KINGSLEY BARRETT

Charles Kingsley Barrett
1917–2011

For all of his life Charles Kingsley Barrett was never Charles K. Barrett. For generations of students and readers of his writings he was C. K. Barrett. To family and friends he was always Kingsley.

Kingsley Barrett will be long remembered for four reasons in particular. One is his writings on the New Testament and allied subjects. He was simply the finest English language commentator on the New Testament in the twentieth century. He was almost the last of a fine generation of New Testament scholars in England—including C. H. Dodd, T. W. Manson, C. F. D. Moule, F. F. Bruce, and his Durham colleague C. E. B. Cranfield—all of them evincing the English skill of careful analytic commentary well informed by extensive knowledge of original sources. But as the commentator who mastered the central section of the New Testament—the Gospel of John, the Acts of the Apostles, Paul's letter to Rome and his letters to Corinth, all of them served with weighty commentaries—Kingsley Barrett surpassed his contemporaries. Indeed, he could be described as the twentieth-century J. B. Lightfoot—Lightfoot, the pre-eminent English commentator on early Christian literature of the nineteenth century.

The second reason links Kingsley Barrett once again with Joseph Barber Lightfoot. For after many years in Cambridge as Hulsean Professor, Lightfoot climaxed his career as Bishop of Durham (1879–89), enhancing the tradition of Durham's Bishop being a first class academic. Kingsley Barrett spent almost all his academic life at Durham University (1945–82) and was the major figure in establishing the university's Theology Department as a centre of excellence internationally known and respected. He was a Durham man through and through, turning down attractive

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invitations to other distinguished universities, and in retirement he moved no further than the edge of Durham.

A third reason why the memory of Kingsley Barrett is widely revered in the north-east of England is that during his career at Durham and thereafter he never ceased to be a Methodist minister. Every Sunday, year after year, he would lead services, morning and evening, often in small country chapels, but always giving each the same attention in preparation and delivery as he would when preaching in Durham Cathedral. When Mr Barrett, who 'taught in the College on the peninsula' (beside Durham Cathedral), led the worship service it was a highlight looked forward to for weeks ahead and remembered for weeks afterwards. Preaching was so much at the heart of what he did that in the months before his death he preached and sang Wesley hymns to the hospital ward.

A fourth reason why Kingsley Barrett is so fondly remembered by those who knew him was his wife Margaret. They were famous for their hospitality to friends, colleagues and students. Like his colleague, Michael Ramsey, who went on to become Bishop of Durham and Archbishop of Canterbury, Kingsley fell short in the art of small talk. But Margaret always more than made up for him. As a conversationalist she sparkled and shone with warmth and humour, so that their guests were put completely at their ease. Together they provided many memorable evenings. Hundreds of students, fellow academics and friends were entertained in their home in times of need as well as in times for celebration. A harmonious domestic life made the space Kingsley needed for productivity and hospitality. From their marriage in 1944 until her death in 2008, Margaret introduced lightness into a life called to seriousness.

Kingsley Barrett was son of Fred Barrett, a well-known United Methodist minister and evangelist. During his ministry in Katherine Road, Forest Gate, London, he met Clara Seed, a deaconess at the same church. They married in Sheffield in 1916 and then moved to Salford, where Kingsley was born in 1917. Fred was a great Dickens fan and of course also a fan of Charles Kingsley. Surprisingly for those who knew him, Kingsley was a sickly child and spent quite some time at home under his mother's care. He always talked very warmly about his mother, from whom he acquired many of his quieter characteristics and knowledge of cooking and general housekeeping.

While conducting a mission in Bideford, Fred met John Rounsefell, headmaster of Shebbear College in north Devon, a small boarding school with about a hundred boys. Fred was so impressed by him that he determined that any son of his would be educated at Shebbear. So, the family

having moved to south London in 1921, it was from there that in 1928, three days before his eleventh birthday, Kingsley went to Shebbear College. The college was a small and somewhat isolated school established by the Bible Christians, whose principal centre was at Shebbear. The Bible Christian movement was founded by William Bryant and began in the early 1800s as a reaction to an environment of poverty and religious hypocrisy at a time of strong religious revivalism across the south-west of England. What began as a religious society, in the tradition of Methodist beginnings, soon separated from the Wesleyan Methodists, the Bible Christian societies forming an independent circuit. After 92 years the Bible Christians merged with the United Methodist Free Churches in 1907 to form the United Methodist Church, which joined with the Wesleyan Methodists and Primitive Methodists in 1932 to form the Methodist Church as it is today. This Bible Christian background probably helped form Kingsley's character.

The principal influence on Kingsley, however, was that of Shebbear College itself, led by its charismatic headmaster. From John Rounsefell he learnt that nothing mattered more in life than adherence to principle and the pursuit of truth, whatever the cost. Kingsley never forgot his time at Shebbear, and Shebbear never forgot him; a representative from Shebbear attended his funeral in Durham in 2011. There he learnt much of what equipped him so well for his future—oratory, singing, debating, compassion, being a good team player, and a love of history and Shakespeare. He also started preaching while he was still at Shebbear, instinctively tutored by his father, Fred, who was known as a great expository preacher. In Kingsley's own words, 'I was soaked in the study of texts, inevitably learning from him [Fred] ideals of ministry and preaching.' At Shebbear Kingsley is still remembered as both a fine scholar and also a very promising cricketer and captain of cricket. When he went to Cambridge, however, he relegated cricket well down his list of priorities, though he maintained a lifelong interest in both cricket and rugger.

