

bal concern of God for the conversion of culture. This militates against a secularist banishment of moral or spiritual vision from the public square. The proposal is that we endorse a 'plurality of secularisms', which allows particular communities in their spaces and times to negotiate a *modus vivendi*—and this includes the right of religious communities to have a stake in the public life of a nation. Here, the author is bound to be sketchy and, as he says, tentative, but he is certainly constructive within the constraints on his space.

Our first and last word on these lectures must be one of warm commendation and gratitude to the author. The task of grappling with these issues is both painful and demanding, for what is at stake is, in the words of the subtitle, 'Christian integrity in a multicultural world'. Vinoth Ramachandra has not shirked his task and has executed it in a way that combines fair-minded objectivity with allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord of thought and life; the latter demands the former. As such, the book takes its place admirably in that tradition of evangelical writing directed to those who may not be academic specialists but who are committed to think about pressing issues. Those competent to do so, as this reviewer is not, must judge the soundness of his account of Islam and Hinduism, but it is presented both plausibly and coherently.

If criticism be offered—and what self-respecting reviewer does not cheerfully shoulder the burden of such occupational hazard?—we broach here less the substance of the author's conclusions than the form in which he sometimes attains them. Compression causes casualties. The remarks on page 25, including the apparent endorsement of Azmy Bishara's words, on Islamic legal codes and traditions and the Islamic system of government come close to conflating the claims that (a) there is no explicit formulation of some item in the Qur'an and (b) that item is totally foreign to it, and to early Muslims. These, however, are different claims and the author's allusions to *qiyas* (analogical reasonings) advertise the many distinctions that might occupy the space between them. Again, in (rightly) denigrating a strong scepticism on the historicity of the Gospel accounts, Ramachandra picks on some of the more extreme rather than moderate examples of scholarship. Further, while he is meticulously honest in identifying his sources, it is risky to build on one person's criticism of the words of another without going back *ad fon-*

tes. Thus, on the important question of the secularisation of public discourse in 'liberal' political philosophy, Jeffrey Stout is taken out of context and misrepresented (p. 149). However, the author would doubtless plead in his defence that this is the occupational hazard attending the efforts of any who try to do what must be done, which is to synthesise material in a relatively short space.

The last three chapters treat the issues not just according to their logical order, but (I think the author would agree) according to their increasing scope for intra-evangelical disagreement: the historical and divine Jesus must be fundamental; the ways in which conversion and culture mesh will be variously understood; proposals on society, toleration and pluralism will positively collide. Vinoth Ramachandra's abilities, his wide experience, in his capacity as Regional Secretary for IFES in South Asia and in his international teaching ministry, all rooted in unswerving commitment to Christ and Scripture, earns him the right to be seriously heeded on all these questions. Those who listen will learn much.

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***God and Contemporary Science
(Edinburgh Studies in Constructive
Theology)***

Philip D. Clayton

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press,
1997, xii + 274 pp., £14.95, pb.,
ISBN 0-7486-0798-6

RÉSUMÉ

Le livre de Philip Clayton est un ouvrage très utile, qui se concentre sur la question de l'action divine. L'auteur procède de façon à essayer de rendre justice à la fois à la théologie chrétienne et à la science. Un survol de la conception biblique de la relation entre Dieu et le monde est proposé et il intéressant de signaler que l'auteur veut montrer que la panenthéisme est compatible avec la Bible et philosophiquement supérieur au théisme classique. Clayton propose aussi une typologie des différentes conceptions de la relation entre la science et la religion ainsi que quelques exemples de tentatives récentes de description de l'action divine qui n'utilisent pas Dieu pour combler tous les vides. La thèse de Clayton est la suivante : la relation entre l'esprit et le

