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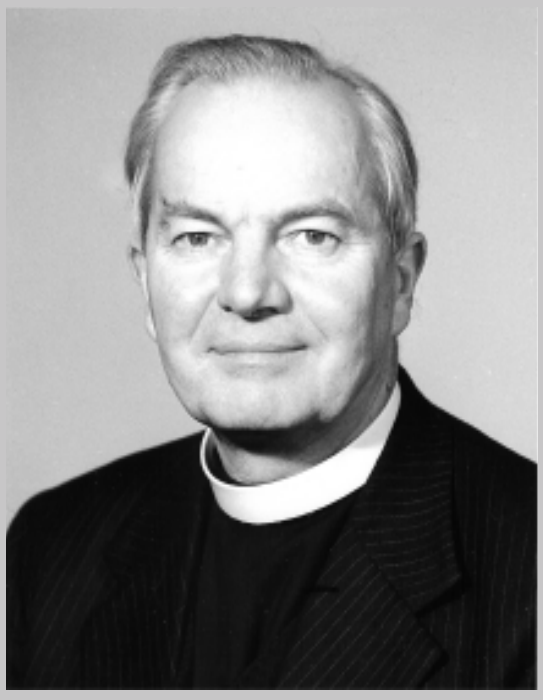
# *Participatio*

## *Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship*



## Supp. Vol. 1 (2011)

***Participatio*** is the journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship (www.tftorrance.org), a research fellowship within the Christian Church and tradition based on the theology of Thomas F. Torrance. The journal's mission is two-fold: to apprehend the significance of Torrance's work and to advance his evangelical and scientific theology for the benefit of the Church, academy, and society.

**Participatio: The Journal of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship** is published as an annual, peer-reviewed, online journal. Researchers interested in engaging the theology of T. F. Torrance may submit manuscripts in accordance with the policies specified below. Contributions from diverse disciplines and perspectives will be encouraged to explore the wide-ranging significance of Torrance's legacy. Occasional miscellaneous issues will include paper presentations and responses from the annual conference, book reviews, etc. For more information see www.tftorrance.org

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ISSN: 1932-9571

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# TRIBUTE AND REVIEW

## RAY S. ANDERSON (1925–2009)

***Christian D. Kettler***
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### Maverick Theologian

Ray S. Anderson, one of Tom Torrance's most constructive and prolific students, passed away on Father's Day, June 21, 2009.[1] Professor of theology and ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary for many years, Anderson was a theologian who never ceased to be a pastor. Whatever one's status as ordained or layperson, whatever one's denomination or Christian heritage, Ray Anderson offers many exciting and sometimes provocative things to say. I speak as a student of Anderson's, beginning at Fuller but extending over many years. When reading almost any of his many books, I am always struck both by his depth of insight and his almost playful joy in the ministry of theology. Theology is ministry, the ministry of meditating upon the gospel of the unconditional grace of God in Jesus Christ; but ministry is also theology — ministry, the ministry of God, always precedes and governs theology.[2]

For over thirty years, Ray Anderson quietly produced a body of work that is remarkable in its ability to awaken both the academy and the church to a theology that actually intersects with the ministry of the church, and to a view of

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1 This essay first appeared in another form as a eulogy for Ray Anderson in "Faith and Theology," the blog of Benjamin Myers, Lecturer in Systematic Theology at Charles Sturt University in Sydney, Australia (http://faith-theology.blogspot.com/2009/06/ray-s-anderson-1925-2009.html) and is reproduced with permission. The author also wishes to thank the editor of the journal, Todd Speidell, and the anonymous reader for invaluable help in sharpening the essay for further publication.

2 Ray S. Anderson, "A Theology for Ministry" in *Theological Foundations for Ministry,* ed. Ray S. Anderson (Edinburgh and Grand Rapids: T&T Clark and Eerdmans, 1979), 7, 20.

ministry that dwells in a deep place of theological reflection. I regret that I will be unable to replicate the spark of playfulness and intellectual restlessness that characterizes Anderson's writings, lectures, and sermons. Donald Mackinnon, the noted Cambridge theologian, spoke of this "nervous, restless quality" that is present even in Anderson's doctoral dissertation (later published as *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God*).[3] For many years, Anderson's lectures were a refuge of grace for weary seminary students who were bounced back and forth between studying critical academic disciplines and learning pastoral ministry skills, with little integration of the two. Above all, when in the midst of personal crises, students found in Anderson's lectures (and pastoral counsel) grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). Unconditional grace was not merely a doctrine for Anderson but also the way he responded to people, even in their weaker moments. For what Anderson meant by a theology of ministry was not simply a thin veneer of Bible verses justifying the typical, prosaic ministry program of a local church. Rather, his theology of ministry was truly *incarnational*: the Word penetrates deeply into our flesh (John 1:14), the flesh of the whole person, and becomes involved in our spiritual, emotional, and physical turmoil. That is where Jesus Christ has met us and continues to meet us, not in a ministry of our own creation but through our participation in his continuing ministry, *God's ministry*.

In recent years Anderson had found more dialogue with Christian psychologists than theologians (perhaps attesting to a fear among theologians of their own humanity?). This had born fruit in a remarkable issue of *Edification: Journal of the Society for Christian Psychology*, in which Anderson's article, "Toward a Holistic Psychology: Putting All the Pieces in Their Proper Place," was followed by several responses from psychologists, philosophers, and theologians.[4] This kind of critical interaction demonstrates the stimulation that Anderson's thought can provide for all three groups of scholars and also benefits all of those involved in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

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3 Donald Mackinnon, foreword to Ray S. Anderson, *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), ix.

4 Ray S. Anderson, "Toward a Holistic Psychology: Putting All the Pieces in their Proper Place," *Edification: Journal of the Society for Christian Psychology* 1, no. 2 (2007); cf. Peter M. Young, "The Ontological Self in the Thinking of C. Stephen Evans and Ray S. Anderson" (doctoral diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991).

This compulsion to inhabit the intersection between theology and ministry made Anderson somewhat of a theological maverick. And for all of Anderson's commitment to community, there was a great freedom in his theology to be a maverick, to be oneself and go against the grain. J. G. Hamann and Dag Hammarskjöld are two iconoclasts Anderson liked to quote. As such, he presented an interesting portrait of the maverick theologian in the midst of community — which is not an easy venture, as his former colleagues and students will attest!

Good theology is not just a display of erudition, as Thomas Torrance once told me. Ray Anderson was not a church historian, biblical scholar, or philosopher in the guise of a theologian. Rather, he was an unapologetically "restless" theologian in service to the church of Jesus Christ. Good theology is faithfulness to Jesus Christ and demonstrates that faithfulness with the kind of "nervous, restless quality" of mind by which Donald Mackinnon described Anderson's thought. But Anderson was doubly challenging in that he refused to allow for a theology that does not partake, like the incarnation, of actual human flesh, the human flesh of human dilemmas, perplexities, and ambiguity. I well remember Ray telling a class that one must always be open to a "doctrine of ambiguity." How difficult it was for us conservative evangelical students to hear that! But we came to realize that this ambiguity exists in our limited and fallen understandings, not in God.

Anderson's influences were many and profound, and include Edward Carnell, Kierkegaard, the philosopher John Macmurray, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas Torrance, James Torrance, and the interdisciplinary work of Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death*. Anderson was probably the first English-speaking theologian (in his dissertation, published in 1975) to recognize the profound theological anthropology and ecclesiology in the work of Greek Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas. As such, Anderson provides an interesting case study of American evangelicalism at mid-twentieth century, when some were trying to provide an intellectual alternative not only to fundamentalism but also to the rationalistic theology presented by such early Fuller Seminary professors as Carl F. H. Henry. Anderson's critique of Henry is both telling and insightful.[5] Anderson's place, an often controversial one, in the modern history of Fuller Seminary and American evangelicalism is worth further study. This is especially

5 Ray S. Anderson, "Evangelical Theology," in *The Modern Theologians,* ed. David F. Ford, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 489–95.

true of his and Geoffrey Bromiley's attempts to present Karl Barth's theology to Fuller evangelicals, who were often more interested in promoting a Christian "worldview" or church growth techniques than in learning from and building upon Barth's radical evangelical theology.[6]

When one reads Anderson one will be struck with the sheer *humanity* of his theology. The incarnation is not just an orthodox or abstract doctrine for him. Two "Rays" have been very influential on my life and thought: Ray Anderson and the fantasy writer Ray Bradbury, author of *Fahrenheit 451* and *The Martian Chronicles.* Bradbury's writings have a profound humanity yet always with a sense of wonder and respect for the divine. In a way, just as Ray Bradbury has brought a sense of God into the humanity of fantasy and science fiction

6 See Richard Mouw's, Colin Brown's and Richard Muller's less than enthusiastic comments about the Barth centennial in 1986 ("Now That the Party Is Over Was Karl Barth That Good?" *Reformed Journal* 37, no. 3 (March 1987): 16–22; and Ray Anderson's satirical response to their criticisms in the same journal, 37, no. 5 (May 1987): 6–8. Anderson once said that criticisms of Barth are easy, like shooting an elephant; you're bound to hit something! The contribution of Anderson to evangelicals' reevaluation of Barth is discussed in Phillip R. Thorne, *Evangelicalism and Karl Barth: His Reception and Influence in North American Evangelical Theology*, Princeton Theological Monographs 40 (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1995), 117–23. Cf. John Lewis, "The Formative Influence of Karl Barth in the Theology of Ray S. Anderson," *Colloquium* 37, no. 1 (May 2005): 27–44, and *Karl Barth in North America: The Influence of Karl Barth in the Making of a New North American Evangelicalism* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2009). Anderson was included in the "notorious" company of those attacked by Harold Lindsell in "the battle for the Bible" debate over biblical inerrancy in the 1970s, as found in Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979). Lindsell bizarrely speaks of Anderson's view of God as a Kantian agnosticism! A more positive response to Anderson on transcendence is found in Kenneth Surin, *The Turnings of Darkness and Light: Essays in Philosophical and Systematic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 186–89. See also "Foreword: An Appreciation" by Kenneth Surin, *On Being Christian . . . and Human: Essays in Celebration of Ray S. Anderson,* ed. Todd H. Speidell (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 6–8. Surin relates that it was the archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams who first led him to Anderson's *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God.* Williams's review of that book is found in the *Downside Review* 94, no. 316 (July 1976): 236–39.

writing, Ray Anderson has brought a sense of humanity into the field of theology. Anderson's writings have that same respect for humanity that Bradbury's do for the divine.

## Life and Labor

Born on a South Dakota farm, Anderson came from the soil of the very human and practical endeavor of the farmer, and he transplanted that humanity into the struggles of American evangelicalism. While a young farmer himself, Anderson listened to one of the most successful early radio evangelists, Charles E. Fuller, and his program, "The Old Fashioned Revival Hour." Anderson eventually left farming and moved his family to Pasadena, California, to enroll in Fuller's relatively new theological seminary. There Anderson found a form of the American revivalist tradition that had become preoccupied with correcting its intellectual and cultural deficiencies — now calling itself "evangelicalism." These sons (at that time almost exclusively male) of evangelists sought to avoid the parochialism and obscurantism of their fundamentalist forebears while holding fast to what they perceived to be the eternal faith. The influence of Edward J. Carnell — a restless, iconoclastic, and troubled evangelical professor at Fuller — stimulated the young farmer-turned-seminarian to move beyond merely regurgitating the new "evangelicalism."

Planting a new Evangelical Free Church congregation in Covina, California, exposed Anderson to the experience of being a young pastor. "Restless" is indeed the word that seems to have characterized Ray in his early days in ministry. During this time of living with the raw realities of a congregation and the stereotypical expectations of a "reverend," Anderson found himself jotting down brief "musings," as he would later call them: theological notes of a daring faith that sought to think beyond the stereotypes of ministry and theology. Published much later as *Soulprints* (1996), this theology in the midst of ministry would be hashed out in the context of the increasingly alienated culture of the 1960s. The result was a ministry that sought consciously to be incarnational, less concerned with success than with the redemption of human beings trapped in an alienating world.[7]

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7 In 1964, while a pastor in Covina, California, Anderson published a series of lively messages on the statement of faith of the Evangelical Free Church titled *Like Living Stones* (Minneapolis: Free Church Press, 1964).

Midlife took Anderson to Scotland for a PhD in theology at the University of Edinburgh under noted theologian Thomas F. Torrance. Torrance, a student of Karl Barth, provided for Anderson a theology that would put into words what he had come to experience in Covina: an incarnational ministry that drove one to ask new questions of God. The result was his doctoral dissertation, *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God,* published in 1975. Borrowing deeply from Dietrich Bonhoeffer and John Macmurray, Anderson sought to orient the doctrine of God in an increasingly skeptical age to a view of transcendence that is not "otherworldly," but based on the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. A strikingly original ecclesiology proceeded from this project, which became Anderson's first major theological work.

After teaching for a short time at Westmont College in California, Anderson joined the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary in 1976. As theological mentor for Fuller Seminary's growing doctor of ministry program, Anderson assembled the massive anthology *Theological Foundations for Ministry* (1979). Not content simply to gather a plethora of competing theologies by which to befuddle students, Anderson offered a coherent theology based on the Trinity and the incarnation, which included generous selections from Barth, Bonhoeffer, Thomas and James Torrance, and others, including the most ecclesiologically dynamic sections of *Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God.* Of special note is the essay by Anderson, "A Theology of Ministry," in which he argues for the importance of allowing ministry to precede and govern theology, not vice versa, on the basis of an incarnational theology in which God is "on both sides" of both revelation and reconciliation. Reconciliation, like the rest of God's ministry, is not left up to us! This anthology signaled to many a new way of integrating theology and ministry that did not simply try to find a lowest common denominator in ethical principles or pastoral techniques but was also based on the richness of the triune life of God revealed in Jesus Christ. This was a different kind of evangelical theology than the apologetics-driven heritage of early Fuller Seminary, but one that was just as loyal (if not more loyal) to the ancient faith in the Trinity and the incarnation. It was refreshingly free to acknowledge not only that Jesus Christ was God but also that because God actually assumed human flesh, theology and ministry are not afraid to embrace the human, as messy as that might be in the realities of ministry.

The incarnational imperative of a humanizing theology that makes us more not less human (including in the church!) drove Anderson increasingly into questions of theological anthropology. Such questions had begun to intrigue Anderson when he observed how little theological basis some of his academic colleagues seemed to have; they possessed a strong, personally pious theology yet offered little integration of that theology with their academic disciplines. These pious colleagues seemed to be operating with more of a philosophical anthropology than one rooted in the incarnation. The fruit of Anderson's thinking on this subject came in 1982 with the publication of *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology.* Karl Barth's profound writings on the doctrine of humanity may have never been mined so thoroughly in light of pastoral and ministry practice as they were in this project. Yet Anderson certainly remained his own man. As a seminarian at the time, I vividly remember the excitement of Anderson's terse yet provocative prose, bursting with genuine theological and ministerial potential. This was not easy to digest for some; but for many others, Anderson's "nervous, restless quality" was the stimulation to believe in the healing power of a trinitarian-incarnational theology. Many a Fuller Seminary student can attest to stumbling into Ray Anderson's class week after week, beaten up by life's events, desperately seeking the grace of God . . . and finding it in Ray's provocative and faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

*On Being Human* only served to further ignite Anderson's creative theological fire, particularly in the implications of theological anthropology. Anderson's theological anthropology is profoundly relational, including male and female relationships and the family, and naturally led to the publication in 1984 of *On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family*. This book was written with family sociologist Dennis B. Guernsey and was the fruit of their team-taught course at Fuller, "Theology and Ecology of the Family." The provocative and pastoral thinking on death and dying in *On Being Human* led to *Theology, Death, and Dying* in 1986. Anderson was fond of mischievously suggesting that he wanted the book to be titled *On Being Dead,* in order to harmonize the title with *On Being Human* and *On Being Family,* and to perhaps include ethics and so be called *On Being Good and Dead*!

Anderson's broad and sweeping integrative interests continued with a volume on leadership in 1986, *Minding God's Business,* and one on counseling in 1990,

*Christians Who Counsel*. No shoddy thinking here; Anderson demonstrated his theological bravery in taking on such "nuts-and-bolts" issues of ministry.

In 1991, Anderson wrote his first "popular" book, but one that is truly profound in its thought: *The Gospel According to Judas: Is There a Limit to God's Forgiveness?* Featuring an imaginary conversation between Jesus and Judas after Judas's death, this book has deeply affected and challenged many to consider how shallow our view of grace and forgiveness really is. However, many have also been offended by this book, including its later version, *Judas and Jesus: Amazing Grace for the Wounded Soul* (2005). These little books still continue to minister to many, as Anderson told, including a convicted murderer in prison serving a life sentence. Anderson's concern for the individual desperately needing the grace of God was evident in many of his later books, such as *Don't Give Up On Me — I'm Not Finished Yet! Putting the Finishing Touches on the Person You Want to Be* (1994), its more technical cousin, *Self-Care: A Theology of Personal Empowerment and Spiritual Healing* (1995)*, Living the Spiritually Balanced Life: Acquiring the Virtues You Admire* (1998), *Everything That Make Me Happy I Learned When I Grew Up* (1995), *Unspoken Wisdom: Truths My Father Taught Me* (1995), *Exploration Into God: Sermonic Meditations on the Book of Ecclesiastes* (2006), and *The Seasons of Hope: Empowering Faith Through the Practice of Hope* (2008).

However, the church — the corporate, communal and relational setting of the Christian life in Christ today — was never far from Anderson's thought and pen. *Ministry on the Fireline: A Practical Theology for an Empowered Church* (1993) challenged an evangelical tradition that emphasizes a "Word" theology to embrace a "Spirit" or "Pentecostal" theology of the presence of the Holy Spirit in mission. Such concerns continued with a work that summarized decades of Anderson's thinking on ministry rooted in a trinitarian-incarnational theology: *The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God's People* (1997). On this same theme, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (2001) explores wide-ranging concerns, from homosexuality to "The Humanity of God in the Soul of the City," in light of a trinitarian model of practical theology.

In these works, Anderson's disgust with the lack of practical ecclesiology in much of modern systematic theology reflects his desire to leave "systematic

theology" behind for the sake of "practical theology." This movement from systematic to practical theology is spelled out in greater detail in *The Soul of God: A Theological Memoir* (2004). Anderson continued to provoke his evangelical constituency (and colleagues!) in *Dancing with Wolves While Feeding the Sheep: The Musings of a Maverick Theologian* (2001) with such chapters as, "Was Jesus an Evangelical?"

One of Anderson's most challenging proposals was his practical theology for secular caregivers, *Spiritual Caregiving as Secular Sacrament: A Practical Theology for Professional Caregivers* (2003). One of his last works provided a theological challenge to the emerging church movement: *An Emerging Theology for Emerging Churches* (2006).

