Morna Hooker at 90

On 14 May 2021, the Cambridge New Testament Research Seminar was dedicated to a celebration of the life and work of Professor Morna Hooker on the occasion of her ninetieth birthday. What follows is the text of three contributions to that seminar, from James Carleton Paget, John Barclay, and Morna Hooker herself. Taken together, they provide an insight into the development of an outstanding biblical scholar, and the development of that discipline during her long and distinguished career. The papers are presented here in the same format as they were given at the seminar, with only minor corrections. It was decided not to add footnotes and bibliographies, but readers who wish to follow up references to Morna Hooker's books and articles will find them readily available.

Reflections on Morna Hooker at 90

**James N. Carleton Paget, lecturer in Cambridge University Divinity Faculty
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It has been my privilege to get to know Morna through several different channels: I attended her lectures as an undergraduate, was her colleague for five years and have been her friend for many more. What I will share this afternoon in a talk I have chosen to call 'Reflections on Morna at 90', some of the contents of which has its origins in a conversation with Morna about a month ago in her garden in Cambridge, will be some personal observations, drawing on my association with her over more than thirty years, and my knowledge of her as a scholar, teacher and friend. I shall begin by drawing on aspects of Morna's biography, showing how these reveal significant elements of her character, elements which have helped make her the remarkable person she has become; and then I shall proceed to a set of, I hope, coherent reflections.

It is sometimes the case that those who experience a difficult period of health when young go on to live a long time. Albert Schweitzer, it was thought, would not see his first birthday, so ill was he as a baby, and yet he survived until he was ninety. In the case of our almost nonagenarian, Morna: as an adolescent she was herself very sick, so sick in fact that she missed a year at school. Consequently, when she announced that she wished to go to university, her doctor told her that that this would have the effect of killing her, but as Morna told me that made her all the more determined to go. And that determination was once more reflected in her choice to study Theology at Bristol University, for when she arrived at the university, she discovered that though the subject had been in the Prospectus for many years as what was termed a Pass Degree, there was as yet no department, and that most teaching was given in theological colleges, since all candidates had been ordinands and obviously men (this was 1950). Morna also learned that Hebrew and Greek would have to be studied and that rather than studying English and Maths in her first year before doing Theology, in addition to those languages, she would have to learn Philosophy, meaning that Maths would fall by the wayside. In addition to this, when it came to studying theology in her second year, Morna had to persuade the University and College authorities that she wanted to study at Didsbury College rather than at the more conservative Clifton College. The authorities were persuaded, and Morna made her way via the Bristol hills on a regular basis, either by bus or bicycle, to study there. She also took some classes in the Baptist and Congregationalist colleges. Inevitably, the fact that she was a young woman caused the authorities in some of these exclusively male, and perhaps fustian, institutions a degree of anxiety, leading one to state that she had to enter the college by the back door, 'leaving her coat with matron', and keeping a low profile.

All of this seems a far cry from the ready-to-cook degrees which we have in the main experienced. Given the complexities and challenges, it was probably unsurprising that she wanted more, staying on for two further years at Bristol to do an MA degree, which, having been examined by the exacting C. K. Barrett and Kenneth Grayston, ended up, rather amazingly, and with virtually no editorial changes, as her first monograph, *Jesus and the Servant*, published in 1959.

But what then? Morna, with the warm words of Professor Barrett ringing in her ears (In his foreword to *Jesus and the Servant*, he notes that he was immediately impressed by “Miss Hooker’s” scholarship; and at the end of the same, he asserts that “It may be too much to hope that her arguments will meet with universal agreement; but if any dissent they encounter is to be effective, it will have to be based upon evidence and reason, and not upon prejudice.”) was intent upon pursuing an academic career. Her first attempt at such a thing at the University of Newcastle came close with Morna being *proxime accessit* to one Geza Vermes, and there followed other unsuccessful attempts. Meanwhile, Morna had got a job at the Sunday School Union at Newgate Street in the City of London, writing, copy editing and proofreading Sunday School lessons, a trial run, as it were, for the future co-editor of the *Journal of Theological Studies*. While in this post, she applied for a studentship at Manchester University to work under T. W. Manson, but his early death led to her studying for her Manchester Ph.D. with C. K. Barrett at Durham. A research fellowship at Durham in the arts followed, and two years later, she was invited to fill a temporary job at King’s College London.

