

posits false antinomies that enervate theological inquiry and vitiate theological passion for truth. The false logic manifests in the stale dichotomies that often characterise theological study today (i.e. nature vs. grace; myth vs. history; fact vs. value; divine providence vs. human freedom; academy vs. church; lay vs. ordained; conservative vs. liberal; faith vs. evidence). Moreover, many social evils, such as racism, sexism, ageism and religious discrimination, also result from errant logics of opposition (23). Adams has proven himself to be a reliable guide to the interpretation of Hegel, but like all good commentators, he makes us want to turn to the primary sources and to discover Hegel for ourselves. If Hegel does indeed show us a path that will lead out of false oppositions that impoverish theological inquiry, as Adams convincingly demonstrates, then perhaps it is time for us as theologians to brush the dust off Hegel's weighty tomes and to immerse ourselves in the thought world of a major philosopher.

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### *Schleiermacher: A Guide for the Perplexed* Theodore Vial

London: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2014; ix + 150 pp,  
£13.49, pb, ISBN 978-0-567-41598-1

#### SUMMARY

This book, part of the excellent *A Guide for the Perplexed* series by T&T Clark, offers readers an introduction to the thought of Friedrich Schleiermacher. It sets out to do so in a way that presupposes no prior knowledge of Schleiermacher, does not over-simplify its subject, and that portrays Schleiermacher as a broad-ranging intellectual (rather than simply as a theologian). It does well in this task.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Dans la série des « guides pour les gens perplexes » éditée par T. & T. Clark, cet ouvrage constitue une introduction à la pensée de Friedrich Schleiermacher pour des lecteurs qui n'en ont aucune connaissance préalable, sans toutefois en faire une présentation trop simplifiée. Il le dépeint comme un penseur aux centres d'intérêts très larges (et pas seulement comme un théologien). Il atteint bien son but.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Buch, das ein Bestandteil der ausgezeichneten Serie *A Guide for the Perplexed* [Ein Leitfaden für die Verblüfften] von T & T Clark ist, bietet seiner Leserschaft eine Einführung in das Denken Friedrich Schleiermachers. Dabei setzt es kein Vorwissen von Schleiermacher voraus. Es verzichtet auch auf eine übermäßige Vereinfachung des Themas und zeichnet Schleiermacher als einen umfassend gebildeten Intellektuellen (statt nur als Theologen). Und diese Aufgabe erfüllt es hervorragend.

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At the outset of his work *Schleiermacher: A Guide for*

*the Perplexed*, Theodore Vial asserts the need for a new work on Friedrich Schleiermacher for two reasons: many introductory works on Schleiermacher are overly simplistic, and the more nuanced books fail to convey the sense in which Schleiermacher was a broad-ranging intellectual (rather than simply a theologian). As such, Vial sets out to write a book suitable as an introductory text on Schleiermacher, that introduces the student to the key contours of his theologian thought, and that also links this to Schleiermacher's role in intellectual life outside of theology.

In Chapter One Vial provides a summary of Schleiermacher's life. Written in an engaging style, the author manages to handle Schleiermacher's biography sympathetically but without falling into hagiography or uncritical praise (see Vial's comment on the prose of Schleiermacher's *Christmas Eve Dialogue*, page 12). He helpfully sets out Schleiermacher's family and religious background, and accounts for the appearance of Schleiermacher's key works (*On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, *The Christian Faith* etc.) in historical context. Chapter Two, 'Schleiermacher's Worldview', sets out his core intellectual commitments. Vial locates this against the backdrop of Kant and Hume, and proceeds to cover dialectic and ethics.

In Chapter Three we are led through Schleiermacher's approach to hermeneutics. Vial highlights that for Schleiermacher, 'humans are fundamentally, not contingently, linguistic beings' (47). Building on this, he explores the centrality of language in Schleiermacher's view of how humans experience, think and know their world. I appreciated Vial's willingness to highlight significant critiques of Schleiermacher on language/hermeneutics, and his explicit desire to provide a more accurate understanding of his subject (rather than simply to defend Schleiermacher): 'I have no stake in raising [these critiques] in order to show that Schleiermacher, in the end, is correct about everything. Rather, working through these criticisms will lead to a more nuanced understanding of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics.' (50)

Chapter Four portrays Schleiermacher as a theorist of religion. Here, the introductory chapter, which has already laid the foundations for Vial's understanding of Schleiermacher as redefining, and not simply as rejecting, religion, is particularly helpful. In this chapter, Vial develops this into a fuller argument that the standard reading of Schleiermacher on religion is inaccurate. His survey of the field in this regard is helpful (61-65). Part of why Vial does well in relation to his task is that by Chapter Four, he has given the reader an overview of Schleiermacher's life, a nuanced introduction to his worldview and key hermeneutical concerns, and on that basis, he now invites the reader into a significant debate on the interpretation of Schleiermacher (in this case, whether his theory of religion 'promotes and protects, rather than explains religion'). The reader is thus presented with the challenge of entering this debate – an inherently interactive task.



