

Book Reviews

The Making of Modern English Theology: God and the Academy at Oxford, 1833-1945. By Daniel Inman. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014, Pp. xii, 334. \$34.00, paper); *Theology and Society in Three Cities: Berlin, Oxford and Chicago, 1800-1914.* By Mark D. Chapman. (Cambridge, UK: James Clarke & Co, 2014, Pp. viii, 152. \$50.00, paper.)

Daniel Inman, chaplain of The Queen's College, Oxford, discusses the development of the teaching of religion at Oxford from 1833 to 1945. His book ends with an epilogue that updates the subject to the present time. At the beginning of this period, Oxford's tradition had been to require all undergraduates to pass an examination in divinity. The "Divvers" exam asked for detailed knowledge of the Gospels in Greek, Bible history, the Thirty-Nine Articles, and Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion* (London: Eaton & Mains, 1736). The Tractarians preferred a more specialized teaching of theology that aligned with their Anglo-Catholic view of the traditional church in little colleges like Ripon. They were opposed by an interesting alliance of broad church, evangelical, and high church clergy who advocated religious instruction for all students.

The Tractarian project ultimately failed. The epilogue of *The Making of Modern Theology*, "From 'Sacra Theologia' to 'Theology and Religion,'" notes how Newman and Pusey's belief that theology was "a *habitus* that enculturated wisdom and informed character was not, in the end, an idea that persisted in the nineteenth-century university" (288). But the general student population also received less and less grounding in Christian faith. Inman notes that the popular Christian writer C. S. Lewis had little influence on theological teaching at Oxford compared to the vastly less famous Austin Farrar (255). Thus, while the university produced one of the most influential Christian apologists of the twentieth century, Lewis' works on "mere Christianity" were little appreciated by his

colleagues, who preferred to teach Christianity as an academic subject alongside other religions.

Even though Inman's book developed from an Oxford D.Phil. thesis, it is quite readable; the load is further lightened by interesting quotations along the way. For example, Inman cites the nonconformist theologian Andrew Fairbairn's observation that at Oxford in 1888: "Two forces are supreme, the Anglican Church and Modern Agnosticism." The Church, in Fairbairn's view, "tends evermore to a higher sacerdotalism, while [agnosticism] tends as inevitably to fastidious indifference or simple negation" (186). More than a century-and-a-quarter later, interest in liturgy and clergy still increases; ironically, at the same time, indifference to religion also continues to grow.

Mark Chapman is vice principal of the afore-mentioned Ripon College and reader in modern theology at the University of Oxford. He begins and ends his history a generation earlier than Inman's. The book is a revised version of the Hensley Henson lectures delivered at Oxford in 2013; in addition to discussing his own university, Chapman offers comparisons with the Universities of Berlin and Chicago. While the lecture format leads to somewhat rough transitions from chapter to chapter, the theme of doctrinal compromise unifies the book. Chapman claims that the history of the church is the history of compromise; a dogmatic church that never changes cannot prosper over time (6). In the University of Berlin in the nineteenth century, Friedrich Schleiermacher and other professors felt that it was their duty to make theology an intellectually respectable field of study—one of many branches of learning. For example, Schleiermacher claimed that "supernatural causality" should be excluded from academic lectures (36)—a principle that would be widely accepted in secular universities today. In Berlin, the study of religion was held to be "objective"; non-believers must be able to be equal participants with believers in religion courses. In the end, then, it was much more convenient to teach the history of theology than to defend religious doctrines.

At the University of Oxford during the same period, broad church leaders were more sympathetic to this development than other parties in the Church of England. Chapman writes, So

education in this sense became "the most characteristic feature of mid-Victorian religious life" (61). Benjamin Jowett's contribution to the controversial *Essays and Reviews* (London: Longman Green, 1860) provides further evidence of the advance of the liberal position. He made two claims that were contentious at the time but are widely accepted today. First, biblical scholarship should not be seen as a threat to faith, since divine truth can be found within and outside the Christian tradition. Second, the Bible can be interpreted like any other book. As a result, dogmatic theology became secondary to individual and social ethics.

At the same time at the University of Chicago, metaphysics also was discouraged, and the social gospel was advocated instead. As the famed Chicago professor, J. Graham Morgan, noted, "The Social Gospel and early sociology were often indistinguishable in terms of both ideas and personnel" (95). In all three cities, the need for compromise reduced theology to a social behavior. Chapman claims that such sacrifices of principle are necessary because religious truths are "situated:" the "timeless truths" of theology are inevitably expressed in a secular world. As he concludes, "there never was a time when there was no secular." As a result, "theology, religion and the church are all products of compromise between the heavenly and the earthly" (100).

Like Inman, Chapman offers interesting comments from contemporary sources. He cites the Bishop of London A. C. Tait's sardonic (and by no means outdated) opinion, following the publication of the liberal *Essays and Reviews*, that, "The great evil is that the liberals are deficient in religion and the religious are deficient in liberality" (74). He also records Chicago's Professor Matthews' provocative opinion that, "The prevention of tuberculosis and syphilis is quite as much an element of duty as the maintenance of church-going" (96). Ultimately, both books give evidence of the decline of the importance of religion in the education of undergraduates in particular and in Western intellectual life in general. Inman describes the institutional changes contributing to this decline in great detail. Chapman's work highlights trends in academe such as the influence of sociology on

Christianity and the need to compromise with the secular world that remain important today.

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The History of American Higher Education. By Roger L. Geiger. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015, Pp. xviii, 564. \$35.00.)

Roger L. Geiger, distinguished professor of higher education at Pennsylvania State University, has written a work that promises to be definitive. This encyclopedic book is as readable as it is thorough, drawing upon voluminous monographs and articles. No pedantic study, it places the history of colleges and universities in the context of broader political, economic, and social trends, the author always showing a firm grasp of the general American narrative.

The book is worthy of a review-essay such as found in *The New York Review of Books* and of necessity this critique must be brief. Geiger starts with the colonial and revolutionary eras, then shows the positive impact of the Second Great Awakening and of the Morrill Act of 1862, which established land-grant institutions for many states. He traces the development of graduate education and such professional schools as law, business, and medicine during the Gilded Age and Progressive era. Particularly fascinating is his treatment of the “collegiate revolution” that peaked in the 1920s, during which athleticism, extracurricular activities, and Greek-letter societies dominated the life of the pervasive “gentleman scholars.” Geiger does much with the religious founding of many institutions, beginning with Harvard College in 1636 and manifesting itself with greatest intensity from 1820 to 1840. Though the great wave of church-related colleges subsided by the time of the Civil War, the interdenominational Young Men’s Christian Association played a crucial role in an increasingly secular academe, joining a traditional religiosity to a collegiate version of “muscular Christianity.”

Devotees of Anglican history may focus on some of Geiger’s findings. During its formative years, the College of William and Mary, founded in 1693 by the liberal priest James Blair, was little more than a finishing school. Producing no graduates, its primary