theologians like Luke are not a thing of the distant past. In this generation Colin Hemer, whose unexpected death this year deprivedThemelios of one of our most valued reviewers and authors, was such. Like Luke the physician he moved into theological study and writing from another profession, in his case from school-teaching. He took up NT research at Manchester University when he was well into his thirties – an encouragement to some Themelios readers! – and proceeded to produce an important and original thesis on the seven churches of Revelation, published recently under the title The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in their local setting (Sheffield: JSTOT, 1986). In this, as in the other work he went on to do, he applied his thorough knowledge of Greek and Roman history and archaeology to the NT, being convinced that Scripture is best understood, and defended from attack, by patient, honest historical work. When he died, he was well advanced with a work on the historicity of Acts, which will hopefully see publication in due course and which may well be a definitive work, significantly furthering our appreciation both of Acts and of the NT as a whole.

Colin was committed not just, or even primarily, to the academic study of the NT, but above all to the good news and service of Jesus Christ. This commitment was expressed not only in his work and in his gentle and humble manner, but also in his involvement with people, especially with overseas students visiting Britain, many of whom he befriended and helped.

Colin had a lot in common with Luke: his concern for the outsider, his self-effacing manner – Luke indicates his own presence in the Acts story through the ‘we’ passages, but talks about Paul, not himself – his expert interest in things historical, especially in the history of Jesus and the church, his involvement in mission, his belief in the gospel and his confident hope in the resurrection. Luke and Colin show that theology and theological study can be profitable. Our prayer must be that ours will be also.

TSF Bulletin
With its May-June issue the American TSF Bulletin ceased publication after ten vigorous and useful years. Professor Vernon C. Grounds, the editor of the Bulletin and President Emeritus of Denver Seminary, has agreed to become an International Editor ofThemelios. We welcome him warmly, and also subscribers to the TSF Bulletin who are now receivingThemelios. We hope that to some extent at least the good work done by the Bulletin will be carried on by Themelios.
Who is the prophet talking about?

Some reflections on the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament

Richard N. Longenecker

The author is Ramsay Armitage Professor of New Testament at Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto. In this article he reviews some recent work on Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). His other recent writings include a particularly useful commentary on Acts in the Expositor’s Bible Commentary series (ed. J. G. Knight and J. F. F. Bealeston; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988).

The question of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 is that asked by every inquiring person when reading what has come to be known as the Old Testament. Who is this man, and how might his use of the Holy Scriptures make him the focus of such a short and succinct reflection in the Scripture? That this very question is raised by the context of the Scripture is to be expected, since it is a common experience to hear people ask about the Scriptures and who is the prophet talking about.

The Old Testament is not the property of the rabbinic tradition alone, nor is it the exclusive property of the Jewish people or the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of history, a book of prophecy, a book of law, a book of poetry, a book of wisdom, and a book of ethics. It is a book of salvation history, a book of salvation history that has a message for the world. It is a book of hope, a book of comfort, a book of instruction, a book of instruction that is relevant to the present day.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church because it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church because it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.

The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church. The Old Testament is a book of the Bible, and it is a book of the Bible that is relevant to the Christian church.
‘Who is the prophet talking about?’

Some reflections on the New Testament’s use of the Old

Richard N. Longenecker

The author is Ramsay Armitage Professor of New Testament at Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto. In this article he explores the OT’s representations of divine activity in the Expositor’s Bible Commentary series (vol. 9, commenting John and Acts, and of F. E. Gaebelien; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).

The question of the Ethiopic eunuch in Acts 8 is that asked by every inquiring person when reading what has come to be known as the ‘New Testament Bible’. Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). His other recent writings include a particularly useful commentary on Acts in the Expositor’s Bible Commentary series (vol. 9, commenting John and Acts, and of F. E. Gaebelien; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).

Fibonacci’s approach to ‘prophet’ is at the heart of biblical theology. This is true, first of all, for the OT, where God’s purposes were to be fulfilled through his covenant people Israel and where the latter prophetic figures explicate the former prophets. It is pre-eminent only for the NT, where the focus is on Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfillment of God’s redemptive purposes for mankind.

The question is, however, to what exactly is meant by fulfillment in the NT? Is it the completion of the moral law (as in Dt 18:22; cf. Is 9:6)? And this same expectation is carried on in the NT, as witness Jesus’ statement on fulfillment in Mark 1:15. The prophetic vision of the Messianic kingdom is fulfilled in Christ (cf. Mt 5:37, “what is written in the Law...’). This expectation of the fulfillment that Jesus Martyr used to excess in his Dialogue with Trypho. It appears also in extreme form in many of the Church Fathers; for example, in Tertullian’s claim that “Jesus Christ is the lion of the law”.

Furthermore, the concept of fulfillment in the NT often has more to do with ideas of corporate solidarity and ‘typological correspondences in history’ than with direct prediction. For example, the editorial comment of Matthew 2:15, quoting Hosea 11:1, “Israel is my son, the child of my substance” is interpreted in terms of the Israel of God’s new covenant (cf. Rom 9:4); and the allusions to the prophet’s words in Matthew 28:18-20 of the ‘kingdom of heaven’ (Mt 16:19) is interpreted in terms of the new covenant (cf. Gal 3:28). The purpose of these interpretations is not to say that the OT is a direct prediction of the NT, but rather to say that there is a sense in which the OT is fulfilled in the NT. The question is one of ‘corporate’ fulfillment.

So-called ‘proof from prophecy’ of a direct nature has always been a factor in both a Jewish and a Christian understanding of fulfillment. It is an important element in the first OT decisions about the purpose of the nation, the importance of the prophet’s work, and the specific nature of the prophet’s message. It is a significant element in the second OT decisions about the purpose of the nation, the importance of the prophet’s work, and the specific nature of the prophet’s message. It is a significant element in the second OT decisions about the purpose of the nation, the importance of the prophet’s work, and the specific nature of the prophet’s message.

What a ‘proof from prophecy’ approach fails to appreciate is that other factors are involved in the NT’s understanding of fulfillment. For example, there are times when an OT text exists in its own context is enigmatic, yet is used in the NT with Christological significance. Such a passage is Ps 110:1 (The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet!’), which was variably understood in early Judaism—usually of God speaking to Abraham, or to David, or to the Messiah, but not of Jesus as the Messiah. This verse is also interpreted as the spiritual fulfillment of the Messianic rule of God in the OT. The second OT decisions about the purpose of the nation, the importance of the prophet’s work, and the specific nature of the prophet’s message.

The passages cited above are only some of the more obvious instances of where the NT’s understanding of fulfillment allows a more specific prediction-verification model. More elusive yet, still of great significance, are the currents of fulfillment that flow almost everywhere throughout the textual fabric of the NT writings. As Leonard Goppelt has pointed out in detail, underlying the common narrative of our canonical gospels are all sorts of typological correspondences between God’s activity among his people in the Old Testament and his activity in the history of the church. For example, the typical fulfillments of the OT are either in the form of personal relationships in the OT—particularly those with his covenant people Israel—and in the present life of the church, including the connection between the church and the nation, death and resurrection of Jesus. Or, as Moule aptly puts it: ‘They had come to estimate Jesus, in his ministry, his crucifixion, his resurrection, his ascension, his coming in glory, as the coping-stone, of an entire edifice of relationship. He was the inaugurator of a new and decisive covenant’ (ibid.).

Having, then, such a view of God’s purposes and their fulfillment, the early Christians looked to their Scriptures for guidance in understanding the person of Jesus. In so doing, they spelled out those prefigurations in terms of what we have categorized as (1) direct prophecy explicated; (2) typological passages clarified; (3) corporate solidarity; and (4) typological correspondences in history—though, admittedly, such a precise demarcation of categories would have seemed to them overly pedantic. In effect, the early Christians (as in any form of the doctrine of the NT) laid stress on ‘fulfillment’—with fulfillment being understood to include everything from direct prediction profoundly enacted on through typological correspondences in history.

II. Exegetical procedures of early Christians

In addition to understanding the concept of fulfillment in the NT, the early Christians also needed to develop the exegetical procedures used by early Christians in working out their convictions. Scholarship of late has focused more and more on the exegetical methods of the NT vis-a-vis those of early helpful books and articles), and much more need be said for any fulfillment. The point to be made here, however, is that the concept of fulfillment in the NT is broader and more profound than usually thought. Certainly it includes direct prophecy explicated, but what the early Christians found surprising is that it didn’t. But direct prediction that explicitly comes to pass is only one factor in a biblical understanding of fulfillment—and one that is perhaps the least that Christians have thought of, not the least thought of. To be included as well are matters having to do with the clarification of the enigmatic, with corporate solidarity, and with typological correspondences in history, as we have suggested above.

Yet behind all these analyses of individual passages and basic to any proposed characterization of what is taking place in the NT’s use of the OT stands a vitally important couplet of ideas that the early Christians made use of in their understanding. They stand what fulfillment in a biblical sense signifies: (1) that God’s plan for mankind has to do with ‘achieving a truly personal relationship between himself and his people’, and (2) that ‘God’s personal relations with man assume, for those who are sensitive to personal values, a recognizable pattern’ (quoting T. D. Jones, Theological Exegesis in the New Testament, New Testament Studies 14 [1968], pp. 194, 198). What the NT tells us is that in Jesus of Nazareth the early Christians saw the culmination or fulfillment of God’s redemptive purposes. Briefly, they could verify each of the prophecies recorded in their Scriptures but ‘because they found reflected in Jesus a perfect fulfillment of all that was predicted, they were able to look back over God’s pattern of personal relationships in the past — particularly those with his covenant people Israel— and bring them into the life of the church of God in Jesus, his ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. Or, as Moule aptly puts it: ‘They had come to estimate Jesus, in his ministry, his crucifixion, his resurrection, his ascension, his coming in glory, as the coping-stone, of an entire edifice of relationship. He was the inaugurator of a new and decisive covenant’ (ibid.).
Judaism. And this is entirely as it should be. For though the gospel is sheep-herding in its origin and effect, it comes from a God who always incarnates his word (as witness the incarnation per ecellence, Jesus Christ) and who uses current historical modes as vehicles for that grace. His grace, in other words, can be seen in retrospect to have differed from literalism among the Pharisees of the NT period.

Midrashic exegesis ostensibly takes its point of departure from the biblical text itself (though psychologically it may have been moved by the need to make the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed-upon hermeneutical rules (e.g. Rabbi Hillel’s seven Midrashim; Rabbi Yehoshua ben Mishaal’s later midrashim, Rabban Gamliel ben Hanina’s). The purpose of midrashic exegesis is to contemporize the revelation of God given earlier for the people of God living later in a different historical situation. What results may be characterized by the maxim: ‘That has relevance for this’ — i.e. what is written in Scripture has relevance for our present situation. In so doing, earlier Judaism developed what George Gothee Moore once aptly defined as ‘an atomistic exegesis, which interprets sentences, clauses, phrase, even single words, independently, as it were, in the context of the historical occasion, as divine oracles; combines them with other similarly detached utterances; and makes large use of analogy of expressions, often by purely verbal association’ (Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era 1: 248).

The expositions in the texts from Qumran are usually introduced by the term ‘pesher’, which stems from the Aramaic word pesher meaning ‘solution’ or ‘interpretation’ (e.g. Qs 2:6; 4:1; 1:6; 3:7; 12:2; 3:23; 4:20; 14:3). Though there is a technical sense in which ‘interpretation’ suggests a procedure of translation, it is important to remember that the pesher is not a form of literal interpretation of the text. Rather, the pesher is a form of translation that takes into account the context of the biblical text, the cultural milieu of the time, and the audience for whom the text is being addressed. The pesher is a way of making the ancient text relevant to the present day.

III. The normativity of then current hermeneutical practices

Any attempt to spell out the nature of the NT’s use of the OT raises the question of the normativity of the current hermeneutical practice of that day and today. Most evangelicals and many ‘constructive’ theologians have been at least sympathetic to the view that the NT regards the OT as normative for the church. In the NT’s proclamation that they together constitute one package, so to speak, with both being in some manner normative for the exposition of the gospel in that day and for the church’s exegetical endeavors today — though exactly how those exegetical procedures should be considered normative and exactly how they should be worked out is often left unaddressed. Recently, J. P. Zaral, in taking up my question of 1970, has insisted (somewhat extreme fashion):

‘Can we reproduce the exegesis of the New Testament? Unlikely. We are not permitted to claim for our results the infallibility of the Lord and His apostles. The NT claims to have understood the OT; the OT explains them to the readers of the New Testament. The NT is the normative teachers of hermeneutics and exegesis. We not only can reproduce their exegetical methodology, we must if we are to be taught their understandings. The subject of hermeneutics is an interpretative science that can be learned and those who teach them by the Lord in His post-resurrection ministry, not absorbed by historical study. They are local. The things they find in the Old Testament are really there, although the Old Testament authors may not have seen them fully (The Old Testament...).’
Judaism. And this is entirely as it should be. For though the gospel is upbraiding-historical in its origin and effect, it comes from a God who always incarnates his word (as witness the incarnation par excellence, Jesus Christ) and who uses current historical modes as vehicles for his grace (as, for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher and allegorical. As yet, the question of a fourfold classification (for example, the sacraments). Why, then, should it be thought unusual or un-Christian for early believers in Jesus to have used some of these of the hermeneutical canons then at hand? Indeed, how could they have done otherwise?
The priority of Jesus: a look at the place of Jesus’ teaching and example in Christian ethics

Melvin Tinker

Introduction

It is not unusual to come across the rule-of-thumb advice: ‘Do what Jesus would have done’, being given to a Christian facing a particular moral problem. Initially, this might appear as ‘wise counsel’, after all, what could be better than to appeal directly to the example of the Master himself? Indeed, it is the apostle Peter who urges Christians to follow in Christ’s footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21), and this means working out the Christ-pattern in the rough and tumble of day-to-day existence. But for all its immediate attractions, not least of which is simplicity and in particular that we do not complicate matters unnecessarily, such a recommendation requires more of the Christian than might appear at first sight.

Without wishing to deny the charismatic experience of direct guidance by the Holy Spirit or the presence of mystics among us (which even John Wimber admits can sometimes be due more to indigence than the Third Person of the Trinity), there is a tendency to respond to such advice simply by allowing the imagination to sketch rather hazy and romantic pictures of Jesus moving about in the situation within which we find ourselves, and almost magically handling the problem in question. But as Os Guinness points out in another context, ‘Jesus are we thinking of? Our picture of Jesus might be as far removed from the portrayal of Christ in the Bible as was the ‘Gentleman Jesus’ of the Victorian drawing room. After all, we are well aware that both “Jesus the pacifist’ and “Jesus the revolutionary” have their advocates. If Christ is left at the level of sanctified imagination, the charge that we get on them together you will find eleven different opinions might not be wide of the mark.

In point of fact, far from short-circuiting ethical thinking, trying to discern ‘what Jesus would have done’ requires a good deal of careful application. It involves cultivating a familiarity with the sort of things Jesus said and did during his earthly ministry — the principles he enunciated, the way he responded to moral matters, the pattern of behaviour he established, and so on — as well as preserving some of the raw material out of which guiding principles might be forged. Even so, this is only the beginning, for there is one major fact which has to be faced, the startlingly self-evident one that there is an historical and cultural distance between the world of Jesus and our world today. Although this may be described as ‘self-evident’, it is one which can surprisingly be passed over with remarkable ease in Christian ethical thinking. Jesus did pronounce on matters which prima facie have no direct relevance for us today (e.g. paying the temple tax, Mt. 17:24f; walking the extra mile, Mt. 5:41f). What is more, we have to face ethical dilemmas which the teaching of Jesus could not directly address because they arise out of recent technological developments (e.g. in nuc fertilisation, genetic engineering, nuclear warfare). Without lapsing into the irresolvable cultural relativism of the sort in which one is led to ask oneself ‘what would Jesus have done’ as one stands on guard against assuming that with the teachings and example of Jesus we can, with the odd adjustment made for minor cultural differences, map a point-for-point direct transfer to our present situation without engaging in some of the rigorous hermeneutical groundwork of the sort suggested by Marshall.

There are two important questions raised by the type of considerations outlined above which form the primary focus of this study, viz. 1. To what extent is moral authority attached to the actions and teachings of Jesus for our guidance today? and 2. how are those actions and teachings to be appropriated in the service of ethics? In short, how are we to conceive of the priority of Jesus in Christian ethics? In an attempt to move towards answering these questions, five interrelated areas of thought will be explored:

1. The basic features of Christian ethics. This will provide the wider perspective against which the teachings and actions of Jesus can properly be considered, while at the same time not losing sight of the fact that the words and deeds of Jesus are themselves constitutive of that perspective.

2. The nature of Christ’s ethical teaching and how it contrasts with legalism.

3. Christ as exemplar. What this means and an assessment of the peculiar epistemological problems it raises.

4. The extent of the moral obligation attached to the teachings of Jesus. This will be specifically linked to a moral decision-making process.

5. The relationship between ‘Creation ethics’ and ‘Kingdom ethics’.

Features of Christian ethics

Cretational

It is proposed that the starting point for Christian ethics is God and his will for creation, and in this sense one may refer
The priority of Jesus: a look at the place of Jesus’ teaching and example in Christian ethics

Melvin Tinker

The author, who has also recently written a TSE monograph on The Bible as Literature: the implications of structuralism, is an Anglican chaplain at the University of Kent.

Introduction

It is not unusual to come across the rule-of-thumb advice: ‘Do what Jesus would have done’, being given to a Christian facing a particular moral problem. Initially, this might appear as ‘wise counsel’, but often, what could be better than to appeal directly to the example of the Master himself? Indeed, it is the apostle Peter who urges Christians to follow in Christ’s footsteps (1 Pet. 2:21), and this means working out the Christ-pattern in the rough and tumble of day-to-day existence. But for all its immediate attractions, not least of simplicity (and it is important that we do not complicate matters unnecessarily), such a recommendation requires more of the Christian than might appear at first sight.