In 1935 he went up to Cambridge, Pembroke College, where he distinguished himself in Part I of the Mathematics tripos before moving on to theology in which he took a First in both parts of the Theology tripos in 1938 and 1939. His supervisor, Noel Davey, directed him to what turned out to be the last course of lectures on the theology and ethics of the New Testament by E. C. Hoskyns, the next major influence on his life. Hoskyns was the translator of the theology-transforming commentary on *The Epistle to the Romans* by Karl Barth (Oxford, 1933), and author (posthumously) of a highly distinctive commentary on *The Fourth Gospel*, edited

by Davey (London, 1947). The influence of Barth's *Romans* on Kingsley was incalculable. Indeed in the Preface to his commentary on *Romans*, he testifies: 'If in those days, and since, I remained and have continued to be a Christian, I owe the fact in large measure to that book, and to those in Cambridge who introduced it to me.' Nor is it any real surprise that Kingsley's own first two commentaries on New Testament writings were on John's Gospel and Paul's letter to the Romans.

Kingsley was amazed to hear from Hoskyns, an Anglo-Catholic, the character of 'biblical theology' which he had imbibed from his father's un-Anglican sermons. A decade later, at Durham, he persuaded his professor, Michael Ramsey, another admirer of Hoskyns, to continue that novelty. And when, in 1950, Ramsey returned to Cambridge, Kingsley made the Hoskyns' view of New Testament theology the backbone of a Durham theological education.

Responding to the call to the Methodist ministry, after his graduation in 1939 Kingsley moved from Pembroke to Wesley House, the Methodist theological college in Cambridge. During his years there he devoted as much time as he could to New Testament study. He bought himself grammar books and taught himself German, also Syriac and Aramaic, adding to the Hebrew and Greek he had mastered for the Theology tripos. His training at Wesley House enabled him to join C. H. Dodd's senior seminar at the university, to study rabbinics there with Herbert Loewe, and to find a lifelong friend in David Daube, a refugee from Nazi Germany and scholar of ancient law. These contacts with Jewish scholars became important after the Second World War, when New Testament scholarship became more attentive to the reality of Second Temple Judaism (Judaism prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in AD 70), a conscious move away from the long history of Christian disparagement of Judaism. This transformation was largely due to the impact of the then newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls, but also reflected the somewhat belated postwar reaction to the horrors of antisemitism and the Holocaust or Shoah. When, in the 1970s, negative Christian stereotypes of Judaism were discredited, Kingsley did not find his own commentaries on Romans (1957), 1 Corinthians (1968) and 2 Corinthians (1973) in need of extensive revision.

Kingsley's career could have taken him to many centres of international theological excellence, but in the event it was surprisingly simple. On completing his training at Wesley House, in 1942, he was sent to Wesley College in Headingley, Leeds, as Assistant Tutor. However, the war being at its height, and the number of men coming forward for ministerial training in decline, after one year the college was closed. Ordained

in that year (1943), Kingsley was stationed at Bondgate, in Darlington (Methodist) Circuit, County Durham, where he began his ministry in earnest. During his time in Darlington, in 1944, he married Margaret Heap, who had just completed her nursing training. In 1945, however, with the encouragement of Michael Ramsey, then Professor of Divinity in Durham, he turned his thoughts to the possibility of an academic career, and was appointed Lecturer at Durham University where he remained for thirty-seven years till his retirement in 1982.

Here he found his destined niche as a first-class scholar, to be known thenceforth as Barrett of Durham. His natural gifts were reinforced by a robust constitution and formidable capacity for hard work. From his Darlington days he adopted a rigorous schedule: each night, the hours from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. were set aside for research. Family holidays were fitted to his work schedule, the Barrett family (including children, Penelope and Martin) becoming a familiar presence at the annual meetings in Europe of the international New Testament society (Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas). At his ninetieth birthday party in Durham, following a speech by Robert Morgan (Kingsley's *Guardian* obituarist), which Kingsley had not been able to follow well, his hearing being impaired, his wife Margaret stepped in to fill the gap. She recalled, with a twinkle in her eye, that when they married a friendly Frau Professor took her aside and told her: 'Now Margaret, you have married a scholar. You cannot expect him to help in the house and with the children. He is first and foremost a scholar.' Margaret paused, and then added, 'And that's more or less how it has been ever since.'

The Durham tutorial system involved what would now seem an absurdly heavy teaching load, and many students recall climbing Western Hill in Durham to attend tutorials in Kingsley's home. (His successor abandoned his long-standing tradition of lecturing on Saturday mornings.) Durham was a federal university with Newcastle until 1963, and the set-up with Boards of Studies responsible for academic departments was introduced only with the reorganisation consequent on the amicable divorce. Prior to that there was no departmental building and power was concentrated in the hands of the professoriate. And even after, the Canon Professor, H. E. W. Turner, retained the right to be permanent Head of Department. The latter carried a very heavy load of administration so as to enable his colleagues space for their own scholarship. Kingsley thrived in this setting, having plenty of time for his own writing, settling into a more reasonable fourteen-hour day, which he carried into his retirement.

