

cultivation of awareness and conscience on the part of the rich so that we are not deaf to the cries of the poor' (p. 141).

The final two chapters apply CST to our communities. Cuff introduces the 'see-judge-act method'. This method necessitates a proper vision of the world as it is ('see'), a vision of the world as it should be ('judge'), and a plan of action to move from the former to the latter ('act'). Finally, Cuff articulates different ways that communities can adopt these principles and key questions to ask of the community. In the end, to live according to these principles is to adhere to the heart of the Gospel: 'we are called to love, because we have been loved' (p. 181). Love encompasses all the principles. Cuff concludes: 'Perfect love casts out not only fear, but indifference . . . we can sum up the whole tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, and the principles derived from it, in these simple words: love in action' (p. 181).

The book excels at several points. It is exceptionally accessible, readable and an excellent introduction to CST. But the book is especially beneficial for those looking to apply CST to their community. The final two chapters alone are worth the price of the book. Cuff avoids vague or stale 'practical applications' and offers instead applications that are clear, helpful and easy to enact. True to its title, this is an ideal work for the church seeking to put CST *in action*.

Cuff's work might have been improved by owning its Anglican heritage. To be fair, Cuff is writing about *Catholic* Social Teaching and to 'every church'. But Cuff is an Anglican, and the Anglican tradition has a rich history of engaging with CST. While 'every church' will find rich suggestions for how to apply CST, those suggestions remain incomplete because they are not denominational-specific. To remedy this, Cuff might have offered ways that are uniquely Anglican, if only as an example for how any community might enact CST. Even non-Anglican communities might have benefitted from seeing how the pastor of a non-Roman Catholic church appropriates CST in a denomination-specific way.

This, however, is a minor criticism. I highly recommend Cuff's book to anyone interested in CST – especially for those interested in putting it in action. And isn't that really the point?

Derek S. King
Theologian-in-Residence, Lewis House, Lexington, KY, USA

E. Radner and D. Ney (eds.), *All Thy Lights Combine: Figural Readings in the Anglican Tradition* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022), pp. xv + 422. ISBN 978-1683595533

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When I was 'nae but a lad', in terms of ministerial experience, I decided – as was all the rage in those days – to dip my toe into the waters of Ignatian spirituality. Arriving at Llannerchwen, a gloriously isolated and simple retreat centre on the edge of the Brecon Beacons in Wales, Sister Joan of the Good Shepherd Sisters took me under her generous wing for three days, introducing me to the idea of *lectio divina*.

She invited me to pray through scriptural texts rather than simply read and study them. Her verdict was that I was, like so many clergy, so immersed in modern approaches to biblical criticism that I simply could not liberate my mind and allow God's Word in. I needed always to analyse and deconstruct, arguably trying to identify and define the action of God in and through Scripture via the narrowness of my intellectual faculties. It was significant for my subsequent development and formation that this experience came through immersion in a Roman Catholic environment, given that another key influence for me was that of Latin American Liberation Theology, again primarily but not exclusively grown in Catholic communities; this also utilizes a practical, earthed pattern of Bible reading in its 'conscientization' process. The interpretation and use of these holy writings, and the authority given to them, are, for most adherents, both the heartbeat of their faith and the most sensitive of processes that so easily lead to discord and division. The framework of Christian faith, is by definition, supported on the foundations of how we read and assimilate the Bible.

This attractively presented volume of essays is primarily the product of North American-based Anglican theologians and historians but includes two UK-based academics and two Methodists. It seeks to explore a way of 'doing Biblical spirituality' through the Anglican tradition, which the authors define as 'figural reading'. That is a term which, so far as I can remember, was not once uttered during my formal theological education; I regret that. Greater encouragement to approach the Bible in this way, could have been transformative.