Without wishing to deny the charismatic experience of direct guidance by the Holy Spirit, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Jesus himself (which even John Wimber admits can sometimes be due more to indigitation than the Third Person of the Trinity), there is a tendency to resist to such advice simply by allowing the imagination to sketch rather lazy and romantic pictures of Jesus moving about in the situation within which we find ourselves, and almost magically handling the problem in question. But as Os Guinness points out in another context,1 which Jesus are we thinking of? Our picture of Jesus might be as far removed from the portrait of Christ in the Bible as was the ‘Gentileman Jesus’ of the Victorian drawing room. After all, we are well aware that both ‘Jesus the pacifist’ and ‘Jesus the revolutionary’ have their advocates. If we hang about too long at the level of sanitized imagination, there is no chance that we will find even different opinions might not be wide of the mark.

In point of fact, far from condemning ethical thinking, trying to discern ‘what Jesus would have done’ requires a good deal of careful application. It involves cultivating a familiarity with the sort of things Jesus said and did during his earthly ministry – the principles he enunciated, the way he responded to moral matters, the pattern of behaviour he established, and so on – all this providing some of the raw material out of which guiding principles might be forged. Even so, this is only the beginning, for there is one major fact which has to be faced, the glaringly self-evident one that there is an historical and cultural distance between the world of Jesus and our world today. Although this may be described as ‘self-evident’, it is one which can surprisingly be passed over with remarkable ease in Christian ethical thinking. Jesus did pronounce on matters which prima facie have no direct relevance for us today (e.g. paying the temple tax, Mt. 17:24ff.; walking the extra mile, Mt. 5:41ff.). What is more, we have to face ethical dilemmas which the teaching of Jesus could not directly address because they arise out of recent technological developments (e.g. in sinr (fertilization), genetic engineering, nuclear warfare). Without lapsing into the irrecoverable cultural relativism of the sort in which the Jesus of today’s society’ seems to ‘speak to’ us out of our time guard against assuming that with the teachings and example of Jesus we can, with the odd adjustment made for minor cultural differences, map a point-to-point direct transfer to our present situation without engaging in some of the rigorous hermeneutical groundwork of the sort suggested by Marshall.2

There are two important questions raised by the type of considerations outlined above which form the primary focus of this study, viz. 1. To what extent is moral obligation directly attached to the actions and teachings of Jesus? for our guidance today and 2. how are those actions and teachings to be appropriated in the service of ethics? In short, how are we to perceive the priority of Jesus in Christian ethics? In an attempt to move towards answering these questions, five interrelated areas of thought will be explored.

1. The basic features of Christian ethics. This will provide the wider perspective against which the teachings and actions of Jesus can properly be considered, while at the same time not losing sight of the fact that the words and deeds of Jesus are themselves constitutive of that perspective.

2. The nature of Christ’s ethical teaching and how it contrasts with Judaism.

3. Christ as exemplar. What this means and an assessment of the peculiar epistemological problems it raises.

4. The extent of the moral obligation attached to the teachings of Jesus. This will be specifically linked to a moral decision-making process.

5. The relationship between ‘Creation ethics’ and ‘Kingdom ethics’.

Features of Christian ethics

Creational

It is proposed that the starting point for Christian ethics is God and his will for creation, and in this sense one may refer...
to Christian ethics as 'creational' in design and foundation, in which the focus upon the moral ordering of the world which in turn is related to the character of God and the nature of man. Such a perspective identifies the moral imperatives which are grounded in and proceed from the Divine Creator. This is not to suggest that ethics cannot in the first instance exist independently of theology: quite clearly there has been a proliferating moral theism which provides ethics with a metaphysical 'home' and substantial coherence when related conceptually to other elements within the Christian framework.1

However, it could be objected at this point that by opting for a moralistic, yet is established by special revelation, one has left unexplored a dilemma classically formulated in Plato's Euthyphro, viz: 'Does God will a thing because it is good, or does God make something good because He is good? To opt for the former would mean surrendering the 'Godness of God', for it would be to admit another principle outside of God to which He must conform ('Goodness'). But to opt for the second would mean violating the principle of 'right' and 'wrong' are merely products of arbitrary will. David Brown argues that it is by adopting a naturalistic position, rooted in natural law theory, that a resolution of this problem is possible.14 He maintains that God, by ordaining man's natural capacities in such a way that only by leading a moral life can he achieve meaning, has made available to humanity a means by which the right is determined, which is not arbitrary, because human nature and morality are linked to God's loving concern for man. But it is difficult to see how this solves the problem. What it does is to push it further back, to the question, What makes the fulfillment of human nature and ordered it in such a way that it is good, or whether it is good because he willed it? The dilemma remains but in a different form. A more satisfactory answer has been proposed independently by White15 and Ward,16 who in different ways postulate that what God desires is what is good for man, and what God wills is also good, the two ultimately residing in the being of God as two aspects of the same reality. Thus, far from being self-sufficient, they are consistent with the loving purposes of God and the nature of man as he intended.2

Taking the link between a moral universe and the Moral Creator a stage further, one can suggest that God is the Good, not only in some abstract Platonic sense, but as the personal, realisable maximum of human happiness, as in the moral life (cf. 10:18f). Consequently what are perceived as moral imperatives, instances of goodness in obligatory form, are different aspects of this one unitary reality -- the Good. It follows that those attitudes and modes of behaviour which are considered 'virtuous' amount to the correct and appropriate responses of man not merely to himself but also to God, in whom the perceived values of goodness and rightness reside and find complete resolution.

Covenantal

Central to both the OT's and the NT's understanding of the relation between God and his people is the concept of covenant. Some, like Karl Barth, would go further in claiming that covenant is central to the understanding of God's dealings with creation andChrist.

Deuteronomy 7:7-8: ‘It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you for yourselves, out of all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth; for the Lord loved you, running through every nation that you might be his people, and establish it as a testimony of the Lord's good name through you, as he promised through his covenant (berekh) with you, and establishing it, the gracious love of Yahweh (berekh). Although God's covenant work is not complete, he deals with Abraham (Gen. 15:18) and David (2 Sa. 23:5). It is particularly in the book of Deuteronomy that the concept takes on a role within a theological significance, encompassing in both form and content the mutual obligation of those involved. The actual stipulations of the covenant which were binding upon Israel are set out in form of a written 'law' (Deut. 5:20-27) and have the same comprehensiveness as the minds of the people between law and covenant, that to disobey was to lose the covenant (cf. Je. 11:11f). What is more, the immediate history of the covenant was to penetrate every area of life as is evidenced by the Holiness Code of Leviticus 19 -- any sacred/secular division with which we are only too familiar. Surrounded on the basis of the beth (something which the prophets had to continually remind the people, cf. Is. 1:10-26).

It was with the Deuteronomic covenant in mind that Jeremiah, in the midst of national apostasy and defeat, made a plea for a new covenant, a more intimate relationship of man with God, with the law written upon the people's hearts (31:31ff.), a promise also taken up by Ezekiel (36:26). However, it was not in fact the letter of the law, but the spirit of the law, as interpreted by the rule of faith, which would constitute a new kind of covenant of the type envisaged at a distance by Jeremiah. This is under the freedom of the 'law of Christ' comes the obligation to fulfill it in its neighbour (Gal. 6:2) and to exhibit a life characteristic of the people of God called to be holy (1 Pet. 2:9f.). To modify Barth's phrase it would be more correct to say that the new covenant ethics (its motivating principle and frame of reference) and ethics is the external manifestation of and response to God's saving act in Christ and the one new man.

Objectivity

Another important claim of Christian ethics is that it is objective, not only insofar as there is a phenomenon called moral experience, but that matters of right and wrong have an objective character: a perception of them. This is indicated by the fact that such matters are the subject of discussion with reasons being given for why something is right and why something is wrong. This is something we don't do when things are solely a matter of subjective preference (e.g. taste). This is what Batail calls the 'logical ground of ethics', the necessity of what has gone before -- that goodness and rightness are expressions of the nature and character of God, distinct from the created order and yet manifested in and through it.
the Christian eschatology as ‘creation’ in design and foundation, and in their focus upon the moral ordering of the world which in turn is related to the character of God and the nature of man. Such a focus means that what is often referred to as ‘natural law’, the difference lying in the epistemology of the two approaches. Natural law, which plays an important role in Catholic moral theology, is a body of moral imperatives which are grounded in and proceed from the Divine Creator. This is not to suggest that ethics cannot in the first instance exist independently of theology: quite clearly when a person is a rational being, he has a moral nature. But natural law also implies that a person’s moral nature provides ethics with a metaphorical ‘home’ and substantial coherence when related conceptually to other elements within the Christian framework.1

However, it could be objected at this point that by opting for a naturalistic approach which is consistent with the scientific method, there is a danger that the human nature which is set and which are necessary to follow if one is to move towards real human fulfillment.

Without denying natural law’s fundamental premise, one is forced to question the extent of its usefulness and the validity of its assumptions. In the first place it falls foul of what G. E. Moore called the ‘naturalistic fallacy’, a point of view that has two complementary points. The first is that such a position assumes that it is possible to derive what man ‘ought’ to do from what man ‘is’. But as David Hume aptly demonstrated, this simply cannot be done without having already built into the situation moral assumptions from the start. Thus what ‘ought’ is cannot be derived from ‘is’, and not deduced from it. The second point involves taking the step of defining ‘good’ in terms other than of itself, e.g. the ‘good is that which brings about the highest good’ or ‘right and wrong are merely products of arbitrary will.’ David Brown argues that it is by adopting a naturalist position, rooted in natural law theory, that a resolution of this problem is possible.1 He maintains that God, by ordaining man’s natural capacities in such a way that only by leading a moral life will a man fulfill his potential and gain his ‘given potential’. But as Moore went on to show, what is ‘good’ may also be something else (happiness, fulfillment, contentment, etc.) and something else, i.e. placed in the same category of means of ends. Hence the concept of ‘good’ is not reducible to the concept of ‘happiness’. The fallacy is revealed by a simple test. If it is claimed that one should follow a particular course of action because it leads to a maximum of happiness, one can ask ‘Why? Why reasons can be given to convince me that I should do this? Although a variety of subsidiary reasons may be given, it is true, the core of the matter is not the claim about the social stability will be secured, eventually an appeal will be made to the belief that we should do it because it is ‘good’. If by the token of being ‘good’, this objective claim to success, no more than that human happiness is human happiness, if not, then it has to be conceded that what is ‘good’ is irrefutably something other than ‘human happiness’, although related to it, having its own moral category of meaning.

In the second place, even if one were to grant that a phenomenal approach to morality, rather than a largely philosophical one, could be harnessed in the service of natural law, that such an approach is universal (man does have a moral sense) and that there is a certain amount of agreement between different cultures over what actions are morally good or bad, it is not clear to what extent this is related to it, having its own moral category of meaning.

The alternative approach being advocated here begins with God and his revelation, together with a consideration of moral experience (itself validated by Scripture, the loci of moral experience), and then develops a moral imperatives which are grounded in and proceed from the Divine Creator. This is not to suggest that ethics cannot in the first instance exist independently of theology: quite clearly when a person is a rational being, he has a moral nature. But natural law also implies that a person’s moral nature provides ethics with a metaphorical ‘home’ and substantial coherence when related conceptually to other elements within the Christian framework.1

In establishing his covenant God does so in an interesting manner. First, he formulates a covenant in Deuteronomy 7:7: ‘It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you, and chose you, for you are the most numerous nation. Instead, it is because the Lord loves you, running throughout the book of Deuteronomy that the concept takes on a role within the theological significance, encompassing in both form and content the mutual obligation of those involved. The actual stipulations of the covenant which were binding upon Israel are set out in the form of a written ‘law’ and as such it indicates their application to the minds of the people between law and covenant, that to obey the law was to obey the covenant (cf. Jas. 2:11ff.). What is more, the law is not equivalent in force; the covenant were to penetrate every area of life is as evidenced by the Holiness Code of Leviticus 19—any sacred/secular division with which we are only too familiar are outlined on the basis of the berith (something which the prophets had to continually remind the people, cf. Is. 1:10-26).

It was with the Deuteronomistic covenant in mind that Jeremiah, in the midst of national apostasy and defeat, made an appeal to the people to return to God and make, with the law written upon the people’s hearts (31:31ff.), a promise also taken up by Ezekiel (36:26). However, even if it was, in the latter case, a covenant which seeks to become a reality, establishing a kainoi diatheke (Lk. 22:20), a term that signifies to a ‘new kind of covenant’ of the type envisaged at a distance by Jeremiah, only one sentence under the freedom of the ‘law of Christ’ comes the obligation to fulfill it in neighbourly concern (Gal. 6:2) and to exhibit a life characteristic of the people of God called to be holy (1 Pet. 2:9ff.). To modify Barth’s phrase it might be said that Deuteronomistic ethics (its motivating principle and frame of reference) and ethics is the external manifestation of and response to God’s covenantal relationship to man. Objectivity Another important claim of Christian ethics is that it is objective, not only insofar as there is a phenomenon called moral experience, but that matters of right and wrong have an existence independent of any subjective evaluation of them. This is indicated by the fact that such matters are the subject of discussion with reasons being given for why we should think of some actions as right or wrong. Everything we don’t do when things are solely a matter of subjective preference (e.g. taste). This is what Baxist calls ‘the logical content of the act’. That is, the obviousness of some action with what has gone before that goodness and rightness are essentially a part of the nature and character of God, distinct from the created order and yet manifest in and through it.

Teleological By using the term teleological it is being claimed that Christian ethics are primarily purpose, ordered towards a goal. What is good for man is related to the type of creature he is and the purpose for which he was made, and it is here that the premise of natural law finds its place, not as a means of determining moral imperatives but as a reference to God, but as a reference to God, but as an indication that true fulfillment lies in the relationship of man to God. The naturalist approach of Brown is in grave error, and his implication that the final end of man is to be found within man (other than by living a virtuous life), is simply a higher law, in fact, it is the purpose and inner nature of all being, he is the ontological base of reality; and to respond to him is to respond to being’s real nature.17

It is this goal and the eternal context in which it is framed that determines much of the content, rationale and direction of Christian ethics (Cf. Mt. 22:40-42), and in particular any ethical frameworks. This should put the Christian on his guard against making superficial comparisons with other ethical systems and especially to a little deeper what is being proposed. For example, the utilitarian principle of the greatest good of the greatest number’ might at first seem attractive and compatible with Christian ethics, but the Christian would want to ask: a. How is the ‘greatest good’ to be understood? b. How does it relate to the goal of developing man’s relationship with God? and c. What difference in perception is made when the claim is placed within an eternal context?17 What is more, the view that the primary end of moral life is not to be found solely within the nature of man’s own freedom and the control of the rational created (which itself is part of being true to our nature), means that however much in practice theology is separated from ethics and social anthropology, it must be linked directly to the biblical witness and which if pursued will always result in an inadequate ethics, one which leaves a major part of reality out of its reckoning (in fact the grounds for reality – God).

Attitudinal The mark of Christian ethics is that they are attitudinal, having a concern for character and attitudes and not simply with the observance of external moral rules, which can become ends in themselves (Cf. Mt. 23:23). Christ central to the Christian ethics is more ‘open-ended’ than legalism or casuistry, going beyond fixed points (Cf. Mt. 5:21-22).

The above is not meant to be an exhaustive or even a comprehensive list of the components of Christian ethics, but an attempt to bring together everything that is important and that we don’t do when things are solely a matter of subjective preference (e.g. taste). This is what Baxist calls ‘the logical content of the act’. That is, the obviousness of some action with what has gone before that goodness and rightness are essentially a part of the nature and character of God, distinct from the created order and yet manifest in and through it.

Ethics and the teaching

In turning to Jesus’ ethical teaching three preliminary points may be noted. First it is Jesus’ view of ethics is a firmly rooted in the OT. The concept of ethical teaching and that enshrined in the ‘law and the prophets’, is, as we see, more apparent than real. Indeed, for Jesus the
whole of the law was summed up in niue in the dual requirement of loving God and loving one's neighbour (Mt. 22:37-39), which itself comes from the torah (Dt. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). This is also a clear indication of the theocentricity of Jesus' ethics and a central message of Jesus' proclamation concerning the kingdom of God. In the person and work of Christ this reign of God breaks into history in such a way that all men are addressed and beguiled to make the kingdom happen. In the teaching of Jesus and the law as follows: 'It therefore becomes apparent that it is not so much Jesus' stance towards the law that Matthew is concerned to depict: it is how the Law stands with regard to him, as the one who brings it to fulfilment and to whom all attention must now be directed. The true solution lay in understanding "fulfilment" in terms of an affirmation of the whole law, yet only through its transcendence. It would thus appear that Jesus was not making a new and unique in comparison. Perhaps one should further add that it was also by the law's realization in the life of Christ that the Jewish incentive to order things in a new way and so respond in a manner which is appropriate to the coming of the kingdom of God. DoddR The particular "parables of the moral life" disclosing to a person the sort of life which is required of anyone who is a member of the kingdom. Both these descriptions have their validity, but one should wary of reducing the moral force of Jesus' sayings to a mere specific instance of generalization. We see what are a number of 'rules' quoted by Jesus, some of which are to be found in the OT, others being the teaching of the Pharisees, but others not. There is a certain legalistic and casuistic manner (e.g. Mt. 5:21-48). On each issue - swearing, adultery, divorce, etc. - Jesus goes back to some of the key points. On this matter he is consistently expressed as an imperative. Far from weakening the requirement of the law, Jesus' treatment gives them greater force and a wider field of application, going well beyond the restraints of legalism. According to Dick France, the effect is 'to make a far more searching ethical demand. In all of this, there is a sovereign freedom in Jesus' willingness to penetrate to the very core of the will of God which lies behind the law's regulations.'

