

The fifth chapter provides an illuminating discussion on the material and historical reality of the books, language, and texts of Christian Scripture. The sixth chapter follows with an account of the inspiration and uses of Scripture in the life of Christians. The short conclusion is largely a summary of the book's central arguments.

While the description of the text suggests it will be drawing from the theology of Bernard Lonergan and Henri de Lubac, it may surprise the reader to find the extent to which the two theologians appear. Lonergan seems to be a particular favourite of Gordon. He does not only feature as a theological resource, but Lonergan's work really sustains the argument of this text in both implicit and explicit ways. For readers who are not interested in Lonergan, certain parts of the book may be a tedious read, despite its other merits.

There are, however, many merits worth pointing out.

One of these is the fifth chapter's compact and clear discussion on the historical formation of the texts of the Christian Bible, including their transmission, codification, and distribution. Thinking about the Bible as a static object, or even as a Platonic form does not leave room for the accidents of its historical development. Gordon suggests that 'Scripture's material reality has theological significance' (p. 169). This claim is illuminated by a thorough discussion of this material reality. While much of the book reads as if it were written for specialists in the theology of Scripture, this section would prove an extremely useful aid for seminary students who need an accurate and succinct account of the history of the Bible's formation.

Another merit of the book is the theological horizon Gordon is able to hold throughout the various discussion of the text. That is, Gordon is attuned to the providence of God, and seeks to understand Scripture's variegated history with this in view. Gordon does not shy away from the difficulties and complexities of Scripture but faces them squarely with the transcendent purpose of God in mind as well. His book models the way that the theologian can successfully integrate insights from history and historical-critical scholarship into a systematic theology.

While Gordon's text does not offer any distinctive insights to Anglican studies, it serves as a useful account of the theology and history of the Bible that will be handy at seminary libraries. The technical prose, the fascination with Lonergan, and the mid-ranged price of the text will likely keep its audience to a relatively small niche. It is a significant work of scholarship nonetheless and will provide an important interlocutor for theologians engaging with Scripture in years to come.

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Jane Shaw, *Pioneers of Modern Spirituality: The Neglected Anglican Innovators of a 'Spiritual but Not Religious' Age* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2018), pp. x + 126. ISBN 13: 978-0232532869.  
doi:[10.1017/S1740355320000376](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355320000376)

In this little book, which began as the Sarum lectures given in Salisbury, Jane Shaw, now Principal of Harris Manchester College, Oxford, presents character studies of

two women and two men who exemplified a style of English spirituality that seemed particularly suited to the period between the wars. It was a time when the old obligations and dogmatic norms attached to the Church of England seemed to be disappearing and in their place there was need for a new form of religious practice that was based on practice, experience and encounter rather than creeds and social convention. Although all four writers had links with the established church, none was a holder of high office; yet all were influential in their different ways despite their often uneasy relationships with institutional Christianity.

The first chapter discusses Evelyn Underhill, perhaps the most influential English spiritual writer of the twentieth century, who spent much of her life seeking God outside formal Christianity before being received into the Church of England for the last twenty years of her life: she was able to exercise a powerful personal magnetism on others through spiritual direction, especially among those outside the churches. There is an eloquent matter-of-factness to her approach to muddling through fog and doubt which, when accompanied by her dry wit and lack of pomposity, gives her work a vitality and relevance that transcend her own times. The second figure chosen is the less well known, but equally influential figure of Reginald Somerset Ward, a 'behind the scenes' man who exercised his ministry as one of the first professional spiritual directors in the Church of England and who, like Underhill, offered advice that was 'severely simple and sternly practical' and based on a pattern of prayer and realistic rule of life. The third example is Percy Dearmer, who emphasized the importance of beauty and justice in religion along with the quality of public worship as performance. For much of the time after the First World War he held no ecclesiastical position, which meant he could work in unfamiliar ways that included promoting the ministry of women and drawing in new media and styles of worship. In this way he saw the church as capable of expanding into every aspect of life as it freed itself from its petrification in an institution. The final chapter discusses the novelist Rose Macaulay. It is a fascinating account of the correspondence between Fr Johnson of the Cowley Fathers and Macaulay, whose relationship with a married man meant that she was estranged from the church until the age of 69. Johnson's non-judgemental spiritual counsel gave her the opportunity for a fresh start and to acknowledge that all people are a bundle of contradictions: there was always room for a second chance.

In a brief concluding chapter, Shaw draws some contemporary lessons partly from her own experience in the United States in such churches as St Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco with its emphasis on beauty and justice. Equally important in all the examples discussed is the emphasis on teaching people how to practise their faith in daily life, which has so often been overlooked by the Church of England. All in all, this is an upbeat book that does not wallow in the decline of the present-day church and its vain fixation on growth. Instead its message about the spiritual life is simply just to 'get on with it' in a disciplined, non-dogmatic and practical way whatever the apparent difficulties. That, it seems to me, is something deeply rooted in the Anglican tradition, not least in Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*.

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