He was promoted to a personal chair (Chair of Divinity) in 1958, the first non-Anglican member of the department to be so honoured in Durham, the Chair indeed being especially created for him as a non-Anglican. The named chairs, Lightfoot and Van Mildert (both former Bishops of Durham), were reserved for the Canon Professors. Kingsley objected in principle to the Canon Professorships, not because he was anti-Anglican but simply because it subjected an academic post to a non-academic criterion: the only eligible candidates were ordained (and, at that time, only male) Anglicans. But probably, as long as he was allowed to get on with his own research he was not too worried about the Canon Professorship limitations, though he may have regarded Anglican scholarship as somewhat lacking a theological (rather than an analytical) edge as compared with the achievements of German Lutheran scholarship. It was only after his retirement that Durham, university and cathedral, reduced the number of Canon Professors to one, with the university having its statutes altered accordingly by the Privy Council.

His time at Cambridge and the influence of Hoskyns gave Kingsley a knowledge of and respect for German scholarship which knew few bounds, and he lamented that at international conferences the number of British New Testament scholars who could match their German colleagues was very small. As he emphasised in a later interview: 'I learned from my father that honest biblical criticism was a thing to practise, and I learned more from the Germans, especially about its theological significance, than from the English.' An important, seminal, experience was his first sabbatical leave, when he spent the summer of 1953 in Göttingen, where Joachim Jeremias, Ernst Käsemann and K. G. Kuhn were teaching. There he became familiar with the Dead Sea Scrolls, the texts available in photocopies. His most memorable experience, however, was sitting in the university library and reading the 500 Latin pages of Luther's Lectures on Romans. Kingsley's friendship with Käsemann, the leading German New Testament theologian in the second half of the twentieth century, was enduring. When Käsemann became professor at Tübingen, Kingsley often visited him there, where he also got to know Martin Hengel. He also lectured in Münster, Heidelberg, Bochum, Hamburg and Frankfurt. It was integral to his vision of the challenge and task of New Testament scholarship that it should evidence the same Germanic quality. In his own scholarship he certainly was successful in realising this vision, and through personal friendships and academic conferences Kingsley did more than most to restore English academic links with Europe.

As professor Kingsley served as Dean of the Faculty for two years, and played his part as a member of several university committees, notably as Chair of the Curators of the Library, which became the Library Committee. A university librarian recalls that he had a wider view of university libraries than most of his colleagues, when it was the fashion for academics to give first priority to purchases for their own personal libraries, leaving the university library to purchase the more expensive or exotic works. Kingsley made the committee aware of the need for undergraduate library provision.

Unbending on matters of principle and a man of few words in company, but always prepared to listen with an open but judicious mind, Kingsley is remembered for his kindness to junior colleagues. In the Introduction to his Festschrift (M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (eds.), *Paul and Paulinism: Essays in Honour of C. K. Barrett*: London, 1982),[1] K. H. Kuhn, a former student of Kingsley, a Durham colleague and long-standing friend, could not refrain from mentioning 'the friendship which he inspires in both his students and colleagues . . . Kingsley is always available when needed. Advice and help are freely given. No trouble is ever too much for him.' For his junior colleagues, indeed, Kingsley was the scholarly benchmark in the Durham department, at a time when lecturers did not have to worry about Research Assessment Exercises. In fact, very little seems to have been published in the department in those days, Kingsley being the exception. His weekly staff seminar was the only concerted departmental scholarly activity—typically working through a biblical text in the original language, verse by verse.

Although a rather private man, a side of his character, some would say his real character, came out in Kingsley's preaching. He was a highly eminent scholar, dealing with often complex linguistic and interpretative issues in his writing, but he never 'dumbed down' in his weekly preaching. On the contrary he had a gift of expressing profound ideas in the language of the village chapel, language they could fully understand, often displaying a wonderfully dry humour. He was tireless in the preaching commitments he undertook, preaching for old friends in different parts of the country, and loyal to annual engagements in sometimes quite small village churches. As he himself testified: 'When you are called to be a minister you are first called to preaching . . . it was the preaching that has always

[1]This Festschrift includes a full list of his publications up to 1980: all of his significant post-1980 publications are referred to in this memoir.

been first for me.' Amos Cresswell, who became Chairman of the Plymouth and Exeter (Methodist) District and President of Conference in 1983, recalls Kingsley giving the address at a Cliff College evangelistic mission on Tyneside, and putting the challenge and invitation of the Christian faith to the congregation, the two of them standing together, side by side, to welcome those who responded to the appeal of the gospel. And this when he was already a senior professor at Durham.