It is this internalization of the law which underscores the point made earlier that ethics also embraces attitudes (Mt. 5:28). One simply imply that 'thought' and 'decree' are to be given equal moral weight. The Nazarene might as well be hung for a sheep as a goat'. It does mean that when speaking of moral action, one must give the concept of 'action' a much wider interpretation than the mere physical act and its consequences. In considering the moral value of a particular action three constituent elements should be evaluated: the context in which the action occurs, the intentions and the consequences. To take intentions first. As far as one is able, one should try and assess whether they are good rather than selfish. The problem of course is that there is usually a mixture of motives, desires and intentions; some are good, others less than such. Such states the Holy Spirit is not with Christ in this case. But if after considering the moral act 'event' it is concluded that this in itself is expressive of promise and commitment, then this brings into question the morality of the situation, for what is being expressed by intercourse is denied by the overall situation, including the intentions of those involved. In such situations, intentions, actions, intentions and consequences are to be found in Jesus' treatment of the tradition about 'Corban' (Mk 7:5-13.)

As we have seen, Jesus' approach to ethics is far more 'open-ended' than legalism. It is also deeper in that it takes the 'act' and its intention and consequences which form the heart of Christological meaning-making.

Jesus and ethics - the example

In speaking of Jesus as God's `incarnate' (and thus the 'God' in the 'God and man' theme) it first is that it is the God who does which man cannot do and refuses to do, namely fulfilling the law and the perfect expression of the moral law. Marcus Borg who (in my view) captures the essence of these things happen, thus what man ought to be actually is in Christ. As W. F. Wolffhau put it, 'If we could tolerate the transgression that he was man because he was what man had never been able to be because what men were; he became what they were meant to be.' Therefore, not only would the Christian wish to point to the
whole of the law was summed up in love in the dual requirement of loving God and loving one’s neighbour (Mt 22:37-39), which itself emerges from the torah (Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18). This is also a clear indication of the theocentricity of Jesus’ apocalyptic function, in that this central message of Jesus’ proclamation concerning the kingdom of God. In the person and work of Christ this reign is realized and brought about—a kingdom that is both new and unique in comparison.26 Perhaps one should further add that it was also by the law’s realization in the life of Christ that the whole law was fulfilled and brought to an end (Mt 5:17).

Such an understanding would go a long way towards explaining Matthew’s concern for ‘righteousness’, with the noun dikaiosynē occurring some five times in the Sermon on the Mount.27 The Greek, dikaiosynē is the rendering of the Hebrew word for ‘righteousness’ (Tsedeq) that is which meets with approval in the heavenly court. The man who is declared ‘righteous’ is the one who is in a positive relationship with God.28 For Peter, as noted, the reformational slogan that ‘righteousness is doing and being done to you is that only upon the basis of an outcast and the needy. It is in Christ that this is decisively achieved, the one in whom the will of God is realized, the covenant completely kept and through whom salvation has been won.”29 His ethical implications for Christ’s followers then become clear: they too are to seek God’s kingdom and his righteousness—his rule and saving action—and are to reflect the same character of righteousness in their lives. It is by acting on behalf of those who cannot help themselves that they are to exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees (Mt 5:20).

Central to any understanding of Jesus’ attitude towards ethics is a growing recognition of the dual nature of his teaching (Mt 5:17-18), although originally they may have been independent of each other.20 First of all there is the statement: ‘Think not that I have come to destroy the law and the prophets; I have not come to abolish but to fulfill’.21 This is then followed by another statement reaffirming the abiding significance of the law: ‘For truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota will pass from the law, till all is accomplished’.22 It should be pointed out the texts do not say anything about the law per se. A distinction is not made between ceremonial and civil law, or between Moses and Christ. Rather, Jesus is concerned with the law in its entirety. Clearly the key to the interpretation of these verses is to be found in the meanings of the verbs ‘abolish’ and ‘fulfil’.

In saying that he came not to abolish the law (καταργεῖν τὸν νόμον ἀπὸ τῆς ὁμολογίας) Jesus is enjoining adherence to the law. However, Jesus goes on to say positively that he has come ‘to fulfill’ the law (πληρώσειν τὸν νόμον), and this verb suggests more than simple adherence. It is something which has to be understood from the standpoint of the whole of Jesus’ ministry, and the thought is not so much that Jesus came to keep the law right down to its minutiae, as that he gives to the law and the prophets a deeper and richer understanding, expressing their inner intention and purpose; thus they are ‘fulfilled completed’ to make them true.23 This is the meaning Jesus and the law as follows: ‘If therefore becomes apparent that it is not so much Jesus’ stance towards the law that Matthew is concerned to depict: it is how the Law stands with regard to him, as the one who brings it to fulfilment and to whom all attention must now be directed. . . . The true solution lay in understanding “fulfilment” in terms of an affirmation of the whole law, yet only through its translocation.24 It is this translocation that is the new and unique in comparison.25 Perhaps one should further add that it was also by the law’s realization in the life of Christ that the whole law was fulfilled and brought to an end (Mt 5:17).26

We now turn to the way Jesus handled the so-called ‘traditions of the elders’. Scholars have asked whether as to whether the Sermon on the Mount was intended by Jesus of Matthew or as in some sense a new law. It is certainly not the case that Jesus himself appears to reject them as entirely without value (cf. Mt 11:7). Indeed, Mark (7:1-23) reports that Jesus and his disciples are associated with the Pharisees in some of their practices. It is possible, however, that the Sermon on the Mount reflects a new synthesis of these. There are a number of things in a new way and so respond in a manner which is appropriate to the coming of the kingdom of God. Dods30 discusses ‘the parables of the moral life’ disclosing to a person the sort of person to whom the kingdom of God is required of anyone who is a member of the kingdom. Both these descriptions have their validity, but one should be wary of reducing the moral force of Jesus’ saying to mere something of a generalization. What we see are a number of ‘rules’ quoted by Jesus, some of which are to be found in the OT, others being something new. Thus there is a combination of a legalistic and casuistic manner (e.g. Mt 5:21-48). On each issue—swearing, adultery, divorce, etc. —Jesus goes back to something in the OT, and to the right of a ‘new’ created as an emphatic. Far from weakening the requirements of the law, Jesus’ treatment gives them greater force and a wider field of application, going well beyond the restraints of legalism. According to Dick France, the effect is ‘to make a far more searching ethical demand. In all of this, there is a sovereign freedom in Jesus’ willingness to penetrate to the will of God which lies behind the law’s regulations.31 It is this internalization of the law which underscores the point made earlier that ethics also embrace attitudes (Mt 5:24-26). The message here is that ‘thought’ and ‘deed’ are to be given equal moral weight. ‘One ought not only to be good, one ought equally be good—when one ought as well be good for a sheep as a goat’. It means that when speaking of moral action, one must give the concept of ‘action’ a much wider interpretation than the more physical act and its consequences. In considering the moral value of a particular action three constituent elements should be everywhere present: intention, action, and consequence.

To take intentions first. As far as one is able, one should try and assess whether they are good rather than selfish. The problem of course is that there is usually a mixture of motives, desires and intentions; some are good, others less so. Here the Holy Spirit is the key to us and Christ in making our understanding of what is right, creating a distorted ‘moral vision’. However, there are instances where a sharp distinction can be drawn—e.g. poring for our life (and) what we should do (to rescue the drowning man). One of the errors of situationism as advocated by Joseph Fletcher is that among intentions there are two which are not moral intentions, such that if a person is convinced that his intentions are right, the act becomes morally acceptable. But this is too individualistic and relativistic; we need to be secured a person from blame, does not ensure that an action is morally right. This why intentions need to be taken together with the other two components of moral action as well as the moral imperatives which make provision for our intention. While situationism gives a prominent place to intentions, it is utilitarianism which gives pride of place to consequences. But this too proves to be an inadequate criterion for determining the ‘rightness’ of a course of action. To say that one should take the course which promotes the ‘greatest happiness for the greatest number’, is itself a question of what constitutes ‘happiness’. This is far too general to encompass the object of any use. What is more, it requires that the moral agent in a position to determine what consequences his action will bring. But this asking is asking too much, for we are all painfully aware of the many unwanted effects that our actions are regularly pronounced with the outcome of speaking of ‘intentioned’ actions have thrown up in the past. Finally, this position also avoids the complexity of the relationship between events and consequences. To speak of an action as ‘a means to an end’ is in itself an abstraction, for it is the intervening events and conditions that add to the effect of an action and effect is far more mysterious than this position allows. However, possible consequences do have to be taken into account as we wrestle with the options open to us in a moral situation, and the Christian will also be humbled by the fact that consequences of eternal significance have to be placed in the balance.

In addition to intentions and consequences, the act itself will have to be considered. The question here is whether one can legitimately speak of ‘an act in itself’, as if the act could be divorced from its wider context of intentions and consequences. However, one may make a distinct distinction (rather than a formal one) between an ‘event’ which is neutral in description, and an ‘action’ which is related to intentions and consequences. Such a distinction might enable one to discern more efficaciously of course as can easily be overlooked while the operation of the notion of ‘moral action’. For example, a person who is being embroiled in a love affair could be made for sex outside of marriage (intention—‘I wish to share my love with my partner’; consequence no undesirable consequences). But if after considering the sex act as ‘event’ it is concluded that this in itself is expressive of promise and commitment, then this brings into question the morality of the situation, for what is being expressed by intercourse is denied by the overall situation, including the intentions of those involved. It is only by an understanding of intentions, actions, intentions and consequences is to be found in Jesus’ treatment of the tradition about ‘Corban’ (Mk 7:5-13).

As we have seen, Jesus’ approach to ethics is far more ‘open-ended’ than legalism. It is also deeper in that it takes account of personal ethical situations which form the heart of Christian moral decision-making.

Jesus and ethics— the example

In speaking of Jesus as ‘God’s incarnate’ (and thus the ‘Good’ in the good news) it is first that is that God who does which man cannot do and refuses to do, namely the fulfilling of the law and the perfect expression of the will of God, who alone can do anything in this way things happen, thus what man ought to be actually is in Christ. As W. T. Lofftouse put it, ‘If we could tolerate the fact that we, as men, were what we were, and be content with what men were; he became what they were meant to be.’

Therefore, not only would the Christian wish to point to the
teaching of Jesus to illuminate morality, but also to his acts as providing a model. This is particularly important if one is to make use of the vast wealth of ethical material in the gospels which goes beyond specific moral teaching.

The concept of Jesus as moral paragon also upends much of what is reprinted as authoritative religious testimony. For example: As it is in Jesus that God’s righteousness is shown, especially in the cross where God declares both just (δικαιος) and the justifier (δικαιωματίας) of all who have faith in Christ. We are therefore reminded of what is meant by what true righteousness means in action. This is well summarized by Moyer: ‘The basis of the whole life of the whole righteous man is his own righteousness—his own mercy which rescues creation for himself. This righteousness has now been supremely expressed in Christ. But as men are grasped by it, justified and made acceptable to God, so they are stamped with the image of the righteous Saviour, and summoned to live in imitation of him as his people.

Without doubt, as Luther stressed, it is possible to hold to a slavish literalism of the notion of ‘imitation of Christ’ so as to be left with nothing but an initiatory list of rules and a sense of overreacting to that danger that one robs it of any ethical content. It is an idea which is firmly embedded in the NT, though the word ‘imitate’ (μοιηθηται) is not used in the NT, but it is clearly taught to be ‘holy for me’ (LProv 11:14; 19:2; 20:26). Within the context of the master/slave relationship Peter writes: ‘Christ also suffered for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God. For it is through Christ that we are justified before God, so that we might live out of his grace’ (1Pet 2:24). This teaching is found elsewhere. On the question of humility it is the divine condescension which is appealed to (Phil 2:5ff), as it is in the case of charitable giving (2 Cor 8:9). Certainly for Paul it was the realization that God had done something of such magnitude for the Christian in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that provided the key to the New Testament’s teaching on the ‘holy’ or the sacred. For us, there are a number of contexts in which these themes can be recollected. If we want to take up the themes of Jesus, the Christ, who has been crucified with Christ . . . its no longer I that live but Christ . . . I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. This is the principle of the development of the moral life, hence the call to ‘put on the mind of Christ’ (Eph 5:23) and to ‘bear fruit’ (Gal 5:22).

Rather than a detailed example to follow, Christ’s life, and the culmination of that life in his sacrificial death, provides a pattern to be copied. But it is at this point that a particular epistemological problem is raised and which can be formulated as follows: ‘To recognize a person as a good example to follow presents certain problems which have a remarkable feature by which to judge the example, therefore one may ask what, if anything, does the example add to our understanding of morality?’ Is it not superfluous to say that the problem is simply stated! ‘Even the Holy One of the Gospels must first be compared with our ideal of moral perfection before we can recognize him as such.’

(Grundlegung). However, the necessity of this objection has been indicated and sufficiently maintained by Mitchell.

While agreeing that it is true that in order to recognize someone as a good example to follow we must have some notion of what ‘goodness’ is, Mitchell maintains that it does not follow that we should ask whether any desired end is the criterion of a good example. He illustrates this point from the game of rugby. If a person recognizes Fred Smith to be a good rugby player, and thus a player to be imitated, then it will follow that whenever he meets a person playing the game of rugby, the basic rules, the steps of involved and so on. But this does not mean that the observer would be immediately able to imitate Fred Smith in rugby, or even be able to make the rugby enthusiast as he was, a form of his mind in the game of rugby,’ and seeing Fred Smith in action given what he knows about how the game is played, he comes to recognizing a moral example. Man having a moral sense, as well as having specific moral content, can have that enriched as he looks to Christ, perceiving that we do have an example to emulate. As Mitchell himself puts it: ‘It does not, fortunately, take a saint to recognize a saint, a genius to recognize a genius, a master of a trade to recognize a master, a phonim (wise man) to recognize a phonim.

Jesus and ethics – relevance and application

It transpires from the discussion so far that within the context of Christ’s ethics it is impossible to separate the two. Neither is separate and is. As with any moral act (and the Christian would wish to add that here is the moral act incarnate) there is the necessity of obligation. Certainly a distinctively Christian view of ethics is that a religious act is something as a moral fact, which carries with it the notion of obligation, i.e. x is good therefore I ought to do x; and discussing whether or not I should do x is itself a case of discernment of whether or not I should act. In this context, it is a question of whether or not I have made a moral decision. Of course there is also the possibility that someone may recognize a moral fact and yet choose to ignore it. As such, this type of approach as an ethical teacher and exemplar as to any principle or rule. Even so, if Jesus is the archetypal moral man, the Ideal, and is recognized as such, then this carries with it a sense of obligation that we too ought to imitate this pattern which, in turn, has to be translated into our own situation. But the question arises as to how this translation is to take place and to what extent the teachings and example of Jesus are binding.

So far it has been claimed that Jesus is the personification of the Good, the Universal which has been revealed in a specific historical-cultural situation. The principle of its teaching was clothed in the message of his day, and that his lifestyle and mode of behaviour were appropriate to his contemporary culture, means that a certain amount of religious content is introduced into Jesus’ ethics. Indeed, this is a phenomenon which is inevitable with any use of language. The moment specific content is given to a principle it is also given permanence and authority. But there are certain circumstances. Thus ‘Do not steal’ will create a certain ‘resonance’ in the minds of the people who hear that instruction, but it will mean something very different to the person trained in Scripture and elucidated by the same hermeneutical procedure adopted by Christ, viz. pinpointing the underlying truth and principle beneath a moral injunction or story and

Laxing moral standards also makes us face the problem of the Christian’s relationship to the Law. It is possible to think of the Law as a generalizing, yet it refuses to allow circumstances wholly to determine the principles employed (as with situationalism) because the latter philosophy is not able to remain at the level of general abstraction. Having considered the historical acts and attitudes of Jesus as they are worked out in the 1st century context, we then have to translate them into our own. This means that there will be discontinuity, due to the loss of that which is culturally relatable (e.g. example of washing), but also continuity in that beneath the specific expression there is a universal quality or ‘core’ which can be transferred and applied regardless of time and place. In other words, how much of such a translation of the ‘imitation of Christ’ might apply to a Christian who is a scientist. He writes: ‘...the man who feels that it is his vocation to pursue intellectual studies may allow himself to ‘imitate Christ’ in some sense. He will realize that in so doing he will not, of course, be ‘imitating Christ’ in any direct sense, since Christ was not a scientist. But, at the same time, the people of his environment who are scientists will be able to temper the scientist’s attitude to his own vocation. It will prevent from creting an ideal of intellectual superiority, from despising the ignorant, and from supposing that the pursuit of truth is the only value which should be acknowledged by all men.’

Allowing for both the universality of the life and sayings of Jesus for ethics and yet at the same time their relativity, what is intended is not the idea that the Christian individual or community might engraft on the Law. What is said is that the NT teaches an approach to the Law which approaches Christians often adopt in reaching moral decisions, but it is also prescriptive in suggesting a particular approach and builds upon some of the considerations outlined above.

Taking the application of moral principles first. It is proposed that in considering a moral context, that is, either a particular moral problem to solve or a pattern of behaviour to adopt, one of the principles based upon Scripture and the overall situation. Thus one would need to take into account the various ‘background factors’ which make up the situation (e.g. what are the needs, are there special features of the case, are there other factors at play, agents, etc.) and in the light of these consider the relevant biblical principles. Identifying and interpreting the biblical principles becomes the further stage of the ‘general’ which is the normative authority in Christian ethical decision-making. But attention should also be given to ‘moral tradition’, that is, the sense in which what is say, a particular view of how things are or should be. For example, one can find what is called ‘the invariable’ can be summarized in diagrammatic form (see Fig. 1 on page 17).

