

Perhaps the richness of that discussion can best be indicated by mentioning his introductory setting of the issues where a careful analysis of Kant's position is compared with Buddhist treatments of Nibanna in both of which strict causal determinism for the world is juxtaposed with a linguistic paradigm that creates a freedom for human beings that stands above such an apparently rigid frame (10–17). Although Kant then disappears from the discussion with scholars such as Chalmers, Downes, McGilchrist, and Rorty taking his place, it could be argued that Kant is an influence throughout, and that despite Williams's advocacy of a very different approach to questions of truth-telling, and that is because moral concerns are central throughout his discussion. Although God is initially presented as the overarching frame to the search for coherence in language in general (xi–xiii), from the book as a whole it is clear that such a being's relevance is essentially to be encountered at points of difficulty, in progress towards the dispossession of self as a clearer perception of the world's true interrelations is sought.

The book therefore ends with the declaration that God is to be found in silence and what is described at one point as 'non-experience' (177). Such an emphasis has been a recurring theme in Cambridge theology, notably in Mackinnon, Lash and Turner. But it would seem to me a mistake to run the two halves of the argument into one. The representational or symbolic character of language may well raise questions about the possibility of God without it necessarily following that it will only do so at the margins and even then only negatively. Undoubtedly, that is sometimes the case but why should one make it a general rule? Perhaps Williams has been misled here by his desire to make a general claim about language. There is only a fleeting discussion of metaphor in some fine comments about 'weeping skies' (22). But, granted that every metaphor and figure of speech is an attempt to go beyond where speakers at present find themselves, does not every act of the imagination have the potential to carry those speakers into that greater beyond in which the divine may manifest itself? Certainly, that is no less a biblical perspective than the one on which Williams chooses to focus so exclusively.

DAVID BROWN

© 2015, David Brown

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2015.1020008>

David Brown is Wardlaw Professor of Theology, Aesthetics and Culture and Professorial Fellow in the Institute for Theology, Imagination & the Arts (ITIA), University of St Andrews. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2002 and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 2012.

The Making of Modern English Theology: God and the Academy at Oxford, 1833–1945

DANIEL INMAN

Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2014

'Little keys open large doors.' This frequently offered advice to doctoral students applies significantly to Daniel Inman's readable, engaging and thorough study of the development of the Faculty of Theology at Oxford from divinity professors, who were seen as contributing to the Christian character of the University as a whole, to the contemporary re-naming of the Faculty as a Faculty of Theology and Religion. It is a fascinating story,

which could well be characterised by Newman's dictum that theology advances 'by saying and unsaying to positive effect'.

Inman begins by reminding us of the French Revolution's conviction that the university 'had no more place in the new age than monasteries, serfdom or slavery'. For the supporters of the Revolution, the French universities were to be destroyed because they were 'the training grounds for those defending the religious and political orthodoxies of the eighteenth-century' (1). In England, though there was not a revolution, the 1830s saw significant changes to the confessional state, which were catalytic in the Oxford Movement's call to a renewal of Anglican identity. As confessional and collegiate universities, with strong historical links to the Church of England, and providing such training as there was for the ordained ministry, Oxford and Cambridge were inevitably places where battles were fought over the place of theology in the university and its character. The continental model of the new university, seen particularly in Humboldt's creation of the University of Berlin, and Schleiermacher's defence of the place of theology within it, was viewed with suspicion by English defenders of the faith. Henry Longueville Mansel's skit, *Phrontisterion* (1852),¹ with its chorus of high-kicking German professors entering with the words:

Professors we, from over the sea,
From the land where Professors in plenty be;
And we thrive and flourish, as well we may,
From a land that produced one Kant with a K,
And many Cants with a C,²

points sharply to the English resistance to research-orientated Faculties of Theology seen as opening the door to reductionist analysis which would undermine the sense of theology as dealing with revealed truth.