There are many ideas to treasure in these books, ideas that colleagues and students alike have appreciated much through the years. Much of the critical thinking stimulated by Ray Anderson's theology can be found in two Festschriften edited in honor of Ray: *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society, and Family: Essays in Honor of Ray S. Anderson* (ed. Christian D. Kettler and Todd H. Speidell) (1990), which includes essays by Thomas Torrance, James Torrance, Geoffrey Bromiley, Colin Gunton, Alan Lewis and Lewis Smedes (with a telling introduction by the president of Fuller Seminary, David Allan Hubbard and a bibliography through 1990); and *On Being Christian . . . and Human: Essays in Celebration of Ray S. Anderson* (ed. Todd H. Speidell) (2002), which includes contributions by many of Ray's former students, including LeRon Shults and Willie Jennings, and an essay on "Community in the Life and Theology of Ray Anderson" by Daniel Price (along with a bibliography through 2002). Also included are the case studies Anderson used for many years in his sequence of theology courses.

In the lectures he gave during his tour of the United States late in life, Karl Barth remarked that what he desired for Americans was to be freed for a "theology of freedom."[8] In a way, I think Ray Anderson is the purest example of an answer to Barth's desire for America: a theologian who has always been first a pastor of a concrete, local church, never deserting the church for the rarified air of seclusion in the academy, never deserting particular, actual people for abstract values

8 Karl Barth, *Evangelical Theology,* trans. Grover Foley (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), xii.

or virtues. For most of Anderson's twenty-plus years of seminary teaching, he preached weekly at what he called, with a twinkle in his eye, the "high of the low churches," Harbour Fellowship in Huntington Beach, California. Anderson built on Barth's revolution but was distinctly a theologian for the church in the US. Much is made today of the need for a theology of "globalization" and "postmodernism," and certainly the church and the gospel are for the world. But Anderson's roots in a South Dakota farm and an evangelical parish were realized in a theology that takes very seriously both actual human beings and concrete human situations in the church. He never allowed the real human situation to be swallowed up by abstract ideals and causes, including everything from orthodoxy to social justice.

I have just finished writing a little introduction to Anderson's works, titled *Reading Ray S. Anderson: Theology as Ministry, Ministry as Theology.* I am pleased that Ray was able to read the preface and seemed happy (and embarrassed!) by the book. "Theology as ministry" particularly relates to the doctrines of God and theological anthropology. "Ministry as theology" suggests the profound integration of a theology of *praxis* to the church in its ministry and mission. But the dialectical aspect of theology as ministry and ministry as theology should not be forgotten. There is one ministry of God, Anderson contends: the ministry of Jesus Christ. Theology only seeks to serve that ministry. Anderson is well known for his use of case studies in exploring the implications of theology in ministry. (The actual cases he uses for examination in his courses are found in the second Festschrift, *On Being Christian . . . and Human*). At the end of each chapter I have included a case study that "fleshes out" the implications of that chapter for ministry. I think you'll find that the writings of Ray Anderson will be an incredible stimulation to your participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ that Karl Barth, Thomas Torrance, and Ray Anderson bore witness to takes freedom, faith, and courage. Just to tow the orthodox line without being willing to risk exploring the radical implications of a trinitarian-incarnational faith is not enough. The Nicene fathers knew that. Barth, Torrance, and Anderson knew that. Ray was fond of Torrance's plea for us to "think in Jesus Christ" rather than in simply our "unbaptized reason." That is the adventure Ray Anderson took in his life and ministry and in doing so encountered some puzzling looks, even opposition, along the way, but also many appreciative responses to his freedom, faith, and courage in Christ.

## An Annotated List of Suggested Books by Ray S. Anderson

*Christian Who Counsel: The Vocation of Wholistic Therapy.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. Argues for a distinction between "Christians who counsel" and "Christian counseling."

*Don't Give Up On Me — I'm Not Finished Yet: Putting the Finishing Touches on the Person You Want to Be.* New York: McCracken Press, 1994. A popular version of *Self-Care*.

*Dancing with Wolves While Feeding the Sheep: Musings of a Maverick Theologian.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002. Unique answers to provocative theological and pastoral questions, such as, Does Jesus think about things today? and, What do I say at the graveside of a suicide?

*An Emerging Theology for an Emerging Church*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. A dialogue with the emerging church movement.

*Everything That Makes Me Happy I Learned When I Grew Up.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. On the nature of happiness.

*Exploration into God: Sermonic Meditations on the Book of Ecclesiastes.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006.

*The Gospel According to Judas.* Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1991. Rev. ed. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1994. The classic work on betrayal, forgiveness, and grace.

*Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975. The seminal work formulating Anderson's incarnational theology in relation to the transcendence of God.

*Judas and Jesus: Amazing Grace for the Wounded Soul.* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2005. A follow-up to *The Gospel According to Judas*.

*Living the Spiritually Balanced Life: Acquiring the Virtues You Admire.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. On the virtues and the Christian life.

*Minding God's Business.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986. Rev. ed. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008. A theology of leadership in Christian organizations.

*Ministry on the Fireline: A Practical Theology for an Empowered Church.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. His theology of mission.

*The New Age of Soul: Spiritual Wisdom for a New Millennium.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000. A response to New Age spirituality.

*On Being Family: A Social Theology of the Family.* With Dennis B. Guernsey. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Implications of *On Being Human* for family life and ministry.

*On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982. The seminal book on Anderson's distinctive theological anthropology with wide implications for ministry.

*The Soul of God: A Theological Memoir.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004. A virtual "greatest hits" of Anderson's theological ideas in the context of his life and ministry.

*The Seasons of Hope: Empowering Faith Through the Practice of Hope.* Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008. Provocative thoughts on the theological significance of the seasons of life seen in light of hope.

*Self-Care: A Theology of Personal Empowerment and Spiritual Healing*. Wheaton, IL: Bridgepoint, 1995. A theology of the emotions, with attention to abuse, shame, betrayal, tragedy, and grief, building on the theological anthropology in *On Being Human*.

*Spiritual Caregiving as Secular Sacrament: A Practical Theology for Professional Caregivers*. London and New York: Jessica Kinsley Publishers, 2003. A unique proposal for acknowledging the spirituality yet not necessarily religiosity in all caregiving.

*The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God's People*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. The mature statement of Anderson's theology of ministry.

*Something Old, Something New: Marriage and Family Ministry in a Postmodern Culture*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007. A follow-up to *A Theology of the Family*, addressing contemporary concerns and issues.

*The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. Various classic essays on the theology of ministry.

*Soulprints: Personal Reflections on Faith, Hope, and Love.* Huntington Beach, CA: Ray S. Anderson, 1996. Anderson's existentially powerful journal as a young pastor.

*Theology, Death, and Dying*. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986. Builds on Anderson's suggestive ideas on a theology of death and dying in the context of ministry in *On Being Human*.

*Theological Foundations for Ministry.* Edited by Ray S. Anderson. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1979. A massive anthology that is a theological education in itself, including generous amounts of Barth, Bonhoeffer, and the Torrances as well as Anderson, especially the classic essay "A Theology for Ministry."

*Unspoken Wisdom: Truths My Father Taught Me*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1995. Lessons on the development of character based on relationships between parents and children.

# CHRISTIAN D. KETTLER, *READING RAY S. ANDERSON* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010, 178 pp.)

***Review by Adam Nigh***
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In *Reading Ray Anderson*, Christian Kettler offers an introduction to Anderson's work that intends to encourage further reading of this "maverick theologian." Anderson, a one-time farmer turned pastor and theologian, earned his doctorate in theology at the University of Edinburgh under T. F. Torrance and taught systematic and practical theology at Fuller Seminary from 1976 to 2006, authoring twenty-seven books in that time. With Anderson's recent passing in 2009, Kettler now seeks to bring a wider audience to his work, a theology forged in and addressed to the concerns of concrete ministry, bearing what Donald MacKinnon described as a "nervous, restless quality" with significant influence from Barth, Bonhoeffer, Torrance, and Zizioulas.

The book is divided into two sections of three chapters each. The first section, "On Theology as Ministry," is meant to focus more on the theology, while the second section, "On Ministry as Theology," is meant to focus more on ministry, though the two cannot be fully separated in Anderson's thought, justifying a bit of overlap between the two. Each chapter ends with a real-life case study and a set of questions intended to help prompt reflection and connect the concepts dealt with in the chapter to the concerns of practical ministry.

Chapter 1, titled "Exploration Into God: The Doctrine of God and God's Ministry," opens the first section. The focus here is that knowledge of God is not something that ought to be sought in the realm of abstract transcendence (*omnis*) but in God's own ministry in human history fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We can make an exploration into God on the basis of the ministry of Jesus Christ, who is "literally the exegesis of the soul of God" (p. 8). There we find that love is

the very logic of God, a love that refuses to keep a safe distance from the pain and confusion of human estrangement but acknowledges the tragic element of our existence and resists excusing God for it, requiring a "doctrine of ambiguity" (p. 13). Our knowledge of God is possible because he has lovingly bound his existence up with ours. God's transcendence is thereby relocated, not to be found in his distance from us but in the historical humanity of Jesus Christ, what Anderson calls God's "historical transcendence" (p. 18).

The second chapter, titled "On Being Human: Theological Anthropology and the Humanity of God," continues exploring the reality that since God has become human, theology and anthropology are inseparable. On the anthropological side, we must attend to Christ crucified to understand humanity. There we find humanity united with all other creatures through its participation in the sixth day but differentiated from them in the seventh day, which is not merely a continuation of the sixth but is determined from beyond. Thus we are not determined by our creatureliness but by the Word of God, who, existing as a triunity of persons unified in differentiation, makes us in his image as cohumanity, differentiated persons in communion. Integral to the differentiation of cohumanity is gender distinction so that "gender identity reflects the complementarity in God's own being as the Trinity" (p. 43).

This leads to a discussion of Anderson's views on discrimination as an alternative to the dichotomy between determinism and free will: discrimination is decision made in response so that it is neither predetermined nor made in autonomous freedom. This view recognizes that we cannot know God's will ahead of time but only at the end. In the meantime, God's command does not determine specific choices for us but creates limits within which we discriminate between different possibilities. These insights are then developed in discussions of marriage, family, and death.

Chapter 3 is titled "Jesus Christ, Divine Reconciliation, and the Healing of Persons: The Reconciliation by 'The Little Man on the Cross.'" The focus here is on healing, both of persons and the relationships that distinguish them as persons. It is, of course, Jesus Christ, "the little man on the cross" (the meaning of this phrase is never made satisfyingly clear, p. 59), who heals us by being vicariously healed for us, taking on our disease and infirmity and healing it in himself. But in doing so, Anderson insists, Christ's healing reaches us at the core of our existence, including our feelings; healing our feelings means, ironically, an

ontological healing at the level of our being since "feelings *are* the self" (p. 66). Anderson understands the biblical episodes of exorcism as related to this kind of holistic healing, casting out not just demons but also all that is inhuman and establishing the truly human. Therefore, inasmuch as they relate to personal healing, salvation and faith are not merely religious matters but matters of the self as well, of personal trust and love learned in the concrete realities and relationships of life despite adversity and even disaster.

Anderson points to Judas as a case study for the relationship between Christ's healing faith and obedience, and our faithlessness and disobedience, arguing that "when our love has been destroyed and our faith in prayer exhausted, as it was for Judas, then our only hope is in the love and faith of Jesus. He does not come because we have prayed rightly or loved perfectly; but he comes into our prayerless night and loveless days to become, once again, God's answer and a focus for our faith" (pp. 84–85); here we undoubtedly have an Anderson "greatest hit". This discussion leads (with a rather jarring lack of transition) to a concluding discussion on the family as the proper context for spiritual formation.

Chapter 4, "Ministry as Real Presence: A Sacramental and Relational Reality," begins the second section of the book, shifting the primary focus from theology to ministry. The terms *sacrament*, *sacramental*, *liturgy*, and *liturgical* receive much use and consideration in their place in community in ways seen to be spiritual but not necessarily religious, a distinction made with less clarity than might be desired. It is claimed here both that "the incarnate Jesus is the liturgist" and that the church's acts of liturgy are "not just acts remembering or in honor of Jesus, but acts of his real presence" (97), though Kettler insists that Anderson is not guilty of dissolving the identity and activity of Christ into the identity and activity of the church. Anderson argues that nonbelievers should be admitted to the Lord's Table, suggesting that belonging is the original condition of our being so that we ought to welcome anyone into our liturgical fellowship and allow belief to take form within that belonging in which Christ's real presence is experienced.

Anderson applies this notion of real presence to hermeneutics as well, holding to the risen Christ as the present and active criterion for hermeneutics, which necessarily issues forth in an "eschatology of humility" (p. 111) since Christ alone can establish the proper reading of Scripture and will when he comes. In the present, it is the Spirit that mediates Christ's real presence to us. The

incarnation, the ministry of Christ as an obedient human filled with the Holy Spirit, has made the Spirit accustomed to our humanity, even "housebroken" (p. 114). All subsequent ministry is possible only on this basis through the same Spirit.

In chapter 5, "Ministry and Mission: Community as Kenotic and Ek-static," Kettler makes Anderson's case that evangelism and mission should not take place on the assumption that those we go to may belong to our community only on the condition of their belief; but instead, the church must live, as Christ did, in and with the world, enacting kenotic love to others on the presupposition of their belonging. Anderson focuses on the "ek-static" nature of the church, rooted in Christ, who "stands out" in his incarnated Sonship in prayer to the Father (p. 131). This is related to Anderson's notion of "Christopraxis," in which the church's ministry and mission participate in the ongoing work of Jesus Christ, rather than its praxis being practical application of theoretical formulas.

Ministry and mission are inseparable, each needs the other, but there is a priority of mission to ministry such that it is the mission of the Holy Spirit that calls the church and its ministry (though, again, this is Christ's own ministry) into being. In a related way, incarnational theology needs empowering Pentecostal experience and vice versa; the latter without the former leads to excitement with no direction, while the former without the latter leads to dead, insular churches. Moreover, ministry needs an awareness of God's activity and responsibility so that ministers avoid misconstruing their responsibility as that of doing God's job, rather than serving God in God's work.

The final chapter is titled "Ministry as the Future of Christ Coming Into the Present: Eschatology — Toward the Church of the Final Century." Kettler discusses death and eschatology, focusing on Anderson's insight that the church should not be oriented to the ideal of the earliest church but to the eschatological Spirit of the future, the church as it will be at the final hour. In this light, questions of heaven and hell should not be dealt with under either the determinism of God's sovereignty (Calvinism) or that of human decision (Arminianism), but through the revelation that Jesus Christ's assumption of our humanity and conquering of our death removes death as the final determination of our lives. This is not, Kettler insists, universalism, but it puts the ultimate determination in Jesus Christ as the elect one who in coming all the way to us in his incarnation has gone to hell for us. Anderson addresses the question of the afterlife of those who commit

suicide through the same concerns. The peace and hope such a focus on Christ's assumption of our curse and conquering of our death brings forth allows Anderson to see death as a season of hope rather than of struggle and to minister to the dying in that light, respecting the "penultimate as well as the ultimate" (p. 164).

Kettler has served both the church and the scholarly theological community by calling greater attention to Anderson's provocative, sometimes frustrating, but more often soul-nourishing thought. The pervasive focus on Christ's real humanity, real presence, and the difference these make for real human lives has, as Kettler frequently proclaims, "profound implications" for Christian ministry. The case studies and questions to ponder at the end of each chapter, though sometimes difficult to connect neatly to the material, strengthen the emphasis on the concrete and pastoral. Pastors and those preparing for ministry will be especially served by the greater awareness of Anderson they will gain through this book.

Though the book contains such compelling theological insight and is also quite well researched, its organization is rather wanting. The material often moves jarringly from one topic to another with fairly awkward transitions, at times doubling back to earlier topics and repeating quotations, indicating the need for a stronger conceptual outline. Perhaps most lamentable is the absence of a conclusion to the book, a missed opportunity to bring the rather tangled lines of thought together into a final condensed and clear statement of the dominant insights and relevance of Anderson's thought. However, Kettler's intention of offering a "Ray-Lite," a collection of Anderson's "greatest hits" to entice the reader on to further study of Anderson's thought, has certainly been achieved.

## *THE RAY S. ANDERSON COLLECTION by WIPF & STOCK PUBLISHERS*

Ray Sherman Anderson (1925-2009) worked the soil and tended the animals of a South Dakota farm, planted and pastored a church in Southern California, and completed a PhD degree in theology with Thomas F. Torrance in New College Edinburgh. He began his professional teaching career at Westmont College, and then taught and served in various administrative capacities at Fuller Theological Seminary for thirty-three years (retiring as Professor Emeritus of Theology and Ministry). While teaching at Fuller, he served as a parish pastor, always insisting that theology and ministry go hand-in-hand.

The pastoral theologian who began his teaching career in middle age penned twenty-seven books. Like Karl Barth, Prof. Anderson articulated a theology of and for the church based on God's own ministry of revelation and reconciliation in the world. As professor and pastor, he modeled an incarnational, evangelical passion for the healing of humanity by Jesus Christ, who is *both* God's self-revelation to us *and* the reconciliation of our broken humanity to the triune God. His gift of relating suffering and alienated humans to Christ existing as community (Dietrich Bonhoeffer) is a recurrent motif throughout his life, ministry, and works.

The Ray S. Anderson Collection comprises books by Ray Anderson, an introductory text to his theology by Christian D. Kettler, two edited volumes that celebrate his distinguished academic career (*Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society, and Family* and *On Being Christian . . . and Human*), and a reprint of an *Edification* volume that focuses on Ray Anderson's contributions to the field of Christian Psychology. A word of gratitude is due to The Society of Christian Psychology and its parent organization, The American Association for Christian Counselors, for their permission to make the *Edification* issue available in book form. Jim Tedrick of Wipf and Stock Publishers deserves a special word of thanks for publishing many of Ray Anderson's books and commissioning this collection of works to continue his legacy.

Todd H. Speidell, General Editor

I consider Ray Anderson to be one of the finest pastoral theologians of his era. When students ask me for a pastoral theologian who goes unerringly to the theological heart of pastoral dilemmas, I point them toward Ray Anderson's incomparable work. The scope, depth, sophistication and relevance of his work for ministry today is unparalleled. He has tackled all the difficult questions with amazing graciousness and clarity and offers a theology that lives and breathes. Though the field of pastoral theology has sadly lost one of its finest contributors, we are blessed to have the distillation of his mature wisdom in his literary legacy.

Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, Ph.D.
Charlotte W. Newcombe Professor of Pastoral Theology
Princeton Theological Seminary

I am grateful to Todd Speidell and Wipf & Stock Publishers for making The Ray S. Anderson Collection available. Anderson wrote, "theology is meant to be an open and continuing inquiry into the the truth of God revealed through God's ministry . . ." (*The Soul of Ministry*). He taught that the church's main task is to discern and participate in the Triune God's love for the world. By insisting that we pay attention to God's activities in the world, Anderson taught countless students and pastors to think theologically about congregational life and mission. As he wrote when he autographed a book for me, "We live our theology before we write it." This new collection will include most of Anderson's 27 books and the first full monograph on Ray S. Anderson written by Christian Kettler. We will have stories and reflections, biblical interpretation and ministry challenges, leadership practices and prayerful pondering--all shaping a theology in service of God's missional church.