The most clouded period of Kingsley's time as a Methodist minister in Durham came during the 1960s. In 1963, during the heyday of the ecumenical movement in the United Kingdom, the Report of conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church was published recommending the union of the two Churches. The Methodist group of twelve representatives (ministerial and lay) divided when it came to signing the Report. Four of them presented a Dissentient opinion, while the other eight supported the general Report. The Dissentient Statement claimed that the proposals did not 'recognize adequately the pre-eminent and normative place of Scripture' and would lead to 'the more scriptural church order being swallowed up by the less'. Kingsley was one of the four dissentients, along with the Revd Dr Norman Snaith (Headingley College, Leeds), Professor T. E. Jessop (Hull University) and the Revd T. D. Meadley (Principal of Cliff College). The major critical point of dissent was the Anglican claim that ordination was valid only when performed by bishops in the historic episcopate, and that therefore Methodist ministers should seek episcopal ordination. Kingsley's friend, Professor Franz Hildebrandt, was among those who joined the dissentients, having previously been informed that his Lutheran ordination was equally invalid (as therefore were the ordinations of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller); his ordination was gladly recognised by the Methodist Church. Such disdain for non-(historic)-episcopal ordination was bound to provoke Kingsley, who made it clear to friends that if Anglican episcopacy came into Methodism he would leave. The idea of apostolic succession, he believed, was 'very bad history and worse theology'.

Methodist opposition to the proposals for Anglican/Methodist unity was led by the Voice of Methodism which organised public meetings on the issues, and which made plans for a continuing Methodist Church should the proposals go through. Kingsley made no secret of his own opposition to the proposals ('as a matter of conscience') during this period, an advocacy which caused many ruffled feathers and stirred deep feelings on both sides. In early 1969, in the period building up to the final decision on the proposals, he was publicly accused in the north-east of

initiating a division in Methodism and of formulating plans for a separatist church (shades of the Bible Christians), when Quarterly Meetings, Synods and Conference had still to vote. Most hurtful of all was the accusation that he had been disloyal to Methodism, an accusation which caused Kingsley to withdraw his services from the Durham Methodist Circuit pulpits. As he wrote in the correspondence columns of the *Durham County Advertiser*, 'A superintendent cannot wish to see in the pulpits for which he is responsible, a preacher whom he has accused of disloyalty.' In the event apologies were made, the potential loss of Kingsley to the preaching plans of the north-east Methodist circuits causing great dismay, and the status quo was resumed. In the event, later in 1969, in the final vote, the proposals scraped through the Methodist Conference but were rejected by the Anglican Synod. But Kingsley ceased to be active in Conference affairs and stood down when invited to allow his name to go forward to be President of the Conference, claiming that his position and commitments in Durham would make it too difficult for him to serve effectively as president. The loss was Methodism's.

Lest the impression be given that Kingsley was narrow in his beliefs, it should be stressed rather that he was clear in his beliefs, and that it was only when occasion demanded that he spoke forcefully against alternative beliefs which careful study had convinced him were less than securely grounded. But this never marred his friendships with Anglican and Roman Catholic colleagues and friends, and he was always very ready to step across dividing lines which others thought important—for example, preaching in Durham Cathedral and Roman Catholic churches. It was entirely fitting that at his funeral the sermon was given by a Catholic priest who was both a former student and a friend, at whose ordination and its twenty-fifth anniversary Kingsley had been the preacher.

Kingsley's first publication was in 1942, a note on a key Greek term in John 1:5, for the *Expository Times* (53 (1942), 297). In the following year two further articles already indicated the breadth of his interests: 'Questions about reformed theology: (6) does it ignore modern scholarship?' (*The Presbyter* (1943), 8–9, 16); and 'Q: a re-examination', again in *The Expository Times* (54 (1943), 320–3)—'Q' being the name (the German Quelle) for the second source drawn on by Matthew and Luke, their first source being the Gospel of Mark. But his first major publication was the monograph, *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition*, published by SPCK (London, 1947) where Noel Davey, his old Cambridge tutor, was editor. Having thus given him his breakthrough, Kingsley remained faithful to SPCK, regarding it as his chief publisher for the rest of his

academic life. In this first volume he already displayed the mastery of original sources and exegetical acumen which became the hallmark of his writing. For example, on the sensitive issue of whether Jesus called himself 'the Son (of God)', Kingsley comments perceptively on Mark 13:32 ('About that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father'): 'Even if the substance of the verse is genuine … the description of Jesus by the most honorific title available would be precisely the sort of compensation that tradition would introduce' (*Holy Spirit*, pp. 25–6). And in commenting on Mark 12:1–9, he observes that 'A Jew could not tell a story about a vineyard without embarking upon allegory (cf. Isa. 5:7)' (p. 27).

Journal articles followed every year, including still valuable overviews of 'New Testament eschatology' (*Scottish Journal of Theology*, 6 (1953), 136–55 and 225–43), and reviews of 'New Testament commentaries: I Classical commentaries; II Gospels and Acts; III Epistles and Revelation' (*Expository Times*, 65 (1954), 109–11, 143–6, and 177–80). He became an inveterate and much respected book reviewer throughout his career, his early book reviews already including French and German titles; in 1954 he reviewed no less than sixteen titles, five of them German. And 1954 also saw his own first German publication—'Zweck des vierten Evangeliums' (*Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie*, 22 (1953–4), 257–73).

