for God is ‘from Eternity full of Want. He made us Want like GODS.’ (quoted, 266). Inge carefully unravels Traherne’s complex and rich theological vocabulary, her own book a triumph of systematic clarity. Perhaps more now is needed to establish her insights in the context of theological thinking in the past century so that Traherne continues to emerge as the undoubtedly significant and original theologian and poet that he is.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY


The first edition of this important textbook was published in 1982, rapidly followed by a second, slightly expanded edition in 1985. Any sense of anticipation surrounding this third edition, however, is quickly disappointed. The content is almost identical to the second, with only light revisions to the prefix and the description of contributors evidencing change: this is more truthfully a reprint than a new edition.

The book results from a collaborative venture around 30 years ago to describe the traditions and tasks of theology, and boasts an impressive and varied list of contributors. Each of the central chapters explores one doctrine: its patristic, medieval, and Reformation formulations; its interrogations by and responses to Enlightenment thinking; its nineteenth- and twentieth-century revisions; and finally its ‘contemporary’ constructive responsibilities. In respect of the latter, the chapters broadly attest the view that developments in late twentieth-century thinking represent a challenge to Christian theology comparable to that of the Enlightenment (270, cf. 27). The correct response — according to the difficult consensus the group ‘eventually’ achieved (ix) — lies in a ‘mutually critical correlation between an interpretation of the Christian tradition and an interpretation of the contemporary situation’ (36). With this assertion, the ‘classic’ paradigm of theology — along with many of its central truth claims and its understanding of Scripture — seems finally to be deemed untenable (389).

As a potential introduction to theology for today, the book evidences three major flaws. First, it reads as a work of the past: references to the ‘emerging discussion of narrative theology’ (135), ‘Käsemann and the new quest’ (239), and ‘contemporary European Marxists’ (316) all betray a volume written a generation ago. Correspondingly, there is no sense of the complex geopolitical and religious situation of the early twenty-first century, and no ‘Suggestions for Further Reading’ published after 1994 (the occasion of a previous revision). Second, it fails to explore (or predict!) some of the characteristics which have marked systematic theology in the past twenty-five years — for example, the resurgence of the doctrine of the Trinity, the rise of the theological and ecclesial interpretation of Scripture, and the emergence of pentecostal theologies. Finally, in its constructive commitment to a correlationist methodology which seeks to reinterpret and revise the Christian tradition at every turn, it is not always clear that other approaches to Christian theology are given sufficient attention. This is not to pre-judge different methodologies; merely to observe that an introductory text may require greater breadth.

As an account of issues facing theology 25 years ago and of the response of one group of thinkers to those issues, this volume represents an interesting, thought-provoking, and historically illuminating account. As an introduction to Christian theology for readers today, there may be better alternatives.

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STARTING NEW TESTAMENT STUDY: LEARNING AND DOING


Chilton and Good’s Starting New Testament Study is a well-designed and appropriately aimed introduction to NT studies. In a sense it functions as a crash course for those taking their first steps into the academic study of the NT, providing a sweeping
overview of the social world of first-century Palestine, the towns to which Jesus travelled, the relationship between Paul and his churches, and many other background issues which provide a solid foundation for further studies. Readers will be introduced not merely to the writings of the NT, but to the places in which it took place, the people with whom it is concerned, and the world from which it emerged.

This scope is reflected in the first chapter as Chilton and Good discuss the first-century social world of Jesus (e.g., the rule of Herod Antipas and rural Galilee). In chapter two Paul and his letters are covered. Here the authors focus on Paul’s upbringing in Tarsus and its implications for his education, call to apostleship, and the letters he wrote to his fledgling churches (including those allegedly written by others in his name). The gospels are the subject of chapter three, which begins with a helpful introduction of the sources of the canonical gospels. Finally, in chapter four the catholic letters and apocalyptic writings of the NT are treated.

Overall this short book suits its purposes. Its chief strength is its aim to introduce undergraduate students to the field of NT studies generally rather than the individual NT writings. In terms of weaknesses, occasionally the authors’ own views come through too strongly for a work of introductory nature. For instance, Ephesians and Colossians are uncritically introduced as letters written by Timothy in Paul’s name. Such a view surely fails to acquaint readers with the ongoing and heated debate within the NT guild on Pauline authorship. That said, the book is well-tailored to introduce debutants to elementary matters in the study of the NT.

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TREGELES’ EDITION OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT


Samuel Prideaux Tregelles was one of the great independent biblical scholars of the mid-nineteenth century. He is perhaps best known for his edition of the Greek New Testament, initially published in separate fascicles between 1857 and 1872. The broadly contemporaneous edition of Tischendorf overshadowed the work of Tregelles, so it may be asked if the decision to re-issue is no more than the ready provision of an historical oddity, or of an obsolete edition. There are various reasons why such perspectives should be resisted. While the significance of Tregelles’ edition was diminished by that of Tischendorf, it needs to be seen as contributing to wider efforts to bring about the replacement of the Textus Receptus by a more ancient text. Therefore, in the development of the discipline of textual criticism, Tregelles’ edition was influential in formulating new methods and principles for selecting variant readings that allowed subsequent scholarship to move beyond an ill-founded ideological commitment to a late form of the Byzantine text. The apparatus presented by Tregelles is still useful in conjunction with those of more recent editions (such as NA27) since it preserves variants not found in some of the common hand-editions. This edition also needs to be viewed in its historical context as an expression of the confident, yet critical scholarship that set the agenda for a more thoroughgoing scientific approach to New Testament studies.

This re-edition forms part of the recently-launched Cambridge Library Collection which reissues out-of-copyright scholarly books (www.cambridge.org/cle). Like Tregelles original edition, this printing is published in five parts, encompassing the seven volumes. The first part contains Matthew and Mark (originally published in 1857); the second part (1861) contains Luke and John and refers to a more extensive range of witnesses including Mai’s edition of Vaticanus and Tischendorf’s publication of Sinaiticus although these have not been incorporated in a systematic manner. However, for the third part (1865) containing Acts and the Catholic Epistles, these two manuscripts along with Scrivener’s transcription of Bezae are fully utilized. The fourth part contains the Pauline Epistles from Romans to 2 Thess