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A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership
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Why does adoration need to take place as a distinct activity beside action? Because God did not create human beings to be merely God's servants but above all to be God's children and friends. As much as they need to do God's will in the world, they also need to enjoy God's presence. The center of Christian life consists in personal fellowship of human beings with the Son of God through faith. Adoration is a time when this personal fellowship, which determines the whole life of Christians—their relation to themselves, to their neighbors and nature—is nurtured, either privately or corporately. This is the reason why human beings "need periodic moments of time in which God's commands concerning their work will disappear from the forefront of their consciousness as they adore the God of loving holiness and to thank and pray to the God of holy love."

MIROSLAV VOLF, "WORSHIP AS ADORATION AND ACTION: REFLECTIONS ON A CHRISTIAN WAY OF BEING-IN-THE-WORLD" IN *WORSHIP: ADORATION AND ACTION*, D. A. CARSON, ED. (GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: BAKER, 1993), 207.

The words of Luther from his lecture on Isaiah: "The worship of the New Testament . . . is nothing else than song, praise, and thanksgiving. This is a unique song. God does not care for our sacrifices and works. He is satisfied with the sacrifice of praise. I have no one to sing and chant about but Christ, in whom alone I have everything. Him alone I proclaim, in him alone I glory, for he has become my salvation, that is, my victory."

DAVID PETERSON, "WORSHIP IN THE NEW TESTAMENT" IN *WORSHIP: ADORATION AND ACTION*, D. A. CARSON, ED. (GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN: BAKER, 1993), 68.

BOOK REVIEWS

WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND THE TRIUNE GOD OF GRACE

James B. Torrance
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (1996)
130 pages, paper, \$12.99

This book, based on a series of lectures by the author, is a wonderful summary of and introduction to the thinking of James B. Torrance (Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology, University of Aberdeen) on worship. His brother, Thomas F. Torrance (Professor Emeritus of Christian Dogmatics, University of Edinburgh) has made parallel contributions in this area. (See Torrance worship bibliography at the end of this review.)

The book (and its title) is born out of the author's conviction that "true theology is done in the presence of God in the midst of the worshipping community" (10). (This is reminiscent of J. I. Packer's incisive statement: "The purpose of theology is doxology. We study in order to praise.") What he presents to us is a magisterial presentation of the meaning and significance of worship.

Torrance insists that "how we worship God must reflect who God is—the triune God of grace—and what he has done and is doing for us in Christ and by the Holy Spirit" (10). He claims with searing insight that much, if not most, of evangelical worship is, in practice if not in theory, "Unitarian" in nature: God has saved us, and now we do something for him in return when we worship. "We sit in the

pew watching the minister doing his thing, exhorting us 'to do our thing,' until we go home thinking we have done our duty for another week" (20)! How infinitely richer, Torrance shows us, is a Trinitarian understanding of worship: one which fully takes into account the ongoing high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ, in his humanity continuing to mediate between God and man, in both God's revelation to us and in our response to him. "Christian worship is . . . our participation through the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father" (15).

What a grand and glorious vision of worship—and how sorely we need today such an exalted perspective of the highest of all human activities! How desperately we need to despair of our own trivial debates over styles and preferences, and recognize with awe and wonder that

the real agent in all true worship is Jesus Christ. His is our great High Priest and ascended Lord, the One true worshiper who unites us to Himself by the Spirit in acts of mercy and in a life of communion, as he lifts us up by word and sacraments into the very triune life of God (17).

How trifling and petty our worship debates (and even "wars") seem next to such a vision! To be sure, there are important questions which must be addressed in every individual congregation as to how public worship is to be constituted in that local body. This book does not seek to address such issues, but we may well ask how different those discussions (and their results!) would be if they were guided by an understanding that

At the center of the New Testament stands not our religious experience, not our faith or repentance or decision, however important these are, but a unique relationship . . . between Jesus and the Father. Christ is presented to us as the Son liv-

ing a life of union and communion with the Father in the Spirit, presenting himself in our humanity through the eternal Spirit to the Father on behalf of humankind. By his Spirit he draws men and women to participate both in his life of worship and communion with the Father and in his mission from the Father to the world (30-31).

These concepts shed an entirely new and different light on such glib evangelical idioms as worshipping "through Jesus Christ" and praying "in Christ's name." Torrance helps us to see the depth and reality of these truths—that such worship and prayer are not merely done in acknowledgement of and dependence on what Christ has accomplished for us in the past, but are actually vicariously realized and carried out on our behalf by our fully human High Priest who is seated at the right hand of the Father!