corps devrait être notre premier modèle pour décrire la relation entre Dieu et le monde. Mais étant donné la conception de l'esprit et du corps qu'il adopte, son argumentation est extrêmement fragile.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Philip Clayton hat ein hilfreiches Buch vorgelegt, das die Frage des Handelns Gottes auf eine Weise behandelt, die versucht, zugleich christlicher Theologie und den Naturwissenschaften gerecht zu werden. Ergibt eine Skizze der biblischen Sicht von der Beziehung zwischen Gott und der Welt und bringt das interessante Argument, Panentheismus sei mit der Bibel vereinbar und philosophisch dem klassischen Theismus überlegen. Clayton bringt auch eine Typologie verschiedener Ansichten zur Beziehung von Naturwissenschaft und Religion, sowie eine Zusammenstellung neuerer konstruktiver Versuche, göttliches Handeln darzustellen, ohne Gott als Lückenbüßer hinzustellen. Claytons positiver Beitrag ist, daß die Beziehung zwischen Verstand und Körper die primäre Analogie für unser Denken über die Beziehung zwischen Gott und Welt abgibt. Allerdings ist seine Argumentation hier sehr offen für Kritik aufgrund des Verstand-Körper Modells, das Clayton benutzt.

Philip Clayton has provided a scholarly yet readable attempt to outline a theory of divine action that does justice to contemporary science. Clayton appreciates the space created by the post-modern shift to begin his study within a particular tradition without apology. However the biblical notion of God demands that God's relevance not be limited to that tradition. Clayton wants to take both the universal claims of the Christian tradition *and* the work of scientists with absolute seriousness (ch. 1).

Chapters 2-4 attempt to set out a biblical theology of the God-world relation. The biblical doctrine of creation is spelled out in such a way that it does not require a literal interpretation of the Genesis narratives (ch. 2). The Christ-event implies a minimal outline of Christian theology that is rather orthodox. Theologians have the obligation to integrate this theology with what we know of science (ch. 3). Clayton thinks that Christians have been correct to reject pantheism but, he maintains, that all the advantages of theism can be maintained by panentheism. Panentheism retains the notions of God as creator, infinite, transcendent and necessary as well as the

notions of creation as finite and contingent. In fact, panentheism, he thinks, has the edge over classical theism in that it takes God's presence and immanence more seriously than traditional theism can (ch. 4).

Chapter 5 is a helpful typology of different views on the links between science and theology to set the context within which theology must now work. Chapters 6-8 attempt to make positive steps towards a theology of divine action. Clayton argues that there is an appropriate presumption of naturalism but that acts of God cannot be ruled out *a priori*. One may never be in a position to 'know' that a miracle has occurred but one can make a reasonable 'judgement' on the issue (ch. 6). Fear of a 'God-of-the-gaps' drives Clayton to seek an account of divine action that does not resort to violations of laws of nature. Five recent positive attempts to spell out such accounts are surveyed for insight. Clayton is cautiously positive towards accounts in which God works at a quantum level and uses chaotic systems to amplify the effects and so called 'top-down' approaches (ch. 7). The final chapter argues that the panentheistic analogy in which the God-world relation is significantly similar to the mind-body relation is very fruitful in developing a way of thinking of divine action. This is the climax of the book. Clayton defends emergentist supervenience. In this view consciousness supervenes upon the brain but cannot be reduced to the brain. More than that, mind actually has causative power. So too the world is not separate from God but is part of God. Just as mind can effect the world so too God can effect matter without violating natural laws.

At this point in the book I found myself in deepest disagreement with Clayton. Surely God does not supervene on matter! Surely God does not arise on the scene when matter reaches a certain level of complexity! Clayton thinks not. But then God is *not* related to the world like mind is (on this mind theory) and the analogy begins to break down. Clayton really seems to want to think of matter as supervening on God (though he does not put it like that) but this is very *unlike* the mind-body picture he sets up. Panentheism also seems to raise other awkward questions such as how the presence of evil in the world can avoid being seen as evil *within God*. Would this make God imperfect? Also unclear is how and why Clayton wants to see any after-life as disembodied given his positive affirmation of matter. Here traditional Christian belief would perhaps fit better with his views.