Many moral situations are complex, and the interactionist approach as outlined above allows for such complexity. It is possible to speak of something as being ‘grounded in the biblical tradition’ or ‘Scripture’. This approach is not simply a matter of ‘stealing’ in particular their culture. However, the specific principle enunciated is still an articulation of something which is universal; it does not undergo a thorough relativiza-
teaching of Jesus to illuminate morality, but also to his acts as providing a model for Christian living. This is particularly important if one is to make use of the vast wealth of ethical material in the gospels which goes beyond specific moral teaching. As John Robinson notes, very little moral teaching is given didactically, but a considerable amount is conveyed through action. Indeed this is the Johannine approach to Jesus the Good Shepherd, as taught (Jn. 13:34; 1 Jn. 2:6; 3:16). For John, Jesus is the exemplar par excellence.

The concept of Jesus as moral paradigm also appears quite clearly in the Johannine writings. As it is in Jesus that God's righteousness is shown, especially in the cross where God declares both just (Acts 4:22) and the justifier (Acts 10:16) of all those who have faith and repent. The connection to righteousness is through Jesus into what true righteousness means in action. This is well summarized by Moyer: 'The basis of the whole life of the Christian is his faith in Jesus who - his being the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world - is the source of the mercy which rescues creation for himself. This righteousness has now been supremely expressed in Christ. But as men are grasped by it, justified and made acceptable to God, so they are stamped with the image of the righteous Saviour, and summoned to live in imitation of his as people.'

Without doubt, as Luther stressed, it is possible to hold to a slavish literalism of the notion of 'imitation of Christ' so as to transmute it into the image of the 'true and right model' of ova so roreacting to that danger that one robs it of any ethical content. It is an idea which is firmly embedded in the NT, and it is used to express the idea of being 'blessed to be holy for me' (Rev. 1:14; 5:9; 20:28). Within the context of the master-slave relationship Peter writes: 'Christ also suffered for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, to be 'holy for me' (Rev. 1:14). Within the NT, this notion of 'being holy for me' is closely linked to the idea of being 'holy for my own' as a prerequisite to God's righteousness in the larger scheme of things.

Jesus and ethics - relevance and application

It transpires from the discussion so far that within the context of Christian ethics it is the idea of 'imitation of Christ' which is central and is. As with any moral act (and the Christian would wish to add that here is the moral fact that incarnate) there is the necessity of obligation. Certainly a distinction may be made between requiring something as a matter of moral fact, which carries with it the notion of obligation, i.e. x is good therefore I ought to do x; and discussing whether this is a moral fact, i.e. x is a moral fact, x is unchangeable, there has been no decision of making of course there is also the possibility that someone may recognize a moral fact and yet choose to ignore it as we see the actions of what is an ethical teacher and exemplar as to any principle or rule. Even so, if Jesus is the archetypal moral man, the Ideal, and is recognized as such, then this carries with it a sense of obligation that we too ought to imitate this pattern which in turn, has to be translated into our own situation. But the question arises as to how this translation is to take place and to how far the extent the teachings and example of Jesus are binding.

So far it has been claimed that Jesus is the personification of the Good, the Universal which has been revealed in a specific historical-cultural situation, Simonian by union with the commandment. 'You shall not kill', as endorsed by Jesus, and the whole biblical concern for the sanctity and quality of all human relationships, is underwritten by the very importance of compassion, especially compassion for the weak and needy. It is at this point that the paradigm of Jesus Christ as a model which is in effect, what this approach will involve. To be sure, the way Jesus approached needy situations will mean that two important qualities are demanded. The first is that Jesus be real, not sentimental, or a cover for some ulterior motive (e.g. seeking an abortion to get the embarrassment of having to face one's friends with an unwanted pregnancy). It is clear that compassion can (and did) Mk. 4:44—deal from far superficial; indeed, it was surgical. Furthermore, not only is this compassion to be real, it also has to be rational; not a performance for the sake of 'easy one's', which arises from a self-centred, self-determining, self-minded, 'self-pleasing' approach. The compassion of Jesus is not in the way of 'easy one's', which is far from superficial; indeed, it was surgical. Furthermore, not only is this compassion to be real, it also has to be rational; not a performance for the sake of 'easy one's', which arises from a self-centred, self-determining, self-minded, 'self-pleasing' approach. The compassion of Jesus is not in the way of 'easy one's', which is far from superficial; indeed, it was surgical. Furthermore, not only is this compassion to be real, it also has to be rational; not a performance for the sake of 'easy one's', which arises from a self-centred, self-determining, self-minded, 'self-pleasing' approach.
context of the church as the Body of Christ, and under the prayerful guidance of the Holy Spirit (see Fig. 3 on page 17).

Arising out of this moral dialectic, a decision is reached and informed advice may be given. However, it should be stressed that although the primary objective in the situation envisaged above was to give advice, clearly the moral process is much wider, calling upon the moral agent to realize in practice the second great commandment to ‘love your neighbour as yourself’. This will mean extending a loving heart, and engaging in sacrificial empathy, where required as well as offering wise words. Furthermore, the whole moral encounter should extend the moral repertoire of the agent and itself become a moral paradigm for future reference (see Fig. 4 on page 17).

The extent to which the above model will be both acceptable and applicable will largely be determined by a person’s stance viz-a-viz the Christian faith and biblical authority. If a person places himself firmly within the Christian fold, and the illumination of the Spirit will be both natural and acceptable. But what of the person who would place himself squarely outside Christianity? To what extent will the ethical teaching and example of Jesus be binding upon him?

Two preliminary points need to be made in this regard. The first is that the moral authority of Jesus is integrally related to his person — the ‘What’ is decisively linked to the ‘Who’. That is, what Jesus says is both determined by who he is (the eternal Son of God) as well as being evidence of who he is. This is clearly brought out by Jesus’ distinctive form of address, prefacing his words with ‘amen’, thus identifying God in advance with what he is about to say (Mt. 5:18; 26:62; etc.). In addition to the fact that Jesus did not appeal to the ‘traditions’, this will account for the astonished reaction of the crowds as recorded in Matthew 7:28: ‘When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law’. But what is more, the authoritative pronouncements of Christ were of a piece with his actions. Not only did Jesus declare forgiveness of sins, he authenticated his words by healing (e.g. Mk. 2:1-12), both word and deed thus being expressive of his being as unique bearer of the divine nature. The moral authority of Jesus is therefore both unique and supreme because it is not derived ‘second-hand’ but is proclaimed directly, stamped with the very authority of God.

The second point is that strictly speaking Christian ethics is for Christians, those who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, who are members of the kingdom and who are empowered by the Spirit to bring about a substantial realization of that kingdom in their lives. There is considerable weight behind the contention that the Sermon on the Mount is directed to those who already, or potentially, followers of Christ (cf. Mt. 5:1b, 2 – it is the disciples who are addressed).

Even so, these two considerations do not carry the corollary that Jesus’ teachings and life only have moral force for those allied to the cause of the kingdom. In both principle and practice this is clearly not the case. If, as has already been argued, morality is both objective and universal, part of the warp and woof of reality, then in principle it should be possible for such universals to be recognized, together with their binding nature, regardless of their source or the particular framework of beliefs held by the observer. This means that whether the source be Christ or Socrates, provided that it is in the true nature of moral reality they refer, acknowledgment should be possible by the person who in general does not subscribe to either the Christian faith or the philosophy of Socrates. To adapt Mitchell’s example of the rugby player, it should be possible to recognize Fred Smith as a good rugby player even if one is not a supporter of his team or an active player oneself.

But not only is it possible in principle for those outside the Christian faith to recognize the validity of Jesus’ ethical teaching, it is also the case in practice. It appears that Gandhi was able to accept much of Jesus’ ethic, but not other elements of his teaching. One of the great dangers of 19th-century liberal theology was the reduction of theology to mere morality, with Christ being presented simply and only as the Ideal Man pointing the way to the authentic moral life. This was a movement whose roots lay in Kant’s contention that Jesus was the ‘personified idea of the good principle’. However, given that Jesus is at the very least the focus of the Good (although much more than that), then it is eminently reasonable to expect that some perception of that ‘Good’ should occur on a universal scale. While it is true that one may wish to question the logical consistency (or lack of it) of those who would want to take on board the moral claims of Jesus while rejecting his religious claims, one is still left with the fact that those moral claims are recognized well beyond the bounds of the redeemed community, indeed such a recognition may be the first step of a journey towards the full acceptance of the Lordship of Christ.

Concluding remarks – creation ethics and kingdom ethics

At first sight, it might appear that a firm and irrevocable division has been made between creation ethics and kingdom ethics, but this is more apparent than real and dissolves under close analysis. We should be wary of stressing the discontinuity between creation and kingdom ethics at the expense of the continuity. The point of continuity is that God is the author, and relationships the subject, of both ethics as they are grounded in the loving grace (mercy) of God. The line of discontinuity is drawn around the fact that it is in Jesus Christ as representative Man that God’s requirements of righteousness are met, a new covenant established, and relationships transformed by the eschatological Spirit which he disperses. Indeed, it is Christ’s redemptive work which provides the proper vantage point from which to view God’s purposes in creation.

Even within the perspective of the OT, any attempt to separate off creation ethics from the wider context of redemption is doomed to failure. As Von Rad has shown, not only are Israel’s beliefs about creation inseparable from her beliefs about redemption, in many respects they are secondary. Therefore Chris Wright is quite correct in maintaining that: ‘At every point this creation theology was linked to the fact that the Creator God was also their, Israel’s, Redeemer God. This means that the “creation ordinances”

Fig. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moral context (Ethical moral problem/moral pattern)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual discernment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction between various elements, each ‘shading light’ on the other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 2, stage A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbour situation reflecting a need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific needs, constraints, circumstances, attitudes and values of those involved, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3, stage B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paradigm acts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral agent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4, Stage C: Action taken (individual or corporates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbour situation altered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision reached and action taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ethical resources)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The whole moral encounter becomes constitutive of agent’s moral experience

The ethical resources are enriched, the moral encounter becoming a ‘paradigm act’ for future reference
context of the church as the Body of Christ, and under the praefectural guidance of the Holy Spirit (see Fig. 3 on page 17).

Arisin out of this moral dialectic, a decision is reached and informed advice may be given. However, it should be stressed that although the primary objective in the situation envisaged above was to give advice, clearly the moral process is much wider, calling upon the moral agent to realize in practice the second great commandment to ‘love your neighbour as yourself’. This will mean extending a loving heart, and engaging in sacrificial empathy, where required as well as offering wise words. Furthermore, the whole moral encounter should extend the moral repertoire of the agent and itself become a moral paradigm for future reference (see Fig. 4 on page 17).

The extent to which the above model will be both acceptable and applicable will largely be determined by a person’s stance viz-a-viz the Christian faith and biblical authority. If a person places himself firmly within the Christian fold, and accepts the illumination of the Spirit will be both natural and acceptable. But what of the person who would place himself squarely outside Christianity? To what extent will the ethical teaching and example of Jesus be binding upon him?

Two preliminary points need to be made in this regard. The first is that the moral authority of Jesus is integrally related to his person – the ‘What’ is decisively linked to the ‘Who’. That is, what Jesus says is both determined by who he is (the eternal Son of God) as well as being evidence of who he is. This is clearly brought out by Jesus’ distinctive form of address, prefacing his words with ‘amen’, thus identifying God in advance with what he is about to say (Mt. 5:18; 26:62; etc.). In addition to the fact that Jesus did not appeal to the ‘tradition’, this will account for the astonished reaction of the crowds as recorded in Matthew 7:28: ‘When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law’. But what is more, the authoritative pronouncements of Christ were of a piece with his actions. Not only did Jesus declare forgiveness of sins, he authenticated his words by healing (e.g. Mk. 2:1-12), both word and deed thus being expressive of his being as unique bearer of the divine nature. The moral authority of Jesus is therefore both unique and supreme because it is not derived ‘second-hand’ but is proclaimed directly, stamped with the very authority of God.

The second point is that strictly speaking Christian ethics is for Christians, those who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ, who are members of the kingdom and who are empowered by the Spirit to bring about a substantial realization of that kingdom in their lives. There is considerable weight behind the contention that the Sermon on the Mount is directed to those who, already, or potentially, followers of Christ (cf. Mt. 5:1b, 2 – it is the disciples who are addressed).

Even so, these two considerations do not carry the corollary that Jesus’ teachings and life only have moral force for those allied to the cause of the kingdom. In both principle and practice this is clearly not the case. If, as has already been argued, morality is both objective and universal, part of the warp and woof of reality, then in principle it should be possible for such universals to be recognized, together with their binding nature, regardless of their source or the particular framework of beliefs held by the observer. This means that whether the source be Christ or Socrates, provided that it is to the true nature of reality they refer, acknowledged should be possible by the person who in general does not subscribe either to the Christian faith or the philosophy of Socrates. To adapt Mitchell’s example of the rugby player, it should be possible to recognize Fred Smith as a good rugby player even if one is not a supporter of his team or an active player oneself.

But not only is it possible in principle for those outside the Christian faith to recognize the validity of Jesus’ ethical teaching, it is also the case in practice. It appears that Gandhi was able to accept much of Jesus’ ethic, but not other elements of his teaching. One of the great dangers of 19th century liberal theology was the reduction of theology to mere morality, with Christ being presented simply and only as the Ideal Man pointing the way to the authentic moral life. This was a movement whose roots lay in Kant’s contention that Jesus was the ‘personified idea of the good principle’. However, given that Jesus is at the very least the focus of the Good (although much more than that), then it is eminently reasonable to expect that some perception of that ‘Good’ should occur on a universal scale. While it is true that one may wish to question the logical consistency (or lack of it) of those who would want to take on board the moral claims of Jesus while rejecting his religious claims, one is still left with the fact that those moral claims are recognized well beyond the bounds of the redeemed community, indeed such a recognition may be but the first step of a journey towards the full acceptance of the Lordship of Christ.59

Concluding remarks – creation ethics and kingdom ethics.

At first sight, it might appear that a firm and irrevocable division has been made between creation ethics and kingdom ethics, but this is more apparent than real and dissolved under close analysis. We should be wary of stressing the discontinuity between creation and kingdom ethics at the expense of the continuity. The point of continuity is that God is the author, and relationships the subject, of both ethics as they are grounded in the loving grace (hesed) of God. The line of discontinuity is drawn around the fact that it is in Jesus Christ as representative Man that God’s requirements of righteousness are met, a new covenant established, and relationships transformed by the eschatological Spirit which he dispenses. Indeed, it is Christ’s redemptive work which provides the proper vantage point from which to view God’s purposes in creation.

Even within the perspective of the OT, any attempt to separate off creation ethics from the wider context of redemption is doomed to failure. As Von Rad has shown,60 not only are Israel’s beliefs about creation inseparable from her beliefs about redemption, in many respects they are secondary. Therefore Chris Wright is quite correct in maintaining that: ‘At every point this creation theology was linked to the fact that the Creator God was also their, Israel’s, Redeemer God. This means that the “creation ordinances”

Fig. 1

Moral context (Ethical moral problem/moral pattern)

Background factors

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Traditional reflection

Spiritual discernment

Decision

Interaction between various elements, each ‘shedding light’ on the other.

Fig. 2, stage A

Neighbour situation reflecting a need

Specific needs, constraints, circumstances, attitudes and values of the involved, etc.

Immediate perception of situation

Background factors

Fig. 3, stage B

Neighbour situation

Background factors

Moral perception broadened

Moral agent

Paradigm acts

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

Traditional thought

Spiritual discernment

Interaction between the various elements which make up the agent’s ethical resources

Fig. 4, Stage C: Action taken (individual or corporate)

The whole moral encounter becomes constitutive of agent’s moral experience

The ethical resources are enriched, the moral encounter becoming a ‘paradigm act’ for future reference

(1) Neighbour situation altered

Decision reached and action taken

Moral agent

(Ethical resources)
The drawing together of creation and the kingdom to such a point that they more or less overlap is to be found in Colossians 1:15ff. In this great ‘hymn’ to the supremacy of Christ, the author portrays the one by whom and for whom all things were created (v. 15). This is paralleled by the fact that he is also the one in whom and by whom all things are reconciled, establishing God’s rule (kingdom) throughout the created order (vv. 16-20). It follows that if the creation-kingdom division is finally overcome in Christ, then so is the creation/kingdom ethics divide, with the latter being the transformation of the former. The Colossian hymn is thus through with praise to the Creator-Redeemer Christ, and it is as his pattern and teaching is worked out in the lives of his people, the members of his kingdom, that the same song will be heard — the song of the priority of Jesus.

1 John Wimber, Power Evangelism, Signs and Wonders Today (Hodder & Stoughton, 1985), p. 73.

2 This is almost turning the Ignatius method of Bible study on its head. This method invites the reader to enter the biblical passage and so engage in an ‘encounter’ with Christ. To attempt to approach the creation and the kingdom through this one Man, Jesus, will be universalized at the end of time, as the whole of creation becomes caught up in God’s creative-redemptive action through this same person (cf. Rom. 5:21; Eph. 1:10ff.). Or to put it another way, in Jesus there is an actualization of man’s true potential as God intended (God’s image); the ought becomes an historical reality. At the end of time the same image will be actualized in other men, of whom Christ is the first fruits (1 Cor. 15:23). It is then that creation will be brought to true completion. The unity between creation and kingdom as found in Christ can be represented in Fig. 5 at the bottom of this page.

