engagement with Kierkegaard suggests that this book is for even the most seasoned of Kierkegaard scholars. The omission of sustained engagement with secondary scholarship (evidenced, for example, by the rather sparse bibliography presented) proves to be ostensible weakness that from another perspective actually highlights the strength of the book. Jaded, unsure, over-confident, or simply confused, we can all benefit from an attempt to return to the less convoluted reception of this mystifying figure as he emerged during such an anxious moment in the history of Western Christendom.

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Martin W. F. Stone (ed.) *Reason, Faith, and History: Essays for Paul Helm*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009). Pp. xi+243. £55.00 (Hbk). ISBN 978 0 7546 0926 1.

In *Reason, Faith, and History*, Stone presents a collection of essays written by Paul Helm's peers, colleagues, and former students that celebrate his work. Although no particular problem is treated by the majority of the essays, most provide the reader with the opportunity to reflect on the viability of the Anselmian faith-seeking-understanding tradition of which Helm is a part. I will comment on these. Other essays deal with the problem of free will, the nature of concepts, and the historical figures Basil of Caesarea and Charnock.

The essays by Howard Robinson and Oliver Crisp show the Anselmian tradition at its best. Robinson argues that we can coherently hold that God's essence is identical to God's existence. If, as Robinson argues, existence is a property, then it must be part of God's essence because God's existence could not derive from anything else. Either God's essence is identical to his existence or existence is a logical constituent of the essence. But, if God's essence has logically distinct constituents, then it is possible for God to have been otherwise. So, we can maintain that God's being is necessary by holding that God's essence is identical to God's existence. Oliver Crisp argues against Hebblethwaite's position that one, and only one, incarnation is possible. Instead, Crisp holds that while the divine nature could take on multiple incarnations in much the same way that a person might take on new limb, it is both reasonable and consistent with tradition to hold that God only has reason to become incarnate once because one incarnation suffices for human redemption.

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Some of the other essays from within the Anselmian tradition do not seem as successful. In particular, the essays by Alan Torrance and Stephen R. L. Clark appear problematic. Torrance argues that one can't determine in advance any criteria that could be used to judge whether or not something is a revelation. Instead, the criteria themselves are God-given and properly basic. Faith is thereby distinguished from other forms of knowledge. Much of Torrance's paper is devoted to exposing the inadequacy of applying an idealist theory of knowledge to theology. According to idealists, the standards of judgement are immanent within human reason itself. As a result, idealism turns theology into anthropology. The independence of theology can be preserved by holding that the criteria of revelation are given by the Spirit. Revelation does not take the form of a Socratic teacher drawing out knowledge from within but by means of an authoritative, external deliverer. Torrance asserts that both critics and apologists force foreign standards onto divine revelation. He writes as though the idealist theory of knowledge and the Socratic idea of teacher as midwife are legitimate except when applied to theology. However, they plainly fail in many cases of real knowledge acquisition and teaching.

We know from the history of natural science, mathematics, and medicine that human knowledge is not acquired by holding to fixed, a priori, immanent standards. Criteria have histories and limitations and change over time. Evolving approaches may lead us to reject or to defend some alleged source of knowledge – contrast alchemy with astronomy. Historically contingent criteria can be used for both criticism and apologetics. Moreover, even though we develop the standards of these fields, the fields are not branches of anthropology nor do they rest on properly basic foundations. The Socratic method often works poorly or not at all when applied to science, mathematics, and history. A biology teacher introducing her students to the theory of evolution is not acting as a midwife. Moreover she is, as she teaches her subject matter, delivering standards and criteria by which to judge it. Importantly, even though teachers are authoritative, students should still be critical and independent thinkers. Granted that theology does not fit the idealist theory of knowledge, why shouldn't it be like the rest of our knowledge? Through interacting with material we take to be divinely revealed, we can develop evolving standards of judgment through which to defend and criticize that material. We might even come to reject it.