The date now was 1961. The redoubtable Morna D. Hooker (some may be interested to know that such a constellation of letters is an anagram for ‘Ode to honour Mark’, a discovery of my former colleague, Markus Bockmuehl) still very much alive twelve years after her doctor had said that study at university would kill her, and now appointed to a permanent position, was firmly ensconced in the United Kingdom’s capital city, while the swinging sixties went on around her, Harold Macmillan and his cabinet were mocked and mired in scandal, and Harold Wilson’s Labour Party and the Beatles, and even the England football team appeared to be the future. While in Durham she had published ‘Adam in Romans 1’ in addition to *Jesus and the Servant*, and looking at her publications while she was at King’s – ‘Authority on her head. An Examination of 1 Cor. 11.10’, ‘A further note on Romans 1’, and the monograph *The Son of Man in Mark*, Morna might have seemed impervious to the cultural revolution going on about her, but she clearly wanted a bit of the action, as she was one of the first people to rent a flat in the Barbican. It was that flat and its many problems—a fridge which heated wine up, a refuse system which constantly disturbed her, and very noisy neighbours—which led her to apply for a job that had come vacant at Oxford. She posted her application more in hope than anything else and thought nothing of it. Some months later, she received a telephone call from the Pauline scholar, D. H. Whiteley, who announced that she had been appointed to the position, in spite of the fact that she had not been interviewed or even visited the place.

In 1970, Morna arrived in Oxford, appointed to a university lectureship for five years. Life in the university seemed strangely disorganised or at least loosely structured. She was told that she could lecture on what she wanted even if it replicated the subjects on which her colleagues were lecturing, and when she eventually met the forbidding G. D. Kilpatrick, at that time the Dean Ireland’s Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture, and asked why the New Testament lecturers never met together, the learned professor agreed that this would be an excellent idea and asked her who the New Testament lecturers were. But Morna ploughed her own furrow and set up a seminar for graduate students; with a fellowship at Linacre College (where she remains an honorary fellow), she seemed destined to remain in Oxford; but in 1975, as Professor C. F. D. Moule moved towards retirement as Lady Margaret’s Professor at Cambridge, she was asked to apply for that job, but refused. Eventually she was simply invited to take up the position, again with no interview and on this occasion, having not even applied. In 1976 she became a pre-foundation Fellow at the newly created Robinson College and took up her position as LMP, which she remained until her retirement in 1998.

Here, then, are the bare bones of an unlikely life for a woman born in 1931. Few could have predicted that not only a woman, but a Methodist woman, would plough such a successful furrow in the world of academic theology, which

was dominated by men, and in Oxbridge in particular by Anglican men. Her route, as I have attempted to show, was in some ways circuitous and unexpected, though that is perhaps not untypical for an academic. What is certain is that as a woman in a man's world, she proved a pioneer. The list of firsts is remarkable. First female lecturer at KCL, first female Lady Margaret's Professor, first female President of SNTS, first female editor of JTS, and so on. Interestingly, Morna told me that when she became Lady Margaret's Professor, she was informed that there had been a question in Parliament about whether a woman should be occupying such a post. In fact, having consulted a colleague, who is an accomplished user of the search engine for the digitised version of Hansard, I think that such an intervention is apocryphal, but it certainly has the ring of truth about it. And while on the subject of Parliament and pioneers it's a striking coincidence perhaps that the pioneering Morna shares a birthday with Nancy Astor, the first female MP, though before one pays too much attention to such a coincidence, it should be observed, with a sense of healthy scepticism, that she also shares a birthday with Kemal Atatürk, Ho Chi Minh and Pol Pot!

Morna would be the last person to extol her achievements, not least as a woman (in fact she told me that she resented being asked to do things 'as a woman', as if she were a member of a freak show). Charlie Moule, in the introductory essay to Morna's festschrift of 1996, edited by John Barclay himself and the late John Sweet, saw her as someone who had made her way without what he termed 'vociferating'. Morna, he implied, had come to occupy the position of influence and responsibility she had, in a quieter, more diffident way, her ability above all else dictating her advancement. Some now might want to question Professor Moule's use of the term 'vociferate' in the context he uses it, and his confidence in the view that women of ability would always advance—these, after all, were words written twenty-five years ago—though all would endorse his praise of Morna's gifts, which John has spoken of so eloquently and were to see her receive so many distinctions.

John, in the title of his contribution to this afternoon's seminar, references Morna's capacity to ask the awkward questions, and in so doing highlights a particular characteristic, namely, her independence of mind. Moule, in the essay to which I have just referred, notes that in *The Son of Man in Mark*, she risked her reputation by her unfashionable views. While this is no doubt an inherent quality, it may in part have been nurtured by the circumstances in which Morna set out on her theological studies in 1950, circumstances which she had to make for herself, and where interaction with many teachers and students, as would have been the case in a more conventional faculty or departmental context, were not available to her.

Sometimes the independent-minded, especially the independent-minded academic, can be a tad dogmatic, incapable of seeing that there could be an alternative view to their own. Limpet-like, they cling to their theories, however effective the assaults launched against them. In a discipline as speculative as New Testament studies, this has seemed a strange position to adopt. Morna, ever open-minded, has always shown herself only too aware of the complexity of the evidence with which she is dealing, and so has written in a way that, though always concerned to present a particular argument, appears open to contradiction. As she wrote at the end of her much-cited essay, 'Christology and Methodology', "My chief plea, then, is for less dogmatism in our conclusions, and the recognition that all our results are only tentative ..." And one thinks, too, of her helpfully generalised conclusion in her commentary on Mark, that the Gospel was written "somewhere" in the Roman Empire, a coldly realistic assessment of the evidence. Over against the reading of some individuals' monographs and articles, when reading Morna's, one senses the presence of a flexible and curious mind.