This same emphasis upon the unitary activity of God uniting both the work and goal of creation and the kingdom is to be found in Barth.3 He draws attention to what he sees as the conditional nature of the Christian theo-ethics and will of God, who in Jesus Christ is man’s Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer. What we perceive as three successive moments in God’s activity (Creation, Reconciliation, Redemption, to use Barth’s own terminology) are in reality one in the eternal movement of God (Creation-Reconciliation-Redemption). Thus from the vantage point of the God who ‘sees the end from the beginning’, any attempt to draw a division between creation/kingdom in absolute terms would be as erroneous as attempting to divide the Goodhead.

---

Conversion: a comparison of Calvin and Spener

A N S Lane

Conversion is a particularly important feature of modern evangelicalism. John D. Halford is Research Professor of Theology at the School of Religion and Theology of the University of California, Berkeley. In this essay, he discusses the development of evangelicalism since the time of John Calvin, and the role of conversion experiences in the spread of the faith. He examines the work of such figures as Spener, who sought to bring about a spiritual revolution in Europe through the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of new churches. Halford argues that conversion experiences continue to be a central feature of modern evangelicalism, and that they play a crucial role in shaping the beliefs and practices of individuals and churches.

---

In the Pia Desideria Spener laments the sorry state of the contemporary church, which he believes has lost its way and is not fulfilling its mission. He argues that the actual state of the early church that standards can improve and puts forward six specific proposals for reform. In this paper, the context is he is teaching on conversion that concerns us.

Spener was writing at a time when virtually all citizens were baptized (as infants) and therefore (according to Lutheran doctrine) believed to be regenerate. In this situation Spener believes that people (prevalence of nominal Christian: if "we judge by this mark [love], how difficult it will be to find even a small number of real and true disciples of Christ among the great mass of nominal Christians" (p. 57). Spener does not deny that baptism is "the real 'washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit' (Tit 3:5)" (p. 63). (Incidentally, John Calvin, who is an Anglican, does not see baptism as a conversion experience, but as a means of grace (p. 64). There is in true Christian faith without an inner change, a heart knowledge of God and a holy life. The problem of nominal Christianity was acute, not least among the clergymen. Some of them led scandalous lives. Others did not
can only be fully understood and appreciated when they are illuminated by the light of Israel's redemptive faith and traditions, and not merely taken as "universal" and somewhat abstract propositions.19 If the word 'Christian' were to be substituted for the term 'Israel' in Wright's statement, then it would provide a succinct summary of what is being maintained here, namely that it is in the light of the NT, and especially of Christ's teaching and example, that OT ethics can be appreciated and appropriated.

However, it is when a Christocentric approach is adopted, one which is in line with the NT's varied testimony that Christ is the intersection point of all the works and purposes of God, that any hard-and-fast distinction between creation ethics and kingdom ethics has to give way to a more unified concept. We have already seen how Christ fulfills the inner intention of the law and the prophets, but it could equally be claimed that he also fulfills the inner purpose of creation as he brings about God's kingdom — viz. that the Creator and creature should live in harmony (the goal of covenant). For Jesus in God's will is done, the kingdom has come and the Father's name is hallowed. But furthermore, what was achieved in the first instance by Jesus in that one man, Jesus, will be universalized at the end of time, as the whole of creation becomes caught up in God's creative-redemptive action through this same person (cf. Rom. 5:21; Eph. 1:8ff). Or to put it another way, in Jesus there is an actualization of man's true potential as God intended (God's image); the ought becomes an historical reality. At the end of time the same image will be present in other men, of whom Christ is the first fruits (1 Cor. 15:23). It is then that creation will be brought to true completion. The unity between creation and kingdom as found in Christ can be represented in Fig. 5 at the bottom of this page.

This same emphasis upon the unitary activity of God uniting both the work and goal of creation and the kingdom is to be found in Barth.20 He draws attention to what he sees as the condition of one man, Christ, the community and will of God, who in Jesus Christ is man's Creator, Redeemer and Reconciler. What we perceive as three successive moments in God's activity (Creation, Reconciliation, Redemption, to use Barth's own terminology) are in reality one in the eternal movement of God (Creation-Redemption-Reconciliation). Thus from the overriding standpoint of the God who sees the end from the beginning, any attempt to draw a division between creation/kingdom in absolute terms would be as erroneous as attempting to divide the Godhead.

2 This is almost turning the Ignatian method of Bible study on its head. This method invites the reader to engage personally with the biblical passage and so engage in an 'encounter' with Christ. To attempt to separate the person of Christ from the text is to make Christ stepping out of the text into our situation. In both cases hermeneutical controls are singularly absent.
3 On Guinieux, Pascale Faith in Two Minds (Lion, 1976), p. 91.
6 David Cook, In The Moral Maze (SPCK, 1983), p. 28ff. Marx's law under the category of creation ethics, but he uses the term in a much broader sense, concerning everything that is being suggested here, avoiding the claims exclusiveness associated with strict natural law theory.
8 G. E. Moore, Principia Ethica (Cambridge, 1903), chapters ii, iii, and iv.
9 See Greg Forster's Cultural Patterns and Moral Laws (Grove, 1977).
11 Paul Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics. Some, like Don Cupitt, argue that ethics have to be autonomous and must be severed from religion for man 'come of age'; for a reply see Keith Ward, Holding Fast to God (SPCK, 1982), pp. 30-62.
12 C. S. White, Honesty to Goodness (Grove, 1981) and O. Barclay, 'Ethics and Morality', in Law, Morality and the Bible (IVP, 1978).
13 This is a rather extreme position, esp. in light of the position taken by some of the classical figures.

---

### Conversion: a comparison of Calvin and Spener

A N S Lane

...conversion is particularly important feature of modern evangelism, it is essential to examine the influence of Theology and of the work of the German scholar. The冲击 of Calvin's ideas in the Reformation... Spener's work in promoting Christian activism in Germany was significant. His focus on education and moral reform laid the groundwork for the German middle classes to engage in active Christian living. Calvin's... Spener's emphasis on personal piety and activism in Christian living... Calvin's and Spener's values have influenced modern Christian thought...

---

In the Pia Desideria Spener laments the sorry state of the contemporary church and the need for a reawakening. He points out that the lack of evangelical fire among the clergy and the actual state of the early church that conditions can improve and puts forward six specific proposals for reform. In this context it is his teaching on conversion that concerns us.

Spener was writing at a time when virtually all citizens were baptized (as infants) and therefore (according to Lutheran doctrine) believed to be regenerate. In this situation Spener bestowed people with a prevalence of nominal Christianity: "If we judge by this [mark] how difficult it will be to find even a small number of real and true disciples of Christ among the great mass of nominal Christians" (p. 57). Spener does not deny that baptism is the "real "washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5) (p. 63). (Incidentally, John Arnold, who is Anglican and not Lutheran, is to German Pietism, also held onto the traditional Anglican doctrine of baptismal regeneration.) But Spener would not say that infant baptism was enough, regardless of how one then lives. Nor is it said that Spener baptized the infant, but the inner man, where we have put on Christ in baptism, must also keep Christ on and bear witness to him in our outward life (p. 6). Similarly, he does not say that Spener baptized the inner man, but by without recognizing that 'godly faith does not exist without the Holy Spirit, nor can such faith continue when deliberate effort is made' (p. 64). There is no true Christian faith without an inner change, a heart knowledge of God and a godly life. The problem of nominal Christianity was acute, not least among the clergy. Some of them led scandalous lives. Others did not...
but still exhibited a thoroughly selfish and worldly spirit. ‘Although they themselves do not realize it, they are still stuck fast in the old birth and do not actually possess the true marks of a new birth’ (p. 46).

Spener’s opposition to nominal Christianity was to become a major theme of his later writings. To what extent was it also a part of the teaching of the Reformers? A three-point comparison of Spener and the evangelical tradition which Calvin will reveal some interesting similarities and differences.

Calvin, like Spener, is well aware of the fact of nominal Christianity. There is the phenomenon of the ‘empty faith’ of the reprobate. Apart from non-Christians and true believers, there are also the nominal Christians and are ‘initiated into the sacraments, yet by impurity of life denying God in their actions while they continue in their sins, they belong to Christ only in name’. Others are ‘hypocrites who conceal with empty pretences their wickedness of heart’ (3:141). Calvin has a harsh but direct tone when he speaks of the ‘invisible church’. In the visible church ‘many Reformation enunciations of the name of Christ’ are ‘buried under the name and outward appearance’ (4:17). The invisible church is the small and contemptible number of the elect hidden in a huge multitude (4:12). Calvin certainly did not believe that mere church membership and participation in the sacraments was any guarantee of salvation. But, as the term ‘invisible church’ implies, Calvin was opposed to any attempt to separate the wheat from the chaff, to say who is elect (4:17-9). The invisible church is invisible not because it means the secret church or that members are invisible but because its boundaries are known only to God. Only God can discern accurately whose profession of faith is genuine (1:16-18). The second reason for the invisible church is ‘whereby we recognize as members of the church those who, by confession of faith, by example of life, and by partaking of the sacraments, profess the same God and Christ with us’ (4:18). Evangelicals are opposed to complete union because they cannot read people’s hearts and divide the wheat from the chaff, but this does not usually stop them from at least having a shot at making the division. The acknowledgment that God alone reads hearts is relegated to the small print.

Calvin, like Spener, insists that church membership and outward participation in the sacraments do not suffice for salvation. There must be an inner change brought about by the Holy Spirit. There is the need to live a godly life. Without the sanctification of the Holy Spirit there is no true faith or knowledge of Christ (3:2-8). But while Calvin emphasizes that there must be an inner change, Spener emphasizes that Calvin stresses the need for saving faith, but he does not imply that it must come at an instant. Regeneration for Calvin is a lifelong process.

This restoration does not take place in one moment or one day or one year, but through continual and sometimes even slow advances God washes out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleansing, renewing all their minds in knowledge and fear of God, renewing all their minds in true piety that they may practise repentance in all their thoughts and lives and know that this warfare will end only at death (3:39).

Calvin could speak of his own ‘sudden conversion’ to the Protestant cause, but he does not seem to have regarded such as the norm. The emphasis is on numerical growth to the exclusion of growth in maturity. There is a medical term for this sort of growth: cancer.

Fourthly, we need to consider the content of conversion. Certain types of evangelistic effort are notorious for producing quick marks of conversion which never last. One inner-city church was recently called upon to nurture over fifty ‘converts’ from Mission London. Only one of them appeared to be continuing as a Christian. We would all agree that this is not satisfactory, but what is the solution? Why did these converts not continue? Perhaps the problem lies in the definition of conversion. Did they fail to continue or did they never start? What is conversion? Many who would regard a previous expression like ‘letting Jesus into your heart’ as superficial would nonetheless be happy to define conversion as repentance and faith, or ‘an inward change. This is certainly central to expression, but is it enough? It would be more in keeping with the practice of Acts and the theology of the epistles to expand the definition to include baptism and embarking on a life of Christian discipline within the fellowship of the church. But what difference does it make simply to change a definition when it is not just a word? No. It is important both because we use the word conversion so much (unlike the Bible) and because evangelism is geared to obtaining conversion. The only way to avoid the problem of a flood of transient ‘converts’ to is to rethink the definition of conversion. It is also important because for the NT the church is itself a part of the gospel message. You cannot preach the full gospel without talking about the church. To have God for one’s father implies, of necessity, having his other children as one’s brothers and sisters. It is a contradiction in terms to talk of having God and not becoming a Christian. Conversion is not just entering into a private relationship with God. It means joining God’s family, which is not some abstract material or mental concept but is composed of actual human beings around us.

Finally, if our definition of conversion is expanded in this way it has another important consequence. As we accept a broader and fuller definition of conversion it becomes harder to see instantaneous conversion as the norm. After all, few follow the clear definition of repentance and faith; they are not even baptized and join the church all on the same day! For most of these four elements come over a period of time. Further more, the order of these stages may be arranged in different orders. Some may be baptized and confirmed before they come to saving faith. Others may not be baptized until later. This is a simple fact, whatever we may think happens. But how should we react to the fact that for most people conversion in the full sense does not happen all at once? Many will fall into the trap of making conversion a two- or three-stage event, with certain steps following in a prescribed order. In the NT repentance, faith, baptism and church membership are held together as different aspects of what it means to be a Christian. Theologically it is disastrous to separate them — whether by separating faith from repentance or faith from baptism or from confirmation or conversion from receiving the Holy Spirit. In practice conversion may happen by stages (like the healing of the blind man in Mk. 8:22-26), but we must not develop a multi-stage doctrine of conversion, any more than a two-stage concept of healing. Conversion is, theologically speaking, a single event which may, in practice, happen gradually over a period of time and stages.

Towards an analysis of cult

N A D Scotland

The sociology of religion has been a subject of growing importance in theological courses, but one into which Thelemos has rarely ventured. In this article Dr Scotland, who is Senior Lecturer in Theology at the University of Kent, is writing about a cult popular in the UK called the Children of God. He says: Mary in Cheltenham, looks at some modern religious movements in a way that may encourage us to reflect on our own religious traditions.

Until recent years sociologists of religion have concentrated their studies of religious institutions on ‘churches’ and sects’ typology, which is based on the work of cadge and Max Weber. More recently developed by the Oxford sociologist Bryan Wilson. No attempt was made to distinguish between ‘sect’ and ‘church’ or any actually became known as ‘cult’. But from the mid 1960s onwards scholars have begun to differentiate the two. It should be noted at the outset that some sociologists of religion, notably Roy Wallis (1984) and James Beckford (1986), have preferred the term ‘New Religious Movements’ (NRM) on the ground that it is less prejudicial. Others such as Eileen Barker seem happy to stay with ‘cult’.1 Ernie Eronroth pointed out that ‘culturals were much less sects was that it was extremely difficult to draw a line between the two. However, Milton Yinger considered that cults represent a sharper break in religious terms from the dominant religious tradition of society.2 A number of recent sociologists, most recently Ronald Enroth, Eileen Barker and James Beckford, have followed Yinger and sought to analyse a cult typology. Thus, Enroth argues that the New Religious Movements are an additional analysis seeks to clarify the nature of a cult. Illustrative material is drawn in the main from Christian-related cults such as those of Jonn L. Wainwright, the Children of God and the Unification Church, but reference is also made to Scientology and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

1 There is an English translation of the Pia Divinata, translated by T. G. Tapert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). Page numbers in the text refer to this version.


3 Cailin’s attitude to pastoral care is well brought out in H. T. Mayer, Pastoral Care (Auckland: John Knox Press, 1975, ch. 6).
Calvin, like Spener, was opposed to the lax standards of the contemporary church and sought to improve them. He had a clear doctrine of church discipline (4:12) and his efforts in establishing discipline at Geneva are well known. But Calvin recognized that it was important to believe and to practice. To what extent was it also a part of the teaching of the Reformation? A three-point comparison of Spener and the evangelical tradition with Calvin will reveal some interesting similarities and differences.

Calvin, like Spener, is well aware of the fact of nominal Christianity. There is the phenomenon of the "temporary faith" of the reprobate. Apart from non-Christians and true believers, there are nominal Christians who are "initiated into the sacraments, yet by impurity of life denying God in their actions while they continue with their lips, they belong to Christ only in name". Others are "hypocrites who conceal with empty pretences their wickedness of heart" (3:14:1). Calvin has a more developed concept of "invisible" church. In the visible church are many absurd "converts". Calvin had the name of the church "outward appearance" (4:1:7). The invisible church is small and contains the number of those who are elect (4:17:9). The invisible church is invisible because it means many persons or groups of persons are invisible but because its boundaries are known only to God. Only God can discern accurately whose profession of faith is genuine (4:17:10). By the way, that is a very strong assertion of the invisible church, whereby we recognize as members of the church those who, by confession of faith, by example of life, and by partaking of the sacraments, profess the same God and Christ with us (4:18). Evangelicals and Spenerists will argue that they cannot read people's hearts and divide the wheat from the chaff, but this does not usually stop them from at least having a shot at making the division. The acknowledgment that God alone reads hearts is relegated to the small print.

Calvin, like Spener, insists that church membership and outward participation in the sacraments do not suffice for salvation. There must be an inner change brought about by the Holy Spirit. There is the need to live a godly life. Without the sanctification of the Holy Spirit there is no true faith or knowledge of Christ (3:28-10). But while Calvin emphasizes this, he does not think that we can say that faith is a gift whereas Calvin stresses the need for saving faith, but he does not imply that it must come at an instant. Regeneration for Calvin is a lifelong process.

This restoration does not take place in one moment or one day or one year, but through continual and sometimes even slow advances God wips out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleansing them, renewing all their minds in the true purity that they may practise repentance and holiness of lives and know that this warfare will end only at death (3:39).

Calvin could speak of his own 'sudden conversion' to the Protestant cause, but he does not seem to have regarded such as the norm.

Finally, if our definition of conversion is expanded in this way it has another important consequence. As we accept a broader and fuller definition of conversion it becomes harder to see instantaneous conversion as the norm. After all, few look for instant faith and knowing the difference between those who are baptized and join the church all on the same day! For most these four elements come over a period of time. Furthermore, the forms and stages of conversion are different orders. Some may be baptized and confirmed before they come to saving faith. Others may not be baptized until later. This is a simple fact, whatever we may think happen. But how should we react to the fact that for most people conversion in the full sense does not happen all at once? Instead we fall into the trap of making conversions a two- or three-stage event, with certain steps following in a prescribed order. In the NT repentance, faith, baptism and church membership are held together as different aspects of what it means to become a Christian. Theologically it is disastrous to separate them — whether by separating faith from repentance or faith from baptism or confirmation or conversion from receiving the Holy Spirit. But practice conversion may happen by stages (like the healing of the blind man in Mk 8:22-26), but we must not develop a multi-stage doctrine of conversion, any more than a multi-stage concept of healing. Conversion is, theologically speaking, a single event which may, in practice, happen gradually over a period of time and in stages.

