

media are appreciated both in themselves and as pointers to God" (p. 17), and shrewd observations are made about people and society. "The investment of people in their network of recognition and respect is so large that the most stubborn resistance ... is bound to follow ... the effort is made to separate praise of God from its social and practical consequences" (p. 76). "If the self is seen as completely secure ... free to concentrate on God and other people ... taken up in thanks and praise ... all sorts of growth and change can happen, but they are by-products, not aims, flourish in freedom and unselfconscious absorption in God, the object of praise" (p. 84).

Occasional happy phrases light up a whole paragraph. "In a faith which has 'the foolishness of the cross', a 'lamb on the throne' and the 'justification of the ungodly' there must be an appreciation of upside-downness, and many ways in joining in the laughter of the resurrection". (p. 73)

But does the enterprise succeed? The treatment of St. Mark's Gospel in chapter 3 is very valuable, as is a nice comment on Ephesians on p. 58. The choice of Dante as representative of a tradition of praise is masterly but does presume a fair degree of familiarity with the *Divina Commedia*. The discussion of Philippians in chapter 3 is complex and at times hard to follow, as is the rest of the book. The style is somewhat opaque, the material often far too abstract and the argument involved and unclear. Some positions seem unduly strained to make them fit into the line of thought, and one or two theological assertions are open to question. The treatment of evil and suffering in chapter 6 is weak and unconvincing, though there are some perceptive insights on this subject elsewhere. Saddest of all perhaps, the treatment of the Psalms in chapter 3 does not rise above the mediocre, and makes them seem dull and uninspiring.

As the authors point out, the inquiry pursued in this book is without parallel in theological literature. It is an interesting and ambitious project which holds out many exciting and inspiring ideas. Perhaps it needs further pondering to bring it to a satisfying clarity and fruition.

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**A SHORT HISTORY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE** by Robert M. Grant with David Tracy. *SCM Press*, London, 1984. Pp. ix + 213. £6.95.

Many Christians sense a deep gulf between modern biblical scholarship and the ways they use the Bible, whether in their theological thinking, their preaching or their devotion. One way of bridging the gap is to see the rise of modern historical scholarship in a wider theological context by seeing how the Bible has been used throughout Church history. The republication of R.M. Grant's compact, informative and readable little book, first published in 1948 and again in 1963, is therefore most welcome. It has not dated much. Only the chapter on Jesus seems a bit old-fashioned, and some readers will find that an advantage. Both the strength and the weakness of the original is its simplicity and avoidance of much deep theory. This has now been changed by the addition of three chapters by David Tracy, whose own book *The Analogical Imagination* is an outstanding if verbose contribution to the subject. But here he struggles for clarity, and the results are accessible to the general reader, while providing specialists with food for thought. The Anglican common-sense of Grant is thus enriched by Tracy's fine account of interpretation as 'conversation' with classic texts. Gadamer's hermeneutics of retrieval is balanced by a hermeneutics of suspicion with its attendant critical theory, and 'understanding' is enlarged to include textual explanation. Both authors have distilled wide reading into brief space.

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