This was the herald of the work which established Kingsley's reputation as a scholar of international note—his commentary on *The Gospel According to St John* (London 1955). Somewhat ironically, he recalls writing it in response to an invitation from Michael Ramsey, who was editing a series called the Cambridge Greek Testament ('they taught New Testament Greek in schools then'); but it ended up three times too long! The volume was initially overshadowed by the major contribution of C. H. Dodd, the doyen of British New Testament scholars, on the same gospel—*The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge, 1953). But in several ways Dodd's volume marked the end of an era, in which the main concern was to read John's Gospel primarily in the context of Greek/Hellenistic thought—as indicated by the content of Dodd's Part I on 'The Background: the higher religion of Hellenism: the Hermetic literature; Hellenistic Judaism: Philo of Alexandria; Rabbinic Judaism; Gnosticism; Mandaism'. Kingsley's commentary, in contrast, was an early reflection of the impact made by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, first discovered in the late 1940s. As became steadily clearer, the scrolls provided clear evidence that features of John's Gospel, which for the preceding two generations had been attributed to Hellenistic influence,

had equally and usually better parallels in Jewish thought, even Jewish thought uninfluenced or only partially influenced by Hellenism. His commentary, in great detail, and in obvious mastery of a full range of sources, Old Testament, early Jewish (including Dead Sea Scrolls) and Rabbinic, Greek and Latin authors, inscriptions and papyri, and early Christian literature, provided a model for a more judicious commentary (not seeking to press a thesis, as so often the case with the History of Religions School still dominant in Germany). The comprehensive detail does not make for an easy read, but as a resource for reference it is still without par. The esteem in which Kingsley's John commentary is held internationally is indicated by the fact that its second edition (1978) was translated into German and included in the leading German New Testament commentary series (Meyers kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar, Göttingen) in 1990, a singular honour not granted to any other non-German commentary.

The next year saw the publication of one of Kingsley's most helpful publications for students—*The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* (London, 1956; revised 1987). It provides extracts from classical texts on the Roman Empire, papyri and inscriptions, from Greco-Roman philosophers, other religions (Hermetic literature and mystery religions), the Jewish philosopher Philo, the Jewish historian Josephus, rabbinic literature, Jewish apocrypha and pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls. Such student aids are familiar now, but British scholarship had been slow to recognise the value of such volumes and their benefit in inducting students gently into unfamiliar source material. Its value was acknowledged by its translation into German as *Die Umwelt des Neuen Testaments*, published by Mohr Siebeck in Tübingen in 1959.

In the same year (1956) was published one of Kingsley's most influential essays, again indicating the breadth of his New Testament scholarship—'The eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews', in *The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology: Studies in Honour of C. H. Dodd* (ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube, Cambridge (1956), pp. 363–93). This was another swipe at the tendency to read a New Testament document too exclusively against a Hellenistic background—in this case that of the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria. Kingsley makes a strong case that the more intelligible background is that of Jewish apocalyptic. His essay remains one of the chief reference points in subsequent discussions.

In 1957 Kingsley made his first contribution to the Black New Testament Commentary series: *The Epistle to the Romans* (London, 1957; second edition 1991), followed by *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London, 1968) and *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London,

1973); all also published in North American editions by Harper & Row, New York. The Black Commentary is a series which aims midway between the scholarly market, drawing ostentatiously on original sources and engaging in at times substantial debate on points of detail, and the popular market, avoiding all technicalities and striving for straightforwardness in presentation. In a subject (the New Testament) where there is an extensive market of informed laypeople (and professionals), commentaries which dig deeply into the text and do not hesitate to tackle its difficulties, without undue detail, are at a premium. Kingsley proved himself a master of the art. He saw the task as simply spelling out and explaining what the original Greek says, integrating his translation of the Greek into an extended exposition of the train of thought. This makes ideal sense in the case of the letters of the apostle Paul. Whereas the tendency of scholarly commentaries is to become absorbed in detail and to lose sight of the wood for the trees, the Barrett commentaries on Paul's letters enable the reader to keep up with the flow of Paul's line of thought. Single-handedly, we may say, Kingsley established the reputation of the Black New Testament Commentary series and ensured that his and other contributions to the series would become a 'must-buy' for scholars, students and clergy concerned with the challenge of understanding and preaching Paul.

The Epistle to the Romans also brought out clearly that Kingsley was not so much interested in maintaining the traditionally analytic style of British biblical scholarship. His commentaries did not set out to be merely analyses of the syntax and grammar of the text; it was Paul's gospel and theology which he wanted to explain and expound, to engage theologically with the text itself—to expound by theologising. In doing so, he freely acknowledged the debt he owed particularly to Luther, Calvin and Barth. As he affirmed, again in the Preface to *Romans*: 'To have sat at the feet of these great interpreters of Paul is one of the greatest of privileges.' For example, from Barth he had learned that what Paul was critiquing in Romans 1:22–3 was religion, and that 'whatever New Testament Christianity is, it is not a religion'. Such stimulus from and engagement with German New Testament scholarship was evident again in 1957 with articles on 'Myth and the New Testament' (*Expository Times*, 68 (1957), 345–8 and 359–62), and on 'Rudolf Bultmann', (*Expository Times*, 70 (1959), 125–6). These regular articles in *Expository Times*, a journal which enables busy clergy to be continually plugged into developments in theology, attested Kingsley's concern that he communicate not just with other scholars but with the wider circle of thinking Christians.

