The gospel according to Henry VIII
Arthur Freeman
Give a gift that lasts all year –
The TLS

Give a friend a subscription to the TLS this Christmas, and they’ll receive a year of fine writing, literary discoveries and incisive debate, delivered to their door each week. They’ll be sure to find the TLS the most stimulating company.

You will also receive a 50% discount and a set of two TLS bookmarks as our gift to you.

Subscriber benefits:
• A gift that will last all year
• Save up to 60% in the course of the year
• Delivered direct to the door every week, anywhere in the world
• Free set of two TLS bookmarks for you when you take a subscription for friend

To purchase the gift subscription, please call +44 (0) 1895 438781 ( quoting code SO24) or visit www.subscription.co.uk/wt/SO24

Alternatively, you can fill in the details in the gift order form.
Offer ends 31st December.

TLS gift order form

If yes, I would like to give a gift subscription to the TLS:

Choose the subscription your friend would like to give:
1 year subscription: UK £65 (saving 50%)
Europe £116 (saving 32%)
Rest of World £115 (saving 30%)

Your details:

Name: ____________________________ Address: ____________________________
Tel: ____________________________ Email: ____________________________
Postcode: ____________________________

Gift details:

Is this a gift? Yes ______ No ______
For whom? ____________________________

TLS subscriber: ____________________________

Please send the form to: The TLS, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, LE16 9RS, UK.

TLS December 14, 2007

John Constable by David Gardner (1796)

The first bible to be printed in Britain had not merely a royal patron but also a royal editor – one who was bold enough to omit most of the Old Testament and to give a robust defence of his methods in a preface. In the Commissary section, Arthur Freeman suggests some of the reasons why Henry VIII has received so little credit for his pioneering popularizations of scripture, those picturesque engravings, his easy-to-read typography and handy quarto page size. A date of publication in the same month as Sir Thomas More’s beheading was maybe one mistake.

The former Archbishop of York and long-standing TLS contributor, John Halden, reviews a further selection of books from one of the most popular fields of 2007, the "new atheists", which looks, he thinks, so very like the old atheism. The philosopher and critic Roger Scruton has been reading a new exploration of forgiveness, one which gives special attention to the way in which public apologies for great crimes seem to have changed. Reciprocity and dialogue are essential for successful forgiving, he says. Some things will remain forever unforgiven.

Earlier this year the Nobel Prize winner James Watson found forgiveness in short supply when he opined on the mental inferiority of black people as observed by those who employ them. Jerry A. Coyne describes how the racism, which Watson’s friends had long feared has stained the legacy of the man found for discovering the molecular structure of DNA.

Our art critic, Julian Bell, has been to Glimh for "the most exhilarating survey of British art that anyone is likely to see for a long time". John Constable in the heart, squeezing Turner into some uncomfortable corners but allowing the space for Lewis Carroll's "bizarre" Alice.
W hat is forgiveness, and what good does it do? How are we helped by offering forgiveness and how are we helped by receiving it? Can forgiveness be offered on behalf of another or must it always come from the victim? Is there always a victim?

The crimes of the twentieth century, now receding from human memory with the rapidity that guilt alone can generate, ought to have put us, and similar questions, firmly on the syllabus of Anglophone moral philosophy. And if they haven’t done so then we might at least hope (if hope is the word) that the daily spectacle of Islamists punching the air and generally making the kind of fools of themselves that people make when they cannot look in a mirror and see the thing they hate would have reminded us that forgiveness was planted in the heart of our civilization and runs like a golden thread through all the rules and morals by which our ancestors were instructed. Christ taught that those who ask forgiveness must also grant it, and exhorted this maxims in the prayer that his disciples repeat each day. The love-one’s-neighbor idea, which Jews and Christians believe to be the core of morality, is unintelligible without the context of mutual forgiveness.