This writer has been profoundly moved and impacted by the thoughts contained in this book, and unabashedly acknowledges how much has been drawn from it (and from other writings of the Torrance brothers) in the article "Jesus Our Worship Leader" found elsewhere in this issue.

In the fourth and final chapter of the book Torrance makes an unfortunate and rather puzzling diversion into a discussion of gender roles in the church; the only link to the rest of the book appears to be his attempt to bring Trinitarian issues to bear on the discussion—but, alas, the chapter seems to be a rather weak attempt to defend a foregone conclusion.

Nevertheless, this author cannot recommend this book too highly for its refreshingly God-honoring, Christ-centered approach to worship (at least through chapter 3), for the excellent introduction it provides to the thought of two profound theologians, and for the potentially life- and ministry-changing perspective it brings to the worship debate. What could be more liberating than to realize, as Torrance so powerfully demonstrates, that "God does not

throw us back upon ourselves to make our response to the Word in our own strength. But graciously He helps our infirmities by giving us Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit to make the appropriate response in us and for us." That is indeed grace abounding!

**WRITINGS ON WORSHIP
BY THE TORRANCE BROTHERS**

James B. Torrance

Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996)

"Contemplating the Trinitarian Mystery of Christ," Chapter 12 in *Alive to God: Studies in Spirituality*, J.I. Packer and Loren Wilkinson, eds. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992)

"The Contribution of John McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26 (1973): 295-311

"Covenant or Contract? A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23 (1970): 51-76

"The Doctrine of the Trinity in Our Contemporary Situation," Chapter 1 in *The Forgotten Trinity*, Alastair I. C. Heron (London: British Council of Churches/CCBI, 1991)

"The Place of Jesus Christ in Worship," Chapter 12 in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, Ray S. Anderson, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979)

"The Vicarious Humanity of Christ," *The Incarnation: Ecumenical Studies in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, A.D. 381*, Thomas F. Torrance, ed. (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981)

Thomas F. Torrance

"Justification in Doctrine and Life," Chapter 9 in *Theology in Reconstruction* (London: SCM Press, 1965)

"The Mediation of Christ in Our Human Response," Chapter 4 in *The Mediation of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983)

"The Royal Priest," Chapter 1 in *Royal Priesthood* (Edinburgh: Tweeddale Court, 1955)

"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," Chapter 4 in *Conflict and Agreement in the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1959)

"The Word of God and the Response of Man" and "Theological Persuasion," Chapter 6 and *Postscript in God and Rationality* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997)

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**A ROYAL "WASTE" OF TIME:
THE SPLENDOR OF WORSHIPING GOD AND BEING
CHURCH FOR THE WORLD**

Marva Dawn
Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans (1999)
370 pages, paper, \$18.00

A Royal "Waste" of Time is the sequel to *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*, Marva Dawn's first book on worship. Although she is a prolific writer, it is also my first exposure to this author. What this review lacks in perspective, therefore, will be compensated for with the freshness of first impressions.

[This book] intends to counteract the current push for worship to be the means by which people are attracted to God. Of course, people will be attracted when we worship well, but if we make such appeal the focus of worship, then God will no longer be. Worship is idolatry unless it is a total waste of time in earthly terms, a total immersion in the eternity of God's infinite splendor for the sole purpose of honoring God (11).

Dr. Dawn's concern is that today's church has lost its vision and distinctiveness from the world, and is in danger of losing its soul. It has tried to survive the onslaught of postmodernity often by cutting itself free from its denominational roots and theological foundations. The author's contention is that in its pragmatic search for success the church has let go of the transcendent. In so doing it has let go of that which gives it the power to address culture, since the more like its culture the church is, the less able it is to help it. Though many evangelical leaders today say that God leaves our worship styles and forms to individual preferences, Dawn convincingly argues that it is idolatrous impulses which fuel these views.

Scripture tells the church how to worship God. The values found in Scripture are meant to provide the guidelines by which the church shapes and patterns its worship of God. In reinventing the worship wheel along lines which flow out of our culture's dominant values and idols, instead of patterning worship by Scripture's counter-cultural values, the church loses its ability to call people away from the ephemeral to the eternal. Instead God's people become religiously superficial, covered with a biblical veneer which hides their unfaithfulness.

