

changes. Loisy flatly contradicted received neo-scholastic theory: 'dogmas are not as truths fallen from heaven and preserved by religious tradition in the precise form in which they first appeared.' Dogmas, he affirmed, 'are the least imperfect expression that is morally possible.'

Von Hügel recognized that doctrine does not exhaust but points to divine Truth. 'God is, overflowing; and there is an end of that point.' George Tyrrell, arguing that 'definitions are simply safeguards and protectors of revealed truth', wrote that 'the process of defining things briefly by their differences leads to the fallacy of forgetting their other constituents.' Tyrrell recognised that doctrine expands and, like new wine, bursts old wine skins. 'Wine skins stretch, but only within measure; for there comes at last a bursting point when new ones must be provided.'

Our own crisis is unique in a way that theirs was not, and more fateful, because potentially fatal, than was theirs. But in June, 1903, on a midsummer day in the midst of his five-year stay at Richmond, Yorkshire, with his early death only six years and one month away, George Tyrrell wrote on a card to a friend, 'I write for a small circle of readers, those who belong to three generations ahead.' If his theological method, and that of Loisy and Von Hügel, is helpful to Christians responding to today's environmental crisis, then George Tyrrell once again may be correct.

## **With my body**

**John Bate**

Two slim children, sitting side by side, eyes  
on the map she held, were planning  
a journey—then paused, and with deep kisses  
pressed each other's mouths with truths  
they had to say, then, back to the map,  
her finger pointing to where they should go,  
he assenting, as it seemed to us.  
The carriage was cramped and old-fashioned,  
uncomfortable seats made us restless,  
so how could we keep from paying attention,  
or fail to notice the presence  
that hovered around them, or stop  
our memories, as we watched their abandon,  
that throwing together of frail futures,  
recalling our own unvisited temples,  
and the guest there unadored?