Rev. Dr. Mark Lau Branson
Homer Goddard Associate Professor of Ministry of the Laity
Fuller Theological Seminary

Ray Anderson pioneered a path that changed the direction of pastoral theology. At a time when ministry studies were Christologically anemic, he brought to bear a rigorous Trinitarian doctrine of God on the ground of a thoroughgoing understanding of Jesus Christ as a basis for a theology of ministry that was singular and ground-breaking. His opening essay on theology of ministry in his edited volume, *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, is arguably the most important essay on ministry in the last fifty years. Anderson went on to write extensively on

pastoral theology, covering an astonishing range of topics, including theological anthropology, death and dying, family, psychology and counseling, and method in practical theology. I am delighted that Anderson's legacy in print will be available to a new generation of men and women who seek to ground their practice of ministry in conversation with a godly theologian, pastor, and teacher.

Andrew Purves, Ph.D.
Professor of Reformed Theology
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Ray Anderson, more than any other theologian I have known, epitomized what it means to be fully human. During the eight years in which we taught a psychology class together based on his book, *Christians Who Counsel*, I was deeply privileged to experience firsthand his consummate teaching and scholarship. He gave countless students the gift of a comprehensive framework for integrating psychology and theology, not merely as an intellectual discipline, but as an endeavor for the whole person. Now, this timely republishing of Anderson's rich collection of writings will doubtless give many new readers the same opportunity to be blessed by this psychologically-minded scholar with a passionate pastor's heart.

Jeff Bjorck, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology, Graduate School of Psychology
Fuller Theological Seminary

Because of his profoundly Christ-centered theological orientation as a minister of the Gospel, Ray Anderson approached the field of Christian counseling from a radically different standpoint than most. Weary of abstract, theoretical models of the integration of psychology and theology, his work seems better to exemplify the paradigm of Christian psychology. He utilized contemporary human science research, but he assumed a holistic model of human beings as fundamentally embodied, psychological, social, and spiritual. Moreover, he concentrated his attention on the soul-healing resources of the Christian faith, particularly the saving activity of God in the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected Christ. Consequently, he was ahead of his time, and it will take the rest of us a while to catch up.

Eric L. Johnson, Ph.D.
Lawrence and Charlotte Professor of Pastoral Care
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

# INTERVIEWS

## Interview of DAVID W. TORRANCE

### *by Todd Speidell*

David W. Torrance is the youngest brother of Thomas F. Torrance. They, James, and their three sisters were all born in China to missionary parents. The order of their ages was Mary (wife of the Rev. Prof. R. S. Wallace), Tom, Grace (wife of the Rev. Dr. R. W. Walker), Margaret (wife of the Rev. Kenneth MacKenzie), James, and David. David is almost eleven years younger than Tom and fifteen months younger than James.

All three brothers studied classics as undergraduates, philosophy for their M.A. degrees, and then theology, specializing in systematics. Each gained a B.D. degree with distinction, was dux of New College, Edinburgh, and was awarded a senior scholarship for further study in theology, which each in turn pursued under Karl Barth in Basel. Both Tom and James went on to teach after ministering in a parish: Tom as professor of theology at Edinburgh, and James, after lecturing at Edinburgh, as professor of theology at Aberdeen. David continued in parish ministry.

The following interview between Todd Speidell (hereafter cited as TS) and David Torrance (hereafter cited as DT) offers personal and theological reflections and recollections of Tom Torrance as a person, pastor, and theologian. On behalf of the journal board, we are grateful for David Torrance's willingness to share his memories and impressions of his oldest brother and other family members. David has also made many invaluable contributions to the journal since its inception.

TS: I recall Tom or James saying that all three of you studied under Karl Barth, and when you introduced yourself to him, he peered over his glasses at you and asked, "Are there others?" True?

DT: Yes, I studied under Barth with great profit. I well remember my arrival in Basel. Like both brothers before me, I stayed in the [Theologische Fakultät]

Alumneum, where Oscar Cullmann and his sister were house parents. I also remember quite vividly my first visit to KB in his house. He was warm and friendly. He certainly remembered Tom and James, but I do not remember if he asked, "Are there others?" However, he may well have said so. With his warm, friendly approach in tutorials and discussions, and his physical build, I tended to look on him as a warm and friendly bear! He was very approachable, although as students we always looked on him with some awe.

TS: I also recall both Tom and James talking about visiting Barth's house for tutorials and being with him on other informal occasions. I vividly remember James saying that he sat next to Barth in his home and translated on demand from St. Thomas or whomever was deemed necessary for the evening discussion. Do you have other personal recollections, whether of your own or your brothers' experiences with KB outside of the university setting?

DT: Some of the interesting and amusing situations took place during the tutorials, which KB conducted in English. These were small and informal and comprised only five or six students. In my case, we read through volume I/1 of the *Church Dogmatics*. These tutorials were over and above his lectures and tutorials in German.

My brother James told me of an amusing situation, which took place in one of these tutorials. Sometimes people visiting Basel on holiday would drop into Barth's lectures and tutorials in order simply to see, hear, and hopefully meet him. Barth welcomed them in his kindly way and used to say with considerable amusement that he seemed to be one of the tourist attractions in Basel. Not all who dropped in were theologically literate. On one occasion an American dropped in. My brother James said it seemed clear that he did not understand anything of what Barth said. However, at the end of the lecture he said, "What they say in my country is, 'If your heart is all right, then put it there, brother.'" And he held out his hand across the table to Barth, whereon Barth with a great grin and much amusement shook his hand.

On another occasion, Barth recalled with great amusement an American student who came to ask if he could study under him for a doctoral degree on the subject of "Nothingness" — presumably because of Barth's belief that God created the world out of nothing. When KB learned that the student had originally planned to study in Holland, he asked him why he had changed his

mind and come to Basel to study under KB. The student's reply, to Barth's great amusement, was, "I wanted to come to the fountain of nothingness." Barth was a very human person and enjoyed a great sense of fun.

TS: Do you have other outstanding memories of Barth's English tutorials?

DT: As I have mentioned, in the English tutorial which I attended, we studied Volume I/1 of the *Church Dogmatics*. Barth asked each of us in turn to summarize fifty pages in our own words. That is to say, one student summarized pages one to fifty, the next student summarized pages fifty-one to one hundred, and so on. We were each in turn required to read our summary to the tutorial class and hear KB's comments, whereupon discussion began. I found this immensely helpful. It was a test as to whether we really understood Barth and his theology.

TS: By the time you studied under Barth, Tom had started his academic career. Are you aware of how Barth assessed his former student's building upon the theology of his mentor in his own creative way?

DT: It was clear from an early stage that Barth had a tremendous respect for Tom. At a later stage he said to Tom that he regarded him as his best interpreter in the English-speaking world and the one who best understood his theology. Barth recognized and respected the fact that Tom went beyond him in the interrelationship between theology and science. They discussed that fact both when Tom had occasion to visit Basel and when KB visited Tom in Edinburgh. Long before KB retired, both KB and Oscar Cullmann wanted Tom to succeed Barth upon his retirement from the chair of theology in Basel. Cullmann wrote to Tom urging him to come to Basel. However, Tom felt that he was called to remain in Scotland.

TS: Aside from Tom's university post in New College, he was also a parish minister, founding editor of the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, and moderator of the Church of Scotland. By his calling, do you mean not only his academic career but also his theological vision for the ministry, service, and renewal of the church in Scotland?

DT: From his early days in China, Tom understood that his calling by God was to be a minister of the gospel and a missionary. Originally, he wanted to be a missionary evangelist in China like his father. At university, as he studied

for the ministry, he felt his missionary and evangelistic call being refocused and deepened. His great concern became the call to evangelize ministers and, through them, the church. He was passionately concerned that ministers should understand the Word of God and be faithful in proclaiming and teaching it. That is clear from a letter called "An Urgent Call to the Kirk," which he wrote to every minister of the Church of Scotland following his year as moderator. Although he wrote it, he invited two other ex-moderators of the Church of Scotland and an elder to sign it along with him. With them he initiated various meetings throughout the church to discuss the letter and its contents. Despite his heavy teaching load and academic study, he was always ready to support visiting evangelists and on occasion to associate with them on their preaching platforms. He initiated and was the prime mover of an invitation extended by the Church of Scotland to Dr. Billy Graham, the well-known evangelist, to visit Scotland in 1990. After the crusade, Tom helped to set up a follow-up school in evangelism. He was a friend of Billy Graham's, and Billy Graham kindly sent a telegram of sympathy following Tom's death, which was read at Tom's funeral service. Tom always wished to be known not primarily as an academic theologian but as a preacher of the gospel. That is the way that he described himself.

TS: You three brothers were all pastorally oriented theologians in different contexts. Your joint work, *A Passion for Christ*, shows the unity and center of your theology. Tom also contributed an essay to your edited book, *The Witness of the Jews to God*. Did you, James, and Tom differ in any key areas?

DT: No! We never, ever differed theologically or in our evangelistic and missionary concerns. We were each different in the way that we expressed the gospel. We sometimes differed in our political views and perhaps on other minor issues, but never theologically or evangelistically. Tom was more reserved than James and myself in his approach to the charismatic movement in the church, and sometimes a little critical. All three of us agreed with Rev. Tom Smail, a theological leader in the charismatic movement and a friend of ours, that the Holy Spirit makes us more aware of Jesus Christ and leads us to participate more fully in Christ's death and resurrection.

We were all three greatly influenced by our missionary parents, their dependence on the Word of God and prayer. They imparted to us their missionary

concerns. Tom always called our father the evangelist of the family and our mother the theologian. They encouraged us from an early age to read the Bible through for ourselves once a year, which we continued to do. They never gave us any theory of what the Bible is. They simply taught us to pray and ask God to speak to us each time before reading the Bible. They said that when we heard God speaking to us then we would know that the Bible is God's Word, and nothing would ever shake that conviction. That we found to be true. Later, as we studied theology, that assurance of the Bible as God's Word never left us, nor did the missionary concern which they imparted. Their approach to the Word of God laid for each of us a foundation such that none of us ever felt a tension between our faith in the Lord and our theology, nor between our theology and our ministerial and evangelistic work. Theology became for us simply a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of God's Word. Theology is the servant of ministry. If it does not lead us to personal faith in Jesus Christ in the unity of his person and work, then, as Tom often said, "our theology is only a paper theology." In that case, it should be discarded. Belonging to the same family, remaining close to each other, and frequently discussing theology together, it is perhaps not surprising that we held the same theology.

TS: What theological sources did your mother have you read? Would you say that she was a formative personal influence that contributed to Tom's embrace of women in ordained ministry?

DT: Because Tom was over ten years older than I, I am not aware of what mother advised him to read*,* apart from her giving Tom his first book by Barth, *Credo*, thereby introducing him to a theologian who had a great influence on him. James was only fifteen months older than I and, in regard to him and me, I am able to answer your question more easily. Mother often guided us in our reading by encouraging us, in addition to missionary books, to read works like *A Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* by Martin Luther, Robert Bruce's *Mystery of the Lord's Supper: Sermons on the Sacrament Preached in the Kirk of Edinburgh,* Samuel Rutherford's *Sermons*, and particularly his *Letters.* While still at school we read Luther's *Bondage of the Will* and were introduced to Calvin's *Institutes.* We also read John Howie's *The Scots Worthies* and several books on the Scottish Covenanters, and so on.

Books were much treasured in our home. Our parents had a wide selection of missionary and religious books together with books on theology and church history. On Sundays, we never read secular books nor studied for exams. As a family we never worked on a Sunday. Sunday was a holiday and the happiest day of the week. Therefore on Sundays we read missionary and religious books and spoke about what we read. We had time for one another.

In regard to the ordination of women, Tom at an early period changed his mind and strongly supported the ordination of women on biblical grounds. For example, in Romans 16:7, Paul speaks of Junias (a woman) as "outstanding among the Apostles." And women like Philip's four daughters prophesied (Acts 21:9 and see 1 Cor. 11:5). As for our mother, on missionary deputation (long before the church accepted the ordination of women), she often spoke from a pulpit and at many meetings led prayer meetings and helped in church work. At least on one occasion she conducted a funeral service. I imagine this influenced Tom, although mother was not overly attracted to women ministers. She was not in the modern sense a "feminist."

TS: Did the three brothers discuss theology as youngsters and later read each other's sermons, articles, and books? How would you describe your political differences and the manner in which you expressed them to each other?

DT: The simple answer to your first question is yes. We often discussed together and learned from each other. I learned a great deal from both brothers, in discussion and through reading their sermons, articles, and books.

We did not discuss politics very much or in any depth, although I know that we tended to differ. In our general elections, Tom would generally vote Conservative and James and I would generally vote Labour. James had a strong social conscience, which I shared. He felt keenly the issues arising from apartheid in South Africa, a country that he visited. He felt strongly that our theology should influence our political decisions. In regard to Israel, on the one hand, Tom and I were in full agreement regarding God's continuing covenant and purpose for Israel and their restoration by God to the land. We often worked together and spoke in support of each other on this matter in the Church of Scotland's General Assembly. James, on the other hand, was always more reserved on this matter. He believed that Israel was still the people of the covenant and that God had a continuing purpose for them. However, it is not always easy or

possible to separate theological and political issues concerning Israel and the land. With his strong social consciousness, James was always deeply concerned, and rightly so, about the conflict over human rights and the suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians. I doubt whether he ever read the history of the Jewish-Arab conflict. I think this contributed to his uncertainty or silence concerning the land and Middle East issues. However, having myself spoken many times and published on the subject, James never, ever criticized my views. In fact, he often asked me for my views when certain political or military issues arose concerning the Middle East. Tom, however, was fairly knowledgeable about the history of the Middle East. I read more widely than Tom about the Middle East and its history, and often recommended to him certain books concerning the background of the Middle East conflict or Arab speeches and pronouncements. He quoted from some of these in our General Assembly.

TS: Tom wrote booklets on women in ministry, marriage, the presbyterate, and abortion. What do you think led him, whom some would see as an academic theologian, to be so concerned about practical issues of pastoral ministry — to which all three of you dedicated your lives and ministries?

DT: Tom was never primarily an academic theologian. He was primarily a churchman and pastor with a pastor's concern for the spiritual renewal of the church. It was out of his pastoral concern for the renewal of the church that he felt led — or compelled — into the academic world in order to try and forward that concern. His theology as a biblical theologian was centered on the saving, Triune grace of God centered in the person and work of Christ, that grace which in Christ changes and transforms lives. Because he was first and foremost a pastor, he always had concern for practical issues confronting the church. It was therefore quite natural for him to write on ministry, marriage, the office of elder, and abortion. He also wrote on preaching Christ and called the church to be faithful to the Word of God.

# Interview of ALASDAIR HERON

***Todd Speidell***

*Alasdair Heron (Born 1942, began school in Scotland 1947; 1956-1961 Fettes College, Edinburgh; 1961-1965 Classics and Moral Sciences in Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge; 1965-1968 Divinity in New College, Edinburgh; 1973 Dr. Theol., Tübingen; 1973-1974 Research Lecturer, Irish School of Ecumenics, Dublin; 1974-1981 Lecturer, New College, Edinburgh; 1981-2007 Chair of Reformed Theology, Erlangen)*

TS: You have known the Torrance clan for a long time. Can you describe your personal history with this historic family?

AH: A very wide question! I knew of Tom Torrance years before I met him, for my father, John Heron, was closely associated with him in the 1950s in the Church of Scotland Special Commission on Baptism. Personal contact with Tom and James began when I came to New College, Edinburgh, in 1965 and was taught by both, particularly when in my third year I specialized in Dogmatics (with Calvin and Tillich as my special subjects). After my graduation it was Tom who suggested the topic for my doctoral dissertation — Didymus the Blind of Alexandria — though at his suggestion the dissertation was eventually submitted in Tübingen, not in Edinburgh, because he felt that the direction of my research was becoming primarily philological and historical and "the Germans are keener on that sort of study."

It was Tom who put me in touch a year or two later with the Irish School of Ecumenics, where I taught ecumenical theology in 1973-74, and Tom again who then suggested I come to his department in New College to teach in dogmatics. I worked closely with him there till his retirement in 1979, among other things also taking on the editing of the *Scottish Journal of Theology* for some twenty years. I also worked a great deal with James both before and after his departure from Aberdeen, e.g. as examiner in Systematic Theology for the Aberdeen faculty

when I was still in Edinburgh, or in the 1980s, when I was already in Erlangen, in the BCC commission on *The Forgotten Trinity,* which he chaired. This is to say nothing of David, though contact with him was much more occasional, or of the next generation, particularly Iain, now President of Princeton Seminary, who still edits *SJT,* and Alan, who briefly worked with me in Erlangen (and later completed his doctorate there) and is now Professor in St. Andrews. I have had to do with all these Torrances in the last thirty-five years! But there is no doubt that Tom was the towering figure and for me the most influential.

TS: Hm, Calvin and Tillich. How did you find your way theologically to Barth and Torrance? And what do you think of "the major divide of Barth vs. Tillich" dominating 20th century theology, especially in light of your own early research focus on Calvin and Tillich?

AH: The way to Barth and Torrance was already paved by my studies in Edinburgh. The choice of Calvin and Tillich for the final exams was because of an interest I developed in both at New College (which was also approved by Tom as my chief supervisor). My father had also studied with Tillich in Union Seminary in 1937/38 and I still remember his verdict when Tillich died in 1965: "A fine Christian, a great philosopher and a heretic!" At that time, however, I inclined — like many others then — to see Tillich as the major alternative to Barth so far as method in systematic theology was concerned. (I even chose Tillich as the subject for my oral doctoral examination in Systematics with Jürgen Moltmann in Tübingen — an experience I still remember as a classical instance of bumpy reciprocal communication, though it fortunately did not damage the degree result!) By the time I wrote my *Century of Protestant Theology* in the late 1970s I had modified that view somewhat, and my experience with teaching students in more recent years suggests that Tillich (unlike Barth, but perhaps like much existentialist, process, contextual or political theology) has become very dated and remote, indeed almost incomprehensible for today's young theological students. There is still — or was the last time I looked a few years ago — a kind of academic Tillich fan club active in Germany which holds conferences and publishes in Lit Verlag, but that seems to me now an increasingly shrinking private preserve with little impact or resonance outside the group of insiders. The architecture of Tillich's philosophical theology remains intellectually challenging for those who make the

effort to understand it, but in the end amounts to little more than an imposing glass-bead game whose internal complexity conceals its distance from reality in any ordinary sense. In this sense one might say that Tillich in the end never ceased to be a late echo of German Idealism — not really surprising when one remembers that his early academic work was on Schelling.

TS: GWB, who did PhD work on German Romanticism, and TFT shared a disdain for contemporary theology.

AH: You are referring I think to Geoffrey Bromiley's enquiry in his later years whether death of God theology was still alive! He and Tom certainly shared the conviction that much of what passed in their day for fashionable theology was vacuous. Tom at least believed much of it to be positively harmful — his denunciation of "subjectivity" in a Cambridge University Sermon in 1965 still rings in my ears forty years on! And I must admit that influenced me both as a student and later, though I was perhaps somewhat more sympathetic to some contextual concerns than he was.

TS: Do you think that the so-called 20th century divide between Barth and Tillich is still a fruitful conversation? If so, on what basis, or if no, why not?