The alluring title, from the first line of a poem by George Herbert (who otherwise disappointingly makes little more than a passing appearance in the book) sets the scene for the essays, each of which explores figural reading in the writings of some well-known (and some less well-known) Anglican figures from the sixteenth through to the twentieth century. If there is a key hook on which the volume hangs it is the *Book of Common Prayer*, often described, alongside the King James Bible, as the jewel of Anglicanism. Archbishop Cranmer was successful in immersing the regular and ordered reading of Scripture in a context of biblically inspired liturgy, prayer and sacrament. This opens up an accessible and original way into the riches of 'The Logos of God' for the people of God. It provides a structured, manageable springboard. From here the faithful reader, as the editors note in the opening essay, may 'uncover the way that God's creative work integrates all reality by showing how particular parts of scripture – God's own words – interlock with others, often across time, books and characters, through similitude, resonance and moral form' (p. 4).

Disciplined reading of Scripture, in a beautiful, devoted and sacred space creates the context in which heart and mind may reach out and touch the holy, and the holy may invade the heart. One question which might have been addressed, but which may fall outside the scope of this volume, is how revolutionary this was in the parishes of sixteenth-century England. Prior to the introduction of an English liturgy and Bible, the actual words were indeed inaccessible to the majority of a poorly educated population. If 'direct access to divine grace', in place of the intervention of priests and sacraments and church, is a byword of the impulse for Reformation, then 'enlivening' access to the truth of Scripture is crucial. But, with the painful animosities between denominations of past centuries, now largely superseded by mutual respect and friendship, I would have liked to have seen some

assessment of what, if anything, preceded Cranmer's work in enabling spiritual life 'in ordinary'.

These essays, having explored at some depth figural reading among Anglican divines in the first hundred years or so of the establishment of the Church of England, as well as in Charles Wesley and Coleridge, spill into the 'post-critical' era with arresting pieces on John Keble (by Maria Poggi-Johnson) and then three women – Josephine Butler, Elizabeth Rundle Charles, and the African American crusader, Maria Stewart. Marion Taylor describes these three as being 'among the myriads of forgotten and silenced women interpreters of the Bible'. Judith Wolfe follows by indicating how we cannot ignore the contribution of C.S. Lewis.

It was Professor Poggi-Johnson's essay which included the passage which I found most helpful in tying these diverse ideas together. She writes:

From Scripture comes the rule of faith and the standard of feeling that gives Christian worship and Christian life its character. And the Prayer Book in its cycles, its layerings, and its juxtapositions, makes a space where the faithful can watch Scripture's self-interpretation unfold. In this it follows the fathers' figural or mystical approach to Scripture, which approaches the text, not with scholarly expertise and critical refinement, which murder in order to dissect, but with awe, devotion and a 'feeling of infinity'. Keble then follows both the Fathers and the Anglican tradition growing from the Prayer Book. As a scholar with Hooker and Butler, as a poet with Donne and Herbert, and as a pastor and preacher with Taylor and Andrewes, *he strove to usher the faithful into the world of Scripture.* (p. 250; italics mine)

I love that. We cannot retreat behind the walls of a pre-critical reading. That leads inexorably either to literalism or rejection. Understanding the nature of the book we are dealing with is of the essence and, perhaps today, we can only move to a truly figural reading once we have that understanding, which releases the full glory of the words, the poetry, the mystery into our life experience. It is this invitation, this 'ushering in' to the sacred space that enables that release.

Some years ago, the then Archbishop of Canterbury gave the annual St George's Lecture in St George's Chapel, Windsor. In passing, he adverted to 'an Anglican way of doing theology'. In his inimitable style, responding to the lecture (which was a careful reflection on Anglicanism as a bridge-building tradition), the host, Prince Philip, responded, 'All very interesting, but I've never heard of "doing theology". You read theology, or study it but I have no idea what it means to do theology.'

Perhaps, if we really want to 'do Scripture' authentically in our lives, then reading the Bible figurally ushers us towards that encounter with the mystery which feeds, restores and inspires our lives in the mysteries of God's love. As a non-specialist, I found some of the essays in this volume testing. It was the later offerings which ultimately demonstrated fully the value of the book. Reading the entire volume has, however, certainly invigorated my own reflections as someone who sits uncomfortably on the frontiers between belief and unbelief.

Andrew Deuchar
Chirnside, UK