All the while Kingsley was building the solid academic foundations for his later stance on apostolic succession, particularly as it bore on proposals for Church of England and Methodist Church unity. In 1953 he had already written on 'Paul and the "Pillar" Apostles', in *Studia Paulina in honorem J. de Zwaan* (ed. J. N. Sevenster and W. C. van Unnik (Haarlem, 1953), pp. 1–19). In 1956 he had fired a warning shot on 'The Methodist Church and episcopacy', in *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*. This was followed by 'The Apostles in and after the New Testament' (*Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok*, 21 (1957), 30–49), 'Apostolic Succession', (*Expository Times*, 70 (1959), 200–2), '1662 and 1962', (*Expository Times*, 73 (1962), 291–5)—an ominous collocation of dates for those clued up on their seventeenth-century church history—'The ministry in the New Testament', in *The Doctrine of the Church* (ed. D. Kirkpatrick (London, 1964), pp. 39–63), 'Anglican–Methodist Union: a Symposium, 5' (*Church Quarterly*, 1 (1968), 114–19), and 'Anglican–Methodist relations' (*The Churchman*, 82 (1968), 262–77). The climax in his scholarship, paralleling the ecclesiastical outcome of the Church of England/Methodism proposals, we may say came in the forthright exposition of unbearable tensions between Paul and the Christian leadership in Jerusalem in a sequence of writings, in which he agreed strongly with his German colleague and friend, Ernst Käsemann, in: '*Pseudapostoloi* [False Apostles] (2 Cor. 11:13)' in *Mélanges Bibliques en homage au R. P. Beda Rigaux* (ed. A. Deschamps and A. de Halleux (Gembloux, 1970), pp. 377–96); *The Signs of an Apostle* (The Cato Lecture 1969 (London, 1970)); and 'Paul's opponents in 2 Corinthians' (*New Testament Studies*, 17 (1971), 233–54), not to mention his treatment of the same theme in his commentary of *2 Corinthians*. He testified years afterwards that this was one of the most painful but most fruitful times of his life, when he was debarred from some pulpits. His experience helped him to understand what Paul had experienced and written; 'I got into Paul through that provocation.'

Never narrowly focused, Kingsley maintained his original interest in the Synoptic Gospels and issues relating to 'the historical Jesus'. A particularly significant essay was on 'The background of Mark 10:45', in *New Testament Essays: Studies in Memory of T. W. Manson* (ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Manchester, 1959), pp. 1–18). In it he sided with M. D. Hooker whose dissertation, published as *Jesus and the Servant* (London, 1959), he had examined in 1956, to argue against the majority view that the verse showed dependency on the famous 'Suffering Servant' passage of Isaiah 53—a critical issue in determining Jesus' own assessment of his mission. In Kingsley's view the emphasis on Jesus as one who came to serve was more

likely in striking contrast to the other notable figure of Old Testament reflection and expectation, the 'one like a son of man' of Daniel 7:13–14, whom all nations would serve and to whom everlasting dominion was given.

Kingsley's principal contribution in this area came with his modest monograph, *Jesus and the Gospel Tradition* (London, 1967; Philadelphia, PA, 1968), in which he brought the richness of his scholarship and insight to bear in portraying a realistically historical Jesus accessible to a wide readership. A typical passage well represents the clarity and astuteness of his argument:

> It is a modest claim, historically, if we start from the belief that Jesus held that he had a unique understanding of the moral demands made on men by God, and that the final working out of God's purpose for mankind was in some way connected with his mission. These propositions may be accepted independently of the historicity of any particular saying, since apart from them the story as a whole does not make sense (p. 104).

All the while Kingsley kept his interest in John's Gospel fresh, by providing substantial reviews of recent publications and open to the new findings which were transforming the debate about John's Gospel. Already, two years after his *Gospel According to St John* he had taken up examination of one of the most interesting of the Nag Hammadi documents, which had been discovered in Egypt around the same time as the Dead Sea Scrolls had been discovered beside the Dead Sea, but which had been overshadowed by the latter. This was 'The Gospel of Truth' (*Expository Times*, 69 (1957), 167–70). The possibility of overlap or interaction between the *Gospel of Truth* and John's Gospel revived the debate about the possible influence of Gnostic thought on John's Gospel, since the *Gospel of Truth* was a notable expression of Valentinian Gnosticism and provided another reflection on the work and person of Jesus. Kingsley addressed the issue in 'The theological vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel and the Gospel of Truth', in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honour of Otto A. Piper* (ed. W. Klassen and G. F. Snyder (London, 1962), pp. 210–23 and 297–8). His carefully argued conclusion was that the great weight of probability indicated that the author of the *Gospel of Truth*, possibly Valentinus himself, had read John's Gospel.