AH: For the reasons indicated above I rather doubt whether the specific divide between Barth and Tillich is likely to be very fruitful. But the divide between their approaches can still be relevant if it is seen as the contrast between theology and church on the one hand and theology and culture on the other. Whereby culture perhaps tends to change rather more than church!

TS: A question on TFT and Scotland: how do you assess his reading of Scottish theology, his impact upon the Scottish church and its ministry, and his significance as a conduit for Barth's influence in Scotland?

AH: Without analyzing these questions in detail, which would take much too long, I would say that the Scottish context (also as reflected in his writing, including *Scottish Theology*) cannot be left out of sight. Much of the Torrancian theology was forged in critical debate with a specifically Scottish version of Calvinism which is still in the air in Scotland, though having lost its determining influence in the nineteenth century. Again, Tom's importance as a mediator of Barth to Scotland and the Anglo-Saxon world is immeasurable: he was not the first here

— in Scotland that distinction belongs to people like George Hendry with his *God the Creator* — but he was particularly industrious and influential over long years; he also stood even closer to Barth than most others.

His impact on the Scottish church and ministry as they are today is more difficult for me to assess: I have been working outside Scotland for nearly thirty years and several of those most influenced by Tom have also spent many years abroad. It may be that TFT's work today has wider influence in North America than Scotland. But others in the *Participatio* circle are better placed to assess that than I am.

TS: How did you become Editor of *SJT*?

AH: Soon after I joined the staff of New College in 1974 Tom presented me with headed SJT notepaper carrying my name and New College address. That, as I remember, was it.

TS: What are your reflections on TFT as an ecclesiologist and theologian of the sacraments, as well as a churchman and ecumenist?

AH: Big words for big fields! I would say they apply especially to the middle period of Tom's theology, up to the early 1960s, the period of *Conflict and Agreement*, though of course they did not disappear after that. In brief: Tom was a major spokesman of the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition in the ecumenical context of the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in the setting of ecclesiastical and theological dialogue with the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions. His hopes for major theological and ecclesiological reunification were not realized in his time, however, and their fulfillment has not become any more likely in recent years.

That also to some extent pulls away the carpet from under serious ecumenical engagement with themes of ecclesiology and the sacraments, where at least at the highest official church level there has been very little movement and no real advance for decades in spite of the Roman Catholic/Lutheran *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. At the level of international and regional, national or local ecumenical meetings the traditions do continue talking to and even (especially locally) working with each other, but that is about all. We are a long way from the heady days around 1960 and the Second Vatican Council. But now I am giving you the slightly tired view of one who under Tom's influence began

forty years ago as an enthusiastic if critical ecumenical theologian, one who really thought intensive theological exchange on themes of ecclesiology and the sacraments would bring us further than it has actually proved to do…

TS: Do you find that many Barth and Torrance scholars are as interested in constructive theology as KB and TFT were?

AH: Both Barth and Torrance produced so much writing and went through such interesting stages of development in changing cultural, political and ecclesiastical contexts that they supply vast mining areas for continuing research. The temptation is then for such research to focus on "getting them right" as opposed to the many misinterpretations to be encountered along the way. Even when it is accurately done, that kind of hermeneutics easily gets stuck in what they would both have regarded as myopic historicism which is no longer able to ask what they would say today or tomorrow — or what we should say today or tomorrow. The best scholarship on both recognizes and seeks to avoid this trap, but that is not entirely easy because most Barth or Torrance scholars are operating in their own, sometimes very different cultural, political and ecclesiastical situations.

TS: Ray Anderson, Tom's student and my mentor, reclaimed Tom as a practical theologian, and yet others read him as a mere academic preoccupied with epistemology and philosophy of science. What are your thoughts on these very different assessments of his work and concerns?

AH: Ray was outstanding among Tom's students in recognizing and spelling out the profound practical implications of his theology, and doing so in his own inimitable way. (I still possess a copy of *The Gospel according to Judas* which Ray gave me in Fuller in 1992.) Not all students saw this, perhaps because (a) they had little contact with Tom in any pastoral, liturgical or other practical context and (b) he did have a tendency to challenge them so frontally that they shied away in aversion. Think of the apparent gusto with which he retailed stories of elders in his congregations in Alyth and Aberdeen who were so angered and upset by the preaching of free grace that they shortly afterwards "tumbled down into the grave!" And of course there were on the other side those who were more fascinated by the intellectual and methodological challenges of Tom's theology, both as a model of disciplined theological thinking and for the avenues it opened into academically satisfying theological work.

TS: What do you make of the common charge that Tom read his own "Barthian" theology back into Calvin and the Greek Fathers (and some critics like one of my former professors, Richard Muller, claim into all of historical theology!)? Do you think his critics were onto a point (and if so, what's the most serious charge?) or do you think there's a greater point of misunderstanding on their side?

AH: There is a certain valid point here. Attentive readers will see hints at it in my paper in *Participatio* on TFT's use of Calvin. But it tends to be exaggerated by unsympathetic critics. Tom did not regard historical theology as a spectator sport for detached observers, but as part of an ongoing enterprise still continuing in the present. In a sense he saw the Greek fathers or reformers like Calvin, if not as immediate contemporaries, nevertheless as engaged in the same enterprise albeit across historical and cultural distances of time and space. This can bring with it the risk of interpreting them a little too strongly in terms of one's own theological perspective or of selecting one-sidedly what one finds most useful for one's own reflection. But tendencies in this direction do not outweigh TFT's massive absorption in the work of these earlier theologians or the huge erudition he amassed. To say nothing of the fact that his critics sometimes have an agenda of their own which may be different from his but equally or more open to question. When, for example, they can point out places where he has misinterpreted one of his authorities, that is fair enough and such misinterpretations deserve to be corrected. But when criticism goes so far as to suggest, for example, against Tom that there is no substantial difference between Calvin and later forms of Calvinism, or that the negative significance of "scholastic Calvinism" is exaggerated in the Torrances' critique, that risks becoming historically misleading and even obscurantist.

TS: What aspects of Tom's work do you think were most misunderstood, and why?

AH: The prior question is perhaps "misunderstood by whom"? Thinking back to my days in New College as a student in the 1960s and lecturer in the 1970s, I would think it fair to say that many students quite simply found him hard to understand. A fair number of faculty colleagues did not find themselves on his wavelength either. This was doubtless in part the reaction of less profound thinkers to his imposing presence but it also reflected a fair range of different

competing understandings of the task of academic theology, both among the systematic theologians and between the different theological disciplines. That is already a complex enough picture without going on to reactions in the wider theological and ecumenical community. But there too one can distinguish between a significant minority of appreciative admirers and a larger majority who over the decades became at best indifferent, at worst hostile. But Tom is not the only major theological figure of whom one can say that!

TS: Tom was a bit prickly in his interactions with fellow theologians, many of whom he thought needed to be converted! Tom has also been embraced by others, with a fellowship and journal existing to continue his legacy. Why do you think he elicited the kinds of responses he did?

AH: Saying of an opponent that (s)he needs to be converted is a fairly massive strike that should generally be employed rarely and only when (a) seriously provoked and (b) likely to effect the conversion! (As I remember, Tom didn't actually say it very often, though one could sometimes sense that he thought it. He did, however, sometimes talk down to people, which is also not always a successful method of persuasion: it can leave resentment lingering long after the actual disagreement has faded from memory.) … But why does anyone evoke both admiration and rejection? Big ships make waves and Tom was no lightweight coracle. But it is also true that he didn't hide his disdain for views and arguments — and sometimes people — he thought didn't deserve to be taken seriously. That could and sometimes did rebound. So much for the negative responses. I imagine the positive sides are already well known to the members of *Participatio*!

TS: What is your take on TFT's "new" natural theology in light of "old" natural theology embedded in what TFT develops within the ambit of revelation?

AH: This is the main point where Tom went deliberately beyond Barth; and it also became the central theme of his work in his later active decades from the late 1950s. He shared with some others the conviction that traditional constructions of an independent natural theology (which Barth rejected in all its different forms) were invalid and illegitimate, but that within the reference framework of divine revelation it was possible and indeed necessary to reintegrate the deliverances and discoveries of natural knowledge and in particular natural science and to see

them (1) as confirming the rationality of creation (and ultimately of God ), (2) as cohering in depth with that rationality and so being in turn further illuminated by it, and in turn (3) as helping to clarify and open up new perspectives on the work of theology itself. This was the point where his repeated claims for "rational, scientific theology" came into play, in particular in regard to the development of genuinely scientific method in theology. That is also of course the point where he met not only agreement but also disagreement from others, both on the theological side and on that of natural science.

TS: Do you think there is any residue of the old natural theology that TFT theoretically rejected left in his thinking regarding the project of a new and transformed natural theology?

AH: There is more than a residue in that many of the concerns and even materials of older forms of natural theology are taken up and reincorporated in the new paradigm, but — in Tom's understanding at least — on a different epistemological basis. He also believed here that he was following pointers laid down by Barth — see on this in particular the introduction to *Space, Time and Resurrection*, written in 1975 and recalling his last conversation with Barth in this specific methodological context.

TS: You mentioned that Tom met some disagreement from natural scientists. Can you specify and expand your point?

AH: First let me say that I was never really much involved directly in Tom's conversations with natural scientists. He seems to me to have found most resonance with thinkers like Michael Polanyi who were passionately interested in the methodological and epistemological dimensions of natural scientific research and discovery — which most scientists, quite frankly, are not. And not all those who are share Tom's tough-minded critical realism. I have the impression from a distance that there is a widespread tendency in the continuing dialogue between theologians and scientists to take refuge on both sides in some form of weakly symbolic epistemology — so that neither appears to be making too great claims. That was not Tom's approach, to put it mildly.

TS: What undeveloped frontiers do you see most fruitful to build upon Tom's legacy, especially for young scholars who have found Tom's theology as fruitful for their own ministry?

AH: The continuing clarification of the foundation, sources and method of useful and constructive theological enquiry and the continuation of the dialogue between theology and other academic disciplines, including both the natural and the human sciences.

TS: Many thanks, Alasdair, for your personal take on Torrance, both the man and his theology.

# AN INTRODUCTORY READER'S GUIDE TO THE PUBLISHED WORKS OF T. F. TORRANCE

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***ABSTRACT:*** *The following essay is a reader's guide to the publications of Thomas F. Torrance. The essay covers both primary and secondary literature in relation to all of the main themes of Torrance's theology and also his life. Since Torrance's publications include more that six hundred items, this essay is introductory and addressed primarily to those just beginning to read the works of Thomas F. Torrance.*

## Introduction

This essay, which is an introductory reader's guide to the publications of T. F. Torrance, is what I wish I had when I first started reading Torrance back in 1983. When I examined the range and sheer volume of his publications, I had no idea where to begin or how to proceed. So I stumbled my way forward, muttering repeatedly how much easier it would have been if I had read this article or book before that one and in relation to those other two or three essays on a particular subject published elsewhere. So I hope that this guide will at least save a few readers of Torrance some of the wasted time that I experienced over the first several years of studying his theology.

Since the Torrance bibliography itself runs fifty pages, it is impossible to provide a complete guide within the bounds of an essay like this one. What follows is designed primarily for those who have not yet immersed themselves

in Torrance's publications. There is no one "right" way or order to read T. F. Torrance. What follows is a basic road map guiding readers into Torrance's publications.

New readers of Torrance's work should be forewarned that there may be parts of Torrance's work that they will not understand the first time through. Seminarians in my course on Torrance's theology often have this experience. So if you are new to Torrance, keep reading, try to gain a feel for the big picture, and come back to the difficult sections at a later date. T. F. Torrance in not an easy read!

Indeed, the most complete published bibliography of Torrance's works, which is found in Alister McGrath's *T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography*, includes more than six hundred items and consumes nearly fifty pages.[9] The range of materials flowing from Torrance's pen from 1941 to 2007 is equally as impressive as the sheer volume. One finds the monographs *Space, Time, and Incarnation* (1969) and *The Hermeneutics of John Calvin* (1988), as well as pamphlets like *The Christian Doctrine of Marriage* (1984) and *Test-Tube Babies: Morals, Science, and the Law* (1984). Topics run the gamut from essays such as "The Epistemological Relevance of the Holy Spirit" (1965) and "Newton, Einstein, and Scientific Theology" (1971) to "The Spiritual Relevance of Angels" (1992) and "The Divine Vocation and Destiny of Israel in the World History" (1982).

To make matters more complex, one will look in vain for anything resembling a "Church Dogmatics," where Torrance develops the core of his theological perspective within the bounds of several carefully constructed volumes. Torrance planned, but never produced, a three-volume summary of theology, which would have played a key role in interpreting the voluminous materials he produced over his fifty-year career.

The Torrance corpus, as it stands, is rather occasional in nature. Many of his books are collections of lectures and essays rather than deliberately planned monographs on particular subjects. Beginning readers could never anticipate the deep connections that often exist between essays published in very different venues and that are chronologically separated.

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9 Alister McGrath, T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1999).

In addition, while Torrance clearly has an architectonically rigorous theological vision that unifies the themes he treats in various publications, nowhere does he develop it in a way that readers can grasp the contours of his theology by reading a couple of books or a handful of articles. This is particularly evident with reference to the profound interconnections between "scientific" method and theological content, which is surely one of his greatest contributions to theology. His actual publications tend to focus on method or on specific theological content, without clearly delineating the relations between the two, so that only after one has read a number of books and essays on both, and then maybe several times, do these interconnections became evident.

Furthermore, even a cursory reading of Torrance's publications reveals that his theological perspective is itself *holistic* because of his profound conviction that analytic, deductive, discursive, and linear modes of thought tend to disconnect and dissolve the dynamic interrelationality of the divine and contingent realities that make them what they are. One can only grasp reality adequately by simultaneous subsidiary attention to the constitutive parts. However, the actual scope of this holism characteristic of Torrance's theological vision is scattered throughout his publications and must be reconstructed by readers who attend to its constitutive elements discussed in various essays and books.

Then there is a burgeoning body of secondary literature on Torrance's work, which offers a variety of perspectives on where to begin and how to read T. F. Torrance and his theology, along with an astonishingly fertile supply of misinterpretations leading to pointed, though ill-considered, criticisms of various dimensions of his theological oeuvre.

The combination of all these factors is that readers of T. F. Torrance, particularly those just starting out, are faced with the rather complicated task of figuring out where to begin and how to proceed. Indeed, seldom a month goes by that I do not get a request from a Ph.D. or masters student or a pastor for assistance in relation to reading Torrance's work, whether on a particular subject or in relation to this theology as a whole. So do not give up if the initial reading of Torrance is a bit of a struggle. This reader's guide is designed to make the task at least a bit easier.

In the first section of the guide, I will begin with Torrance's life as a helpful matrix within which to view his publications. The first section also deals with Torrance's overarching theological vision. It is crucial to grasp something of Torrance's convictions about what theology is and how it proceeds. This theological vision developed for Torrance in the years leading up to 1937-38 and his study under Karl Barth in Basel. Torrance pursued this vision throughout the rest of his long and varied career, developing it into the complex perspective that many of us have found so illuminating and helpful both theologically and pastorally.

After these overarching orienting subsections, this reader's guide will focus on the various theological themes that constitute Torrance's "scientific theology," beginning in his words "from its Christological and soteriological centre and in the light of its constitutive trinitarian structure,"[10] for Torrance's theology is "deeply Nicene and doxological (theology and worship going inextricably together), with its immediate focus on Jesus Christ as Mediator, and its ultimate focus on the Holy Trinity."[11] The final section of this guide will deal with theological method and related topics.

## Life and Theological Vision

Torrance, the son of missionary parents, was born on the mission field in inland China. He had planned on being a missionary himself, but he became a theologian without ever ceasing to be an evangelist. It is rather telling that in his final conversation just before he died he shared of the gospel with his Chinese nurse (according to her account). She left the room for a moment and returned to find that he had passed on.

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10 Thomas F. Torrance, "My Interaction with Karl Barth" in *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids, MI, 1986), 54. Also see I. John Hesselink, "A Pilgrimage in the School of Christ-An Interview with T. F. Torrance," *Reformed Review* 38, no. 1 (Autumn, 1984), 53.

11 R. D. Kernohan, "Tom Torrance: The Man and Reputation," *Life and Work* 32, no. 5 (1976), 14. Also see Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 146.

This section will note the most important discussions of Torrance's life in secondary literature as well as a number of crucial autobiographical essays from Torrance's own pen. The most complete biographical treatment of Torrance's life is found in part 1 of Alister McGrath's monumental work *T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography*, pp. 3–107. It covers Torrance's entire life, includes pictures, and is quite insightful.

David Torrance wrote a delightful biographical piece on Tom from the perspective of a younger brother, titled "Thomas Forsyth Torrance: Minister of the Gospel, Pastor and Evangelical Theologian," in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialogue with T. F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001), pp. 1–30. It contains information not found in any of the other biographical and autobiographical essays.

There are three other important biographical chapters in books on Torrance's theology. The one found in Paul D. Molnar, *Thomas F. Torrance: Theologian of the Trinity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1–30, is not only a biographical sketch but also surveys the broad theological landscape to which Torrance dedicated his career. The second is Jock Stein's essay, "The Legacy of the Gospel," in *A Passion for Christ: The Vision that Ignites Ministry*, ed. Gerrit Dawson and Jock Stein (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1999), pp. 131–50. The book contains seven essays by the three Torrance brothers, Tom, James, and David, plus an introduction by Dawson. The biographical chapter by Stein tells the story of the whole Torrance family and contains information not found in any of the other essays. The other essay is my own brief discussion, "Torrance's Life and Achievement," chapter 1 of my book, *How To Read T. F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian and Scientific Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), pp. 35–51.

There are several crucial autobiographical essays by Torrance that provide invaluable information about Torrance's life and especially his theological vision. Early on in his career, in his undergraduate studies and in his later graduate work in theology, Torrance admired the architectonic beauty of Schleiermacher's "scientific system" of Christian doctrine. The problem from Torrance's perspective was that Schleiermacher's presuppositions about the nature and content of the gospel and what constitutes a "scientific" theology were all wrong.

Torrance was determined to make that his life goal: to develop a methodologically rigorous scientific theology focused on the true nature and content of the gospel.

For Torrance, a scientific theology is simply one determined by the nature of God as revealed in the gospel. In Torrance's words: "Any rigorous scientific approach to Christian theology must allow actual knowledge of God, reached through his self-revelation to us in Christ and in his Spirit, to call into question all alien presuppositions and antecedently reached conceptual frameworks, for form and subject-matter, structure and material content, must not be separated from each other."[12]

Torrance finally discovered what he was looking for "in the doctrines of the *hypostatic union* between the divine and human natures in Christ, and the *consubstantial communion* between the Persons of the Holy Trinity."[13] Torrance knew that he was "probing into the essential connections embodied in the material content of our knowledge of God and his relation to us in creation and redemption and that it might be possible to develop a coherent and consistent account of Christian theology as an organic whole in a rigorously scientific way in terms of its objective truth and inner logic, that is to say, as a dogmatic science pursued on its own ground and in its own right."[14]

The following two autobiographical essays provide deep insight into Torrance's overall theological vision and should be studied closely by anyone wanting to really understand the central convictions that organize and render intelligible the various facets of Torrance's overall theology and the way Torrance's various publications dealing with how these facets fit together: (1) "A Pilgrimage in the School of Faith—An Interview with T. F. Torrance," by John Hesselink in *Reformed Review* 38, no. 1 (1984): 49-64; and (2) "My Interaction with Karl Barth," in *How Karl Barth Changed My Mind*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 52–64. This essay is reprinted in Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth, Biblical and Evangelical Theologian* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990), pp. 121–35. They are also important because they reveal both Torrance's dependence on Barth and places where he self-consciously moves beyond Barth as well.