Dawn's passionate love for God shines through the pages of this book. One passage describes how many Christians have lost their sense that God's people are called to

suffer, that in this world he intentionally refines his people in the furnace of affliction. She then applies this principle of suffering to suggest how it ought to inform the nature of the church's singing:

Some people are overwhelmed by suffering and are attracted to worship services that offer emotional highs because *they think that these will help them cope with suffering better.*

Many churches respond to suffering in their worship services by glossing over it with "happy songs." Of course, this is injurious to those who suffer because sooner or later the "warm fuzzy" feelings fade away, and the sorrow or pain must be faced. . . . Unless persons have more evidence of God's care beyond their feelings, their doubts will have no response.

The reason why many hymns passed down through the ages have stood the test of time is that they give a full picture of who God is and how God is there for us in our suffering. Churches need to offer in their worship services genuine lament (236-37).

To show that she is not speaking from an ivory tower, the author briefly enumerates the illnesses and physical handicaps she has had to face in life. The list is enough to make one cry. Dr. Dawn not only has not let serious handicaps and pain rob her of joy and trust, but she is living a life so filled with activity and service that it might well exhaust most teenagers. She must have great courage.

Dr. Dawn writes powerfully and convincingly, but not always easily. One must labor through this book. Part of this is due to the nature of her work—she is dealing with complex analysis and sifting of ideas. Part is probably due to writing style. She reminds me of Francis Schaeffer, another seminal thinker who struggled to distill his ideas to readable and harmonious form. In addition, the book

lacks a conclusion; I was left wishing for its ideas to be pulled together by some final synthesis.

A Royal "Waste" does have some disconcerting aspects. Iconoclastic tendencies, such as Dawn's renaming of the Old Testament to call it the First Testament, serve little purpose. This is minor. But one other concern is not so minor. Should women preach? (A distinction is made here between women leading seminars and teaching at conferences, etc., and preaching from the pulpit.) Dr. Dawn apparently preaches often in different churches, and she has used selected sermons of hers to introduce each new section of the book. She does so without acknowledgment that this practice is controversial, and without explanation of her unorthodox views. This rather contrived literary mechanism seems aimed more at exposing the reader to Dawn's preaching than in helping develop her thoughts. Not only that, but she writes as one instructing others on how to preach more effectively. For one who champions traditional values and rightly laments the church's loss of connectedness to the past, this aggressive attitude toward her own preaching seems to be out of step.

Who will most benefit from this book? For the evangelical thoughtmakers of our time, this book is one they should contend with. For the pastors and church leaders who want to honor God as they make decisions regarding the character of their worship services, it should prove to be a resource full of godly wisdom. And for the layman who wants to think through his or her own theology regarding worship, it likewise will be a great help in reflecting biblically on this issue. It is a valuable contribution to the current evangelical debates regarding worship.

ROBERT PYKE
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BLINDED BY MIGHT

Cal Thomas and Ed Dobson
Grand Rapids: Zondervan (1999)
256 pages, cloth, \$19.99

There are several popular books which raise important questions about religious conservatives' fascination with political power. One thinks here of writers like Jim Wallis, Tom Sine, and Tony Campolo. Helpful as these books may be, they are typically discounted by religious conservatives because of their (perceived or real?) liberal/moderate bias. A new book addresses some important issues which conservative Christians will find harder to dismiss. Among other things, *Blinded by Might* is written by two darlings of the religious and political right. Cal Thomas is a well-known syndicated columnist, and Ed Dobson (no relation to James) is the senior pastor of a large conservative Christian church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Both served in the Moral Majority: Thomas as vice president of communications and Dobson as personal assistant to Jerry Falwell.

Blinded by Might has created quite a stir in the evangelical world. Leaders such as James Dobson and D. James Kennedy have voiced disapproval over the book. James Dobson sent out a newsletter in July 1999 which was devoted to denouncing the book. In it he said,

According to the authors, clergy and any organized expression of the laity should, by inference, avoid issues such as the sanctity of human life, the redefinition of marriage, pornography, gambling, safe-sex ideology, and the assault on religious liberty. As such, they provide convenient "cover" for pastors who don't want to take the heat, and for laymen who don't want to get involved.

Dobson's critique of *Blinded by Might* shows how strongly Christians are divided on the issue of political involvement.