Notable also were Kingsley's Franz Delitzsch Lectures in 1967 on *Das Johannesevangelium und das Judentum* (Stuttgart, 1970), translated as *The Gospel of John and Judaism* (London, 1975), reaffirming the primacy of this relation for understanding the Fourth Gospel. Still more striking was his plunge into the deep theological issues raised by John's Gospel for

Christian understanding of the relation of Jesus to God, partly anticipated in his Ethel M. Wood Lecture of 1970—*The Prologue of St John's Gospel* (London, 1971)—but fully engaged with in 'The Father is greater than I' (John 14:28): Subordinationist Christology in the New Testament', in *Neues Testament und Kirche: für Rudolf Schnackenburg* (ed. J. Gnilka (Freiburg, 1974), pp. 144–59), and 'Christocentric or theocentric? Observations on the theological method of the Fourth Gospel', in *La Notion biblique de Dieu* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 41; ed. J. Coppens (Leuven, 1976), pp. 361–76). All this in preparation for the second edition of his *The Gospel According to St John* (London, 1978), twenty per cent larger than the first edition, in which the additional passage of time since the discoveries in the Judean and Egyptian deserts allowed a maturer view to come to expression. This continuing engagement with John's Gospel was fittingly marked by one of two collections of Kingsley's essays published in the year of his retirement from Durham University—*Essays on John* (London, 1982).

His equally intense absorption with three of the four great Pauline epistles was marked by a series of essays on other important aspects of Paul's Corinthian correspondence, in preparation for his own commentaries on the two letters to Corinth, notably his Manson Memorial Lecture of 1963 on 'Christianity at Corinth' (*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 46 (1964), 269–97) and 'Things sacrificed to idols' (*New Testament Studies*, 11 (1965), 138–53). These essays were appropriately gathered together in the second retirement volume of his published articles, *Essays on Paul* (London, 1982).

But his engagement with Paul went much further. A series of lectures in the United States, published as *From First Adam to Last: a Study in Pauline Theology* (London, 1962), had allowed him to elaborate a theme in Paul's writing which had not been sufficiently integrated into Paul's overall theology—Paul's understanding of Christ's significance by comparison and contrast with Adam. The concluding chapter, a highly persuasive summary of what Kingsley believed to be the heart of Paul's faith, was an early indication of his own evident conviction and personal commitment to a distinctly Protestant Christianity. A brief and more popular commentary on *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford, 1963) demonstrated that he could open up a classic sequence of letters effectively even when the number of words was restricted. More significant in scholarship terms was his essay on 'Pauline controversies in the post-Pauline period' (*New Testament Studies*, 20 (1974), 229–45), emphasising the continued significance of what the historical Paul had stood for in the following

period when the process towards the canonisation of Paul may have blurred the rough diamond character of his mission and theology.

Nor did Kingsley neglect the other major Pauline letter, to the Galatians. Characteristic of his sensitivity to the challenges which Paul must have addressed in this letter was his contribution to the Festschrift in honour of his Tübingen friend and colleague, Ernst Käsemann, 'The allegory of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar in the argument of Galatians', in *Rechtfertigung: Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann* (ed. J. Friedrich *et al*. (Göttingen, 1976), pp. 1–16). And the more popular *Freedom and Obligation: a Study of the Epistle to the Galatians* (London, 1985) brought out the continued relevance of the letter to contemporary issues. This commitment to engagement with Paul continued into Kingsley's retirement years, particularly with his contribution to one of the biannual Durham–Tübingen research seminars, also a public lecture, 'Paul: missionary and theologian', in *Paulus und das antike Judentum* (ed. M. Hengel and U. Heckel (Tübingen, 1992), pp. 1–15), with his popular *Paul: an Introduction to his Thought* in the 'Outstanding Christian Thinkers Series' published by Geoffrey Chapman (London, 1994), and with a further collection of his essays written since retirement, *On Paul: Aspects of his Life, Work and Influence in the Early Church* (London and New York, 2003).

Robert Morgan, a keen observer of modern biblical scholarship who wrote Kingsley's *Guardian* obituary, rightly perceived that Kingsley saw himself as a historian rather than a doctrinal theologian—in his own words, 'I'm a historian by nature, a theologian by grace'—but a historian with a sensitivity for the religious and theological character of the texts not always so evident as the discipline of New Testament studies has become more secularised. The relationship of theology and history in New Testament theology is at issue in many of Kingsley's articles, as evidenced, for example, by sketches of his most admired predecessors, including one of his Methodist teachers, 'Vincent Taylor 1887–1968' (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, 56 (1972), 283–92), and the two great New Testament scholars who were also Bishops of Durham, Brooke Foss Westcott and Joseph Barber Lightfoot: *Westcott as Commentator* (Westcott Memorial Lecture Cambridge, 1959); 'Joseph Barber Lightfoot' (*Durham University Journal*, 64 (1972), 193–204); and 'J. B. Lightfoot as biblical commentator', in 'The Lightfoot Centenary Lectures' published in *Durham University Journal* (1992, 53–70)—as also in two further studies of Rudolf Bultmann in 1984: 'Jesus and the word', *Rudolf Bultmann: Werk und Wirkung* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft); and 'Rudolf Bultmann' in the *Epworth Review.*