Several other important autobiographical pieces are "Interview with Professor Thomas F. Torrance," in *Different Gospels*, ed. Alan. Walker (London: Hodder

12 Torrance, "My Interaction," p.53.

13 Ibid., p. 54.

14 Ibid.

& Stoughton, 1988), pp. 42–54; Michael Bauman, "Thomas Torrance," in *Roundtable Conversations with European Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990), pp. 111–18; and R.D. Kernohan, "Tom Torrance: The Man and Reputation," *Life and Work* 32, no. 5 (May, 1976): 14–16 .

There are two unpublished autobiographical essays worthy of note. One is Torrance's unpublished *Journal of My Visit to Hong Kong, Chengdu and Wenchuan, April 22–June 3, 1994,* which is eighty-four single-spaced pages in length. It is an account of his trip to the remote Minshan mountains of the Wenchuan area of China where he personally delivered a large gift of money to the indigenous Qiang people so that they could rebuild churches his father had established in the early twentieth century, which had been destroyed by Mao's forces in 1935. Torrance was in his eighties at the time.

The other is titled *Itinerarium in Mentis Deum* and is an eighteen-page treatment of Torrance's early intellectual development during his years at Edinburgh University. Both essays should be available in the collection of Torrance's unpublished materials assembled at Princeton Theological Seminary.

## The Christological and Soteriological Center

When reading T. F. Torrance on the christological and soteriological center of his theology, *the* place to begin is the two-volume posthumously published lectures from Torrance's dogmatics courses delivered at University of Edinburgh: *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ* and *Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Robert T. Walker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008, 2009). We owe Robert Walker a huge debt of gratitude for his painstaking, meticulous editing of the lectures, truly a labor of love.

These volumes are such a great place to begin reading T. F. Torrance since they bear the more conversational style of the classroom and are therefore more readily accessible than some of Torrance's dense prose in works like his *Christian Doctrine of God, One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), which is a rather difficult read for beginners. Walker also includes an incredibly detailed synopsis of the content of each volume in outline form. This enables readers to quickly zero in on topics of interest. The second volume, *Atonement*, includes a "Brief Guide to Further Reading."

Here are the chapter titles for each of the two volumes so readers will have an idea of the topics covered in each volume:

***Incarnation***

Chapter 1: Introduction to Christology
Chapter 2: The Incarnation
Chapter 3: The Once and for all Union of God and Man
Chapter 4: The Continuous Union in the Life of Jesus
Chapter 5: The Mystery of Christ
Chapter 6: The Hypostatic Union
Chapter 7: The Kingdom of Christ and Evil
Addendum: Eschatology

***Atonement***

Chapter 1: The Atonement in the New Testament
Chapter 2: Redemption in Light of the Old Testament
Chapter 3: The Priesthood of Christ
Chapter 4: The Atonement in the Teaching of Paul: Atonement as Justification
Chapter 5: Atonement as Reconciliation
Chapter 6: Atonement as Redemption
Chapter 7: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
Chapter 8: The Nature of the Resurrection Event
Chapter 9: The Ascension and Parousia of Jesus Christ
Chapter 10: The Biblical Witness to Jesus Christ: The Coming of the Spirit and the Creation of the Apostolic Testimony and Gospel
Chapter 11: The One Church of God in Jesus Christ
Chapter 12: Jesus Christ the First and Last: the Eschatological Perspective of the Gospel
Epilogue: The Reconciliation of the Mind

Also see the long introduction to *The School of Faith: The Catechisms of the Reformed Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), which is an excellent early summary of many key themes of Torrance's theology. The first two chapters by T. F. Torrance of *A Passion for Christ: The Vision that Ignites Ministry* ("The Christ

who Loves Us" and "Preaching Jesus Christ") mentioned above are very readable summaries of Torrance's Christology and Soteriology.

Beyond these outstanding and accessible volumes the following list of publications is my suggested way to read Torrance on various subtopics under the main heading of Christology/Soteriology. The order of these various essays and chapters generally begins with more accessible works but also indicates a particular sequence that I think is helpful for understanding Torrance on these themes. I include chapter titles and some comments to guide readers into the subject matter of these various publications.

***The Mediation of Christ**, 2nd ed. Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1992*

Chapter 1: The Mediation of Revelation
Chapter 2: The Mediation of Reconciliation
Chapter 3: The Person of the Mediator
Chapter 4: The Mediation of Christ in our Human Response
Chapter 5: The Atonement and the Trinity

The first three chapters especially place Jesus Christ within the matrix of Israel, a subject of some importance to Torrance. Readers will find various other discussions of Torrance's views on the place of Israel within the mediation of revelation and reconciliation by consulting the full bibliography of Torrance's published works in McGrath, *T. F. Torrance*. Chapter 4 deals with the vicarious humanity of Christ.

***The Trinitarian Faith: The Evangelical Theology of the Ancient Catholic Church**, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988*

Chapter 4: God of God, Light of Light
Chapter 5: The Incarnate Saviour

While *The Trinitarian Faith* deals with the theology and theologians of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed, Torrance's own theology shines through it all. Chapter 4 contains a particularly rich discussion of the significance of the *homoousion to patri*, which is crucial to Torrance's theology. Other essays in this section also deal with the *homoousion*.

***Preaching Christ Today: The Gospel and Scientific Thinking**, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994*

Chapter 1: Preaching Christ Today

Chapter 2: Incarnation and Atonement in Light of Modern Scientific Rejection of Dualism

***"The Atonement: The Singularity of Christ and the Finality of the Cross: The Atonement and the Moral Order."** In **Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell**, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron, pp. 225–56, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993*

***"Incarnation and Atonement: Theosis and Henosis in the Light of Modern Scientific Rejection of Dualism."** Society of Ordained Scientists 7 (spring 1992): 8–20*

These last two essays contain significant discussions of the inseparable relation between the incarnation and the atonement, the singularity and finality of Christ, and the relation of redemption to the moral order.

***"Karl Barth and the Latin Heresy."** Scottish Journal of Theology 39 (1986): 461–82, reprinted in Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990*

This essay is Torrance's most damaging criticism of various accounts of the gospel in terms of "external relations" between Christ, the atonement, and humanity's sins.

***"Karl Barth and Patristic Theology."** In **Theology beyond Christendom: Essays on the Centenary of the Birth of Karl Barth**, ed. John Thomson, pp. 215–39. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1986. Reprinted in Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian, pp. 182–212*

***Reality and Evangelical Theology**, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982*

Chapter 3: A Realist Interpretation of God's Self-Revelation

This chapter and the following chapters and essays below all deal with the mediation of revelation, especially as it is embodied in the human creaturely word, first in Israel, then preeminently in the vicarious human mind of Jesus Christ himself (the one ultimately true human theology), and then in its outfolding in the apostolic nucleus and apostolic mind that gave rise to the New Testament Scriptures.

The "Deposit of Faith" is particularly helpful in sorting out Torrance's understanding of this whole subject, which is rather complex and far more sophisticated than so many discussions of Scripture in relation to the mediation of revelation in conservative theological circles. This is one of Torrance's major contributions to the doctrine of revelation.

***God and Rationality,*** *London: Oxford University Press, 1971. Reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997*

Chapter 6: The Word of God and the Response of Man

***Space, Time and Resurrection.*** *Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1976*

Introduction

Chapter 8: The Lord of Space and Time

***"The Historical Jesus: From the Perspective of a Theologian."*** *In* ***The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke,*** *ed. W. Weinrich, pp. 511–26. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984*

***"The Deposit of Faith,"*** *Scottish Journal of Theology 36. no. 1 (1983): 1-28*

***Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian***

Chapter 3: Karl Barth: Theologian of the Word

This is a crucial essay for Torrance's understanding of Scripture in relation to revelation. Even though it deals with Barth's views, Torrance's own perspective is very evident.

Also the following secondary sources are helpful:

***McGrath, T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 7: Revelation and Salvation: The Place of Jesus Christ in Christian Theology

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 2: The Mediation of Christ: *Homoousios*, Hypostatic Union, Atonement
Chapter 3: The Mediation of Christ: Christ's Vicarious Humanity

***Elmer M. Colyer, ed. The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians In Dialogue with T. F. Torrance.***
*Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001*

Chapter 3: The Christology of Thomas F. Torrance, by Andrew Purves

***Molnar, Thomas F. Torrance***

Chapter 4: Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, *Homoousion* with the Father and with Us in our Humanity
Chapter 5: Atonement: Incarnation and Reconciliation Are One in Jesus Christ

***Gerrit Scott Dawson, ed. An Introduction to Torrance Theology: Discovering the Incarnate Saviour.***
*Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2007. Chapters 1–3, 7–8*

Torrance's early reflections in the area of Christology and soteriology are nicely summarized in his Auburn Lectures in 1938–39, published in 2002 as *The Doctrine of Christ* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002). Also see the first two sections, titled "Knowledge of God" and "Through Jesus Christ," in *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM, 1965). This volume is mostly a collection of lectures and essays previously published in various other venues. One additional brief but important essay is "The Reconciliation of Mind," *TFS Bulletin* 10, no. 3 (1987): 4–7.

## God the Father, the Almighty Creator/Contingent Creation

I will divide this section into more manageable subsections. There is so much material in Torrance's publications on some of the subjects in this section (natural science and theology for instance) that I can provide only a very introductory bibliographic guide. In relation to other sections, like the one on the human

creature, Torrance only wrote a handful of essays, though there are lots of minor discussions embedded within his treatment of other topics.

## The love of God the Father

***The Trinitarian Faith***

Chapter 2: Access to the Father

This is a masterful treatment of the whole subject captured in Athanasius's memorable aphorism, often quoted by Torrance: "It is more godly and accurate to signify God from the Son and call him Father, than to name him from his works and call him unoriginate."

***The Mediation of Christ***

Chapter 5: The Atonement and the Trinity

***"The Christian Apprehension of God the Father."*** *In* ***Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism,*** *ed. Alvin F. Kimel Jr., 120–43. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992*

***"The Problem of Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth."*** *Religious Studies 6, no. 2 (June 1970): 121–35*

The article is republished in two other places, and what is revealing are the changes Torrance introduces toward the end of the later versions. See *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge* (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1984), pp. 285–301; *Karl Barth*, pp. 136–59.

***Christian Doctrine of God,*** *pp. 55–59, 137–41, 203–7*

These brief summaries of the love of God the Father are quite revealing.

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 4: The Love of God the Father Almighty

***Molnar, Thomas F. Torrance***

Chapter 3: God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth

## The Almighty Creator

***The Trinitarian Faith***

Chapter 3: The Almighty Creator

***Christian Doctrine of God***

Chapter 8: The Sovereign Creator

Chapter 9: The Unchangeableness of God

These chapters contain important discussions of the almightiness of God, the impassibility of God, and the character of God's providence.

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 5: Sovereign Creator, Contingent Creation

***Molnar, Thomas F. Torrance***

Chapter 3: God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth

## The contingent creation

Both of the chapters under the previous subheading, "The Almighty Creator," contain material on the contingent creation. What follows are a few of Torrance's most important discussions of creation and contingence.

***The Ground and Grammar of Theology.***
*Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1980*

Chapter 3: Creation and Science

***"Ultimate Beliefs and the Scientific Revolution."***
*CrossCurrents 30 (1980): 129–49*

***"Divine and Contingent Order."*** *In* ***The Sciences and Theology in the Twentieth Century,*** *ed. A.R. Peacocke, pp. 81–97. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981*

***Divine and Contingent Order.*** *1981; Reprint, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998*

Chapter 1: Determinism and Creation

Chapter 2: God and the Contingent Universe

Chapter 3: Theological and Scientific World-Views

Chapter 4: Contingence and Disorder

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 5: Sovereign Creator, Contingent Creation

***Molnar, Thomas F. Torrance***

Chapter 3: God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth

***Colyer, Promise of Trinitarian Theology***

Chapter 10: Humanity in an Intelligible Cosmos: Non-Duality in Albert Einstein and Thomas Torrance, by Chistopher B. Kaiser

## The human creature

***"The Goodness and Dignity of Man in the Christian Tradition."*** *Modern Theology 4 (1988): 309–22*

***"The Soul and Person in Theological Perspective."*** *In* ***Religion, Reason and the Self: Essays in Honour of Hywel D. Lewis,*** *ed. Stewart R. Sutherland and T.A. Roberts, pp. 103–18. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1989*

***The Christian Frame of Mind: Reason, Order, and Openness in Theology and Natural Science****. New and enlarged edn. Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard, 1989*

Chapter 1: The Greek Christian Mind

Chapter 3: Man, Mediator of Order

These are Torrance's main discussions of theological anthropology, though there are other important brief articles and pamphlets on various related topics like the three that follow.

***The Christian Doctrine of Marriage.*** *Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1984*

***"Donor Insemination for Single Women:*** *The Animalisation of the Human Race." Ethics and Medicine 7 (1991)*

***The Soul and the Person of the Unborn Child.*** *Edinburgh, Handsel Press, 1999*

## Natural science and theology

### *The Christian Frame of Mind*

Chapter 2: The Concept of Order in Theology and Science
Chapter 3: Theological and Scientific Inquiry
Chapter 4: Fundamental Issues in Theology and Science
Chapter 5: Realism and Openness in Scientific Inquiry

*The Christian Frame of Mind* is probably Torrance's most accessible book dealing with the relation between natural science and theological science. Neidhardt's introduction is also excellent on this topic. The following book, *Divine and Contingent Order*, is rather difficult for beginners.

### *Divine and Contingent Order*

Chapter 1: Determinism and Creation
Chapter 2: God and the Contingent Universe
Chapter 3: Theological and Scientific World-Views
Chapter 4: Contingence and Disorder

***Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge: Explorations in the Interrelations of Scientific and Theological Enterprise.*** *Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984*

Chapter 7: Christian Theology in the Context of Scientific Change
Chapter 8: Newton, Einstein and Scientific Theology

*Transformation and Convergence* is a difficult book. It is a collection of lectures and previously published essays, except for the crucial first chapter: "The Making of the Modern Mind from Descartes and Newton to Kant," which Torrance composed for the book itself.

***McGrath, T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 9: Theology and the Natural Sciences

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 5: Sovereign Creator, Contingent Creation

***Colyer, Promise of Trinitarian Theology***

Chapter 11: Natural Science and Christian Faith in the Thought of T. F. Torrance, by P. Mark Achtemeier

## Natural theology

This is one of the more difficult subjects in Torrance's theology. Here interpreters of Torrance do not agree. Paul Molnar and I do not agree with Alister McGrath's portrayal of Torrance as advocating a kind of refurbished natural theology, one that McGrath himself tries to develop further. I see Torrance as making a place for a "theology of nature," which at one point he called "natural theology," but later regretted doing so. Torrance was kind enough to read my book, *How to Read T. F. Torrance* in manuscript and offer some helpful suggestions. Next to note 187 on page 194 of my book, where I say, "There is reason to believe that Torrance may regret calling this reformulated version 'natural theology,'" Torrance drew a huge exclamation point! Readers should compare the chapters of the first five books below with the discussions in the chapters from *The Christian Frame of Mind* and the materials listed after that.

***Karl Barth***

Chapter 5: Natural Theology in the Thought of Karl Barth

***Ground and Grammar***

Chapter: 4 The Transformation of Natural Theology

***Reality and Evangelical Theology***

Chapter 1: The Bounds of Christian Theology

***Reality and Scientific Theology***

Chapter 2: The Status of Natural Theology

***The Christian Frame of Mind***

Chapter 4: Theological and Scientific Inquiry

Chapter 5: Fundamental Issues in Theology and Science

Chapter 6: Realism and Openness in Scientific Inquiry

***"Creation, Contingent World-Order, and Time: A Theologico-Scientific Approach."*** *In* ***Time, Creation and World-Order,*** *ed. Mogens Wegner, pp. 206–36. Oakville, CN: Aarthus University Press, 1999*

***McGrath, T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 8: The Place and Purpose of Natural Theology

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 5: Sovereign Creator, Contingent Creation

***Paul Molnar, "Natural Theology Revisited: A Comparison of T. F. Torrance and Karl Barth,"*** *Zeitschrift fur dialektische Theologie 20, no. 1 (December 2005): 53–83*

## The Holy Spirit

***Theology in Reconstruction***

Chapter 14: Come, Creator Spirit, for the Renewal of Worship and Witness

This chapter and the one in *The Trinitarian Faith* are Torrance's two most important discussions of pneumatology.

Chapter 12: *Spiritus Creator*: A Consideration of the Teaching of St. Athanasius and St Basil

***The Trinitarian Faith***

Chapter 6: The Eternal Spirit

***Christian Doctrine of God,*** *pp. 59–67, 147–55, 180–94*

***God and Rationality***

Chapter 7: The Epistemological Relevance of the Spirit

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 6: The Holy Spirit

***Molnar, Thomas F. Torrance***

Chapter 6: Torrance's Pneumatology

***Colyer, Promise of Trinitarian Theology***

Chapter 4: The Holy Spirit in T. F. Torrance's Theology, by Gary W. Deddo

## The church

***Theology in Reconstruction***

Chapter 11: The Foundation of the Church: Union with Christ

This chapter and the one in *The Trinitarian Faith* are Torrance's two most important discussions of ecclesiology.

***The Trinitarian Faith***

Chapter 7: The One Church

## "The Deposit of Faith"

***Theology in Reconciliation***

Chapter 1: Ecumenism

Chapter 2: The One Baptism Common to Christ and His Church

Chapter 3: The Pascal Mystery of Christ and the Eucharist

Chapter 6: The Church In the New Era of Scientific and Cosmological Change

***Royal Priesthood: A Theology of Ordained Ministry.***
*Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1955, 2nd ed. 1993*

This is the most important work of Torrance on ordained ministry, though there are additional discussions in the two volumes next in this list. The first volume of *Conflict and Agreement in the Church* is primarily about ecumenical discussions with various churches and problems in relation to faith and order.

***Conflict and Agreement in the Church, vol. 1, Order and Disorder.*** *1959. Reprint; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996*

***Conflict and Agreement in the Church, vol. 2, The Ministry and the Sacraments of the Gospel.*** *London: Lutterworth Press, 1960. Reprint; Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996*

Chapter 1: The Ministry
Chapter 3: The Sacrament of Baptism
Chapter 4: The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
*Kingdom and Church: A Study in the Theology of the Reformation*

This volume is on the eschatology of Luther, Butzer, and Calvin, but there are significant discussions of various aspects of ecclesiology in which Torrance's own views are evident.