Clark argues that our scientific understanding of the world requires a theological basis. One of his considerations is that since the world is metaphysically contingent but not arbitrary, it must have been produced by something necessary exercising a rational choice. His other consideration is the problem of induction: from studying a finite set of examples, one cannot know that an observed pattern exists throughout all times and places. He writes that 'without God's guidance we cannot even identify the true description of a present fact' (123), and that 'science, as we now practice it, rests on theology: on the faith that there is a

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discoverable pattern, to be identified not merely by ratiocination but by loving involvement in an historically grounded community of the faithful' (125). Faith connects one to the mind that made nature and the incarnation shows the possibility of an identity between the human mind and the divine one; faith gives one the hope of knowing the answers. The secularist is left with a groundless trust in habits and instincts.

Clark's position is objectionable for at least three reasons. First, a survey of scientific practice suggests that actual scientific achievements depend little or not at all on the participation of scientists in religious communities. Second, a secularist can adopt the position of moderate dogmatism: we trust our various instincts, habits, historically developed methods, etc. because we have no choice, because doing so has satisfied our curiosity, and because we've had some success; we do not, however, trust them absolutely. Finally, having faith in God does not help scientists with induction because it gives them nothing more to go on – they still rely on background knowledge, habits, instincts, and intuitions.

Jerome J. Gellman's analysis of the naturalistic rejection of mystical experiences of God is more successful. Gellman defends the possible validity of mystical experiences of God as a source of knowledge against a criticism from Matthew Bagger. Bagger rejects the notion that there are any formal, universal canons of reason, explanation, and justification in favour of the conventionalist view that such standards vary over time and place – with no God's-eye-view, we are stuck using the standards we have. Our standards rule out supernaturalistic explanations of events (like miracles) and so we should dismiss supernaturalistic accounts of alleged mystical experiences. Gellman points out two significant problems for this: first, methodological naturalism is a convention of a subculture of secularists; second, it is problematic to rule out supernaturalistic explanations a priori on methodological grounds because, given that our methods are not ideal, the mere fact that they rule something out does not mean that we should.

These points are fine so far as they go, but I think they miss something substantial. While some conventionalists might hold that all standards are equally good, one can, as I think most pragmatists do, hold that some historically contingent standards are better than others. As tools for acquiring knowledge, some standards are just better. We have good reason to be closed-minded about the supernatural insofar as we have rejected belief in alchemy, belief in magic, belief in demon-possession, belief in witchcraft, belief in astrology, belief in fortune-telling, belief in séances, belief in faith-healing, belief in ghosts, and so on. To the extent that the supernatural is methodologically excluded, this method is itself an invention rooted in factual discoveries. What's needed is a reason to think that mystical experiences are categorically different than other alleged supernatural phenomena.

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While some of the essays make contributions to the Anselmian tradition, others call this very project into question. Together they raise an existential question: what happens when faith seeks understanding and finds only confusion? The essays by Christopher Hughes, Richard Cross, and Peter Byrne all do this.

Hughes shows that there are significant problems with claiming that God has knowledge of not-yet-necessary truths. Suppose that the future is partially open, that statements about the future have a determinate truth-value, and that God knows the future with the infallibility and comprehensiveness that He knows the past and present. This presents a problem. Let O be a true statement about the open future. This would mean that although O is true, the current state of the world does not necessitate it. God, however, knows O; in fact, God knew O yesterday. Past states, however, are closed – they couldn't now or in the future be different than they were. So, it is necessary that God knew yesterday that O. Since this was necessary, it would seem also that O was necessary yesterday. So, O was not open. Hughes discusses ways in which a number of thinkers have attempted to address or avoid this problem. He adds a provocative argument that even if God did have knowledge of the open future, He could not use that knowledge proactively. The reason is that if God uses His knowledge to alter some current state of affairs, then the actual state of the current state is counterfactually dependent on a future state – if there were to be a different state in the future, then God would have made a different state now. Given that current states are necessary, since this 'altered' current state depends on a future state, that state would also be necessary now and hence not in the open future. Hughes's paper is highly suggestive that divine agency requires both that there is an open future and that God does not know it. This is at odds with the usual understanding of divine omniscience.

