

My one criticism is that this is mostly a diagnosis, and while mostly fair, it is a bit gloomy. Have there not been attempts at a “kritische Orthodoxie” from the Catholic side among their exegetes, often encouraged by those like Joseph Ratzinger—enterprises which have often seen them teaming up with like-minded Protestants (Hengel, for one), for the sake of ecumenical and biblical/doctrinal theology? Perhaps these have been hardly mentioned because that is the next book the author might write.

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*The Vocation of Anglicanism.* By Paul Avis. New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016. Pp. xii + 191. \$80.

From start to finish, Paul Avis has set his book on Anglicanism in an ecumenical context. On the opening page, the worldwide Anglican Communion is described as a particular “community of missionary disciples” (vii), using Pope Francis’s phrase in *Evangelii Gaudium*. In a chapter on the Reformation inheritance of Anglicanism, both *Lumen Gentium* and the Reformers (rightly understood) are provided as evidence that “all Christian traditions agree that the mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ transcends its visible earthly expression” (125). In the conclusion, of each of the first four pairs of attributes that A. considers Anglicanism to balance, he admits it “is not the only church tradition that does this” (182–85); and of the fifth pair of attributes—faithfulness to tradition and openness to fresh insight—he writes, “Fresh insights should only be embraced when we have wrestled long and hard with Scripture and tradition, in an ecumenical community of interpretation” (185). But he does not shy away from stating the blind spots in his own or others’ tradition; for instance, “A magisterium is not invariably qualified to judge the conclusions of scholarly research” (167).

Although unsurprising from someone who served as General Secretary of the Church of England’s Council for Christian Unity (1998–2011), his ecumenism is nevertheless a refreshing response to the troubles of the Anglican Communion, troubles that could have led to a book with (as he recognizes) an “introspective, navel-gazing preoccupation with Anglican identity, which would be merely pathetic, or even pathological” (xi). Instead, this is a hopeful and generous book, looking for “the Church” and its notes of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity wherever they may be found. Moreover, his ecumenical vision enables him to notice where discord is also a part of the contemporary Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic traditions. Only one essay (on the proposed Anglican Covenant) focuses on the particular machinery by which A. thinks the Anglican Communion might best retain its unity. Yet even here, the “Anglican Covenant and the ecumenical enterprise, with all its convergences and commitments, are of a piece” (68). So, this is potentially a book for all Christian readers, not just Anglicans.

The essays collected here are excellent testimony to A.’s attentiveness to other voices, historical and contemporary. The essays are divided into two parts: The

Vocation of Anglicanism (in each chapter of which that vocation is described with a number of adjectives); and Three-Dimensional Anglicanism (in which three “dimensions” of Anglicanism—catholicity, reform, and criticism—are described in each case by three more principles). Frequently, the essays were originally delivered across the world, and one gets the sense that he has listened to his audiences in redrafting them as book chapters. His approach is non-partisan, following F. D. Maurice’s finding that (as A. paraphrases) “people were generally right in what they positively affirmed, but ... generally wrong in what they denied or neglected” about alternative church parties or traditions (171). Incidentally, A. is at his own best when stating things positively: one long sentence in which the word “not” appears seven times is very difficult to follow (60)! A.’s theological method is therefore to build consensus, as in one paragraph where he aligns Vatican II with the theology of Charles Gore, Bonhoeffer, Barth and Rahner (151–52). One is left pondering, however, if these theologians would have accepted that they were in agreement.

Charles Gore is perhaps A.’s exemplar of the theology and ecclesiology that represents Anglicanism “at its best,” grounded in the Bible and antiquity but critically informed. Gore explained in the famous *Lux Mundi* (1889): “the epoch in which we live is one of profound transformation ... and certain therefore to involve great changes in the outlying departments of theology, where it is linked on to other sciences, and to necessitate some general restatement of its claim and meaning.” A.’s posture of theological openness is as attractive as Gore’s, in which “everything but everything” is open to criticism (133). Yet notice that for Gore change is only really allowed in “outlying departments of theology”: core doctrine is insulated. Likewise, for A., “In practice, no theological question is closed, though if a member of the clergy openly repudiated the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the Resurrection, the inspiration of Scripture and the value of the sacraments, I think (and hope) that he or she could expect censure or discipline” (139). As Bishop of Oxford, Gore censured his clergy who did not believe in the Virgin Birth or Resurrection.

Gore’s sort of Anglicanism is still appealing today, although it carries with it an understanding of episcopal authority that is not welcomed by all Anglicans. Rather, where A.’s book is most valuable is in showing that Anglicanism possesses a robust intellectual tradition, so it is by means of debate that disagreements can be resolved (or not) and that Anglicanism can continue to hold together.

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*Friends and Other Strangers: Studies in Religion, Ethics and Culture.* By Richard B. Miller. New York: Columbia University, 2016. Pp. xvi + 171. \$80.

In an increasingly secular society, where moral relativism and identity politics are easy answers to difference, can religious ethics play a critical, constructive role, both in politics and in academia? Miller answers in the affirmative, arguing for