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 7: The Church, the Body of Christ

***Molnar, Thomas F. Torrance***

Chapter 6: Torrance's Trinitarian Understanding of the Church, Sacraments and Ministry

***Colyer, Promise of Trinitarian Theology***

Chapter 6: The Dimension of Depth: Thomas F. Torrance on the Sacraments, by George Hunsinger
Chapter 7: Reading T. F. Torrance as a Practical Theologian, by Ray S. Anderson

## The Trinity

### *The Mediation of Christ*

Chapter 5: The Atonement and the Trinity

### *The Trinitarian Faith*

Chapter 8: The Triunity of God

This chapter in *The Trinitarian Faith* is probably the best introduction to Torrance's doctrine of the Trinity.

### *Ground and Grammar*

Chapter 6: The Basic Grammar of Theology

### *Reality and Scientific Theology*

Chapter 6: The Trinitarian Structure of Theology

"The Trinitarian Structure of Theology" is an important chapter that deals with methodological considerations concerning how the doctrine of the Trinity arises.

### *Christian Doctrine of God*

This is Torrance's magnum opus. It is one of the most groundbreaking works on the Trinity in the past twenty years. It includes extremely important chapters on methodological questions concerning how the doctrine of the Trinity arises and is a difficult book.

### ***Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement.*** *Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994*

This book arose out of ecumenical dialogue between the Pan-Orthodoxy Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Torrance played a crucial role in these dialogues. The book contains many discussions important to Torrance's doctrine of the Trinity.

Readers interested in the dialogue between the Pan-Orthodoxy Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches should consult Thomas F. Torrance, ed., *Theological Dialogue Between Orthodox and Reformed Churches*, 2 vols. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985–1993.

***Colyer, How To Read T. F. Torrance***

Chapter 8: The Triunity of God, One Being Three Persons

***Molnar, Thomas F. Torrance***

Chapter 2: T. F. Torrance, Theologian of the Trinity: The Centrality of the Doctrine of Trinity in Torrance's Theology

***Colyer, Promise of Trinitarian Theology***

Chapter 5: Being and Person: T. F. Torrance's Doctrine of God, by Colin Gunton

## Theological Method and Related Issues

This is by far the most diverse, complex, and difficult area of Torrance's theology. He has published so much in so many subsidiary fields, like the history of hermeneutics and the relation between method in theology and natural science, and his perspective so integrates these various fields that it is difficult even to decide where to begin a reader's guide on this subject. Here it might be wise for those just starting out to read chapter 9, "The Integration of Form in Theology," in my book *How To Read T. F. Torrance* to at least have an overview of this vast array of topics and issues before tackling Torrance's own publications on the subject.

The best way to enter Torrance's perspective in the area of theological method may be to examine his understanding of epistemology, or how we integrate form in our knowing in general and in relation to knowing God in particular. Here it is illuminating to see Torrance's perspective on the integration of form in relation to epistemology in the main stream of Western philosophy, science, and theology, from Descartes and Newton through Hume and Kant to the contributions of Einstein and Polanyi.

Torrance's narrative of this history is not an account of how Torrance came to his epistemological convictions; it simply provides a helpful account by Torrance of his views in relation to the perspectives of other significant thinkers in this area in the modern period. Torrance has written a number of articles and chapters of books on epistemology in modern natural science, philosophy, and theology. The following is the most helpful order in which to read these various publications.

## Epistemology: the integration of form

***Ground and Grammar***

Chapter 2: Emerging from the Cultural Split

***Reality and Scientific Theology***

Chapter 1: Classical and Modern Attitudes of Mind

***Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge***

Preface

Chapter 1: The Making of the "Modern" Mind from Descartes and Newton To Kant

This is a crucial essay for understanding Torrance on this subject.

Chapter 3: The Place of Michael Polanyi in the Modern Philosophy of Science

Chapter 5: Ultimate Beliefs and the Scientific Revolution

Chapter 8: Newton, Einstein, and Scientific Theology

Chapter 2: The Integration of Form in Natural Science and Theological Science

***Ground and Grammar***

Chapter 5: Theological Science

***Reality and Scientific Theology***

Chapter 3: The Science of God

Chapter 4: The Social Coefficient of Knowledge

This chapter, on the social coefficient, is the most important place in Torrance's publications where he deals explicitly with this topic pivotal to many aspects of this whole area of Torrance's thought on theological method, though what he says in the opening chapters of *The Mediation of Christ* about Israel's role in mediating knowledge of God is also germane, as is his article, "The Deposit of Faith."

***"Theological Realism," in The Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology****, ed. B. Hebblethwaite and S. Sutherland, 169–96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982*

***Theological Science. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.*** *Reprinted in paperback by T&T Clark, 1996*

*Theological Science* is Torrance's first systematic account of theological science and has a lot of important material, but it does not represent the full later development of his views in the whole area of theological method. Readers should also consult *God and Rationality* (1971; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), and *Space, Time and Incarnation* (1969; reprint, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997). These three works are an early trilogy designed to prepare the way for a rigorous scientific theology within the modern scientific context (see Torrance, *God and Rationality*, p. ix). Most of the chapters of *God and Rationality* are lectures and previously published essays. Readers interested in Torrance's early views on this subject should consult these three books first and then examine various other essays related to the subject published between 1950 and 1970.

### *The Christian Frame of Mind*

Chapter 2: The Concept of Order in Theology and Science

Chapter 3: Man, Mediator of Order

Chapter 4: Theological and Scientific Inquiry

Chapter 5: Fundamental Issues in Theology and Science

Chapter 6: Realism and Openness in Scientific Inquiry

These five chapters include material important to theological method and epistemology. Also see *Belief in Science and in Christian Life: The Relevance of Michael Polanyi's Thought for Christian Faith and Life* (Edinburgh, Handsel Press, 1980). Torrance edited the work but wrote a helpful introduction and chapter 1: "The Framework of Belief," pp. 1–27.

## Hermeneutics

***Space, Time and Resurrection***

Introduction

Chapter 8: The Lord of Space and Time

***Reality and Evangelical Theology***

Chapter 2: Theological Questions to Biblical Scholars

Chapter 3: Realist Interpretation of God's Self-Revelation

***"The Historical Jesus: From the Perspective of a Theologian." Divine Meaning: Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics,*** *Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995*

Introduction

Chapter 1: The Complex Background of Biblical Interpretation

Chapter 5: Early Interpretation of Holy Scripture

Chapter 8: The Hermeneutics of Athanasius

Chapter 12: Transition to the West: The Interpretation of Biblical and Theological Statements according to Hilary of Poitiers

***The Hermeneutics of John Calvin. Edinburgh:*** *Scottish Academic Press, 1988*

***"Hermeneutics according to Schleiermacher."*** *Scottish Journal of Theology 21 (1968): 257–67.*

## The nature of truth

***Reality and Evangelical Theology***

Chapter 4: Truth and Justification in Doctrinal Formulation

***Reality and Scientific Theology***

Chapter 4: The Stratification of Truth

***Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge***

Chapter 10: Truth and Authority in the Church

## Theological method in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity

For those interested in how Torrance's theological method is concretely related to theological content, especially the doctrine of the Trinity, the following chapters trace Torrance's thinking on this subject. Here I have arranged the material in chronological order, as it illumines the growing sophistication of the integration of content and method in Torrance's theology in relation to the Christian doctrine of God, the Trinity. The material in *The Christian Doctrine of God*, from beginning through chapter 4, is perhaps the most developed account written by any theologian to date of how the doctrine of the Trinity arises.

***Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge***

Chapter 2: The Integration of Form in Natural Science and Theological Science

***Ground and Grammar***

Chapter 6: The Basic Grammar of Theology

***Reality and Scientific Theology***

Chapter 6: The Trinitarian Structure of Theology

***Christian Doctrine of God***

Preface and Introduction
Chapter 2: The Christian Perspective
Chapter 3: The Biblical Frame
Chapter 4: The Trinitarian Text

## Sermons

For readers interested in Torrance's sermons, the best place to begin is with *When Christ Comes and Comes Again* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), and *The Apocalypse Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

# BOOK REVIEWS

## T. F. TORRANCE: THEOLOGIAN OF THE TRINITY

***Paul Molnar***

Paul D. Molnar has rightfully gained the reputation of being a prodigious Barth scholar through his previous books and many journal articles. With the publication of *T. F. Torrance, Theologian of the Trinity* (2009), he has proven himself to be a leading Torrance scholar as well. This volume will serve as a landmark study of Torrance's theology and a significant complement to Alister McGrath's *T. F. Torrance: An Intellectual Biography* and Elmer Colyer's *How to Read T. F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian and Scientific Theology*.

It becomes quite evident that Molnar has a comprehensive grasp of the breadth and depth of Torrance's entire body of work, matched by very few. The range of sources Molnar knowledgeably cites is as impressive as it is useful. This breadth of familiarity is crucial for Torrance scholarship since many topics merely mentioned in his full-length books have been treated in depth elsewhere amid Torrance's voluminous shorter writings. *T. F. Torrance, Theologian of the Trinity* will serve as a kind of subject index to Torrance's theological oeuvre. When combined with Colyer's and McGrath's work, if Torrance wrote in depth on a topic, you can probably find where he did, no matter how obscure the source.

Molnar has not only given us an accurate representation of Torrance's thought but has also faithfully caught the emphasis and proportion, the rhythm and flow, the meter and music of it. And such theological sensitivity is no small feat. Molnar knew TFT personally and had significant correspondence with him. His personal knowledge of Torrance and his work contributes to a book that is fair and faithful to Torrance's thought. Molnar does not merely repeat what others have said. He shapes his own narrative, making some unique observations, including some that are at odds with the assessments of others. It should stand as an authoritative guide and witness to Torrance's theology.

In the first chapter, "Introducing T. F. Torrance," Molnar offers a brief biographical sketch and an overview of the extraordinary range of topics and issues he addressed throughout his lifetime of teaching, research, writing, and involvement with other scholars or church leaders. Of particular interest in this chapter is Molnar's tracing out some of Torrance's rather extensive interaction with Roman Catholic theologians.

In chapter 2, Molnar sets out his thesis for the book, which is clear from its title: Torrance's theology is founded and oriented at every point on the revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is Torrance's conviction that Christian theology is intrinsically and so necessarily trinitarian: its proper subject matter is this particular God, the one revealed in Jesus Christ according to Scripture. If Molnar's book does anything, it shows in chapter after chapter how the ontic reality of God as Father, Son, and Spirit is the source and meaning of every other doctrinal point in Torrance's theology.

After setting forth his thesis in chapter 2, Molnar goes on in the subsequent chapters to show how this is so for Torrance in the doctrines of creation, the incarnation, the atonement, pneumatology, resurrection, and ascension; and finally the church, sacraments, and ministry. Working through Torrance in this way, Molnar covers the whole sweep of doctrinal territory in a way that gives us a good idea of what a single-volume systematic theology written by Torrance might look like,[15] commendably tracking the key themes that inform Torrance's work. All this adds up to showcasing Torrance's theological or revelational realism in striking contrast to other systems of thought such as legalism, pantheism, panentheism, moralism, mysticism, and theological nominalism.

The third chapter takes up the doctrine of God as Creator. The key theological insight here is to see, as Torrance does, the significance of the incarnation. Following Athanasius, as Torrance most always does, grasping the difference and yet some similarity of the God-creation relationship with the Father-Son

15 The closest thing we have to a systematic theology written by Torrance himself is the two-volume work comprising the content of his courses on Christian dogmatics given at New College, Edinburgh, edited by his nephew Robert Walker and published posthumously: *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Jesus Christ* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008); *Atonement: The Person and Work of Jesus Christ* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

relationship has enormous value. This theological exercise gives priority to the Father-Son relationship and distinguishes that eternal and internal (*ad intra*) relationship from the external (*ad extra*) and contingent relation to creation that occurs, then, *ex nihilo*. God from all eternity, and not merely as an act of will, is always the Father, Son, and Spirit. God is, to use a term coined by Torrance, onto-relationally Triune. Creation then is the act of the Triune God to create that which is not God. The internal relationships of the Triune God are not dependent on relationship with creation, but that external relation, culminating in the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of the Son of God, bears the exact same quality of relationship as do the internal relations. That is, the act of creation is an act of love that reflects or corresponds to the internal and eternal love of Father, Son, and Spirit. God acts in freedom and in love toward creation because God is Triune. But that relation, in contradistinction to the internal relations, is (1) contingent, (2) gives creation a contingent intelligibility, and (3) grants creation a genuine freedom within limits.

Those following Molnar's writings will recognize this theme as one central to his own thinking. Here Molnar shows us just how essential the distinction and priority of the Father-Son relation over the God-creation relationship was for Torrance and does so in greater detail here than in his other writings. Molnar thus brings into the spotlight a sustained critique of Jürgen Moltmann's panentheist view of a mutually conditioning and necessary relationship between God and creation, which denies the *creatio ex nihilo* and requires that God makes himself in need of redemption. The contrast between Moltmann's view and Torrance's couldn't be clearer.

One other significant aspect of this chapter that warrants comment is Molnar's discussion of Torrance's proposal for a new natural theology, in which Molnar sides with Barth over against Torrance's position—at least as he, Molnar, understands it. This is a notoriously difficult topic on which there is some disagreement among Torrance scholars. Despite what might be connoted, Torrance is not at all claiming that there is a slightly improved way to give consideration to some aspect of creation, independent of revelation, that logically leads to a proper knowledge of God. Molnar agrees on that with Torrance. He objects, however, that Torrance seems to allow for at least an initial consideration of creation that could ostensibly point abstractly to the Triune God of revelation. The phrases

he finds objectionable in Torrance's works involve claims that a consideration of creation shows something like "the signature of the Creator," points beyond itself "with a mute cry for sufficient reason," and "suggests, or directs us to, a transcendent ground of rationality as its explanation." Most egregious to Molnar, it seems, is that Torrance in his attempt to reconstruct a natural theology allows for the "bracketing" (Torrance's term[16]) of a natural theology from knowledge of God via revelation (pp. 95, 97n122, 99).

Now the question is whether these particular claims of Torrance amount to his establishing a relatively independent starting place for knowledge of God. Molnar believes that Torrance is inconsistent at this point. But others dispute that charge.[17] The issue seems to be how those phrases, noted by Molnar, are to be interpreted. Arguments have been made that Torrance was consistent throughout, allowing for no *dogmatic* knowledge of God on the basis of a knowledge of nature but rather allowing for a dialogue between science (which strictly pursues the knowledge of nature) and theology that gives consideration to methodological analogies occurring between the two disciplines with their respective subject matter. Such an interaction is then regarded as being strictly heuristic so that natural theology provides no content to theology, that is, provides no normative knowledge of God, and that natural theology (the overlap of natural science and theological science) must be understood finally within revealed theology.

The disagreement over what Torrance means does raise the question as to whether it is best to identify what he is describing as a new natural theology. What Torrance sets out is not exactly a theology of nature either, as Molnar points out. All this is to say that, especially on this topic, a close reading of Torrance himself must serve as the final arbiter.[18]

The fourth chapter, on Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, stands at the center of Torrance's thought since the self-revelation of God in his person and work

16 T. F. Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology*, pp. 42, 59-60.

17 See Elmer Colyer, *How to Read T. F. Torrance*, pp. 192-207.

18 Readers wanting to pursue this topic would do well to study Torrance's very detailed description of the relationship between theological science and natural science in his book *The Ground and Grammar of Theology* and essays in *Reality and Scientific,* especially chap. 2, "The Status of Natural Theology."

determines where and how God's relationship to his creation are to be known and entered into. The signal value of this chapter is Molnar's bringing together the various key elements of Torrance's unique contributions to Christology. Molnar demonstrates the profound integration of Torrance's thought by showing us the interconnections, sometimes missed, between the *homoousion* of Father and Son, the second *homoousion* with us (of Chalcedon), the hypostatic union of God with humanity in the humanity of Jesus Christ as well as the anhypostatic and enhypostatic dimensions of that union, and the vicarious humanity of Christ. Molnar ably brings out the significance of these doctrinal formulations in protecting the free and loving grace of God enacted uniquely in time and space for our knowledge of God and for our salvation into eternal union and communion with God through the humanity of the Son of God by the Spirit. Letting go of these interlocking formulations weakens and indeed threatens the integrity of the gospel of Jesus Christ itself, evacuating it of its truth, love, light, and life.

Among the many topics that Molnar goes on to address, the most helpful is his extensive explication of the problem of container and spatial notions informing theological understanding. Torrance refers to this problem throughout his writings, but Molnar brings these myriad references together in a way that demonstrates the fullness of Torrance's thought on this crucial and pervasive issue.

Chapter 5, on the atonement, is the second-longest chapter in the book. But this is representative of Torrance's own emphasis. It was essential for him to get right the connection between Christ's incarnation and his atoning work. Of special emphasis, Molnar points out, was the significance for Torrance of the full humanity of Jesus, who came as Son of God "acting for us within history without being confused with history itself" (p. 137). Our actual human condition, down to its ontic roots, had to be transformed by the act of God himself upon our humanity. So the Incarnation, the assumption of our humanity by the eternal Son of God, is essential to the atoning work.

For Torrance, following important trajectories of the early church, the humanity assumed and united in Jesus Christ must be our fallen humanity—the only humanity that needs to be transformed. This is a work that does not take place external to God or external to humanity; rather, it is worked out by the Triune God, involving all three persons, and it is worked out in our humanity in the complete fallen humanity assumed and regenerated in Jesus.

Among the other themes Molnar discusses in chapter 5 is the crucial theme of God's suffering for us on no other basis but the freedom of his love. The Father shares in his own nonincarnate way in the Son's suffering in our place and on our behalf so that we might be taken up into God's own life while remaining and even becoming fully human—fully "personalized," to use one of Torrance's unique expressions.

Just as important is Molnar's exposition of Torrance's view on the nature of sin and justification grasped in the light of the Incarnation. Sin, in the light of God's grace, is seen for what it really is—an attack on God and a rejection of grace. Grace, furthermore, is not an act or a substance offered apart from Christ, for Jesus Christ is the grace of God in person. For Torrance this rules out any Pelagian notions of cooperation with God. It does, however, allow a place for human response—but only response—as by the Spirit we are enabled to share in Christ's own perfect human response. So we respond in repentance and faith. Nevertheless, our response is not adequate. We must also repent of it and entrust it to the mediation of Christ, who joins our response to his by the Spirit. So our own responses are justified and sanctified by Christ's. We must do away with any idea of self-justification; otherwise, the unique, once-and-for-all mediation of Christ is rendered superfluous, and another mediation of our own making is set up. Molnar really does justice to Torrance's persistent refrain on this theological theme. Only a full reading of Torrance could generate a greater impact.

Following this line, Torrance intends to recover the full Reformation emphasis on the saving significance of the continuing risen and ascended humanity of Jesus Christ. Such a restatement is vital since his eternal mediation is so often lost across the board in conservative and liberal, Catholic and Protestant theology. Justifying grace in and through Jesus Christ's dual mediation has both objective and subjective dimensions mediated to us by the Spirit, not just the objective alone.