Cross argues that there is a significant tension between the classically theist view of God's nature and the doctrine of the incarnation. In particular, given classical theism, the doctrine of the incarnation seemingly requires that Christ have contradictory properties insofar as he is both God and human. It would appear that the best way to resolve this is to suggest a parts Christology – that Christ has a divine part and a human part so that the whole of Christ does not hold contradictory properties. Such a solution makes it difficult to understand how Christ could really be a unitary being. Barring very good reasons to accept that Christ really does have contradictory properties, it would seem that either classical theism or the doctrine of the incarnation must be substantially revised. This raises a very difficult question: at what point has a rational reconstruction of the faith left the faith?

Byrne argues that Helm's rejection of a libertarian conception of free will commits him to maintaining that God is an author of sin. The difficulty is that, on Helm's position, God must intend us to do wrong – God's plan counts on our

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wrongdoing instead of merely permitting it. Helm, however, claims that his position no more makes God the author of our sin than a naturalistic compatibilist makes nature the author of our sin. Nature may make us do wrong, but nature is not blameworthy. Byrne points out that nature is blind whereas God intends for us to be as we are and do as we do. God therefore has an authorship role in all of our wrongdoing. Although this does not refute a Helmian theodicy, such a theodicy seems to give comfort to the wrongdoers rather than their victims; moreover, it seems to require abandoning the principle that one should not plan on doing a wrong so that a good may result. The problem here could be larger than that which Byrne points out. If Helm is right and God's absolute, unlimited sovereignty is not compatible with libertarian human freedom, then, given Byrne's critique, the tradition of theism seems to be saddled with the position that God is both holy and the author of evil.

If the faith-seeking-understanding approach is problematic, it is worthwhile to consider natural theology. Richard Swinburne turns the attention this direction and 'encourage[s] [Helm] to be more sympathetic to natural theology' (69). He argues that the existence of the laws of nature as we know them add to a cumulative argument for the existence of God. While a law-governed universe is extremely unlikely on its own, God has reason to make a law-governed universe and so the existence of such a universe, combined with other intrinsically unlikely phenomena, shows that the existence of God is probable. God has reason to make a world that has simple, discoverable natural laws in it because God has reason to make a world in which we can learn how to interact with it reliably by understanding it. His argument, however, is problematic because the real laws of nature are not simple and are not readily discoverable.

The laws of quantum physics and general relativity are particularly complex mathematically and are scandalously counter-intuitive. Assuming that we really do know or are close to knowing the true laws of nature, the journey of humanity from making stone tools to this point has taken some two million years. What people discover readily are not the laws of nature themselves but regularities like the seasons, projectile motion, free fall, etc. Assuming that God made the natural world, it would appear that God has made a world in which Humean regularities are easy to discern but the real causes of events are quite hidden from us. Ours is a world in which the overwhelming majority of humans live with a radically false understanding of the true causes of natural events. Given that we've had such difficulty discerning the real causes of everyday regularities, it would only be reasonable to be very tentative when speculating about the origin of the universe. If our intuitions about space, time, and matter have been as misleading as modern physics has shown, we have good reason to discount our intuitive judgements about the origin of the universe. This is, perhaps, the reason why someone like Helm should not be sympathetic to natural theology: it makes our knowledge of God tentative and, to the extent that it relies on contemporary

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science, a recent event in human history. If our knowledge of God is recent and tentative, that throws suspicion on traditional religion.

Overall, this collection of essays presents much food for thought regarding the viability of the faith seeking understanding tradition and merits study. Many of the essays will be helpful to scholars working through particular problems.

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