Blinded by Might makes several arguments that are worthy of serious consideration. The authors explicitly say that they are not calling for a retreat of Christians from the public square. Here is where James Dobson misrepresents Cal Thomas and Ed Dobson. What the authors are concerned about is the naïve notion far too many Christians seem to have about what actually effects positive change in American society. The best and lasting change does not come from government. Rather, it comes from a transformation of the heart, something that churches are divinely commissioned to do. The primary calling of pastors is to preach the gospel, not lobby Washington. Here I understand the authors to hold the historic position that the gospel properly preached has real social implications rather than just "saving souls," but a weakness of the book may be that more could have been said in this regard.

The irony of modern evangelicals' foray into politics (starting with the emergence of the Moral Majority in 1979) is that American society is more corrupt morally than ever on many fronts (see William Bennett's *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*). Even Jerry Falwell, in a most illuminating interview with Cal Thomas, concedes that the United States is presently more decadent than ever before. This is patently obvious to Falwell, even with all the lobbying and political activism of Christians during the past twenty years.

Scripture calls Christians to be "shrewd as serpents," yet many of us are terribly naïve to the schemes that politicians use us to further their own agendas. Thomas Friedman, author of *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, quotes one Jewish politician as saying,

We had to make ourselves exceptional. So we based our claim on the exceptionality of Israel, in terms of the affliction suffered by its people, and in terms of our historical and spiritual lineage. We knew we were basically appealing to the Christian world for whom the biblical story was familiar and attractive, and we played it to the hilt.

The recent trip to the United States of former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during which he played to the audience of religious conservatives like Falwell and Robertson, shows that the exploitation of the Christian ministers is still not fully appreciated.

Interviews by Cal Thomas with well-known politicians and religious leaders like Falwell and Pat Robertson provide some revealing information. Falwell's present skepticism over the amount of influence Christians can have on government is quite illuminating. Pat Robertson's rationale behind using the name "Christian Coalition" is incoherent and raises some further questions. Political leaders from the "left" like George McGovern, the "middle" like Mark Hatfield, and the "right" like Rich Santorum are a good lens which help us to look into this controversial subject of Christians in politics, though I wished interviews with Jim Wallis, Richard John Neuhaus, and Chuck Colson had been included. In light of recent political events, interviews with Gordon MacDonald and Tony Campolo would have also added quite a bit to the discussion.

Are some Christians enamored with political power? What sort of prophetic role does a pastor have? How many so-called political issues are truly moral and/or spiritual issues? Though this book does not purport to definitely answer all these vexing questions, it is an important contribution to the on-going debate.

DAVID GEORGE MOORE
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THE NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY: 2 CORINTHIANS

David E. Garland

Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman (2000)

587 pages, cloth, \$29.99

David E. Garland, professor of Christian Scriptures at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, Waco, Texas, is a seasoned and highly regarded commentator of the New Testament. Besides his partnership with the esteemed Curtis Vaughan, while they both taught New Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, in writing several excellent popular commentaries designed for laymen and group study, Garland has also written scholarly commentaries on Matthew, Mark, Colossians/Philemon and studies on the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 23 and the "Passion" narratives. Now he gives the church an excellent exegetical and theological exposition of this Pauline letter. This commentary is worth the attention and time of every serious evangelical pastor in America.

Garland incorporates critical material on hugely important interpretative issues with clear presentation of the arguments made by the apostle. Because this epistle includes the most personal portrait of Paul in all the New Testament Garland is correct in showing how this portrait demonstrates, above all else, the Pauline gospel of the crucified one. Paul openly displays both his heart and mind in this letter. He does so to correct a difficult and divided church. What makes this so important is that a true understanding of ministry must always develop out of the context of suffering for the glory of God.

After dealing with the opening greetings (1:1-7) in only 24 pages, Garland devotes 292 pages to Paul's "defense" of his own ministry before the Corinthian church. Here this commentary is at its very best! Drawing on virtually every

important New Testament source in the field Garland writes with clarity and precision. (The index and bibliography reveal wide reading and a careful use of sources.) Garland demonstrates, correctly, that suffering is part and parcel of true Christian ministry. The need for pastors to grasp this fact, especially in the West and at the beginning of a new century, is vital.

Garland plainly shows that the basic thrust of Paul's ministry in preaching was to set forth Christ as Lord and himself as a slave of Christ. Afflictions are catalogued with some degree of care precisely because they demonstrate the truthfulness of Paul's ministry. Garland displays very powerfully how and why this is true.

