

Evangelicalism, piety and politics. The selected writings of W. R. Ward. Edited by Andrew Chandler. Pp. viii + 230. Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. £65. 978 1 4094 2554 0
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In the brave new world of digital publication, collections of previously published articles may seem redundant. However, essays which appear in books rather than journals can all too easily still sink into unmerited obscurity, while an astutely chosen collection affords a valuable opportunity to reflect on the range and character of a scholar's interests. Andrew Chandler's selection from the voluminous back catalogue of the late W. R. 'Reg' Ward (very helpfully documented in the bibliography appended to the book) is very welcome on both counts. The anthology embraces all the key areas of Ward's ecclesiastical historical interests (though it is important to remember that Reg cut his teeth in large-scale studies of the land tax and the Hanoverian and Victorian University of Oxford). Chandler divides his collection into three subsections: 'The Realm of the Imagination', including essays on Gerhard Tersteegen, Johann Sebastian Bach (as biblical expositor) and 'The making of the Evangelical mind' in German Protestant circles in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries; 'Piety and Practice: Establishments, Denominations and Movements', which offers – alongside Ward's classic essay of 1971 on early nineteenth-century English religion, 'The religion of the people and the problem of control', in which he memorably declared its context 'the most important single generation in the modern history not only of English religion but of the whole Christian world' – pieces on Swedenborgianism, revivals in early eighteenth-century Europe and a characteristically robust take on Church-State relations in the DDR and Switzerland; and 'Inheritances and Accommodations', starting with reflections on the Evangelical genesis of the missionary movement and the history of the pastoral office in British and American Methodism, then heading back to twentieth-century German Protestantism (Barth and Bonhoeffer) *via* the seventeenth-century Lutheran Gottfried Arnold before a peroration discussing 'British Methodism between clericalisation and secularisation 1932–99'. The variety of periods and characters under discussion is none the less given genuine unity by the enduring concerns that fuelled much of Ward's scholarship: a breadth of international vision combined with a forensic focus on the particular; concentration on the Protestant tradition of Protestantism and its intellectual trajectories within a thorough grounding in social historical context; and a sceptical approach to establishments (in all senses) which helped to make ecclesiastical history for him *the* 'dismal science'.

Chandler's lively and affectionate memoir and assessment of Ward prefaces the essays, and together with Jay Brown's outstanding obituary for the British Academy will provide readers not fortunate enough to have encountered Reg in real life with valuable and in places necessary context for properly understanding his scholarly output. Those, like the present author, who did know Ward and his work will experience familiar reactions in the re-reading that the volume provokes. The depth and range of reference and knowledge are breathtaking (if humiliating in the expectations the author has of his readers' ability to keep up); there is also the rather curious combination of knotty and difficult prose with memorable one-line put-downs of both fellow historians ('the holy water sprinkled by the late Dean Sykes and his pupils') and historical subjects ('[Thomas] Coke's weakness was not ambition, but the thickest

vein of personal silliness ever disclosed by a Methodist leader of the first rank') and themes ('Ecumenicism has degenerated in the minds of too many churchmen into a kneejerk substitute for thought'). Ward's often unsparing approach to scholarly engagement both on paper and in the seminar makes it all the more important that Chandler's memoir also captures the genuine human warmth and lack of pretention that made Ward not only most intellectually stimulating but good and supportive company for several generations of historians of religion.

KING'S COLLEGE,
LONDON

ARTHUR BURNS

John Wesley's pneumatology. Perceptible inspiration. By Joseph W. Cunningham. (Ashgate Methodist Studies.) Pp. xvi + 155. Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. £60. 978 1 4094 5734 3
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This is not a book for the newcomer or the general reader, though the 'technical' wording of the title should not dissuade serious students from gaining valuable insights into an area of John Wesley's theology that has been somewhat neglected in the past. The author in fact begins his preface by defining pneumatology as 'an orderly understanding of God's spiritual nature in relation to human existence', precisely because of the difficulties involved in using appropriate and meaningful language when speaking about the Holy Spirit. Cunningham is wise to do this, as Wesley himself acknowledged the problems in explaining (and justifying) his position in rational terms against Hume and others – as have Christian theologians throughout the centuries – and Wesley, perhaps, was better equipped than most to engage in the task of apologetic.

This careful study by Joseph Cunningham is not always easy to read, but covers an area where scholarship has been relatively thin on the ground. The term 'perceptible inspiration' (the book's subtitle) was used by Wesley himself to define, as far as was possible, the way in which believers 'experience the Spirit by faith, and are transformed for holiness through inward perception of the divine'. Wesley's correspondence between 1745 and 1748 with a certain John Smith, a pseudonym for a leading contemporary Anglican divine, forms the basis of chapter i, where we have a helpful delineation of Wesley's basic beliefs, showing that he could combine in his writings the complexities of speaking of God's Spirit on the one hand, with a beautiful simplicity on the other, illustrated in his use of the Collect for Purity. This, perhaps, was Wesley's essential genius. The second chapter, despite its invitation to consider the subject of grace as the 'relational foundation' of perceptible inspiration, is less effective because the author takes some time to deal with his main subject, though wherever he cites Wesley directly, such as in the little-read sermon 'On dissipation', we are given a clear insight into his (Wesley's) thinking. The following chapters move us on in a logical progression – from grace to faith as a 'sensorium of spiritual encounter' in chapter iii, then on to the area of witness in chapter iv, where Wesley's teaching on matters relating to assurance and perfection caused perhaps most controversy. The final (and in some ways, most illuminating) chapter deals with the fruits of the Spirit and Cunningham gives a compelling analysis of the way in which Wesley's pneumatology unfolded in practical terms. In his pamphlet