

Rausser's book embodies an admirable search for the foundations of a viable and virtuous public theology. However, while it amasses highly useful arguments for debates with non-foundationalist colleagues, its appeal to the direct perception of non-linguistic concepts and properties (p. 212) falls prey to the very arguments Rausser levels against appeals to inerrant texts in justifying Christian doctrine (p. 36). Just as the act of interpretation renders the concept of textual inerrancy useless, the acts of thinking and communicating render the concept of direct perception rhetorically ineffectual. Neither, it seems, are of much help in matters of disagreement.

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Russell Re Manning (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. xxv + 322. \$90.00 (hbk); \$29.99 (pbk).

'Who still reads Paul Tillich today?' A compelling question opens up Russell Re Manning's new comprehensive volume, *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* (2009). Tillich is widely acknowledged as one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century. Today, he is nonetheless the most neglected of the great theologians of recent times. *The Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* aims to respond to this situation. It is the fruit of a rediscovery of Tillich's work, thought, life and life contexts in the light of new, fresh theological thinking. Eighteen fascinating essays are collected in this volume, accessibly written and yet theologically profound, while covering a wide spectrum of approaches and perspectives. It is a long-awaited study, especially in the English-speaking theological world.

The idea to collect interpretative essays on Tillich's theology in one comprehensive volume started in the early 1950s with Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall's *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (ed. 1952<sup>1</sup>; 1964<sup>2</sup>). The comparison with this study shows impressively how theological thinking, influenced by Tillich today, has a fresh and modern, pluralistic and forward-looking character and style. The basic theological topoi, theology of culture, Tillich in dialogue, provide a theological festival of positions and perspectives!

The theologians of the 'old Tillich school' were critical thinkers in large part. Tillich was at the height of his career. His successors developed their

theological identity by being more or less vigorously ‘contra Tillich’.<sup>1</sup> Tillich scholars today are much more constructive and autonomous in their thinking. The *Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* is a good example of this. It confronts Tillich’s theology with questions and topics re-read from our perspectives today (for instance: Tillich as preacher; his theology of art; his concrete ethics; Tillich in dialogue with feminism and postmodernism). Tillich’s theology definitely has become pluralistic because its interpreters themselves introduce a wide spectrum of positions into it. This pluralism will open up new possibilities for re-reading Tillich and reincorporating him in theological studies, religious, ethical and political discourses as well as in the preaching and spiritual education of church congregations.

Now, which questions remain open? And what are the concrete tasks for the future? I would like to outline my critique by the following expression: ‘back to the roots’. For interpreting Tillich in a constructive way also means analysing systematically and in depth the primary sources with its system-immanent nuances, differences and contradictions. A fruitful method for doing this is to analyse in parallel the English and the German editions of Tillich’s works. A good translation is always the best commentary on its original. Therefore, Tillich’s “‘both/and” method’ should also be at work in our own hermeneutics, i.e. in the balance between a systematically exercised critical text-work on the one hand, the evaluation of system-immanent conceptual ambiguities and potentials on the other hand and, finally, our own creativity and innovation.

One concrete example might illustrate the fruitfulness of such hermeneutics: What Tillich calls *Lehre vom Menschen* in the German *Systematische Theologie* can be unfolded (at least) in a triple perspective: as ‘anthropology’, as ‘doctrine of humanity’ and as ‘theology of the concrete spirit’.<sup>2</sup> Linguistic and conceptual insights and actual theological perspectives can be fruitfully correlated. Keeping Tillich’s theology open by going ‘back to its roots’ therefore represents one major task on the way towards reopening it for our theological discourses today. Hence, ‘back to the roots’ can also mean: back to the burning problems of philosophical reductionism, i.e.

<sup>1</sup> One of the first who clearly analysed this situation was Robert P. Scharlemann, *Reflection and Doubt in the Thought of Paul Tillich* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. viii–x.

<sup>2</sup> Tabea Roesler, ‘Gibt es eine theologische Anthropologie Paul Tillichs? Auf dem Weg zur Begründung eines neuen Forschungsbereichs’, *Tillich Preview*, vol. 2 (Münster and Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2009), pp. 43–52.

indirect theological Cartesianism.<sup>3</sup> Finally, it might be challenging to reconfront Tillich with process philosophy and its insights into concrete multidimensional personhood and the existence of the living God.<sup>4</sup>

To be sure, the *Cambridge Companion to Paul Tillich* offers a rich and constructive platform for these questions and debates. ‘Who still reads Paul Tillich today?’ Everybody who, as the theologians writing in this volume, wants to learn from and to contribute to a fresh and innovative theology should do so! With our own theologies and within our specific life contexts we are all invited to the theological festival.

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Deane Peter-Baker, *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology: Charles Taylor, Alvin Plantinga and the de jure Challenge to Christian Belief* (London: SCM-Canterbury Press, 2007), pp. xii + 228. £60.00 (hbk).

Deane-Peter Baker’s *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology* is a product of the Centre of Theology and Philosophy at the University of Nottingham. The guiding principle is that theology and philosophy need one another to be adequately understood, and Baker’s book reflects this as he treats Reformed epistemology and the moral phenomenology of Charles Taylor. Baker, in blending Plantinga and Taylor, tries in this book to bring analytic and continental thinking together.

His goal is to ‘demonstrate the feasibility of combining the Reformed epistemologist’s position with an argument for theism that [he draws] from Charles Taylor’s work, and to show the value that would be added to the Reformed epistemologist’s position by such a combination’ (p. 2). If successful, this conjoined position will answer a robust version of the *de jure* objection to Christian faith (crudely, why unbelievers should regard Christian belief as not only rational and warranted (if true) but why they should give

<sup>3</sup> Michael Welker, ‘Subjectivist “Faith” as a Religious Trap’, in William Schweiker and Charles Mathewes (eds), *Having, Property and Possession in Religious and Social Life* (Grand Rapids, MI, and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 122–37.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Hartshorne, ‘Tillich’s Doctrine of God’, in Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall (eds), *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (The Library of Living Theology, 1; New York: Macmillan, 1964<sup>2</sup>), pp. 164–95.