Torrance's views, Molnar reminds us, significantly contrast not only with Pelagianism but also with any kind of panentheism. Contemporary theologians who fail to take into account the whole, real, vicarious humanity of Christ and weaken if not eliminate the grace of justification, according to Molnar's reckoning, are Jürgen Moltmann, Ted Peters, Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann, John A. T. Robinson, Edward

Schillebeeckx, Maurice Blondel, Joseph Maréchal, and Karl Rahner. Torrance's own particular targets here also include some aspects of the Westminster Catechism as well as strands of Federal theology. For these theologies in one way or another undermine the full human priesthood and continuing unique mediatorship of Christ to which we are joined by the Spirit. The further result is that other mediations are inevitably substituted for Christ's at one point or another.

The sixth chapter, fittingly, addresses the doctrine of the Spirit. Some have criticized Torrance for neglecting the Spirit to some extent. Molnar's chapter, however, sets forth the comprehensive nature of Torrance's understanding of the Spirit and should provide ample evidence as to why and how Torrance is indeed a fully trinitarian theologian.

Of special interest is Molnar's clear discussion of the way in which Torrance accepts the notion of *theōsis*, or *theopoiēsis* (often translated, unhelpfully, "divinization"), and also corrects the rather pervasive misunderstandings of this term. By the Spirit, God gives us himself so that we as humans, united to Christ's glorified and ascended humanity, share in the divine fellowship and communion—that is, the very life of the Triune God. There is no salvation without the Spirit. And salvation has everything to do with the direct, miraculous, and gracious ministry of the Spirit in the name of the Son, who draws us into communion with God by glorifying humanity but not turning it into divinity.

The Spirit is also essential, as Torrance makes clear and Molnar points out, within the eternal life of God. Accounting for the Spirit in the trinitarian life calls for a radical adjustment of the way we conceive of divine being. The *homoousion* applies just as much to the Spirit in relationship to the Father and the Son as to the Father-Son relationship.

Torrance's view then stands in stark contrast with both Moltmann's (who denies there is a single subject) and Rahner's (who claims there is no reciprocal loving relationship in God) (pp. 203–4). The perichoretic communion that constitutes the eternal and internal life of God requires relinquishing the idea that relationship is external, extrinsic, and accidental to the life of God. Rather, Torrance's onto-relational conceptual shift declares to the contrary that communion, fellowship, relationship is constitutive to the very being of God, not accidental or arbitrary. Without this shift of thinking, Torrance shows that we cannot speak faithfully of the Spirit and of God as unity in Trinity and Trinity in unity.

The final major theme of this chapter addresses the perennial problem of the *filioque*. If full weight is given to the divinity of the Spirit via the *homoousion* and the perichoretic being of God in relationship, then the problem of the *filioque* has no reason to arise. For then the fullness of divinity inexists (*enousia*) each of the persons, and the acts of the three persons as one being necessarily involve all three persons, each in their own unique way. So the generation of the Son must involve the Spirit and the procession of the Spirit must involve the Son. The unity of God should not then be located solely in the person of the Father, but rather the unity is eternally a triunity. The Son is begotten of the being of the Father (who is *homoousios* with the Spirit!). The Spirit proceeds from the being of the Father (*homoousios* with the Son).[19]

The next to last chapter, "Torrance's Trinitarian Understanding of the Church, Sacraments and Ministry," covers an impressive range of interrelated themes. It seems to me that Molnar uncovers a relatively unmined area of Torrance's theology here. Expositing the many facets of Torrance's ecclesiology in relation to Torrance's doctrines of the incarnation and Trinity enables Molnar to identify the most salient and far-reaching features of Torrance's thought for the life of the church catholic.

Here I will simply mention just some of the themes Torrance develops to better inform our ecclesiology. (1) The essential relationship between Israel and the new form of the people of God, which includes the ingrafted Gentiles. (2) The inviolable connection between the person and work of Christ and the person and work of the Spirit. (3) The danger of a dualism in ecclesiology that forces the artificial choice between a disembodied spiritual church and an institutional view of the body of Christ. (4) The once-for-all yet eternally valid vicarious priesthood of Christ, who (5) continues to mediate between God and

19 In an extensive consultation with a leading delegation of Orthodox theologians, Torrance found that such an onto-relational understanding of the trinitarian relations was acceptable to both Orthodox and to representative theologians of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Their *Agreed Statement on the Trinity* (1992) is a landmark work offered to the whole church as a theologically responsible way of transcending the *filioque* schism. Any contemporary theologian who shares an ecumenical concern should become familiar with this agreement and its attendant documents. See http://*warc.jalb.de/warcajsp/news_file/15.pdf*

humanity in and through his continuing humanity, which is (6) both absent and so transcendent over his body and never to be confused with it but also (7) present to us by his Spirit in time and space and so never to be separated from it in any deistic fashion. (8) Ministry then, especially of the sacraments, must be ordered by a living and embodied recognition that all human activity, whether by bishops, priests, ministers, or laity, can only be participations in the ongoing ministry and mediation of the living Christ by the gracious power of the Spirit, (9) thereby ruling out the need to impose any other vicarious or substitutionary ministry or priesthood, as if Christ by the Spirit were absent or were reducible to human activity or control, or (10) conveyed by the supposed potential inherent in natural means or forms that operate independently of Christ's own personal activity. And finally, (11) what Molnar calls Torrance's "massive" achievement: "By focusing on 'God as Man rather than upon God in Man' Torrance embraces a high Christology which concentrated on the humanity of the incarnate Son of God and a view of Eucharistic worship and life in which 'the primacy is given to the priestly mediation of Jesus Christ himself'" (p. 321).

At this point readers of this review may ask if there is any significant interaction with Torrance's critics. While there are a good number of footnotes that address those who diverge from Torrance's view, this matter is for the most part collected in the last chapter of the book, "Considering Some Criticisms of T. F. Torrance's Theology." Although Molnar's purpose is not to conduct an assessment, either in this chapter or in the book as a whole, but to provide a comprehensive exposition of Torrance's work, some readers may be disappointed in the brevity of treatment. Molnar's discussion of critics in this final chapter certainly does acknowledge that there are indeed objections raised against aspects of Torrance's views. But Molnar's concise treatments tend to amount to precise descriptions of the disagreements rather than tackling their nature and offering in depth suggestions for potential resolution.

Molnar has more than just cracked the door open to just such a fair and informed theological engagement with Torrance. His survey of critics does serve to make clearer Torrance's views over against some others. He provides us with explicit citations from Torrance that expose misplaced criticisms and offer a likely line of defense to most of the objections raised. This perhaps too brief of a chapter brings into relief Torrance's teaching in contrast to others, a prerequisite for any

full and fruitful critical engagement. But, although the stage has been set, a full-scale critical assessment of Torrance's work will have to wait for another occasion.

With this book Paul Molnar has pretty well eliminated any excuse not to be able to have a clear, sympathetic, and comprehensive understanding of Torrance's body of theological work. As attested to by the impressive endorsements on the back of the book from John Webster, George Hunsinger, David Fergusson, Elmer Colyer, Alasdair Heron, and Iain Torrance, this work will serve as a landmark treatment that masterfully sets forth T. F. Torrance's constructive work in a way that is detailed and comprehensive and also fully conversant with current theological conventions; it is an indispensable guide.

*Gary Deddo*

## THEOSIS IN THE THEOLOGY OF THOMAS TORRANCE

***Myk Habets. Surrey: Ashgate, 2009, pp. 212, £52.25***

Theosis *in the Theology of Thomas Torrance* belongs to the growing number of publications on the Scottish theologian Thomas F. Torrance, whom Alister McGrath has referred to as "the most significant British academic theologian of the twentieth century" (*TFT: Intellectual Biography,* xi). This book, however, is one of the most important works, because it is one of the few that deals particularly with Torrance's soteriology. As Habets notes, fresh secondary works with the purpose of either expounding or critiquing Torrance's soteriology are long overdue. In fact, although there has been a significant amount of doctoral theses written worldwide on Torrance's soteriology, Man Kei Ho's *A Critical Study of T. F. Torrance's Theology of Incarnation* (Peter Lang, 2008), Peter Cass's *Christ Condemned in the Flesh* (VDM Verlag, 2009), and Habets's *Theosis,* up to 2009, are probably the only published doctoral theses after Kye Won Lee's *Living in Union with Christ* (Peter Lang, 2003). For people who are interested in understanding Torrance's doctrine of salvation, this book offers a promising and substantial help.

The thesis of this book is that although *theosis* is not *the* central point of Torrance's dogmatics, the concept "is of fundamental importance" in Torrance's

soteriology in particular and "is a necessary crucial integrating theme within his overall theological *oeuvre*" in general (p. 16). Grounded in this conclusion, almost in an apologetic manner, the whole book thus shows how *theosis* can be a justifiable hermeneutical key in a presentation of Torrance's soteriology. Habets, at an early point in the book, admits that he undertakes his project with an assumption that Torrance employs "conceptual equivalents" of *theosis* in his writings, such as "union, communion, participation, transcendental determination, reordering, humanising, personalising and atoning exchange" (p. 15). Habets is aware that Torrance rarely employed the term *theosis,* which Torrance himself admitted to be quite offensive to some (*Theology in Reconstruction,* p. 243; quoted on p. 1), so Habets's equation of several key terms and concepts in Torrance's writings constitutes a significant part of the weight of his overall argument.

Being aware of the ambiguity of the term *theosis,* Habets properly devotes the introduction of the book to offering a definition of the term. Albeit laconically, Habets provides the etymological root and basic English translation of *theosis* as "divinisation" or "deification," which he points out are both inadequate and misleading (p. 5). Then he proceeds with the historical development and use of the concept, with particular attention to the Western church, arguing that the concept of *theosis* has been prominent in the theology of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Anglican theologians, the Wesley brothers, and even contemporary Pentecostalism. That Habets presents Torrance's appropriation of *theosis* only after this brief survey seems to be deliberate, in order to show that (1) *theosis* is actually a part of the rich theological tradition of the Western church and (2) that Torrance's use of the concept cannot be considered as a deviation from his own theological tradition.

Habets indubitably possesses an "indwelt knowledge" of Torrance's theology (see p. 2). This book provides ample evidence of the author's exhaustive interaction with the large quantity of Torrance's theological corpus, and the resulting palpable comprehensive knowledge of Torrance's theology is noteworthy. However, it is precisely because Habets is evidently well-informed of Torrance's thoughts that he cannot be acquitted from a noticeable weakness. Ultimately, the book is all about Torrance's soteriology, approached via the concept of *theosis.* Concerning this, the propriety of sketching Torrance's soteriology by starting

with the doctrines of creation and theological anthropology is quite questionable (chapter 1). One wonders if Habets failed to represent Torrance's Christocentric and Trinitarian soteriology in outlining his book, consciously or unconsciously, by seemingly arguing that the first and necessary backdrop to understanding Torrance's soteriology is not knowledge of Christology and the doctrine of the Trinity but of creation and anthropology. This approach seems to be incompatible with Torrance's scientific soteriology.

Habets, however, redeems himself in the ensuing chapters. Chapter 3 constitutes the heart of Habets's arguments regarding *theosis* as a soteriological motif in Torrance's thought, for which the author prudently lays the appropriate theological foundation by devoting chapter 2 to Christology. This move contradicts Habets's earlier assessment that *theosis* "illuminates [Torrance's] incarnational view of the atonement" (p. 1), but it also rectifies the error of that conclusion. Habets rightly points out that Torrance's soteriology is founded on Christology, so that an understanding of the person and work of the incarnate Son is prerequisite in grasping Torrance's soteriological articulation, including *theosis*. This is because the person and work of Jesus Christ are one; that is, his person is his work and his work is his person. This does not imply ontological tautology. Rather, it essentially points to the inseparable relation between Christology and soteriology, and the futility of understanding the latter without the former, and vice versa. Habets beautifully refers to this oneness as "Christ's incarnational redemption" (p. 50), where every aspect of the life of the incarnate Son is essentially redemptive. In short, Christ redeems humanity not through an external transaction but rather as the God-man vicariously effects the atoning exchange between God and humanity, from the side of God as fully God and from the side of humanity as fully man in one person. The life of the God-man is not a prelude to an atoning act. Rather, the whole life of Jesus Christ is the whole atoning act. However, rather than interpreting Torrance as espousing a physicalist theory of redemption, as some critiques of Torrance do, Habets rightly considers that Torrance's view exemplifies an ontological model instead. This means Christ's salvific incarnation deals with more than the problem of physical corruption and death. Considering that the whole life of Christ is salvific, Christ assumed and redeemed all aspects of fallen humanity: the physical, the moral, and most importantly, the relational at-one-ment and reconciliation between God and humanity.

Chapter 3 examines and expounds the use of *theosis* in Torrance's soteriology by heavily relying on Torrance's understanding and use of "union with Christ." Torrance himself admits his deep indebtedness to both Calvin and H.R. Mackintosh on this particular theological theme. Throughout his discussion of Torrance's treatment of union with Christ, Habets ingeniously incorporates both Calvin's and Mackintosh's views, which is probably inevitable, considering the overlapping similarities among these three thinkers. By referring to Torrance's use of the Old Testament concepts *pdh, kpr*, and g'l at the beginning of the chapter*,* Habets reminds his readers that Christ's atoning reconciliation is ontologically accomplished by and in Christ. This is particularly essential in Habets's overall argument, for the atoning exchange accomplished by Jesus's incarnation is the necessary prerequisite to understanding humanity's union with Christ. God in Christ was one with humanity so that humanity might be in union with Christ, and by extension, humanity might share in the Life, love, and communion of the Triune God. *Theosis,* or deification, according to Torrance, is actually humanization. Thus, humanity as humans — not divinized humans — through Christ's ontological and atoning union with us and our consequent union with him are enabled to enter into relationship with the Triune God. To show that Torrance is still a Reformed theologian amid his use of *theosis* in his soteriology, Habets allocates the remainder of the chapter to establishing the relationship between justification and *theosis.* Habets does this by arguing that justification is not merely a forensic act. *Declaration*, or being proclaimed justified in Christ, and *deification,* or our continual union with Christ, are not mutually exclusive (pp. 117–24). In fact, Habets concludes, "justification is an aspect of the metanarrative of *theosis*" (p. 125).

That the role of the Holy Spirit in *theosis* is given attention in chapter 4 is another commendable aspect of the book. Torrance's soteriology, although it is christocentric, is essentially Trinitarian. This implies that the office of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation is indispensable. First, Habets expounds the interrelationship between the Spirit and Christ, particularly their mutual mediation. This means that in the salvific economy, the Spirit is active in the whole vicarious atoning life and work of Christ, from the virgin birth to Pentecost (p. 145). Reciprocally, the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world is also Christ-mediated. This can be understood in two ways: (1) the

Spirit became universally available for all only after Christ's vicarious Spirit-filled earthly human existence, and (2) the Spirit is mediated by and through Christ's finished redemptive activity. But the specific role of the Spirit in the world, as Habets points out, is that the Spirit subjectively actualizes *in nobis* what Christ objectively accomplished *pro nobis*. Thus, Habets calls the Spirit "the Agent of participation," for the Spirit enables us to participate in Christ's perfect knowledge, obedience, faith, and worship of the Father (pp. 151–65). Habets perceives Torrance's participation language as an evidence that *theosis* is crucial in Torrance's soteriology. What is lacking in this section, however, is an elaboration of the relationship between *theosis* and the presence of the Spirit in the world as the coming of God as God to relate with humans as humans. This failure on Habets's part leads to the neglect of an important aspect of Torrance's thought concerning *theosis,* particularly in relation to his anxiety concerning modern theology's tendency to confuse the Holy Spirit with the human spirit and spirituality, that "in the new coming of the Spirit we are up against *God* in the most absolute sense, God in his ultimate holiness or Godness" (*Theology in Reconstruction,* p. 243). This point is essential to Torrance's contention that we share in the life and love of the Triune God as fully human, and by grace alone.

Second, while Habets highlights the horizontal element of *theosis,* or of the relationship between God and humanity, he properly dedicates the remaining part of the chapter to the corporate nature of this horizontal relationship, that is, to the relationship between the Spirit and the church. Habets's decision is justifiable, for Torrance places the church under the Spirit's work. Habets quotes Torrance: "The Spirit creates not only personal union but corporate communion between us and Christ and through Christ with the Holy Trinity" (*Trinitarian Faith,* p. 9; quoted on p. 167). In relation to the Spirit's office in the world, the church, therefore, is the historical community on earth where corporate union with Christ through the Spirit takes place. Corporate worship and corporate partaking of the sacraments are integral elements in Torrance's soteriology. This is because, while our union with Christ in the Spirit is objectively rooted in Christ once and for all (baptism), it is nevertheless a union that needs to be continuously renewed (Eucharist). Furthermore, in the church there transpires both the horizontal and the vertical aspect of relation.

Overall, possessing an open mind, particularly on Habets's appropriation of the concept of *theosis* in Torrance's soteriology, will make a great deal of difference when reading this book. This means that readers should abandon the notion that *theosis* is equivalent to something like a substantial metamorphosis commonly attributed to Neoplatonic, Thomistic, and most recently, radical orthodoxy interpretations of participation in the divine nature. Rather, *theosis* in Torrance falls squarely within his relational and Trinitarian soteriology, where reconciliation is achieved by God in Christ's vicarious and atoning humanity, so that by union with Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, humanity as personalized persons and redeemed humans may share in the love, communion, and life of the Triune God. On the other hand, those who have biases concerning the term *theosis* because of the way that it has been generally conceived by Protestant theology as "divinization" or "deification" according to *essence* or *nature* will benefit from reading this book. Habets's ingenious and convincing presentation of Torrance's rediscovery of *theosis* as a relational concept as supported by both patristic and Reformation theologians has the potential of changing the general Western negative attitude toward the term and also of recovering the rich theological and spiritual orientations behind it.

This book also strengthens Torrance's already evident theological relation with the Eastern tradition. Torrance, in his lifetime, was deeply involved with the Eastern church in ecumenical dialogues, although the main themes of such dialogues were patristic studies and the doctrines of the Trinity and the church (e.g., the two volumes of *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches* [1985 and 1993]). Habets's study shows that Torrance's interest and appropriation of the main themes of Eastern theology goes beyond Trinitarian and ecclesiological concerns, but with soteriological considerations as well. As such, (1) for Torrance scholars, Habets's work should challenge more theologians for future projects, both analytical and critical, on Torrance's use and interpretation of Eastern theology; and (2) for Western theologians in general, this book should prompt more studies on the recovery of neglected themes the Eastern church has to offer for the further refinement of Christian dogmatics as a whole.

*Theosis in the Theology of Thomas Torrance* has much to offer to students of Torrance's theology. Several key elements of Torrance's thought are well-presented and integrated so that a reading of the book will provide a good insight

into Torrance's soteriology in particular and theology in general. A word of caution should be mentioned though, because as Habets himself confesses, using *theosis* in Torrance's soteriology has its own problems (pp. 195–96), particularly as there are areas where Torrance himself did not provide comprehensive discussion. One might wonder if this is deliberate in Torrance: while *theosis* occupies a place in his thoughts, it may not occupy the same weight that Habets places on it.

