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### **Theology and Society in Three Cities: Berlin, Oxford and Chicago, 1800–1914 (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2014), by Mark D. Chapman**

**Citation for published version:**

Purvis, Z 2016, 'Theology and Society in Three Cities: Berlin, Oxford and Chicago, 1800–1914 (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2014), by Mark D. Chapman' *Journal of Anglican Studies*, vol 14, no. 1, pp. 109–110.  
DOI: 10.1017/S1740355315000133

**Digital Object Identifier (DOI):**

[10.1017/S1740355315000133](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355315000133)

**Link:**

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

**Document Version:**

Peer reviewed version

**Published In:**

*Journal of Anglican Studies*

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Mark D. Chapman, *Theology and Society in Three Cities: Berlin, Oxford and Chicago, 1800–1914* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2014), pp. 152 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-227-67989-0.

This is an important, concise book, deserving of a wide readership. Originally appearing in the form of the Hensley Henson lectures at the University of Oxford, delivered in early 2013, its astute analysis of three national contexts and explorations of how ‘external’ political and cultural climates can and do feed Christian reflection in sometimes surprisingly different ways should help to reinvigorate research into the history of modern theology. Chapman’s fundamental argument, presented in an engaging narrative, is that not only did new conceptions of human autonomy and historical consciousness shape the nature of nineteenth-century theological enquiry, but also that each of these major developments in modern theology must be understood with careful attention to ‘institutional and political constraints and the concomitant need for compromise – or quite frequently resistance to any compromise’ (p. 10).

Early chapters of the book centre on the revolutionary and Napoleonic turmoil leading to the momentous founding of the University of Berlin in 1810. The vision of university theology so carefully described by Friedrich Schleiermacher, one of the University of Berlin’s intellectual architects and first dean of its theological faculty, emerged in key respects out of Prussia’s humiliating loss to French forces. Notably, Chapman also highlights ‘alternative theologies that were on offer at much the same time as Schleiermacher developed his’ (p. 37). To that end, he considers how an environment of political restoration, reaction, and piecemeal reform helped to give rise to the Prussian Union-Church (*Unionskirche*),

which Friedrich Wilhelm III established by fiat in 1817, the neo-pietist ‘Awakening movement’ (*Erweckungsbewegung*) associated with F. A. G. Tholuck, and the neo-confessionalism of E. W. Hengstenberg.

The middle chapters on Oxford focus, first, on John Henry Newman and the Tractarians of the 1830s and 1840s, and second, on the development of a distinct ‘Broad Church’ cast of Oxford theology in the 1860s through the interesting and widely contested collection, *Essays and Reviews*, whose contributors included Mark Pattison and Benjamin Jowett, among others. Drawing on a variety of primary sources and with a comprehensive grasp and deftly deployed use of secondary literature, Chapman presents Newman’s view of the moral responsibilities of the college tutor, the ethos of the Oxford Movement, and the relation of the University of Oxford to the Church of England, to broader changes afoot in British politics, and to the overall Anglican synthesis. By the time *Essays and Reviews* appeared in 1860, however, it seemed that the Anglican university as Newman, John Keble, and Edward Bouverie Pusey knew it had ‘outlived its day’ (p. 57). Though sometimes forgotten, *Essays and Reviews* caused much more of a stir in the Church of England than Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, published the previous year. Chapman contends that the volume – together with its unique and influential theological approach – was a product of the Oxford system that ‘spread far beyond Oxford into the “external” university’ (p. 60), that is, across various parish connections and social networks established via the educational system throughout the Victorian era.

Chicago’s blend of sociology and theology near the end of the nineteenth century represents the final case study. Where Berlin reflected Enlightenment ideas in which only the ‘positive’ faculties of law, medicine, and theology had a basis in practical knowledge, Oxford emphasised a complete moral instruction and the twin ideals of national church and national education (p. 77). For theological enquiry at the University of Chicago (founded in 1890 by

the American Baptist Educational Society and John D. Rockefeller), we see, alongside novel challenges of modernisation and urbanisation on the frontier of the 'New World', the critical role played by the emerging field of sociology. 'Although it might be something of an overstatement', Chapman writes, 'it is nonetheless plausible to suggest that the university effectively became a functionally-orientated educator of those whose principal task was the amelioration of social misery' (p. 81). Indeed, the 'early Chicago sociologists saw themselves functioning as secular equivalents of the clergy, and sociology, rather than theology, became the new science of religion' (p. 88). And yet, in Chapman's view, the Berlin of Schleiermacher, the Oxford of Newman, and the Chicago of William Rainey Harper, Chicago's first president, each showed themselves to be thoroughly religious institutions, all while promoting different theological programmes built on various forms of compromise prompted in degrees by local, regional, and national concerns. The book's conclusion ranges a bit wider on the notion of 'sociological theology', pulling from the work of David Martin, Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the London School of Economics and priest in the Church of England.

Both newcomers and advanced scholars will find much of interest in each case study. In this way of approaching the history of theology, Chapman invokes some of the significant views on religion and social analysis from Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber. Although the book highlights human autonomy and historical consciousness at the outset, these themes tend to recede from view as the account proceeds. The book suggests how the category of compromise, set in a insightful comparative account, might illumine current debates about the nature and purpose of theology alongside other disciplines such as the social sciences. In doing so, it is sure to kick off a number of important methodological discussions, not only concerning our understanding of the past, but also for the task of theology across diverse

institutional settings today. Chapman's portrait of theology in three quite different locations shows us anew, with great creativity and erudition, how important context can be.

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