The topic was introduced into an English-language philosophical journal by the Hungarian exile, Aurel Kolnai, in 1973, at a time when Anglophone moral philosophers were analysing the “logic of moral discourse”, and wondering whether it was different from the logic of “boobs” and “hurrah”. The idea that moral philosophy was really about the moral emotions and their place in human fulfillment, was an idea that Kolnai — steeped in the phenomenology of Max Scheler — had never doubted. Little by little, analytical philosophers came round to his point of view, with important articles by J. G. Murphy, Joanna North and others, and an agreeable book, Forgivenness and Mercy, in the form of a dialogue between Murphy and the legal theorist Jean Hampton (1999).

Meanwhile, psychologists influenced by the “positive psychology” of Martin Seligman had begun to emphasize the role of forgiveness in repairing psychic damage. One of them, Robert Enright, established a Forgiveness Institute at the University of Wisconsin, and jointly edited, with Joanna North, a cross-disciplinary book on the subject (Exploring Forgiveness, 1999). The book is introduced by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who has perhaps done more than any other public figure to emphasize the necessity for forgiveness in the healing of communities. Archbishop Tutu was the brains behind the path-breaking Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and the work of this Commission has begun to influence Anglophone moral philosophy, prompting

ROGER SCRUTON
Charles Griswold
FORGIVENESS
A philosophical exploration
978 0 521 70351 2

interesting thoughts on reconciliation in works such as Adam Morton’s On Evil (2004). The Community has also inspired many of the arguments, and provided some of the examples, in Charles Griswold’s powerful study of forgiveness. Griswold is the leading authority on the moral philosophy of Adam Smith, concerning whose Theory of Moral Sentiments he has written the definitive commentary, restoring Smith to his proper place at the summit of Enlightenment thinking. He has clearly been deeply influenced by Smith’s account of the moral emotions and of their root in sympathy. But his book contains echoes too of Butler and Azitoff, and also of Hegel, who saw forgiveness as a restoration of intersubjective ties, a re-creation of a “we”, where two “Ts” had sprung apart.

Griswold, who is no mean classical scholar, prefaced his argument with an illuminating discussion of sungame, a term that does not quite mean forgiveness, but which serves to introduce the many ways in which the ancient Greeks both resembled us and differed from us in the difficult business of apology and pardon. His discussion of Azitoff and the Stoics left me feeling that a full book on this topic in long overdue, to set beside E. R. Dodds’s The Greeks and the Irrational (1951) and Bernard Williams’s Shame and Necessity (1958) as proof that our common humanity can take on uncommon forms. I came away from this part of the discussion echoing Schiller’s regret: “Schone Welt, wo bist du?”. Turning to the world in which we find ourselves, Griswold argues that forgiveness is a process whereby two people cope with an injury inflicted by one upon the other, and a virtue. He understands virtue in the Aristotelian way, as a disposition, turned towards the good, and promoting the fulfillment of the person who possesses it. Virtue are the goal of moral education, and to this extent, Griswold implies, forgiveness can be learned and taught. But some things will remain unforgiven, and in all its occurrences forgiveness should be distinguished from forgetting, condoning or turning away in defeat.

Forgiveness is not achieved unilaterally: it is the result of a dialogue, which may be tacit, but which involves reciprocal communication of an extended and delicate kind. The one who forgives goes out to the one who has injured him, and his gesture involves a changed state of mind, a recollection towards the other, and a setting aside of resentment. Such an existential transformation is not always or easily attained, and can only be achieved, Griswold suggests, through an effort of cooperation and sympathy, in which each person strives to set his own interests aside and look on the other from the posture of the “innocent spectator”, as Smith described it. Crucial in this process are the “narratives” which the parties recount to themselves, and Griswold draws interestingly on recent work in “narratology” in his search for the crucial factor in the process of psychic repair. This is the factor that permits a voicing of resentment in the one soul, and a self-giving through contrition in the other. Each party’s narrative is both an account of the injury, and an allocration of blame, ideal and reality, exoneration and fault, are all woven together, and forgiveness can be seen as an act to attempt to harmonize the narratives, so that the story comes to an end in a new Test match.

