

They Never Told Me *This* in Church!

by Greg Deuble

(New expanded edition, 2010)

Book Review by Barbara Buzzard



What a thoroughgoing delight it has been to re-read this book! It doesn't get much better than this —simple, superbly documented, utterly profound and world-changing to boot! Mr. Deuble is Australian and the reader will be treated to a wonderful variety of Aussie slang which is sprinkled throughout the book and makes for thoughtful and colorful reading.

This book is “A Call to Read the Bible with New Eyes” and an invitation to re-examine your theology. It reveals yet another cover-up, this one deadly serious, and proceeds through a series of chapters that follow the theme of loss of the original to a fraudulent product, culminating in “Another Gospel.” I think the reader will discern an honest heart and mind at work here. Deuble (rhymes with Bible) has a knack of getting to the heart of issues and makes intense study a real joy.

Greg Deuble's story is a fascinating one — from seminary and many years of preaching straight orthodoxy to accepting the challenge of investigating his position and, honestly and diligently, proving himself a Berean. I was most privileged to have been at a Bible study in Australia several years ago where I witnessed his acceptance of this challenge. Since then he has become almost our new gold standard for honesty, and we heartily recommend what we have come to call the “Deuble prayer.” It goes something like this: “Oh God, if I am deceived in any way, please *undeceive* me. I want the truth – no matter what the cost.”

Deuble finds that the early Church was led into temptation and that it was *not* victorious when faced with pagan ideas and philosophy but compromised so totally that the end product no longer was true to its founder. He quotes from *The Messianic Legacy*: “Christians continue to be troubled today by the Church's contradictory doctrines, which arose from the unhappy endeavour to blend incompatible pagan and Jewish ideas...Christianity became transformed by the assimilation of alien ideas and modes of thought. In the process it ceased to be a reliable guide to its own beginnings.” And this summation from the same source: “Christianity, as we know it, is in many respects actually closer to those pagan systems of belief than it is to its own Judaic origins.” The compromises that were made had the effect of losing the real Jesus and substituting a Jesus of orthodoxy's imagination, departing from the church Jesus founded and promoting an alien one.

You will be challenged to a T/F quiz which will let you know whether you have been “caught in the traditional snow job.”

Gandhi was asked what the greatest enemy of Christianity was and replied “Christianity.” Could this be true?

Lockhart in *Jesus the Heretic* says: “There is a sense in which it is necessary for the Jesus who died all those centuries ago to die a second time, not for the sins of the people but for the sins of the Church who made of him more than he ever wished to be.”

Deuble asks this astute question: “Why have those who believe in the ‘orthodox’ teachings of the mainstream church always persecuted those who, on good scriptural grounds and out of a pure conscience before God, begged to differ from the accepted line?” Do ponder this one, for it is very revealing. Greg finds that according to the Apostle John the reason is that the former teaching possesses the spirit of antichrist.

Deuble is appalled that within his own Church of Christ heritage, most are totally unaware that one of their greatest leaders, Barton Stone, was an avowed anti-Trinitarian (there's a great story about how Stone tried to believe the Trinity and could not). We have all been kept in ignorance as to how many of the greatest thinkers of all time have objected to the doctrine of the Trinity: Sir Isaac Newton, John Locke, Isaac Watts, John Milton, and of course Thomas Jefferson.

I would like to offer this sample paragraph to entice you to read this book:

“Yes, winners are grinners and they get to write their own story. Losers just lose. But need they? There is another big untold story out there. Perhaps after all the real Jesus of Jewish history can speak with the same authority that once amazed the crowds who heard him. Even his enemies were impressed. ‘No man ever spoke like this man,’ they admitted (John 7:46). Before it is too late, the traditional church must allow Jesus the Messiah, the Jesus who lived in history, the Jesus of the Bible, back into our human existence. Our hearts cry for authenticity. Beyond the stormy winds of ‘orthodox’ persuasion; beyond the earthquakes of ‘official’ church councils; beyond the fires (often literal) of ‘mainstream’ persecutions, is it possible that we can yet hear that authentic word, ‘You have heard that it was said of old...but *I* say unto you’ (Mark 5:21-22). Perhaps, if we listen to God the Father’s command, ‘This is My beloved Son; *hear him!*’ we will in fact ‘hear the voice of our God’ (1 Kings 19:9-14).”

“Christianity itself has tended to suffer from a translation out of the Prophets and into Plato.” With this quotation and the following one from Snaith, Deuble wants his readers to hear the screaming of alarm bells. “Our position is that the reinterpretation of Biblical theology in terms of the ideas of the Greek philosophers has been both widespread throughout the centuries and everywhere destructive to the essence of the Christian faith.”

I appreciate Greg Deuble's honesty when he says, “I confess that it never occurred to me that these propositions (two natures of Jesus) are *impossible contradictions*.” He then examines statements such as that of Martin Lloyd-Jones who said that we are to look at the Trinity with wonder, awe and worship even though “no single explicit statement of this doctrine is made [in the Bible].” He gives evidence of the fact that the Trinity was found in paganism and in several pre-Christian belief systems, and he feels that the fact that the Trinity is so confusing should be a dead give-away to its man-invented nature.

You will, I believe, see the author’s reasoning when he says: “There is not one verse in all Scripture that uses the word ‘God’ to indicate a three-in-one Being. Not one. This is an astounding fact. Surely it is unbelievable that in the very book that claims to come from divine inspiration, if this doctrine of the Trinity is supposed to be so foundational, there is not one single instance out of some 12,000 occurrences of the words for God and His personal name Yahweh where ‘God’ means ‘three Persons in one’ whenever God speaks as ‘I’ or ‘Me’. This is important. Or perhaps after all, the writers of the Bible had not imagined Him to be three Persons?”