Having said this, I must highly recommend this book. It is thought-provokingly orthodox given its unorthodox panentheism and this must drive Christian thinkers to at least reconsider the legitimacy of that panentheism. It is also an exceedingly helpful overview and positive contribution towards what must be the most important question in the science–religion dialogue—the question of divine action.

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Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell
Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones (eds.)

Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999, 296 pp., \$24.95, pb., ISBN 0-664-25788-7

RÉSUMÉ

Ce livre est composé de seize articles écrits par une grande variété de spécialistes, des plus renommés aux moins connus. Les thèmes clés, qu'on retrouve au fil du texte, sont l'eschatologie et les visions libératrices qu'elle peut générer dans le domaine de la justice sociale, en particulier en faveur des femmes opprimées et de ceux qui souffrent du racisme. Les sujets des articles vont de l'exégèse biblique à une approche théologique de la stérilité en passant par Martin Luther King et la théologie latino-américaine. Dans l'ensemble, ces articles sont engagés et suscitent la réflexion ; mais pour un lecteur évangélique, leur intérêt est inégal. Certains sont relativement proches de l'orthodoxie, tandis que d'autres en sont loin. Le point fort de ce livre est son insistance sur la praxis.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch besteht aus sechzehn Artikeln aus der Feder einer breiten Palette von etablierten bis zu relativ unbekannten Gelehrten. Die Schlüsselthemen, die sich durch die Beiträge ziehen, sind Eschatologie und die befreienden Visionen, die sie im Hinblick auf soziale Gerechtigkeit, speziell für Frauen und unterdrückte ethnische Gruppen, haben kann. Die Themenbreite geht von biblischer Exegese über eine Theologie der Kinderlosigkeit und

Martin Luther King bis zu lateinamerikanischer Theologie. Die Artikel sind insgesamt leidenschaftlich und provozieren zum Nachdenken, aber aus evangelikaler Perspektive von unterschiedlichem Wert. Einige sind relativ orthodox, andere sind davon weit entfernt. Das Beste ist die starke Betonung der Praxis.

Letty Russell is an impressive figure on the landscape of feminist scholarship and this wide-ranging collection of sixteen essays is loosely held together by themes which have driven her work over the last fifty years. The basic theme, to grossly oversimplify, could be summarised as the impact of Christian eschatology on issues of race and gender inequality.

In Part One J. Shannon Clarkson provides a fascinating look back on Letty Russell's work as a Bible translator, liberation theologian and school, church and university educator whilst Rosemary Radford Ruether sets Russell's theological vision of the new creation and partnership in God's household in its socio-historical context. M. Shawn Copeland provides a very clear overview of Russell's theological method and the fundamentals of her theology. There was here, as elsewhere in the book, a simplistic identification of hierarchy with oppression and the questionable assumption that the gospel brings 'equality' for anyone who thinks themselves to be oppressed.

In Part Two Phyllis Tribble imagines various biblical men and women with their diverse experiences coming to a round table to engage in a spiralling and open-ended conversation in which centre and margin dissolve. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld's essay tries to show how the visionary core of Ruth 4 can be a model of eschatological hope when stripped of the patriarchal social structures. This was a very positive way of handling a 'problem' text. Of special interest are the very diverse reactions to Ruth 4 Sakenfeld has gathered from women around the world. Elsa Tamez argues that we, like Ezekiel, must dream of Jubilee liberation in the midst of an exile that contradicts the dream. In a very different kind of essay Katie Cannon examines how Z.N. Hurston used her tellings of the trial of a black woman (Ruby McCollum) in 1952 to name evil and thus to oppose it. James Cone writes of the parallel lives of Malcom X and M.L. King and their ambiguous experiences of 'the city'. He castigates the churches for forgetting the black poor and issues a call to remember the inner cities and to bring liber-