*Dick O. Eugenio*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO TORRANCE THEOLOGY: DISCOVERING THE INCARNATE SAVIOUR

***Edited by Gerrit Scott Dawson***
***2007 T&T Clark***

Over the past decade, many people, lay and academic, have asked me if there is a good introductory book for getting to know the thought of Tom or James Torrance. Often I have referred them to *Mediation of Christ* (1984), yet also with a bit of hesitation — for the layman, *MOC* can be a bit of an overwhelming experience; and for the scholar, its lack of footnoting can be frustrating. James Torrance's *Worship, Communion and the Triune God of Grace* (1996) is excellent, yet somewhat restricted in its dogmatic scope. Now that Tom Torrance's Edinburgh lectures (*Incarnation* [2008] and *Atonement* [2009]) have finally been published, a very readable and thorough work is on the market. But for those not ready to read two large volumes and who are comfortable with a secondary resource, Dawson's broad *Introduction* may be the best thing on offer.

*Introduction* is the product of pastors and theologians who have been deeply shaped and centred by the teaching and writing of the Torrance brothers. (Contributors include: David Torrance, Andrew Purves, Elmer Colyer, Gerrit Dawson, Douglas Kelly, Alan Torrance, Graham Redding, Gary Deddo, and Baxter Kruger.) It is an excellent book for those who want to test the Torrance theological waters, yet it also represents several pieces of thoughtful scholarship

which deserve the serious engagement of fellow scholars. One might balk at the suggestion that there is such a thing as "a Torrance theology" — Tom and James and David don't claim to be "Torrancians" themselves. Rather, as David Torrance reminds us (p. 1), those who would follow in their footsteps are constantly referred back to the pages of the Old and New Testaments, and to theological forebears such as Athanasius, Calvin, Barth, and the like.

Given the nearly magisterial standing of T. F. Torrance in the latter half of the twentieth-century theological scene, the book impressively strikes a fairly even balance between material that includes the contributions of James and David too. Considering their thought together in one book is appropriate, as the three Torrance brothers shared a kindred theological instinct which manifested itself in various ways according to their gifts and calling. If there is a negative aspect to this approach, it is that lumping them together under the rubric "a Torrance theology" tends to minimize their particular distinctiveness and discourage certain kinds of critical questioning. General descriptions of a "Torrance theology" (an odd title given that this is a label that the Torrances themselves would surely not have encouraged) can be helpful in an introductory resource such as this, but serious scholarship requires more particularity and individuation. Each Torrance should be judged and assessed on the basis of his own work and not reduced to a generalized melting pot called "Torrance theology." Those with more nuanced scholarly concerns will need to go elsewhere for more depth. (T. F. Torrance's newly published two-volume Edinburgh lectures [*Incarnation* and *Atonement*] and Paul Molnar's new book on T. F. Torrance in Ashgate's *Great Theologians* series would be worthwhile investments.)

*Introduction* plays a bit like a symphony. Each chapter is written by an author who learned their tunes from Tom and James Torrance, and each is very consciously seeking to be faithful in passing on what they have received. In this sense, there is a consistency to the overall message that shines through each essay even in their variety of themes. Yet this faithfulness does not mean sameness. There is plenty of scope and texture in the Torrances' thought from which to draw. The well is deep. The drum beats reverberate throughout the entire dogmatic spectrum. Some of the essays are a bit like jazz and, while the theme is still present, the cantor is unique (Baxter Kruger's chapter, "Hermeneutical Nightmare," is a case in point). Some of the essays are improvisations, faithfully

extending the Torrances' thought into specific applications. (Gary Deddo and Graham Redding's thoughtful essays come to mind.)

As Gerrit Dawson notes in the preface, not everyone agrees with every point each of the others has made (though none of these areas of disagreement are mentioned throughout the entire text). There are different nuances that each writer draws out, different emphases that constitute the core of the Torrances' message for them. And while many of these emphases overlap through the various chapters, the styles at times can be quite different. (For example, both Baxter Kruger and Gerrit Dawson have much to say about the curse of sin and the fallen humanity which Jesus took to himself, but formally, and in some ways materially, the registers in which they make their points are radically different.)

It ought to be said that, though an introduction, this book is not "Torrance for Dummies." While not every essay is as philosophically complex as Douglas Kelly's ("Realist Epistemology"), all of them take up the dynamic thought patterns of the Torrances' understanding of the gospel, which requires multiple concepts to be held together at once: person and work, being and act, humanity and divinity, humanward and Godward, union and participation, and so on.

One particularly helpful feature of the book is the comprehensive introductory chapter written by David Torrance. David patiently walks through each chapter in the book, distilling the key underlying doctrinal convictions it contributes, and then, most helpfully of all, giving each doctrinal theme a one-line heading. This not only gives the previewing reader an idea of what is to come, but also clearly states the core issues to be discussed and where one could find a specific discussion on that theme. If this technique has a flaw, it is that as a distillation of a distillation, it represents a fairly compressed and somewhat nonsequential line of reasoning and for that reason can make it difficult to piece together a total picture. Perhaps if one were to read the introduction *at the end* of the book the picture would come together more clearly. Regardless of the reader's method, its greatest value is that here we have Torrance the pastor (David) doing for us two things: first, focusing in on the key theological themes of these Torrance-inspired essays; and second, making practical links to church life as they arise.

Theologically, the book covers a great amount of doctrinal ground: soteriology and Christology, love and forgiveness in the covenant, knowledge of God and becoming like God, and worship and service. In an effort to distill the core

concepts even more for those who might still be wondering if the Torrance waters (or more specifically, *this* book) are worth entering, the following is my attempt to summarize the key theological issues discussed (N.B.: this is not a chapter-by-chapter summary, but more of a logical dogmatic flow):

*God's love in Christ is an unconditional covenant love.* All of humanity (not just "the elect" as Reformed scholastics would have it) are freely and eternally loved and unconditionally forgiven by God in Christ and *on this basis* are called by Christ through the Holy Spirit to love and obey him (103-14).

*Atoning reconciliation (i.e., our salvation) is worked out within Christ's own person.* The union of Christ's divine and human natures is a *dynamic personal* (hypostatic) union (81). It is worked out in an *active obedience*. We are saved by *Christ's* faith and obedience to the Father, not *ours* (62). Our salvation was not only accomplished *by* Christ but *in* Christ, *in* his vicarious humanity in which we are given to share by the Spirit (31, 44, 72, 141). We are delivered from both the (juridical) *guilt* of sin by Christ's passive obedience and submission to judgment on the cross and the (ontological) *power* of sin by Christ's obedient life (45-50). We must not separate the person of Christ from the work/acts of Christ.

*The ascended Christ is still the incarnate mediator.* The God-man forever lives for us, offering himself and the fruits of his enduring life for us, and with the Father sending his Spirit upon us to be with us and to unite us to Christ. Christ's continuing humanity as the exalted Lord makes our participation in his ongoing life possible. His enduring life *is* our living atonement (70-72).

*Union with Christ is a completed gift in which we personally participate by the Spirit.* Union with Christ is an accomplished objective fact, but *to neglect our active participation in Christ is to neglect our present salvation* which is established in Christ. We get to participate in Christ's own obedience to the Father (145-52). Through our union with Christ, every facet of our response to God (worship, ethics, prayer, social action, etc) is cleansed and actualized *in Christ* and is to be seen as the gift of participating by the Spirit in the incarnate Son's *ongoing* communion with the Father and his mission from the Father to the world. Christian worship is just such a Trinitarian event, for we do not worship alone but through the Spirit in union with Christ our high priest who both leads and mediates our worship to the blessed Trinity (127-30). Our union with Christ does not make us less ourselves, but more ourselves, more personal, more

human. As personal being is an "onto-relational" reality, union with Christ does not obliterate our "us-ness" but secures us as persons in dynamic communion of intimate giving and receiving with the Triune God (143). Our responses are not negated or replaced, but they are contextualized and relativized (115-16). Our faithfulness, love, generosity, and knowledge is only a participation in the faithfulness, love, generosity, and knowledge of Christ (147, 169-73). Union with Christ and communion or participation in Christ are twin doctrines that cannot be separated or collapsed.

For the reader who is newly introduced to the Torrances, if any of the above concepts intrigue, then by all means, take and read!

I will suggest four areas of critical assessment:

*First of all, a structural challenge.* Given the genesis of the book (a conference on "Torrance theology") the material is bound to be somewhat repetitive. Common themes come to the surface again and again, but the upside of this format is that each chapter is able to stand alone and can be read based on the reader's interest in each particular topic.

*Second, a technical limitation.* As I mentioned above, this book does not seek to draw out the distinctions between the two brothers' thought. Nor does it critically engage either one. Its purpose is exclusively expositional in nature, seeking to clear up misconceptions and misreadings of their theology in general.

*Third, a sociopsychological critique.* The tenor or register of much of "Torrance theology" is focused on the existential angst that many Christians live under as they seek to live up to the demands of Christian faith. This makes the gospel message of "not I, but Christ in me" incredibly refreshing news. Yet how does "the life I now live in the flesh" realize itself in daily life? Gary Deddo's chapter, "The Christian Life and Our Participation in Christ's Continuing Ministry," provides an important balance here, and more extended reflection is needed in Torrance scholarship.

*And finally, a theological question.* Throughout the book, the continuing high priesthood of Christ is lifted up, but little is mentioned of a continuing kingly or prophetic ministry of the incarnate and ascended Christ. Certainly the Torrances' theology provides rich resources for development here as well, and further scholarly theological reflection on the ministry of the exalted Son might prove profitable in understanding what it means to participate in Christ's vicarious humanity.

*An Introduction to Torrance Theology* is an excellent introduction that does just what it says, introducing people to the rich resources offered in the theology of Tom and James Torrance. It deserves to be distributed widely and read thoughtfully.

*Geordie (George) Ziegler*

## *A CRITICAL STUDY ON T. F. TORRANCE'S THEOLOGY OF INCARNATION*

**Man Kei Ho**

*European University Studies, Series XXIII Theology, vol. 869. Bern: Peter Lang, 2008. (x + 290 pp) [ISBN: 978-3-03911-678-2] 76 Swiss Francs*

Since his death in late 2007 a steady stream of literature on Thomas Torrance's theology has made its way off the presses. Much of the secondary literature on Torrance has, to date, focused on his contributions to science or on his epistemology, with his actual theological contributions receiving relatively little attention. This, thankfully, is starting to change, with Man Kei Ho's work being one of the latest contributions to critically examine Torrance's theology of the incarnation.

Ho is currently an adjunct lecturer at the Canadian Chinese School of Theology at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, and the present work is his PhD thesis, completed at the University of Wales under the supervision of Professor Tom O'Loughlin.

The aim of Ho's study is to critically examine Torrance's understanding of the incarnation and to expose it as being inconsistent, incoherent, and finally inadequate. Ho lays special emphasis upon the way he believes Torrance unsuccessfully tries to incorporate dualist ways of knowing into a unitary way of thinking, his supposed reversal on the role of natural theology, and finally on the fact that Torrance was unable and unwilling to address the issue of divine kenosis (a claim never substantiated in the book). To those familiar with Torrance's theology, each of these criticisms will immediately strike one as being unusual and misguided.

After a brief introduction, six chapters canvass Torrance's theology: his theological method (chapter 2), the incarnation (chapter 3), the Trinity (chapter 4), incarnation as revelation (chapter 5), and kenosis (chapter 6). A brief conclusion follows. Throughout, Ho takes a decidedly contrary stance to Torrance's theology, something he seems to believe has not been attempted before, and at each point he finds Torrance's theology wanting.

In chapter 2, on "Theological Method" Ho attempts to outline Torrance's basic epistemology and define his hermeneutics and scientific theology, laying special emphasis and critique upon Torrance's understanding of dialectic and unitary ways of knowing. Throughout this and the other chapters, Ho brings Torrance into dialogue with Karl Barth in order to show both continuities and discontinuities. Ho shows a distinct propensity for ambiguity in his writing, along with some very unusual ways of laying out his argument. For example, under his discussion of hermeneutics (pp. 5–19) he argues that Barth learned hermeneutics from his father and Torrance from his mother, as if these were the sole sources of their respective understandings or even their primary ones. Ho goes on to mention that Torrance advocates indwelling the text of Scripture in Polanyian style; yet he never identifies Polanyi as one of Torrance's influences and mistakenly thinks we "dwell in the Scriptures" (p. 7) rather than indwell them. This sort of imprecision mars the work throughout.

Another example of Ho's imprecision comes when he seeks to find the cause for Torrance's preference for word over sight. According to Ho this is simply a Torrancean proclivity and a misguided one at that (pp. 8–9). But Ho fails to consider the wider framework of Torrance's theology of the threefold Word of God (Barth), that Jesus is the eternal and incarnate Word of God, and thus Word does have priority over sight. He also fails to address Torrance's exegesis of those texts in Scripture where sight and word are synonymous, so that "seeing" is equivalent to "knowing."

Ho does correctly show how Torrance's depth exegesis works in general (although he never identifies it as "depth exegesis" as Torrance does himself), and yet he concludes that this forces Torrance into a "vicious circle" in hermeneutics whereby the believer becomes the sole arbiter of meaning (pp. 12–13). Finally, in this section on hermeneutics Ho accuses Torrance of not following the Reformed confessions that stress the inerrancy of Scripture, and Ho argues instead for

a fundamentalist doctrine of Scripture according to a correspondence theory of truth (pp. 16–18). In the process Ho argues that Torrance's hermeneutics are misguided ultimately because he does not regard "Scripture as divine." Ho writes, "Unless the Scripture itself is divine, it cannot point beyond itself to the divine reality" (p. 17). Ho's logic is thus: Scripture is divine; Torrance does not believe Scripture is divine; thus Torrance is wrong. I have never seen it argued before in academic works that Scripture is "divine." If this were true then we would not believe in a Trinity but in a Quaternary — Father, Son, Spirit, and Scripture! This sort of argumentation is typical throughout chapter 2 and the rest of the book. For instance, in discussing how Torrance uses natural theology, the place of faith in scientific endeavor, and the role of God's self-revelation, Ho comes to the conclusion that "Torrance's theological science is simply another fancy name for a personal belief which is totally independent of science" (p. 25). One wonders how you can read Torrance's scientific theology and come to such a conclusion.

Chapter 3, "The Incarnate Son," suffers from the same poor scholarship and misunderstanding of Torrance's meaning, despite a few valid observations. For instance, Ho notes that Torrance applies the concept of the hypostatic union not only to the two natures of Christ but also to the three persons of the Trinity. Due to this rather idiosyncratic move of Torrance's, Ho believes Torrance risks violating the Chalcedonian Formula, which states that each nature remains distinct, and that Torrance introduces a confusion between nature, person, and being. As a result, "Torrance risks a danger of creating four persons in the Godhead by implicating hypostatic union [sic] as a union of persons instead of natures" (p. 119). Despite this observation once again Ho shows a distinct lack of theological acumen and a general ignorance of the tradition; for instance, he critiques Torrance's understanding that the hypostatic union endures forever, lumping it in with John Walvoord (a dispensationalist), as if this was an idiosyncratic feature of Torrance's theology that should be dispensed with! On the basis of such critique Ho argues that Torrance's doctrine of the atonement is rendered useless because it would deny Christ's words from the cross recorded in John 19:30, that the work of atonement is "finished." Such a thorough misunderstanding of Torrance's theology is staggering. The chapter then concludes abruptly.

Chapter 4, "Triunity in Incarnation," makes fewer fatal mistakes in interpretation than do the first few chapters, but only because this chapter settles for description

rather than detailed analysis. Ho surveys some features of Torrance's trinitarian theology as it relates to the incarnation and along the way continues to accuse him of incoherence and inconsistency. Ho correctly raises questions over Torrance's critique of God's impassibility and immutability, but he does not have the resources to navigate Torrance's mature thought on these topics or the ability to offer lucid critique of these and other doctrines. For much of this chapter Ho draws upon outdated scholarship and appears to be struggling to hold complex theological concepts together. This is evident, for instance, in his treatment of the *communicatio idiomatum* and the *filioque*, where Ho settles for general descriptions of Torrance's work and is thus unable to offer any significant insights or critique.

Chapter 5, "Incarnation is the Revelation" (whatever that may mean!), proceeds as the other chapters have done: with general description, ill-informed analysis, and illegitimate critique. What Ho does do in this chapter is raise the question of whether or not Torrance's doctrine of revelation is coherent; Ho clearly believes it is not. His main criticism is that in Torrance's theology the incarnation becomes the only revelation of God. If this is so, asks Ho, then what of the Old Testament? Drawing rather randomly upon such figures as J.I. Packer and Carl Henry, Ho maintains that "This is the danger in Torrance's theology of revelation that the relationship between God and man is determined by the knowledge of God through the incarnate revelation, this would deny the authenticity of personal relation between God and his chosen people prior to the incarnation, and also would jeopardize the saving activity of God in the Old Testament" (p. 223). In order to bolster his critique Ho draws upon the notion of propositional revelation as opposed to what he styles a "neo-orthodox" view of revelation, which Torrance in Ho's view subscribes to. The essence of Ho's critique throughout this chapter is his insistence upon objective and verifiable ways of knowing, which run counter to Torrance's epistemological commitments. Based on this a priori premise Ho mounts a challenge to Torrance's doctrine of revelation and labels it "fideistic" and "superficial." What is missing from Ho's analysis are those dimensions of revelation and faith that Torrance often speaks about — that it is logical (*logike latreia*), christological, prepared for through Israel — along with how Torrance constructively draws upon critical realism and dimensions of Michael Polanyi's notion of tacit knowledge and the indwelling of texts. Ho pays lip service to some of these features, but he does not adequately

define or analyze any of them. The final result is that Ho's opinions seem to be just that, opinions and assertions rather than informed critique based upon fair and rigorous analysis.

The final chapter, titled "Kenosis" is at once odd and interesting. It is odd in that nothing has really prepared the reader for this specific discussion. No rationale is given for why kenosis is to be a major theme of the study or as to how it fits here as the final chapter. It is interesting in that kenotic theories are perennially thorny issues for Christology and how any particular theologian interprets the doctrine provides something of a window into their theology and method. Unfortunately this chapter merely provides a cursory summary of kenosis theories from the perspective of Scripture, the patristic thinkers (which Ho repeatedly terms "patristic fathers"), and then Torrance himself. Ho's articulation of the trinitarian framework for Torrance's interpretation of the Word's kenosis is limited, and he all but ignores the christological rationale Torrance gives. One would have expected to see some discussion of Torrance's idea of the depth dimension of Scripture, of the *en-/an-hypostasis* theologumenon (this is covered earlier on pp. 91–98), and the vicarious humanity of Christ all considered here, but they aren't. This chapter reads more like a general survey of the topic with reference to Torrance than it does to what one would expect from a doctoral dissertation.

In addition to the faulty argumentation Ho offers throughout the work, the volume is marred by spelling and grammatical mistakes. For instance, chapter 2 has fifty-eight pages, and I counted at least sixty-four mistakes in the text. The series in which this work is published, the European University Studies Series by Peter Lang, publishes doctoral dissertations that are seemingly unedited versions of the original dissertations, and as such the series shows a wide diversity of quality and range. Torrance scholars will not find much in this work worth spending 76 Swiss Francs on, as it simply does not make a critical, informed, or articulate contribution to Torrance studies.

*Myk Habets*