Kingsley's interest in historical issues had been early indicated by his A. S. Peake Memorial Lecture (Peake was another great Methodist biblical scholar), *Luke the Historian in Recent Study* (London, 1961). Here he had demonstrated his alertness to the tendency of Continental scholarship to (over-)emphasise the theological intent of Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, at the expense of his historical reliability. The issue of ancient historiography, often decried in comparison with modernist historical self-confidence, was addressed in a major paper delivered to the annual meeting of Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas—'Quomodo historia conscribenda sit' (echoing Lucian of Samosata's famous criticism of contemporary historians) (*New Testament Studies*, 28 (1982), 303–20). And the issue of 'The historicity of Acts' was forthrightly confronted in *Journal of Theological Studies* (50 (1999), 515–34). The conclusion to the essay gives an indication of how Kingsley argued his case: 'We cannot prove that it happened in the way Luke describes, but if it did not it must have happened in a similar way or the result could not have been what it was' (p. 534). Also to be mentioned is his essay on 'The end of Acts', in *Geschichte—Tradition—Reflexion: Festschrift für Martin Hengel; Vol. 3 Frühes Christentum* (ed. H. Lichtenberger (Tübingen, 1996), pp. 545–55).

The climax to this dimension of Kingsley's scholarship, and indeed to his whole scholarly career, was the publication of his commentary on the Acts of the Apostles in the principal English language commentary series for more than a century, the International Critical Commentary (ICC), a series edited for many years by his former Durham colleague and near neighbour, Charles Cranfield—*The Acts of the Apostles* (2 volumes; London and New York, 1994 and 1998). This in itself was a notable achievement, since, although the ICC series was over a century old, with several earlier volumes replaced by later commentators, there had never been an ICC on the book of Acts. The series demands the most meticulous scholarship, mastery of ancient sources, close familiarity with the reception history of the document being commented on, and vigorous interaction with recent discussion of the text. The user of Barrett's *Acts* has to be prepared for source quotations in original languages, the Venerable Bede's Latin and contemporary German for a start. But he/she will find a mature and insightful discussion of many intriguing and puzzling details and can quote his conclusions with full confidence. And those unable to cope with such detail and foreign language quotations (untranslated) will have been grateful for *The Acts of the Apostles: a Shorter Commentary*, a simplified version of the two volume magnum opus, published by T & T Clark (London and New York, 2002).

In short, Kingsley Barrett was a scholar of rigorous academic commitment, whose scholarship was never dimmed, whose determination to be thorough in all things never weakened, and whose absolute integrity never failed to illuminate his presence. In 1939 he won the Cambridge University Carus Greek Testament Prize. In 1940 he followed this up by winning the Jeremie Hellenistic Prize, and in the following year the Crosse Studentship. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1959, at the unusually young age of 42, and in due course became one of the longest serving Fellows, his Fellowship extending for over fifty years. He was awarded the Academy's Burkitt Medal in 1966 and accumulated several honorary doctorates from the Universities of Cambridge, Hull, Aberdeen and Hamburg. He lectured widely abroad—in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, in Hong Kong and Taiwan, in West and South Africa, in Canada and USA, in Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands. His doctoral postgraduates teach all over the world. He was elected President of Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas for its 1973 international meeting in Southampton, having earlier refused the honour, unwilling to take precedence over Käsemann, his senior by ten years (President in 1972); Kingsley had attended the Society's first meeting abroad, in 1952, and latterly was its oldest senior member. The award of a Forschungspreis by the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung enabled him to spend some months in Tübingen and Münster. Sixty years after going up to Pembroke College he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the college. He also served as vice-president of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Durham University has named one of its new lecture rooms after him, and the C. K. Barrett Lectureship, set up to celebrate his ninetieth birthday, challenges lecturers to bridge the range between academy and chapel as he did so successfully for so long and to the academic and spiritual benefit of so many.

It is fitting to end with his own words from the Preface to his commentary on 2 Corinthians ('my best book', as he himself says):

> From the discipline of exegesis I have learnt method; and from Paul himself, I hope, to understand the Christian faith. Like most people, I sometimes wonder whether Christianity is true; but I think I never doubt that, if it is true, it is truest in the form it took with Paul, and, after him, with such interpreters of his as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Barth. And, as I read them, and especially Paul himself, conviction returns, and, though problems may abound, grace abounds much more.

Charles Kingsley Barrett, biblical scholar, born 4 May 1917; died 26 August 2011.

JAMES D. G. DUNN
Fellow of the Academy

Note. In writing this Memoir I have been particularly assisted by Amos Cresswell, formerly President of the Methodist Conference, Robert Morgan (Oxford), Kingsley's finest obituarist, John Rogerson (Sheffield), Kingsley's former colleague, Eric Watchman, formerly Deputy Librarian at Durham University, and particularly Penelope Hyslop, Kingsley's daughter—who provided several of the quotations in the early paragraphs of this memoir.