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1995

Review: Transforming Vision: Imagination and Will in Kierkegaardian Faith

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Recommended Citation
Morrison, John D., "Review: Transforming Vision: Imagination and Will in Kierkegaardian Faith" (1995). *Faculty Publications and Presentations.* Paper 58.
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Madison. This is especially evident in his views on freedom of religion. Many of the early colonies followed the example of Rhode Island in establishing freedom of religion, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Carolina. (Some, however, would not disestablish state religion until the nineteenth century: Connecticut in 1818, Massachusetts in 1833.) In 1777 I. Backus specifically praised Williams as "the first founder and supporter of any truly civil government upon earth." Williams is credited with starting the first Baptist church in the colonies on the basis of adult believers' baptism. His thinking on the taxation of citizens to support the clergy was seminal in many of the colonies abolishing the tax.

The controversy that arose between Williams and the Puritans is still relevant to fundamental issues in modern life. At what price should religious freedom be guaranteed? What is the ideal relationship between state and Church? How far should Christians work for Christian control of secular institutions such as government?

Gaustad concludes the book with a very useful annotated bibliography of sources available for the study of Williams. The book is written by a master of American Church history and is a welcome addition for understanding an early pioneer of American religious life.

Philip M. Schafran
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Transforming Vision: Imagination and Will in Kierkegaardian Faith. By M. Jamie Ferreira. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991, 166 pp., $39.95.

With so much written on Soren Kierkegaard, is there need for more? Can he be a source to uncover the way for current philosophical and religious issues? Ferreira makes clear that Kierkegaard has yet much to say to us. This work of philosophical analysis comes to the often enigmatic thought of Kierkegaard not only for the purpose of understanding and clarification but also for the purpose of hearing and seeing that the Dane's insights might awaken us to the real nature of will, passion, truth and the role of imagination in all transformations of the self—especially in connection with religious faith.

Ferreira is one of the leading American philosophers of religion and one who has been giving careful reexamination to some of the prominent philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to more finely tune our understanding of their contributions to current questions. In light of contemporary concerns regarding will, paradigm shifts, engagement, knowledge, and the place and nature of imagination in all transitions of the self, Ferreira finds in Kierkegaard much to illumine current thought on these matters.

To go about this task Ferreira draws together and gives expression to crucial aspects of Kierkegaard's understanding that have been largely missed—even by philosophers sensitive to Kierkegaard's highly nuanced emphases. In order to bring to clarification Kierkegaard's view of the interrelatedness (and mutual correctivity) of the "decision" (or "leap"), Ferreira not only gives careful attention to the crucial texts in Kierkegaard but also brings out the sense, richness and depth of thought by means of parallel insights in Coleridge, W. James, C. S. Lewis and current philosophers endeavoring to explore many of the same issues. Ferreira has found Kierkegaard, rightly understood, a helpful guide on these questions in modern philosophy of religion. Ferreira calls attention to the "importance of imagination in such a way as to challenge all those classical divisions of the self which exclude or ignore imaginative activity, as well as those which one-sidedly limit imaginative activity to the negative

ways in which thinking can be 'wishful' . . . (rather) to the ways in which imagination informs paradoxical choice, and the ways in which monetary transition can be understood as an imaginative, re-orienting, transforming shift in perspective" (pp. 17–18). To this end Ferreira has brought much that is directly pertinent together with amazing conciseness, sensitivity and effectiveness.

This is one of the most careful, balanced, well-written and illuminating works on Kierkegaard available today. Indeed it might well stand at the forefront. It must be read not only as analysis but also as corrective of many misunderstandings of Kierkegaard's thought, both popular and scholarly, that often assail him for not doing the very thing he does. Kierkegaard was no irrationalist, no volitionalist, and no dualist (e.g. between reason/knowledge and will). Rather, he challenges these views while calling for subjective passion in relation to the objective Truth of God in Christ. The theological implications of what Ferreira has uncovered are both numerous and significant. He handles, clarifies and advances on these issues so effectively that one has difficulty finding fault.

Yet to engage Kierkegaard appreciatively is a dangerous venture. Ferreira's excellent work may fall under Kierkegaard's own judgment for its seeming arm's-length, phenomenological inquiry about that which can only be known from within. But my sense is that this is only apparently the case. By some imaginative re-visioning there is herein at least what seems to be an indirect engagement with Kierkegaard and an engagement with the Truth with whom Kierkegaard himself was so passionately engaged. If so, that is only appropriate.

Highly recommended, this book is the best now in its field.

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William Ewart Gladstone. By David W. Bebbington. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, 270 pp., n.p.

In this contribution to the Library of Religious Biography series Bebbington has produced a concise, readable introduction to his subject. Gladstone (1809–98) was prime minister of Great Britain four times during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901) and therefore one of the most influential political leaders of that era. Bebbington's perspective on this dynamic statesman is evident in the subtitle: *Faith and Politics in Victorian Britain*. He portrays Gladstone as a committed Christian for whom Biblical morality was the basis of his career and his policies in government. "Gladstone's oratory revealed the inner man—combative, passionate, and religious" (p. 187).

In chronological sequence the book unfolds Gladstone's public career and carefully relates his actions to his Christian belief and fervent devotion. He was a loyal High-Church Anglican with a keen interest in theology and Church history. He desired to become a clergyman but bowed to his father's wish and found his sphere of Christian service in politics. He had an appreciative understanding of Anglican evangelicals and nonconformists, but his own persuasion was decidedly Anglo-Catholic and anti-Calvinist. His firm belief in moral absolutes made him anti-utilitarian as well. Gladstone loved the Bible, but he did not accept the Genesis account of creation as literal history. He accepted, at least tacitly, the conclusions of Darwin's theory of evolution. In opposition to historic Lutheran and Calvinist views of election, Gladstone believed that salvation begins with man's free choice and is nurtured by the sacraments.

According to Bebbington, Gladstone's understanding of divine grace came from his reading of Augustine. But the great African father was vigorously anti-Pelagian, while

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