Deuble notes that Robert Hach makes the point that what is revealed is no longer a mystery and conversely, if it remains a mystery, it has not been revealed (not rocket science, but shocking to unfold and take in!). “The fact that Trinitarianism remains a mystery to human understanding, *despite its supposedly having been revealed by God, is the strongest argument against regarding it as a revelation of God: if God had revealed it, it would be understandable.*”

For the sake of brevity, I should like to list some salient points without comment:

“Jesus never claimed credit for the original Genesis creation of the heavens and the earth. He was in no doubt that the universe was God’s handiwork (Matt. 19:4; Mark 13:19).”

“Surely we do not honour the Lord Jesus when we attribute to him what he himself rejected and what belongs only to his Father in heaven?”

“From cover to cover the unanimous revelation of the Bible is that truth matters. It is necessary to ‘receive the love of the truth so as to be saved’ (2 Thess. 2:10).”

“Exalted in heaven right now Jesus still calls the LORD God Almighty ‘my God’ and ‘my Father’ (Rev. 3:2, 5, 12).”

“There is no verse in the whole book of Acts (or any other New Testament book) that requires you to believe that Jesus is the Lord God, Jehovah, in order to enter the Kingdom and be saved. In all the book of Acts there is no preaching of the Trinity. Yet in Acts thousands were saved according to the Scriptural record. This should be conclusive proof that the Trinity was not a part of early apostolic doctrine. Nor should it ever be taught that unless we believe that ‘Jesus is the Lord Jehovah’ we cannot be saved. What is essential to salvation — that is, essential to entrance into the Kingdom of God when it comes — is to confess that God has made this Jesus ‘both Lord and Christ [Messiah, King] — this Jesus whom you crucified’ (Acts 2:36).”

“In the NT Christians are designated as ‘anointed ones,’ that is, ‘christs’ (see 2 Cor. 1:21). There is no hint that the title ‘messiah’ designates the Deity. To be a messiah is to be an agent of the one God.”

“As Don Cupitt captures the problem of Jesus’ double nature, ‘It is as if Jesus were at one moment Clark Kent and at the next Superman.’”

“Never does the Scripture use the term ‘God-man’ to tell us who Jesus is. The Greek language of the day had a perfectly good word for ‘God-man’ (*theios-aner*) but it never appears in the NT.”

The New Bible Dictionary on Incarnation: “It appears to mean that the divine Maker became one of His own creatures...”

In asking in what sense the confession “Jesus is Lord” is to be taken, Deuble points out that it correlates to being called “Sir” as Mary called the gardener at the tomb and as the Philippian jailer addressed Paul and Silas. This could be food for thought! Psalm 110:1 provides the basis for this title ‘lord’ (*adoni*), which is never used of Deity.

One of Greg’s many gifts is to identify what the Scriptures do **not** say. We have, perhaps, become so accustomed to what we *think* the Bible says that we actually cannot hear Truth. Trade in your tradition-bound ears for some listening ears. For example, does the Bible say that only God can forgive sin? Mr. Deuble answers in this way: “The fact that the Pharisees say that only God can forgive sins does not make this an established Bible doctrine. The Pharisees often had wrong doctrine and were often corrected by our Lord Jesus.” He quotes from John 20:23 where authority to forgive sin is given to the apostles. We pray, “Forgive us our trespasses *as we forgive* those who trespass against us.”

Allow yourself to consider other very well-known “truths” such as: If Jesus wasn’t God, then his sacrifice would not have been acceptable. Deuble quotes Dr. Colin Brown of Fuller Seminary to further explain what the Scriptures do *not* say: “Indeed to be ‘Son of God’ one has to be a being who is *not God!*” Are we listening?! Every time we read “Jesus Christ” we are being told who he is, but we are not listening and are turning him into God. Another example Deuble gives is John 1:14 which does *not* say that *God the Son* became flesh and yet is thought to say that. Another example of what the Bible does *not* say is in Phil. 2:6. The verse does *not* say of Jesus, “who, being God...” Deuble gives five examples to substantiate alternate explanations of the word “form,” the most remarkable being that of Kuschel in *Born Before All Time?* when he points out that a better translation might be “He who has his origin in God’s ‘world.’” You will find that the work that the author has put into his study of these passages will bless you enormously. And of course, if you are of the opposite persuasion, you have nothing to lose — the iron sharpening iron principle.

In his desire to have you really *think*, Deuble quotes Barrett who writes, “It is intolerable that Jesus should be made to say, ‘I am God, the supreme God of the OT, and being God I do as I am

told!” Or in the same vein, “I am God, and I am here because someone sent me.” Deuble does not ask that you believe him but that you check out what he is saying and examine the evidence. Your homework has not been done for you, even in this book.

This is a gem of a fact: “The ‘word’ is used about 1450 times in the Hebrew Bible to mean promise, decree, proposal, plan or message. Not once does it refer to a preexisting Son of God. Not once does it mean a person. Not once!” I believe that he just said that in the Hebrew Bible “word” is *never a person!* Check it out! Following that is a truly fascinating study on what the word “with” means. You will be amazed!

A marvelous summary from Deuble: “Trinitarianism, the idea that God is three in one, is a post-Biblical development which finally became the creed of the fourth-century Church. It was a part of the apostasy that developed from the second century on, finally reaching creedal status under Constantine. But when Christ returns the world will return to the foundational doctrine that ‘God is One.’ Zechariah 14:9 predicts that the *Shema* will be the fundamental creed of the Age to Come. The other creeds of Christendom will be swept away!”

It is my prayer that this book achieves the degree of circulation it deserves. I applaud the author's courage and integrity, to say nothing of his downright hard work, a mammoth challenge cheerfully accepted. From this labor of love comes a book which is a *must read*.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Buzzard