Griswold’s arguments are deep, far-reaching and all the more effective for the many interesting examples, drawn from recent events and biographical accounts. He sets a paradigm before us, in which one person injures another, seeks forgiveness and then receives it. The injury and the seeking are as important for Griswold as the final forgiveness, and he rightly rejects the view that forgiveness is simply a “gift” that can be bestowed by the injured party whatever the state of mind of the one who had hurt him. You don’t “receive” in forgiving when you have shown no recognition of the fault, and you don’t recognize a fault if you regard it with indifference, and without the natural resentment with which one moral being receives the injuries inflicted by another. The one who forgives changes his whole posture towards the one who had injured him, and cannot do this without the other’s cooperation. Repentance must be felt; but repentance is a moral emotion, founded in judgement, and can, in the course of rational dialogue, be “set aside”. In describing this process, Griswold draws faithfully on Bishop Butler’s classic exposition of the topic in his sermons.

3.12.07
London NW8

“Sunday in Kandy was all about Musthak Muralitharan, as Sundays in Kandy usually are when there is a Test match on”, wrote the Times cricket correspondent Christopher Martin-Jenkins in a report on the recent first Test between Sri Lanka and England (which the hosts won by 88 runs). In the course of the match, the off-spinner became the leading Test wicket-taker of all time, overtaking the not-long-retired Australian Shane Warne’s total of 708. Muralitharan’s bowling action will persist (a congenital defect in his bowling arm, he has given the appearance of not straightening it on delivery), as will debates over which of Warne and Muralitharan is the greatest slow bowler in Test match history. What is beyond dispute is that the thirty-five-year-old Muralitharan will remain the leading wicket-taker in Tests for many years to come, as his nearest rivals are all approaching retirement. As a member of the strife-torn island’s minority Tamil community, he has always stressed the importance of cricket as a unifying force. This Heineian portrait, by Phil Tate, of the man who has earned the right to be called the greatest Sri Lankan, was unveiled at Lord’s, the “home of cricket”, on December 3.
PHILOSOPHY
3 Roger Scruton Charles Griswold Forgiveness – A philosophical exploration

POEMS
5 A. B. Jackson The Visitor
23 Robert Crawford Empire
29 Carrie Etter Fear of Lightning

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
6 John Cowper Powys, Japan’s war, Antifascism, etc

RELIGION
7 John Halgood Tina Beatrice The New Atheists, John C. Lennox God’s Undertaker
Bernice Martin/Hans Küng The Beginning of All Things, John Polkinghorne From
Richard Cross Physicist to Priest, An Autobiography
Calum G. Brown Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain
Timothy McDermott How To Read Aquinas
Daniel Schwartz Aquinas on Friendship

ART HISTORY
11 Julian Bell British Vision (Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent)
Robert Hoozee et al British Vision – Observation and imagination in
in British art, 1799–1990

HISTORY
12 John Logister William R. Newton Le Petit Cour – Services et serviteurs à la
curé de Versailles au XVIIIe siècle

COMMENTARY
13 Arthur Freeland To guard His worth – A bible designed by Henry VIII
Barbara Reynolds Begin here – Dorothy L. Sayers, fifty years on
Eric Korn In the Wellcome Library
Hugo Williams Freelance
Then and Now
3 March 2000 – Karlheinz Stockhausen

ARTS
17 John Bowen/Frances Craig
Jane Janeman/Cranfort (BBC1), Elizabeth Gaskell Cranfort and Other Stories
Luke Kennard
Indigo (Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, and Hove Museum and Art
Gallery)
David Edgar and Stephanie Dale A Time to Keep (The Thomas
Hardy School, Dorchester)

FICTION
19 Tom Shippey Tree of Smoke
Tim Sontzer
Chris Mess
Brian Dillon
Patricia Craig

SCIENCE
22 Jerry A. Coyne
Philip Tetlock
James D. Watson
Avoid Boring People
Drew Westen
The Political Brain

BIOGRAPHY
24 John Stokes
Katherine Duncan-Jones/Charles Nicholl
Richard Davenport-Hines
Brenda Maddox

POLITICS
27 Martin Pugh
Brian Brivati

ARCHITECTURE
28 Alan Powers
Kenneth Powell and Cathy Strongman New London Architecture 2