---

Towards an analysis of cult

N A D Scotland

The sociology of religion has been a subject of growing importance in theological courses, but one into which Theopolis has rarely ventured. In this article Dr Scotland, who is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of St Andrews and Mary in Cheltenham, looks at some modern religious movements in a way that may encourage us to reflect on our own religious traditions.

Until recent years sociologists of religion have concentrated their studies of religious institutions on "churches" and their effect on the social order. A recent development by the Oxford sociologist Bryan Wilson. No attempt was made to distinguish between sects and cults, and it is Pinchbeck's duty to the Children of God and the Unification Church, but it is also relevant to the International and the Sociology for Krishna Consciousness.

1 There is an English translation of the Pia Dividers by T. G. Tapfer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). Page numbers in the text refer to this translation.


3 Calvin's attitude to pastoral care is well brought out in H. T. Mayer, Pastoral Care (Alliana: John Knox Press, 1979), ch. 6.

Beckford (1986), have preferred the term 'New Religious Movements' (NRM) on the ground that it is less prejudicial. Others such as Eileen Barker seem happy to stay with 'cult'.

Ernst Becker pointed out that 'cults' were much like sects in that they were a group who believed that it was extremely difficult to draw a line between the two. However, Milton Yinger considered that cults represent a sharper break in religious terms from the dominant religious tradition of society.

A number of recent sociologists, most recently Ronald Enroth, Eileen Barker and James Beckford, have followed Yinger and sought to analyse a cult typology. Thus, for example, James Beckford and Max Weber developed a typology of groups, and the following additional analyses seek to clarify the nature of a 'cult'. Illustrative material is drawn in the main from Christian-related cults such as the Aum Shinrikyo (J. F. Bantley). The Children of God and the Unification Church, but is also relevant to the International and the Sociology for Krishna Consciousness.
One reason why such an analysis of 'sect' and 'cult' forms of institution is important is because it provides a means of identifying and assessing expressions of religion. Orthodox Christianity for example has always been accepting of most new religions, many of which merging and climbing with the historic creeds. In contrast, however, cults, even those with Christian roots, are unacceptable to the main-line Christian denominations. This is because of the function and role of their leadership and also on account of their denial of basic human freedoms.

Exponents of the sect typeology have noted a number of significant characteristics which distinguish the sects. The sects emphasize the importance of the instantaneous and the experiential 'new birth', 'nirvana' or 'Krishna consciousness'. Sects correspondingly are often associated with rhythmical chorus hymns, handclapping and the supernatural. The sect is frequently in the hands of a naturally emerging dominant personality. Sect membership is by conscious decision and exclusive. There is also a strict ethical code of conduct coupled with disciplinary and expulsion procedures.

A cult, it is argued, has a number of distinctive features which mark it off from a sect. Perhaps most obvious is the fact that the cult leader becomes God to the movement. Max Weber pointed out that the founder of the sect would hold a certain aura which could be described in terms of 'charisma'. The sect leader was not considered to be an ordinary human being but in some sense 'a man above his fellows' with special powers and qualities of personality.

A cult (or NRM if you prefer also) also has a living leader, but instead of being considered to be a human creature, the leader becomes God to the movement. The cult leader dies the likelihood is that the cult will disappear unless someone takes over the position. This is unusual not only for God, the belief in the immortality of the god is presumably not replaceable. It does seem, however, as though sectology may succeed in transferring power to the leader along with the mission assumptions. L. Ron Hubbard, though membership has plummeted.

Cult leaders often begin life in humble, even harsh, circumstances but at some point they begin to receive a revelation of the ultimate truth. In the case of Sun Myung Moon, who was born in 1920 of Presbyterian parents of comparatively ordinary circumstances, began to 'preach for extra-ordinary things' when he was just twelve. At sixteen when he was praying not on a Korean mountainside he had a vision of Jesus in which he was told he had been selected to carry out an important mission. He went on to study at Sungkyunkwan University, Moses Peter, Paul, Confucius, Wesley and Buddha, enabling Christianity to be reborn in a Moon-mediated form. In 1954 he founded 'The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity', more simply known as 'The Unification Church'. From this time on both he and his wife have assumed a god-like status over the movement, styling themselves the 'true parents'. Cult members frequently address Moon as 'Father' or 'Master'. Moon teaches that he is in fact the 'Lord of the Second Advent' who has come to complete the work which Jesus left uncompleted. Indeed in one of his speeches Moon speaks of himself as 'the Way of God'.

I have certain things you can find nowhere else. This is what has drawn you to me. What might seem presumptuous doesn't trouble me at all. You are feeling comfortable. You are feeling at home. You feel there is a certain distance you cannot go in your search for God. You must come to Him through me. You are following the unifying path. I am with each of you. I am truly ...' Beckford comments: The person of the Reverend Moon plays an important role in relation to the Unification doctrine not only as an unbroken link to the life of the Lord through the Second Advent ... but also because he is regarded as the mediator's God through and other eminent spirits.' When no visitors are present at their worship Unification Church members pray to God through Moon as he is the physical representation of God.

Swami Prabhupada, the founder of ISKON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), is regarded as not only an unbroken link to the life of the Lord through the Second Advent, but also because he is regarded as the mediator's God through and other eminent spirits. When no visitors are present at their worship Unification Church members pray to God through Moon as he is the physical representation of God.

David Berg, the leader of COG (Children of God), began his working life as an evangelical fire-and-brimstone preacher with his own cult following in the late 1950s. He moved to California along the California coastlands during the 1960s. In his early days he was very puritanical and offered salvation in return for heartfelt repentance. His gospel found ready acceptance particularly in the young youth culture of the permiscuous swinging sixties which was desperately searching for something to cling to.

Berg's personal dominance over the movement became stronger when Berg's whole following accepted that he had been 'filled with the Gift of Faith in his mother's womb'. Berg began to style himself 'Moses David' to indicate his messianic status and he started to issue his pronouncements. Again 'Messiah' for in the New Testament is often used as a synonym for the Hebrew 'pasha'. The title was usually not seen as the precursor of the messiah but as the messiah himself, therefore he exercises total control over the following in a way that has parallels with the activities of the People's Temple in Los Angeles. Eventually the group moved to Guyana to set up the Jonestown Community, a community of some 1500 people, in some of which he made pronouncements much in the manner of the Pope. As early as the mid 1960s he claimed to be 'God's heir on earth'.

Some might feel that all of this is little different from the way in which a Roman Catholic regards the Bishop of Rome or a high Anglican in parishes or a house-church minister unthinkingly responds to his shepherd. And yet there is a fundamental difference in that in the cult the leader is more than a revered figure — he acquires the attributes of a god-like status. The paradox here is that the cults convincingly when he writes: 'today's new wave prophets literally profess to be God incarnate and most wield absolute authority over cult members.'

Another distinguishing feature of cult is seen in a rigid and puritanical practice, which believe their leader to be uniquely inspired and to be a source of divine truth. Because of this they are prepared to accept his teaching. Berg in the early days lived a radical lifestyle as did most of the cultists. However, members who don't wish to fall in with sect patterns of behaviour are either free to leave or they may be expelled or excommunicated.

In the cult the leader assumes the role of dictator or absolute monarch and is to be obeyed without question. The structure of the cult is therefore pyramidal with each tier passing orders down from the top and no one questioning or challenging them. A cult is unique in that it can achieve a great seclusion surrounded by an aura of mystery which leads to greater veneration when they appear in public. Moon lives in a palatial complex in a quiet area of New York State. L. Ron Hubbard, the leader of Scientology, who spent his early years in naval service, lived in a size-life replica of a clipper complete with three masts and bridge which was located in Gillman Hot Springs near the Mojave Desert in California.

Such leaders allow harsh discipline to be meted out on deviant or questioning members. Some instigate a reign of terror. David Blundy described the authority which Jones exercised in his cult as one 'as an ascetic, as cruel and as absolute as Cleopatra's'. In a 1977 press exposure detailed accounts were published of what went on at the 'cult compound'. Jones was convinced that the killing of members, ritual beatings of adults and children and bizarre sexual activities. Later when the cult moved to Guyana dissenters were forcibly injected with drugs to stupefy them down and make them amenable to Jones's policies. Jones, who was by this time styled 'father', demanded that according to any of his several hundred women he happen to fasten his eyes on they were forced to comply even if they were engaged or committed to someone else. All this was a far cry from Jones's early days as an evangelist and those of 'By the Name of Jesus'.

Beckford comments: The evolution of the Children of God movement illustrates the overwhelming power that its leader has been consistently able to exercise over its members.

In 1984 a leading British newspaper gave a parallel report that some of the officials at the East Grinstead Headquarters of Scientology were acting 'like Hitler Youth' dressed in military uniform and inflicting punishments of confinement and violence in the course of Scandal. The church, under the direction of the television programme 'The Sunday Times Magazine', entitled 'The Sinking of the Master Mariner', the church was using the Spanish Inquisition as a model and subjects were placed in some cases in a chamber in which they were made to pass through important officials into line. The Church had a 'penal camp' in an Indian Reservation several miles from Gillman Hot Springs where guards and others would be chained to the wall. The hallucinatory personal auditor (or confessor), was apparently forced to dig ditches in the desert heat for six months and when he wasn't digging he was made to run around a pole. Why didn't he just leave the movement and escape? According to an ex-

Scientology acquaintance: They don't have any money. They don't know anybody outside except their family and they revered those years ago. Anyway that's how they were kept.

Similar instances could be cited from most cult groups but perhaps one more from the 'Love Family' cult reported by Enroth will suffice to make this point. 'The Love Family' was run by the late Paul Enroth, a Seattle salesman, in 1969. He believes he is Christ's second coming as part of God's purpose is to gather God's true family. Amongst other things they hold rigidly to the King James Version of the Bible which is said to be the perfect, without error book. They also hold that the suspicion of drugs is anathema, an industrial solvent. The following passage indicates forcibly the control and repressive discipline exercised on each.

Love also laid down the rules on marriage and sexual activity within the Family. At one point, celibacy was the norm. 'When I first got there, everybody had given up sex until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.' Later Love changed the rules and allowed couples to live as man and wife. A man who wanted to marry was required to bring his bride to a one-night stand with another woman. Love made the decision. Sometimes he would notice that two people liked each other, and he would ask: 'Would you two like to live as man and wife?' They would say yes, and they would be 'bombed'. There really wasn't a ceremony — they would just sleep together. Love also had the authority to unbond people. He could say that those two people couldn't sleep together any more. Or, `Have you got any children?' they used to say, `Well then, you could say, `We're still together, but you can't sleep together now.' And they would obey.

One guy got flogged for sleeping with some girl who wasn't in the Family. He wanted to remain in the Family so he had to submit to a beating as a punishment. He got paddled on his bottom for a couple of hours. Everybody kept on hand. He never went to the Family to come and watch. One of the elders did the beating, and the same person. A guy just flogged and the same person.

Another related feature of the cult is the use of techniques akin to brainwashing. It is important to stress techniques 'akin to' brainwashing because opinion is divided as to whether the techniques employed by COG to brainwash their followers give a number of instances from his researches which indicate brainwashing or something closely approximating to it. His book cites the case of Philip, a student of physics in his honours year. He formed a cult on the basis of a message to say that he had gone to UC Centre in the south of England to learn about the Reverend Moon. On his return home he built himself into his parents' bedroom. His father describes the scene:

He was quite himself; he wasn't natural at all, demented, in a sort of literally that he just had a message from Mr Moon. It was just to confirm that everything [the Centre] had told him was to be accepted... He was convinced that he must consider full commitment.16 It is difficult to know if the self-destructive spirit in the cults is the result of brainwashing or the self-destructive spirit of the group.

This behaviour echoed in another, Brian, a former teacher of music aged 29. His mother commented:

He left everything, library books which I had to take back, just just happened so quickly. I felt when he'd gone actually I was empty and felt that he'd been brainwashed... And then I had letters full of 'You are a real brainwashed and I'm a real brainwashed over. And, of course, since then I feel that he's become retarded.'

In a later chapter entitled 'The Moral career of the ex-

Moonie' Beckford gives further instances which suggest
One reason why such an analysis of 'sect' and 'cult' forms of institution is important is because it provides a means of identifying and assessing expressions of religion. Orthodox Christianity for example has always been accepting of most 'sects' in a way that is not possible with the more dogmatic and traditional forms of religious expression with the historic creeds. In contrast, however, cults, even those with Christian roots, are unacceptable to the main-line Christian denominations because of the function and role of their leadership and also on account of their denial of basic human freedoms.

Exponents of the sect typology have noted a number of significant differences between the two. Notably, the sects emphasize the importance of the instantaneous and the experiential 'new birth,' 'nirvana' or 'Krishna consciousness' experience. Sects correspondingly often operate with rhythm choral hymns, handclapping and the supernatural. The sect is frequently in the hands of a naturally emerging dominant personality. Sect membership is by conscious decision and exclusive. There is also a strict ethical code of conduct coupled with disciplinary and expulsion procedures. A cult, it is argued, has a number of distinctive features which mark it off from a 'sect.' Perhaps most obvious is the fact that the cult leader becomes God to the movement, Max Weber pointed out that the founder of the sect would hold a certain authority which was described in terms of 'charisma.' The sect leader was not considered to be an ordinary human being but in some sense 'a man above all his fellows' with special powers and qualities of personality. A cult (or NRM if you prefer) also has a living leader, but invariably he would be seen to be the canal to the real godhead. Once the leader dies the likelihood is that the cult will disappear unless someone takes over the position. This is usually not a problem unless the leader is biological death and the cult is presumably not to be replaced. It does seem, however, that though sectiology may succeed in transferring power from one generation to another, cultology has failed. L. Ron Hubbard, though membership has plummeted.

Cult leaders often begin life in humble, even harsh, circumstances but at some point they begin to receive a revelation of some sort. There is the claim of divine authority, that because of this the members' faith in the leader begins to develop rapidly and in a process which is largely unconscious they 'identify' his claim to absolute control as a messianic figure. Beckford comments: 'The cult leader is usually seen not as the precursor of the messiah but as the messiah himself, therefore he exercises total control over the following. This is why Moses, Peter, Paul, Confucius, Wesley and Buddha, encouraging Christianity to be born in a Moon-mediated form. In 1954 he founded 'The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity,' more simply known as the 'Unification Church.' From this time on both he and his wife have assumed a god-like status over the movement, styling themselves the 'true parents.' Cult members frequently address Moon as 'Father' or 'Master.' Moon teaches that he is in fact 'the Lord of the Second Advent' who has come to complete the work which Jesus left uncompleted. Indeed in one of his speeches Moon speaks of himself as 'the Way of God.'

I have certain things you can find nowhere else. This is what a man gave me. What mne of those will accomplish a more powerful achievement than this man? You have to look to me for that. I have a certain distance you cannot see in your search for God. You must come to me to find it. You are following the unending faith of Jesus with each sect. You are following the path of the sect in which God is present but I believe his divine purpose is to gather God's true family. Amongst other things they hold rigidly to the King James Version of the Bible, abjuring the modern translations, advocating their own, the use of opium, alcohol, and the use of a hypnotist, an industrial solvent. The following passage indicates forcibly the control and repressive discipline exercised by each.

Love also laid down the rules on marriage and sexual activity within the Family. At one point, celibacy was the norm. 'When I first got there, everybody had given up sex until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.' Later Love changed the rules and allowed couples to live as man and wife. A man who wanted to marry was required to take a year of training before he could be married. Tomilson comments: 'Love made the decision. Sometimes he would notice that two people liked each other, and he would ask, 'Would you like to live as man and woman?' They would say yes, and they would be 'bonded.' There really wasn't a ceremony -- they would just sleep together. Love also had the authority to unbind people. He could say that those two people couldn't sleep together anymore. Or, he could say, 'Well, you could marry, but you could not be born again, but you could not sleep together now.' And they would obey.

One guy got flagged for sleeping with some girl who wasn't in the Family. He wanted to remain in the Family so he had to submit to a beating as a punishment. He got paddled on his bottom with a board of wood. Everybody watching, including the entire Family had to come and watch. One of the elders did the beating, and the guy got whipped for a couple of minutes.

Another related feature of the cult is the use of techniques akin to brainwashing. It is important to stress techniques 'akin to' brainwashing because opinion is divided as to whether the techniques used are typical of brainwashing. Beckford gives a number of instances from his researches which indicate brainwashing or something closely approximating to it. In 1964, for example, he cites the case of Philip, a student of physics in his home university. He formed his own cult and told a man to say that he had gone to UC Centre in the south of England to learn about the Reverend Moon. On his return home he brought into his parents' bedroom. His father describes the scene:

He was quite handsome, wasn't natural at all, demented, it seemed that he had just had a message from Mr Moon. It was just to confirm that everything [the Centre] had told him was to be accepted. . . He was convinced that he must consider full commitment. 18

This behaviour echoed in another, Brian, a former teacher of music aged 29. His mother commented:

He left everything, library books which I had to take back, just just everything. He just went to this cult down in London and it all happened so quickly. I felt when he'd gone actually I was empty and felt that he'd been brainwashed. . . And then I heard letters full of what he was saying. And I was just—one word over. And, of course, since then I feel that he's become retarded.

In a later chapter entitled 'The moral career of the ex-Moonie' Beckford gives further instances which suggest
It might be argued that the evangelistic techniques employed on occasion by certain evangelical groups run close to some of these procedures. Nevertheless it is doubtful whether even the most flamboyant of fundamentalists, preaching to a captive audience of fellow believers in a church service, is likely to deny his audience the freedom to reject his message.