It is interesting that only in Chapter Five does Vial handle Schleiermacher as a theologian. This chapter is useful in accounting for the particular Christological, hamartiological and soteriological emphases found in *The Christian Faith*. Although Vial wants to do so in a nuanced way, he is not uncritical: he provides a helpful summary of Barth's critique of Schleiermacher's theology and follows this with the critiques of Strauss and Wyman (100). Following this, Chapter Six details Schleiermacher's political thought and role as a political activist.

This is a helpful book, one that is well written and accessible. It does well in striving towards its goal: that of introducing the reader to a significant and broad-ranging intellectual, and of locating his theology within that particular context.

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**Scholarship: Two Convocation Addresses on  
University Life  
Abraham Kuyper**

Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2014; xi + 51  
pp, \$4.95, pb, ISBN 978-1-938948-85-5.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage reprend deux discours prononcés par Abraham Kuyper à l'université libre d'Amsterdam. Ils visaient à encourager les étudiants chrétiens et les spécialistes à la poursuite de leurs travaux académiques en présentant l'étude académique comme une recherche du Logos qui est au centre de toute autre vérité. Les discours sont bien traduits et agrémentés de notes de bas de page utiles. On y trouve, dans un contexte européen, des critiques pertinentes de nombreuses conceptions courantes, émanant du capitalisme récent, de ce que devrait être l'université.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das vorliegende Buch enthält zwei Ansprachen von Abraham Kuyper an der Freien Universität von Amsterdam. Sie wollen christlichen Studenten und Wissenschaftlern, die sich der Forschung widmen, Mut machen, und zwar, indem sie das akademische Unterfangen als eine Suche nach dem Logos im Zentrum aller übrigen Wahrheit darstellen. Die Übersetzung ist wohl gelungen, die Fußnoten sind sachdienlich, und in einem europäischen Kontext bietet es eine hilfreiche Kritik vieler gängiger spätkapitalistischer Sichtweisen des Bereiches der Universität.

SUMMARY

This book contains two addresses given by Abraham Kuyper at the Free University of Amsterdam. They are intended to encourage Christian students and scholars in their pursuit of scholarship and do so by portraying the academic endeavour as a search for the Logos at the centre of all other truth. The book is well translated and helpfully foot-

noted, and in a European context offers helpful critiques of many common late-capitalist visions of the university.

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This short book contains the English translations of two convocation addresses given by the Dutch neo-Calvinist theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper in his role as rector of the *Vrije Universiteit* (Free University) in Amsterdam in 1889 and 1890. Translated by Harry van Dyke, at the behest of the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society, it is a highly readable rendering of Kuyper's own inimitable style.

Kuyper's primary purpose in these speeches was to encourage Christian students (the Free University having been founded on Reformed principles some ten years before) in their pursuit of scholarship. Beyond this, the speeches make plain that his university was not well regarded by the mainstream academic community in the Netherlands at that time. Kuyper refers to it as an 'Opposition School' (25). Evidently, speech two in particular (*Scholastica II*) functions as an apology for the notion of a Reformed university and a defence of the Free University's particular academic credentials. Van Dyke's helpful introductory note (ix-x) also serves to clarify this.

Perhaps the key idea in Kuyper's approach to Christian scholarship is the idea that, 'God created, in addition to the world of nature with all its elements and forces and materials, a *world of thoughts*; for all creation contains Λογος [Logos]' (7). Kuyper uses John 1 to apply a Logos principle generally to the practice of scholarship: Christ, the true Logos, is to be found everywhere in this 'world of ideas' and as such, all pursuit of knowledge is, ultimately, the pursuit of knowledge of Christ. On that basis, he characterises the life of both student and professor as a distinctive and privileged vocation: they are called to explore the world of ideas and in so doing, may search it in order to uncover the Logos present in all truth.

On this basis, Kuyper proceeds to offer various points of guidance to his student body: students should manage their money with care, and should not neglect the life of the body whilst prizing the life of the mind (17). His comments on the methodology of study are particularly helpful in the context of contemporary higher education, where the practice of cramming for exams seems commonplace. Such an approach 'yields knowledge that evaporates quickly' (19). Kuyper's critique of the student who crams in order to absorb information retained only long enough to pass an exam, is that he gains a *qualification*, but not an *education*. The concept of the university as an institution to provide an education (or in Kuyper's own choice of term, a *formation*) that stands as quite distinct from a token qualification is challenging to much higher education in the contemporary Western world, where universities are under pressure to adopt their graduates' employability, rather than formation, as a somewhat crude goal.

Kuyper's attempt to argue that a Reformed univer-