In Oxford the controversy, led by Pusey, Newman and other Tractarians, over the appointment of the liberal Renn Dickson Hampden as Regius Professor of Divinity, sets the stage for what was to be a long war of attrition in the defence of Theology as an overarching umbrella over all university studies rather than a subject with its place within the study of humanities. Inman traces this through the reform of Oxford by University Commissions, the rearguard action fought over many years by Pusey in particular, to the institution of a Faculty of Theology in 1868, to the shifting stance of the *Lux Mundi* school in the 1880s, and continual controversies over the appointment of examiners, and the admission of non-Anglicans to Divinity degrees. When in the early years of the twentieth century a radical reform was proposed by Scott Holland, then Regius Professor, and others for a faculty free from denominational tests which would encompass the analysis of the 'religious phenomena of humanity' and their outworking in the facts of historical and personal experience, it was voted down by clerical and other conservatives in Convocation (the body of all Masters of Arts) who had at the time a definitive say.

Scott Holland's successor as Regius Professor, Arthur Cayley Headlam, later to be Bishop of Gloucester and a significant Anglican voice on the ecumenical scene, pursued an ecumenical ideal in the development of the faculty, but with Anglicans still having a privileged place, through Canon Professorships and Chaplain Fellowships. It laid the foundations for, over time, a unique negotiated solution to the evolution of a Theology

¹Mansel, *Letters, Lectures and Reviews*, 392–408.

²*Ibid.*, 401.

Faculty which was able to be both a place of rigorous analysis as part of the humanities, but also open in its traditional syllabus to significant components of ordination training. Even in comparatively recent times the lack of study of church history and historical theology after the Council of Chalcedon reflected Anglican roots which gave a special status to the 'undivided' church of the early centuries.

The unique trajectory of Oxford's development, as also that of Cambridge, has resulted in an ecumenical faculty unlike the confessional faculties of German universities. As a member of the Faculty Board in Oxford when visitors came from the University of Bonn, with whom a twinning relationship had been developed, I can remember the surprise of those from Bonn that the chair of the Faculty Board had been in succession, a Jesuit, a Baptist, an Orthodox, and an Anglican, in stark contrast to the separate Protestant and Catholic Faculties of Germany.

The addition of the study of non-Christian religions to the traditional study of Christian theology is but the latest development in a long and significant story from the understanding, as Inman puts it, summarising Newman and Pusey's ideal, that theology was 'a *habitus* that encultured wisdom and formed character', 'training the Christian gentleman', rather than a specialised area of the humanities (288). Today there are new challenges, most particularly – as Inman notes, citing a trenchant article by Nigel Biggar, the current Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology – the pressures of government, where demands for demonstrating usefulness, 'connotes a shrunken, materialistic, utilitarian understanding of human goods'. 'The usefulness of knowledge sought by the late-capitalist society is "pinched, anaemic and degrading"' (90)³

Daniel Inman is to be congratulated on a balanced and significant piece of work demonstrating that large questions for the nature and character of the study of theology have arisen continually in the evolution of the Oxford Faculty of Theology – questions which, although presenting in particular forms in Oxford's unique historical setting, are sharp, contemporary questions for both the churches and theology. Little keys do indeed open large doors.

Bibliography

- Biggar, Nigel. 'What Are Universities For?'. In *Theology and Human Understanding: Essays in Honour of Timothy J. Gorringer*, ed. M. Highton, with J. Law, and C. Rowlands, 239–50. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2011.
- Mansel, H.L. *Letters, Lectures and Reviews, including the Phrontisterion, of Oxford in the Nineteenth-Century*. London: John Murray, 1873.

GEOFFREY ROWELL

© 2015, Geoffrey Rowell

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1474225X.2015.1020010>

Geoffrey Rowell is an Emeritus Fellow of Keble College, Oxford, who taught church history and theology at Oxford from 1972 to 1993. He is the author of a number of books on the Oxford Movement, notably *The Vision Glorious* (1983), and wrote the chapter on the founding of Keble College for the *History of the University of Oxford*, which engages with some of the issues of confessional identity analysed by Daniel Inman.

³Citing Biggar, 'What Are Universities For?'