A further related feature of the cult institution is the repression of individuality. Within a sect there is a certain amount of pressure on members to identify themselves in terms of their group and to repress their own identity as well as express their opinions within certain limitations. Within the 'cult', however, there is invariably an increased psychological pressure to repress individuality. Members may be pressured to change their names. When new members joined the COG in the 1960s they signed the following statement: ‘I promise to give all my goods and I promise…’ It is not uncommon for members who are married may well be separated from their former partner, as frequently happens in the Unification Church. Sometimes their marriages may be dissolved and they are then married to another.

Cults tend to keep their members on the move, making them work in different centres, headquarters, shops or street sells for three- or four-monthly periods. This means that they have little time to keep in touch with their families and past links around which their identity has been built. Parents are also frequently denied access to their children for this reason.

The next section is to come up by this comment from the mother of a Unificationist:

'The UC attacks family structure, because I don’t think you can be a fully committed member of the UC and live a normal family life, it isn’t possible,' she said. ‘You don’t go for a weekend or if mother’s ill, come home and nurse her or you can’t do a normal family life.'

This fact that NRMs downgrade the nuclear family and emphasize the community of the cult family largely explains why they recruit the vast majority of their membership from broken homes. NRMs like the Unification Church and other cults who have been brainwashed in some cases subsequently been deprogrammed, just as there are those who have been made rational decisions to become members. On the other hand, it has to be said that ‘disenfranchised is common. In the 1970s it is estimated that 75 per cent left the Unification Church within a year of joining. This hardly sustains the view that cults extensively brainwash.

Perhaps the least that can be said on this issue at this point is that from the moment visitors or inquirers first enter cult premises their time is immediately taken up with a programme of lectures, seminars, recreation and leisure activities in which there is little time for reflection and none for questioning. No alternative ideas are to be allowed to discuss their beliefs—they are always they are shadowed by a cult member. Young recruits are often subjected to long hours, little sleep, forcing diets and issues, and are also frequently isolated from their homes and familiar surroundings with the result that they become increasingly dependent on the movement for their security. Erica Hebannekamp acknowledges that many members are ‘not necessarily brainwashed’ but totally dependent on the movement. Like children they are controlled because they are dependent.

b) A scientist who would tell you the same, but justify: ‘For whatever a man wouht, that shall be also reaw’ (Gal. 6:3).

For this to happen, the movement is brought within the spiritual sphere, and demoralizes the mental and moral condition of individuals who make it a part of their lives. The result is the gradual erosion of the mental and moral condition of individuals who make it a part of their lives. The result is the gradual erosion of the human being, leading to a state of mental and moral emaciation. This process is a gradual degradation of the human being, leading to a state of mental and moral emaciation. This process is a gradual degradation of the human being, leading to a state of mental and moral emaciation. This process is a gradual degradation of the human being, leading to a state of mental and moral emaciation. This process is a gradual degradation of the human being, leading to a state of mental and moral emaciation.
It might be argued that the evangelistic techniques employed on occasion by certain evangelical groups run close to some of these procedures. Nevertheless it is doubtful whether even the most flamboyant of fundamentalist preachers would dare to follow this line of procedure in their attempt to deny his audience the freedom to reject his message.

A further related feature of the cult institution is the repression of individuality. Within a sect there is a certain amount of group-induced conformity in techniques and recruitment activities. As cults see it, the world is in the grip of Satan, therefore Satanic methods are both necessary and justifiable in dealings with the outside world.

In the UC this practice is actually termed 'heavenly deception', that is the art of deception if you can promote the interests of the UC or attract a potential convert by lying or not being open it's perfectly alright. Many Mooons if you even ask them 'How long have you been a Mooon?'' they admit that they became a Mooon: 'they call it 'The Holy Spirit Association' or 'One World Movement' or even the 'Kensington Gardens Arts Society'! Most often they have been dragged away from UC and 'we're part of the Church'. Many testify to the fact that they were first attracted to a cult by the friendly smile of a street worker or the depth of fellowship or an inquirers' weekend. All of this is often part of a deliberate tactic. Mooons frequently practise what is known as 'love-bombing'.

This is one of the problems sociologists or students of the movement face. You never know whether you are getting the truth or the lies.

Infiltration of mainstream churches has also been an approved tactic for winning new recruits and/or supporters, although this has led to some counter-productive controversy. Two examples locally illustrate this. About four years ago the UC membership in Cheltenham made a concerted attempt to infiltrate St Philip and St James C of E parish. Members of Stanton Fitzwarren UC (near Swindon) often visit the Old Sarum area and hold their own worship in the evenings.

The UC also organizes conferences for church leaders, scientists and medical practitioners. Some of these are solely with the objective of putting across a positive image to counteract other adverse publicity.

A very different deception technique is that pioneered by David Berg in the mid 1970s. Styled 'Flirty Fishing', he says that it is 'the sacred duty' of women members to have or offer sexual intercourse for the deliberate purpose of bringing men to faith in Christ. Unfortunately this has resulted in the presence within the community of what are termed 'Jesus babyheads' and 'madrills'.

This form of behaviour was justified in a series of MO letters in which Berg argued that because this is the 'time of the end' and immediately before the millennium, the new law of love has replaced the old Mosaic law. The same basis is used to justify the practice of condoning extra-marital sexual relations. Husbands in particular are warned to be magnanimous and forgiving of their wives' liaisons.

Judge not that ye be not judged, for with what measure ye mete it out shall it be meted back again to you (Hodges 1981) p. 136-137.

Beckford argues that the destruction of the self-image or ego in the cult adherent is also achieved in a process of intrusion then manipulation of the member generally across limits of personal privacy. The Times (London), in an article in 1986, carried detailed accounts of a successful lawsuit against the Scientology Church. The article asserted that the cult subjected its adherents to 'psychological manipulations' in a process known as auditing whereby they were forced to reveal intimate details of their past lives. These details were monitored and recorded and then used to blackmail the same individual in the future. The human rights cases against the Church have been quite bluntly 'If you leave we'll reveal this and this about you'.

One further characteristic of cults or New Religion Movements is an escalation of techniques and in terms of recruitment activities. As cults see it, the world is in the grip of Satan, therefore Satanic methods are both necessary and justifiable in dealings with the outside world.

In the UC this practice is actually termed 'heavenly deception', that is the art of deception if you can promote the interests of the UC or attract a potential convert by lying or not being open it's perfectly alright. Many Mooons if you even ask them 'How long have you been a Mooon?'' they admit that they became a Mooon: 'they call it 'The Holy Spirit Association' or 'One World Movement' or even the 'Kensington Gardens Arts Society'! Most often they have been dragged away from UC and 'we're part of the Church'. Many testify to the fact that they were first attracted to a cult by the friendly smile of a street worker or the depth of fellowship or an inquirers' weekend. All of this is often part of a deliberate tactic. Mooons frequently practise what is known as 'love-bombing'.

This is one of the problems sociologists or students of the movement face. You never know whether you are getting the truth or the lies.

Infiltration of mainstream churches has also been an approved tactic for winning new recruits and/or supporters, although this has led to some counter-productive controversy. Two examples locally illustrate this. About four years ago the UC membership in Cheltenham made a concerted attempt to infiltrate St Philip and St James C of E parish. Members of Stanton Fitzwarren UC (near Swindon) often visit the Old Sarum area and hold their own worship in the evenings.

The UC also organizes conferences for church leaders, scientists and medical practitioners. Some of these are solely with the objective of putting across a positive image to counteract other adverse publicity.

A very different deception technique is that pioneered by David Berg in the mid 1970s. Styled 'Flirty Fishing', he says that it is 'the sacred duty' of women members to have or offer sexual intercourse for the deliberate purpose of bringing men to faith in Christ. Unfortunately this has resulted in the presence within the community of what are termed 'Jesus babyheads' and 'madrills'.

This form of behaviour was justified in a series of MO letters in which Berg argued that because this is the 'time of the end' and immediately before the millennium, the new law of love has replaced the old Mosaic law. The same basis is used to justify the practice of condoning extra-marital sexual relations. Husbands in particular are warned to be magnanimous and forgiving of their wives' liaisons. 
social, concept, and it emerged late in Jesus' history, with the Deuteronomistic movement in the 7th and 6th centuries BC.

Part Two (chs. 5-9) is concerned with establishing the date of the origin of the covenant concept in Israel. It examines in detail the key texts to do with 'covenant' from Exodus and Joshua, together with the covenant traditions of Judges. It considers all these sources, and how they relate to covenant traditions that have survived into later times. The book concludes that the references to covenant in Judges are genuine. Not only that, but they seem to presuppose that Hosea could have been writing post-exilic, in a time when covenant was a stock literary device.

Therefore 'covenant' pre-dates Hosea (and the Deuteronomists) by 'All in all' in the book's title: the covenant concept existed long before Yahweh and Israel originated at some point during the second half of the monarchical period' (p. 188). On Nicholas' analysis, the covenant concept existed long before Yahweh and Israel began their work, it only came into its own at their hands, as the Exod. covenant text shows.

Part Three (chs. 10-18) looks at the theological significance of 'covenant' in Israel. This theological section contains two main concerns. First, it considers the nature of the faith which was distinct. Nicholas traces a development in Israel from a religion which legitimated a divinely ordained society to a religion which was a de-legitimating agent, which challenged and relativized the idea of covenant itself. Second, Nicholas discusses the relationship between Jesus and Yahweh. This development is particularly associated with the 8th century prophets, but it came to formal and systematic expression in Israel's covenant theology. This revolution in Israelite theology, whose legacy is 'covenant', set Israel's faith apart from the world, sustaining religious of antiquity. After this revolution, Israel's faith would be set away from magic, sacrifice and ritual intended to ensure and maintain the right ordering of the world, and towards a chosen immediacy: a faith which is 'covenant'.

Students of the OT will appreciate the thoroughness with which Nicholas explores the vast field of research, and the clarity with which he presents it. If he had done more than produce an ordered account out of the chaos of theological ferment, he would have done a great deal. But while this is a major step forward, it is also a sobering reminder of the contributions of his own to the covenant controversy.

One more word before we turn to the summary. Nicholas does not always fit his argument to his data. So, Nicholas' third phase in the study of covenants is not clear in terms of covenant theology, and his discussion of covenants with parallel vassal treaties' is by no means entirely finished (see G. Wengham, 'The Date of Deuteronomy', Theol. Philos., 1985). Nicholas is able to show that covenant theology is an outgrowth of Deuteronomic school (he had already dealt with the issue in Disputes and Conclusions 299), but the discussion of covenant theology which he has in mind in this will not, perhaps, follow him in his reconstruction of the history of covenant. Even then, however, will find his survey of covenants complete, and his discussion of covenant theology complete.

The book is written with a technique that is no easy feat. It also finds Nicholas' analysis of the significance of 'covenant' ('Part Three') is quite clear and a boon to the narrative, even if they do not to find themselves in agreement with its historical aspect.

W. A. Strange, Aberystwyth.

Ernest W. Nicholson, God and His People, Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament (Oxford: University Press, 1986), vi + 244, £25.00

One of the greatest needs of OT students has been for a book which conveniently surveys the study of 'covenant' in the OT, and puts the student in touch with major insights into the Bible's book, but is extraordinarily packed with detail, a huge pageant of civilizations, kings and campaigns. The 20 pages following, by M. A. Broom and C. H. Martin, another of the author's successors, will be the most useful part of this book for students and laymen alike. The approach is tutorial, not technical, and this makes the book a useful introduction to the covenant concept in the OT. The author concludes with K. Robus writing on the traditions of the covenant. In the OT, in the close relationship of texts and ideas, in the clarity of the book's aim and structure, in the clear and careful way in which it handles the text, it is an excellent introduction to the covenant concept. The author has written a book that will be of invaluable value to the student, most people will recommend it without hesitation. It is a book that will be of value to both students and laymen alike.


This little book packs a great deal of information and discussion into its four chapters, admirably fulfilling its task of steering the student through the busy traffic of scholarly books and articles on this pair of books. In each chapter, the text is covered in detail, by a combination of summary and quotation. At the end of each chapter, we are left with a clear understanding of the book's contents. The book is recommended to anyone who wants to read about Ezra and Nehemiah, whether for a general introduction or for a more detailed study. As a helpful guide to the reader, it is a useful tool in understanding the books in question. It is recommended to anyone who wants to understand the historical and theological background of these two books. The book is well written, easy to read, and clear in its arguments. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding Ezra and Nehemiah, both for a general introduction and for a more detailed study.
Book reviews


J. A. Thompson, Handbook of Life in Bible Times (Leicester: SPCK, 1984), 384 pp., £12.95.

The "world of the Bible" is a category which may comprise a remarkable diversity of content. These two books are themselves very different in this respect.

Both, in different ways, major strongly on the OT, even to the detriment of the NT. Both have strong scholarly biases, although both are in a tradition that is a transformation of the first few volumes of a major project series. Most of the contributors are Dutch or Dutch-trained, but authors appear fairly technical, and in general represent a moderate mainstream scholarship. In the areas of its strengths, subject as ever to the reader's careful and critical use, it will be a most valuable reference tool. The problem lies in its strangely uneven coverage, and particularly in the sketchy, often abbreviated treatment of NT topics.

The book is divided into six principal sections, covering respectively geography, archaeology, writing and languages, cultural context, persons and events, and oral literature in the Near East and biblical institutions. There are wide variations between contributors in scale and approach. Thus, while J. H. Newman devotes 40 pages to a detailed, factual description of the physical and human geography of the OT, the same approach is not followed, for example, in the OT "persons" section (though the lukewarm piped water of Laodicea does not come from anywhere near the city). In contrast, the archaeology section (though on the opposite side of the valley). The two pieces on archaeology, by H. J. Frankenh and C. H. J. de Geus, are very satisfactory in their soundness on method and interpretation. J. C. de Moor offers contrasting examples in his account of languages and scripts. J. Thompson chooses to write on Greek. This is a little too brief, an excellent prolegomenon on the status of Greek in Palestine, but it effectively stops short of questions we really want answers to, such as "how did the LXX come into being?"

The NT section is the most satisfying. The NT commentary chapters are, in general, much better than the OT, and make useful selective bibliographies of more popular works and articles. There is clear and complete exposition of the NT materials. The NT section is also the one that makes the book more complete as an instruction tool for the preservice teacher and preacher. There are good and clearly arranged indexes of names, places and subjects.

Colin J. Hemin


One of the greatest needs of OT students has been for a book which conveniently surveys the study of 'covenant' in the OT, and puts the study of the "covenant" into students' hands in a comprehensible form. This is such a book.

Nicholson's book is divided into three parts. Part One (chs. 1-4) discusses the covenant as a relationship, with an emphasis on the personal, social, and political aspects. Part Two (chs. 5-9) deals with the structure of the covenant in the OT, including the historical, literary, and theological contexts. Part Three (chs. 10-13) provides a model for understanding the covenant, with an emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit. The book is well-organized, clearly written, and provides a comprehensive overview of the covenant concept in the OT.

This book is an excellent resource for students and scholars interested in the covenant concept in the OT. It provides a solid foundation for further study and research. The author's focus on the personal, social, and political aspects of the covenant, as well as his use of a model for understanding the concept, makes this book a valuable addition to the field of OT studies.

The ebb and flow of a century of OT scholarship is reflected in Irving Zeitlin’s Ancient Judaism, a book which its title and subtitle promise and a book published first as a series of articles from 1917-1919. Weber enhanced the work of 19th-century positivists who had used economics as the dominant force in understanding the social world by showing how the religious dimension was crucial if even its economic perspective was to be understood. Zeitlin, on the other hand, understood the interaction of society and ideas and believed that the 8th-century prophets worked a decisive change in the consciousness of Judaism whereby the sense of Israel’s election was centered on the reconstruction of Israel and the emergence of Judaism during and after the exile from the religious idea of the covenant. Weber, attention to the social dimension was given additional impetus by Max Weber’s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905).

The new Ancient Judaism is caught in the flow of scholarship which is challenging positions taken up by Weber. Zeitlin does not want to take that course and so it is tossed about in a rough sea. Although Zeitlin is concerned with the factors that influenced Israel’s self-understanding, he is not as sceptical as Weber about the formation of that identity prior to the emergence of the classical prophets. Thus Zeitlin emphasizes that the creation of the Israelite state in the time of the Judges was in direct resistance to the hegemony of amorality in the world. The weakening of the power of the Judges but surpassing them and Saul in his ability to focus the aspirations of Israel and transmute the tribes into a kingdom. Though Zeitlin does point out Israel’s resistance to its formalization by maintaining a social and political organization different to the one seen as dominating then the help of adopting their technology for battle. All of this reflects Zeitlin’s dispute with much 20th-century scholarship and his acceptance of a conservative view of the text.

Indeed, Zeitlin’s whole understanding of the Old Testament emphasizes the origins of ‘ethico-missional’ before the entry into Canaan and thus the formation of a distinctive nation of ‘Israel’, not as a nation of people of the God of Israel’s worship of Yahweh as a resistance to cultural adaptation to the religion of the surrounding nations, even during the exile. The significance of time and place is emphasized by himself is the protector of his covenant people. Thus the force of God’s elector is missed in a discussion which displays only part of Weber’s legacy by not giving a prominent role to the theology of the prophets.

In the current revival of interest in Weber’s thesis Zeitlin’s book may well be caught in one of the eddies a strong current produces. On the one hand, it attempts to read the text in a different way. Zeitlin’s book does not provide a clear understanding of the text’s religious context.”