The instruction of the apostle, with regard to the special collection for the saints (8:1-9:15), is also dealt with clearly, but succinctly. Finally, Paul's warnings, which were meant to prepare the Corinthians for another visit (10:1-13:10), complete the volume in 141 pages. A helpful outline of the epistle, a bibliography of major works on the Corinthian letter, and important journal sources are cited in the concluding pages. This material is followed by a complete index of subjects, persons and biblical texts. All of these added features increase the usefulness of this volume.

My counsel to wise and serious ministers is simple: Get this volume. You will probably consider it the best work on your shelves on the letter of Second Corinthians. Along with Garland, I recommend serious pastor-preachers add the following to their commentary section on Second Corinthians:

Barnett, Paul. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIC-NT (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997)

Barrett, C.K. *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, HNTC (New York: Harper & Row, 1973)

- Belleville, Linda L. *2 Corinthians*, IVPNTC (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995)
- Bruce, F. F. *I & II Corinthians*, NCB (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971)
- Carson, Donald A. *From Triumphalism to Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1994)
- Furnish, V. P. *II Corinthians*, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984)
- Hughes, Philip E. *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1962)
- Martin, Ralph P. *2 Corinthians*, Word Bible Commentary (Dallas, Texas: Word, 1986)
- Thrall, M. E. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994)
- Witherington, Ben, III. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994)

Some of the above are out-of-print but worth searching for and owning. Careful pastors and serious thinkers can profit from all the above but Garland might well be the very best place for them to begin

If the careful pastor will also add Hafemann's *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul's Defense of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14—3:3* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990) to the above volumes he will have the best resources on the letter. This extremely valuable out-of-print volume can be ordered, as of this printing, from the Wheaton College bookstore, Wheaton, Illinois.

Editor

As we reflect on the wide variety of contemporary forms of worship, it seems to me that we can discern two very different views.

The first view—probably the commonest and most widespread—is that worship is something which we do, mainly in church on Sunday. We go to church, we sing our psalms and hymns to God, we intercede for the world, we listen to the sermon (too often simply an exhortation), we offer our time and talents to God. No doubt we need God's grace to help us to do it; we do it because Jesus taught us to do it and left us an example as to how to do it. But worship is what we do. In theological language, the only priesthood is our priesthood, the only offering our offering, the only intercessions our intercessions.

Indeed this view of worship is in practice unitarian, has no real doctrine of the Mediator or sole priesthood of Christ, is human-centered, with no proper doctrine of the Holy Spirit, is often non-sacramental, and can easily engender weariness. We sit in the pew watching the minister "doing his thing" and exhorting us "to do our thing," and go home thinking we have done our duty for another week!

The second view of worship, the view for which the Reformers contended, is that worship is rather the gift of participating through the Spirit in the (incarnate) Son's communication with the Father—the gift of participating, in union with Christ, in what he has done for us once and for all by his self-offering to the Father in his life and death on the cross, and in what he is continuing to do for us in the presence of the Father, and in his mission from the Father to the world. . . .

This second view is trinitarian and incarnational, taking seriously New Testament teaching about the sole priesthood and headship of Christ, his self-offering for us to the

Father, and our life in union with Christ through the Spirit, with a vision of the church as the body of Christ.

Our Father in the gift of his Son and the gift of the Spirit gives us what he demands—the worship of our hearts and minds—lifting us up out of ourselves to participate in the very life of the Godhead.

Whereas the first view can be divisive, in that every church and denomination “does its own thing” and worships God in its own way, the second is unifying, in that it recognizes that there is only one way to come to the Father, namely through Christ in the communion of the Spirit and in the communion of the saints, whatever outward form our worship may take.

Is there not a middle position, as in fact probably most of our good church people suppose?

It might be stated this way. Yes, worship is what we do—but we worship God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we pray to Christ as God, we invoke the Holy Spirit, we respond to the preaching of the Word, we intercede for the world and we offer our money, time and service to God.

It is a do-it-yourself-in-response-to-Christ worship, and is to this extent a modification of the first view, but with more Christian content. Its weakness is that it falls short of an adequate understanding of the role of Christ and of the Spirit in our worship of the Father.

JAMES B. TORRANCE, “CONTEMPLATING THE TRINITARIAN MYSTERY OF CHRIST,” CHAPTER 12 IN *ALIVE TO GOD: STUDIES IN SPIRITUALITY*, J. I. PACKER AND LOREN WILKINSON, EDS. (DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS: INTERVARSITY, 1992), 142-43.