LITERATURE
29 Andrew Kahn
Yury Tynyanov Young Pushkin

SALES OF BOOKS
30 H. R. Woudhuysen
Coleside connections

REFERENCE BOOKS
31 Chakravarti RamPrasad
Jennifer Wallace

IN BRIEF
32 Massimo Carlotto The Fugitive, Simon Joyce The Victorians in the
Reflection Mirror, Matthew Collin The Time of the Rebels, David
Kherdian, editor Forgotten Bread, Amy Scott-Douglas Shakespeare
Inside, Roland Barthes What is Sport? Derek Wilson Sir Francis
Walsingham, Ed Ginsert West End Chronicles

35 This week’s contributors, Crossword

NB
36 J. C.
Recycling books, Machinist and literature, Galliard v Oneworld, “We avoid”

Continued from page 2

The discussion of Butler is one of the few places where Griswold acknowledges the
special place of forgiveness in the Christian world view: he repeatedly emphasizes that
his is a “secular” account, which depends on no theological premisses. A Christian might
suggest that this has led to an unnecessary narrowing of Griswold’s paradigm. Those
who ask God to forgive them their trespasses are not petitioning an injured party: God
cannot be injured. Yet he can forgive us, in the same way that “we forgive those who
wrong us” (“we ask God to forgive us” in order to restore our relationship with him,
and the process may be arduous and long. Here again, Griswold might have fruitfully
studied what has been said about this process in the Catholic tradition – in particular con-
cerning the need for confession, contrition, penitence and atonement, in order to attain
that final homecoming into the place of love.

Much that Griswold says tracks that process without explicitly acknowledging it. As a
result he tends to overlook the enormous part played by penitence in restoring and deepen-
ing our affections.

A long chapter is devoted to the discussion of political apology, and the vexed question of
whether collective acts can be collective acts can be justified by their victims, and, if so, by what process.
Griswold’s cases are complex, ranging from the University of Alabama’s apology in 2004
for its exploitation of slaves in the nineteenth century, to the apology offered by Robert
McNamara, as former Secretary of Defense, for the debacle in Vietnam. As Griswold
points out, some of these apologies, uttered into the void, as often side-stepping responsi-
bility as assuming it, and without any close idea of the relationship that is to be renewed
or the act of penitence that will renew it, have a vacuous air. Often they come across as
attempts to avoid the more arduous task of set-
ting the record straight and executing justice.
Indeed, forgiveness has a part to play in human relations precisely because the strict
demands of justice would too often make it impossible to repair them. In the world of pol-
tics, however, real apology should always have justice in mind. In this context, the lan-
guage of forgiveness too often softens and sentimentalizes the issue, as Griswold
wisely says:

When forgiveness becomes the public rallying cry, played out on daytime television soap
operas, encouraged by civic and religious leaders, and praised far and wide for its power to
heal, its role in confusion and vulgarity is inevitable. It becomes identified with “dili-
cence”, it is sentimentalized and transformed into therapy, and the criteria for its practice are
sharply, It melds into forgiveness of wrong, and is gained all too easily, once the expected
public theatrics are performed.

The criticisms apply to much of the market in guilt-edged political softs, in which President
Clinton made so successful a trade. Griswold’s examples remind us that forgiveness must sometimes be hard, and
penitence no less so, and that in the political arena it is not forgiveness but apology that
counts. And he amplifies the thought in fitting words, concluding with an echo of
Spinosa:

The reconciling ideals of political apology are substantive and noble, even though they are not
intended to satisfy the soul’s deepest yearnings.
The Visitor

Native on waste ground, root-hay willowbush has overpowered Audens – patchy river developments, old red light, the derelict bakery tower a pigeon-haven, and my lunchbox terror as a hovering half mouse

half insect fed on blossoming fireweed, plain air ruined, unavailing: the hummingbird Hawk-moth

fabric and fiction, the day at a wrong angle to the mind. Mediterranean Glasgow, global warming: we know what we should not know.

They find Angelika, the Polish student, next door to the part yards of a church.

A. B. JACKSON