In the past ten years or so Paul’s theology, especially its relationship to Judaism, has become a highly controversial topic in NT studies. In this book Watson launches into that controversy with one of the most important and adventurous contributions to date, which is sure to be highly controversial in its own right. It is not only a daring move to say that ‘the view of Paul’s controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity which derives from the Reformation is seriously misleading’ (p. 1). Watson argues that Paul’s use of law presents a ‘constructive model of interreligious discourse’ (p. 2) and that the ‘view of Paul’s controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity which derives from the Reformation is seriously misleading’ (p. 2). Watson argues that Paul’s use of law presents a ‘constructive model of interreligious discourse’ (p. 2) and that the ‘view of Paul’s controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity which derives from the Reformation is seriously misleading’ (p. 2).

The main argument of the book is that Paul’s use of law presents a ‘constructive model of interreligious discourse’ (p. 2) and that the ‘view of Paul’s controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity which derives from the Reformation is seriously misleading’ (p. 2). Watson argues that Paul’s use of law presents a ‘constructive model of interreligious discourse’ (p. 2) and that the ‘view of Paul’s controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity which derives from the Reformation is seriously misleading’ (p. 2).


Literature on the social world of the early church is a growth industry. But among the many fine works produced, this one by John Stambaugh and David Balch is a basic descriptive book of the social world in which Christianity was born, growing into a historical and sociological framework and by detailing Roman administration and law. The next two chapters deal with mobility in the ancient world and the sharing of limited resources, providing a historical description of the Jewish and rural society with which Jesus would have been familiar. The last two chapters describe the Roman world and the situation of mission which Paul conducted his mission.

The book is not a work on social structure in the broad sense. Every one is packed with fascinating detail which brings the real world of the gospels and epistles alive. The authors base their description on references to the gospels and the Acts narrative, which are not always straightforwardly obvious in their story. The evidence of the NT itself is woven into the fabric they weave, but they are not so much a historical description as a personal historical document and quoted as such. Fascinating little details emerge (the neighbourhood barbership dispered the most accessible hair cutters) and one finds oneself wishing for more. (John Stambaugh and David Balch, The Social World of the First Christians, 1980, pp. 6-65.)

John M. Gernet, University of Glasgow.

The ebb and flow of a century of OT scholarship is reflected in Irving Zeitlin’s Ancient Judaism, a book which titles its and subtitle as a work published first as a series of articles from 1917-1919. Weber enhanced the work of 19th-century positivists who had seen economics as the dominant force in human history. Zeitlin’s social theory by showing how the religious dimension was crucial if even its economic perspective was to be understood. Zeitlin observes the interaction of society and ideas and believed that the 8th-century prophets worked a decisive change in the consciousness of Judaism whereby the sense of Israel’s election the connection with the event of the reformation of Israel and the emergence of Judaism during and after the destruction of the Temple. Zeitlin notes the importance of the idea of the covenant, Weber analyzed the social function of the idea. Zeitlin notes the attention to the social dimension was given additional importance by the work of Karl Marx. The new Ancient Judaism is caught in the flow of scholarship which is now coming to be shaped by positivism. Weber did not want to take that course and so it is tossed about in a rough sea. Although Zeitlin is concerned with the factors that influenced Israel’s self-understanding, he is not as sceptical as Weber about the formation of that identity prior to the emergence of the classical prophets. This Zeitlin emphasizes that the creation of the Israelite state in the time of the Judges was in direct resistance to the hegemony of anarchic city-states. This makes the Judges a period that points out Israel’s refusal to be dominated by a social and political organization different from the local city-states it was in the process of rejecting adoption of their technology for battle. All of this reflects Zeitlin’s dispute with much 20th-century scholarship and his acceptance of a classical viewpoint of the text.

Indeed, Zeitlin’s whole understanding of the Old Testament emphasizes the origin of ‘ethical monotheism’ before the entry into Canaan and then the formation of a distinctive nation of ‘Israel’. The monotheistic understanding of Israel’s worship of Yahweh as a resistance to cultural adaptation to the religion of the surrounding nations. Even during the exile. The significance of the Jewish exiles is the emphasis that is put on himself as the protector of his covenant people. Thus the force of God’s leadership of Israel is missed in a discussion which displays only part of Weber’s legacy by not giving a prominence to the theology of the prophets.

In the current revival of interest in Weber’s thesis Zeitlin’s book may well be caught in one of the eddies a strong current produces. On the other side it is being buffeted by the strong current of social understanding of Israel’s history. The contending options in OT scholarship would give way to those who seek to embark on such a troubled sea.

Gerald Hagerty, Leicester.
Introductions should be written by masters. This one is, Ramsey, who makes it clear that this is the finest one-volume introduction to the study of the Fathers that exists. The book spares us the detailed discussion of those of Quensted and Altner/Shuler, or the surveys of early Christian doctrine like Kelly, are either too large or too technical for average beginning students or interested non-specialists. This volume, therefore, fills a great need. It fills the need well. Ramsey has organized his chapters around themes. At first his outline appears lacking since there is no single dominant treatment of the Spirit, but that concern disappears when one reads the chapter on God. My only suggestion for the plan of the book are the omission of the treatment of the Trinity of the Sacraments, and that there is no index of themes. The reason for the aids for students is that students are seldom to be found within the pages of an introduction. Not only does the first chapter describe the terms and the task, the last 27 pages of this volume offer a glossary to the Fathers, a carefully selected bibliography of works to deepen the understanding, and chronologies that juxtapose the lived time and time of each Father with important religious and historical events. Such a ready reference is so obviously how an introduction should be written.


Introductions should be written by masters. This one is Ramsey, whose clarity, consistency and common sense are matched by few. His is the finest one-volume introduction to the study of the Fathers that exists. What makes it such a delight is that he is not one of those Quaestor and Altaner/Shuler, or the surveys of early Christian doctrine like Kelly, are either too large or too technical for average beginning students or interested laypeople. This volume, therefore, fills a great need. It fills the need well. Ramsey has organized his chapters around themes. At first his outline appears lacking since there is no single treatment of the Spirit, but that concern disappears when one reads the chapter on God. My only suggestion for the plan of the book are two small things. First, the treatment of the hypostatic union of the sacraments, and that there is no index of themes. The reason for the aids for students being seldom is to be found within the pages of an introduction. Not only does the first chapter define the terms and the task, the last 27 pages are summaries of the Fathers, a carefully selected bibliography of works to deepen the understanding, and chronology that juxtaposes the life and time of each Father with important religious and historical events. Such a ready reference is so obviously welcome. It is difficult to understand why it does not appear in other introductions.

Rams were wise enough. No reviewer would agree with every turn of phrase, but giving this volume to students or friends will not increase their lack of literary sensitivity so much as theology does. To conclude: this is a fine book, a welcome volume. It is a book that considers two models for God's relationship to the world: that which sees God as the potter and the world as the clay, and that which sees the world as the potter and God as the clay. The latter model, which can be characterized as the "cosmic" view of the world, is in some ways more consistent with the biblical metaphor of the world as the potter and the clay, in that it regards God as the one who creates and shapes the world. However, the former model, which sees God as the potter and the world as the clay, is in some ways more consistent with the biblical metaphor of the world as the potter and the clay, in that it regards God as the one who creates and shapes the world.

There are a number of places where defects in Wiles's deism seem without needing the empty tomb or the resurrection appearances. He considers two models for God's relationship to the world: that sees God as the potter and the world as the clay, and that sees the world as the potter and God as the clay. The latter model, which can be characterized as the "cosmic" view of the world, is in some ways more consistent with the biblical metaphor of the world as the potter and the clay, in that it regards God as the one who creates and shapes the world. However, the former model, which sees God as the potter and the world as the clay, is in some ways more consistent with the biblical metaphor of the world as the potter and the clay, in that it regards God as the one who creates and shapes the world.
The recent resurgence of 'popular' theology, with virgin birth and resurrection exalted to headline status, has sent Christians of all confessions back to examine what they believe, and why they believe it. Consequently the labels of convenience have assumed the role of flags of allegiance within the church, and the things which divide us have become more evident to the world than those which unite. If there is to be a genuine debate within the church, there is need to abandon the theoretical stance and to move into the practical community. Interpretation of scripture and the discussion of the relationship between the church and society is not simply a question of whether we are seeking to understand the text but, in a broader context, whether we are prepared to accept what the text has to say. The book is a valuable contribution to the debate and should be read by all who are interested in the subject.
The recent resurgence of "popular" theology, with virgin birth and resurrection exalted to headline status, has sent Christians of all confessions back to examine what they believe, and why they believe it. Consequent to the the tenets of convenience have assumed the role of flags of allegiance within the church, and the things which divide us have become more evident to the world than those which unite. If there is no answer to the questions "How does one live in the fullness of the Christian community to which he belongs?" then, as now, they were the occasion for division within the Christian community.


"The main thesis of this collection of essays is that the church in the West faces a major crisis, greater even than that at the time of the Reformation. In his introduction, the editor points to the growing gulf between the 'faithful' and those who often question the church's authority. Heidar's essay calls for renewed attention to the failure of the church to attract new converts and to the increasing loss of the committed from the institutional church. The unifying theme for all the essays is that the root cause of the malaise is the church's flirtation with secular society, allowing her to lapse into secularism. Theologically, he argues that this is reflected in Augustine and Anselm especially, namely that faith must be the starting point of the church's intellectual journey rather than its hoped-for conclusion.

Wayne Hamley, a Canadian Classics Professor, tackles the issue of biblical foundations. He shows how disbelief, especially in the miraculous and the supernatural, has resulted in the distortion of biblical doctrine. The book is a call to the church to be true to its own heritage, especially because of the rapid change in today's world view. His book is a call to the church to reject popular culture and think about the essence of the Christian faith. The book is a call to the church to be true to its own heritage, especially because of the rapid change in today's world view.

This book could be a good resource for those interested in the relationship between the church and state. The book is well-written and provides a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable resource for those interested in the relationship between the church and state. The book is well-written and provides a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

James Stamooli

---

Phil Parshall, Beyond the Mosque: Christians within Muslim Community (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 256 pp., $9.95.

Dr. Phil Parshall has done a service by comparing the concept of community (ummah) in Islam and Christianity. The Arabic word ummah, said to be derived from umm, is probably related to the idea of mother. The word ummah in Islam is sometimes translated as "community," but it is not always used in that sense. In the context of this discussion, a community is a group of people who share a common goal, whether it is the salvation of the world, the spread of their religion, or some other purpose.

In the Preface the author expresses his hope that this book will be of value to the general reader, the student and the scholar alike. Yet this is a book of faith rather than of mere scholarship, and it is not written for those who are content with the absence of a domain, to deny the casual reader any easy access to its substance. Nor is it this book for the reader seeking to wrestle with theologically sophisticated issues. It provides no answer to the central question: What is the Christian experience of community? The book is written for those who want to understand the nature of the church as a community of faith, and for those who want to gain a deeper understanding of the role of the church in the world.

This collection of essays is a timely reminder of the danger of the dying Christian church that is not being given the study and resources that are needed. The church needs to be examined and understood anew if it is to remain a vital force in the world. The essays are a call to the church to return to its roots and to living out its mission in a world that is increasingly secularized. The essays are a call to the church to return to its roots and to living out its mission in a world that is increasingly secularized.

---

Vilnius-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Church and State (Grand Rapids: Cape Town: Eerdmans/Philip, 1986), xvi + 269 pp., $16.95.

The relationship between church and state has historically depended on the answer to the questions: which state, which church, which chronological age? The function of Christians as individuals and as a corporate body in relationship to the state has had many forms. While most Christians have agreed that the state is instituted by God for the good of the church, there has been much disagreement among Christians as to how this is to be achieved.

This book presents the views of some of the leading theologians in the field of church and state, including authors such as John Howard Yoder, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Karl Barth. The essays are well-written and provide a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

The book is divided roughly into two parts: Part One, "The Nature of the Church," and Part Two, "The Nature of the State." Part One examines the nature of the church and its relationship to the state, while Part Two examines the nature of the state and its relationship to the church.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable resource for those interested in the relationship between the church and state. The book is well-written and provides a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

---

James Stamooli

---


The main thesis of this collection of essays is that the church in the West faces a major crisis, greater even than that at the time of the Reformation. In his introduction, the editor points to the growing gulf between the 'faithful' and those who often question the church's authority. Heidar's essay calls for renewed attention to the failure of the church to attract new converts and to the increasing loss of the committed from the institutional church. The unifying theme for all the essays is that the root cause of the malaise is the church's flirtation with secular society, allowing her to lapse into secularism. Theologically, he argues that this is reflected in Augustine and Anselm especially, namely that faith must be the starting point of the church's intellectual journey rather than its hoped-for conclusion.

Wayne Hamley, a Canadian Classics Professor, tackles the issue of biblical foundations. He shows how disbelief, especially in the miraculous and the supernatural, has resulted in the distortion of biblical doctrine. The book is a call to the church to be true to its own heritage, especially because of the rapid change in today's world view. His book is a call to the church to reject popular culture and think about the essence of the Christian faith. The book is a call to the church to be true to its own heritage, especially because of the rapid change in today's world view.

This book could be a good resource for those interested in the relationship between the church and state. The book is well-written and provides a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable resource for those interested in the relationship between the church and state. The book is well-written and provides a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

---

James Stamooli

---


The relationship between church and state has historically depended on the answer to the questions: which state, which church, which chronological age? The function of Christians as individuals and as a corporate body in relationship to the state has had many forms. While most Christians have agreed that the state is instituted by God for the good of the church, there has been much disagreement among Christians as to how this is to be achieved.

This book presents the views of some of the leading theologians in the field of church and state, including authors such as John Howard Yoder, Wolfhart Pannenberg, and Karl Barth. The essays are well-written and provide a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

The book is divided roughly into two parts: Part One, "The Nature of the Church," and Part Two, "The Nature of the State." Part One examines the nature of the church and its relationship to the state, while Part Two examines the nature of the state and its relationship to the church.

In conclusion, this book is a valuable resource for those interested in the relationship between the church and state. The book is well-written and provides a clear and concise understanding of the issues involved.

---

James Stamooli
Chapter 4 deals with the Structure of Christian Community. It draws material from mainly North American Protestant evangelicalism and is somewhat limited and inadequate in both its voice and the range of its examples and illustrations. The Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Episcopal churches.

It is not surprising that the one most interested in Jesus' work is Phil Parish, who has no doubt that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Phil Parish has to say in his concluding chapter on Christian Presence within the Muslim Community. A lot of this is surprising about the knowledge of the differences and the understanding of the differences, which is a new and useful experience of the differences.

It is not surprising that the one most interested in Jesus' work is Phil Parish, who has no doubt that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Phil Parish has to say in his concluding chapter on Christian Presence within the Muslim Community. A lot of this is surprising about the knowledge of the differences and the understanding of the differences, which is a new and useful experience of the differences.

As an overview and evaluation of these counselling assumptions, aims, methods and theories, this book is first rate. It is difficult to find in North American books but I have ordered copies from England and hope to review these in a future issue. I would like to thank the editor for this study book carefully. Our students will surely profit from the results of these studies.

Gary R. Collins, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Cyril J. Barber, The Minister’s Library (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 510 pp., £19.95

While a big library is no sure sign of success in the ministry, it is imperative that the minister continues to study so that he may grow in his maturity as a leader in his church. This book gives us a list of books that are useful for research but may not meet the need of the busy minister. It is a valuable resource for preachers, and the material, also focuses on the books useful for ministry. Basically an introduction to the subject, this book and others are good. This book is the third and a complete introduction to the subject, and I believe that this book should have a copy of this book available for reference and many might decide it worth adding to their own library.

Theodore W. Giese, Theological German: A Reader (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 454 pp., £32.50

While translations are useful, there are occasions when one must read the text in the original. For those who need to read German, this book will be a valuable resource. The book has a comprehensive list of books, and the book is an excellent resource for those who need to read German, and the book is recommended for inclusion in a theological library. The book should have a copy of this book available for reference and many might decide it worth adding to their own library.
BOOK REVIEWS

A. S. van der Woude The World of the Bible (Colin J. Hemer)
Ernest W. Nicholson God and His People, Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament (W. A. Strange)
H. G. M. Williamson Ezra and Nehemiah (Derek Kidner)
Irving M. Zeitlin Ancient Judaism — Biblical Criticism from Max Weber to the Present (Gerald Hagner)
P. Watson Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: A Sociological Approach (John M. G. Barclay)
John Stambaugh and David Balch The Social World of the First Christians (Derek J. Tidball)
Boniface Ramsey Beginning to Read The Fathers (Frederick W. Norris)
Maurice Wiles God’s Action in the World (Richard Sturch)
Paul K. Jewett Election and Predestination (Gordon Palmer)
Oliver O’Donovan On the Thirty-Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity (Gerald Bray)
Alan P. F. Sell Theology in Turmoil. The Roots, Course and Significance of the Conservative-Liberal Debate in Modern Theology (Trevor Hart)
William Oddie After The Deluge: Essays Towards the Desecularization of the Church (John S. Went)
Charles Villa-Vicencio Between Christ and Caesar: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Church and State (James J. Stambaugh)
Phil Parshall Beyond the Mosque: Christians within Muslim Community (Vivienne Stacey)
Alastair V. Campbell A Dictionary of Pastoral Care (Derek J. Tidball)
Roger F. Hurding Roots and Shoots: A Guide to Counselling and Psychotherapy (Gary R. Collins)

In this issue

Editorials: Marriage and singleness in Paul and today; Jesus in history

Justification: the new ecumenical debate
Alister McGrath

Go therefore and make disciples . . .
Hans Kvalbein

The Paulinism of Acts again
David Wenham

Theological trends in Asia
Bong Rin Ro

Two review articles: Pseudonymity; Isaiah

Book reviews and notes

An international journal for theological students
75p
Vol. 13 No. 2