Not only that, but a clear one, too. Morna's prose is uncluttered and direct, and her many works, unlike the case with some of us, are rarely festooned with unnecessary footnotes. Learning is evident but never in a way which appears oppressive, otiose, or pretentious. One of Morna's favourite quotations comes from the nineteenth century scholar, A. B. Bruce: "The diversity of opinion prevailing among interpreters in regard to the meaning ... is enough to fill the student with despair and to afflict him with intellectual paralysis." Morna is aware of the range of opinions in any one area she seeks to explore but, mindful of Bruce's admonition, does not feel the need to overburden us with them. Part of that clarity of approach, evidenced in lectures which I attended as well as in her books and

articles, is exemplified in pellucid metaphors or examples used to illustrate particular points. Who can forget the eschatological sausage, never committed to prose, but, a memorable presence in lectures, used to illustrate the tension in Paul's eschatological world view (I remember as a student considering what such a thing would look like, wondering whether it would be edible or not, or whether it would transcend issues of edibility)? Aside from the telephone metaphor, to which John has referred, I recall two further ones. In one, Morna compares Paul's changed view on the law to the sale of washing powder. But a special favourite of mine, drawn from real life as it were, is an illustration Morna gives of distorting the meaning of terms, without regard to their historical context. To this effect she recalls cycling down the Woodstock Road in Oxford and seeing what she terms "a lurid sign," stating that "Jesus said that I am the Christ." After noting that her first reaction was to say that Jesus made no such statement, according to the Gospels, she continues: "What were the citizens of North Oxford to make of this statement? Unless they already had some Christian commitment, how were they to understand it? The claim that Jesus is the Messiah – the Christ – makes sense only within a particular culture." Ironically, perhaps, Morna may have been one of the few citizens of North Oxford to tarry by that sign. And as the spinner of such illustrative exempla, she has earned the right to criticise others' use of the same. So, one recalls with a sense of mirth her attack upon the famous 'pearls on a string' metaphor used by the Form Critics to describe the chaotic way in which Mark apparently arranged his pericopes. "Only a man", Morna noted acidly, "could make such an observation, for all women know that they take care in the way they arrange pearls on strings."

This concern with clarity is reflected in Morna's interest in accessibility. In a way that is rarer than it should be in scholarship, the former Lady Margaret's Professor has combined publications of a straightforwardly academic kind, which have, as John has shown, contributed significantly to a set of developing debates, with works, which have a more outward looking, less guild-obsessed character, what one might term '*haute vulgariste*'. In this context, it is striking that when one puts Morna's name into the Google search engine, the first headline is "Morna Hooker at Amazon", and the second is "Morna Hooker on eBay – fantastic prices on Morna Hooker."

Morna's commitment to clear communication, encouraged, even nurtured by her working for the Sunday School Union in the late 50s, also reflects elements of her character, which I have always hugely appreciated. Her straightforwardness, her honesty and integrity, her loyalty, and her laudable inability to trim her opinions to suit the circumstances in which she finds herself, are all excellent qualities in a colleague and a friend. However, on occasion one might have hoped for a bit more trimming—I think in particular of marking exams with her when she tended, no doubt out of a strong sense of maintaining standards, to be a very exacting marker, a tendency usually reserved for the zealous novice, as I was then. In trying to persuade her to raise a mark, I often felt like an auctioneer on a wet Saturday in an undistinguished market town trying to extract a few more pounds from the sceptical punters for a damaged late 19th century Toby mug. And in all of this one must not forget her courage, shown not just in her professional career but in the way she coped with the death of her beloved husband and companion, David Stacey, who was taken from her tragically early, and without whom she has lived for more than a quarter century.

No one, of course, is just an academic or a teacher, and that is certainly the case with Morna. Articles and books often finish with reflective observations of a hermeneutical kind, and it is difficult to read Morna's concluding comments on the ethical implications of interchange in her essay, 'Interchange and Ethics', and not gain a sense that there is a symbiotic relationship between lecturing dais and pulpit. Few will know this, but Morna has been what is termed in Methodism a local preacher since 1957 and is still an active member of her chapel. She has contributed greatly to the education of other local preachers—some will know, for instance, of her imposing work, *Studying the New Testament*, which was specially written for this purpose, and complements David Stacey's *Groundwork of Biblical Studies*. The warmth in which she is held by church goers in general, and her sincere commitment to church life, of whatever denomination, are seen in a brief article, dated 28th of March, 2018, which appeared in the *Telegraph and Argus*, a local west Yorkshire newspaper. Entitled "Top Religious Scholar to speak at church service in Ilkley", the reader is informed that Morna will give nine sermons in eight days. "Even in her mid-eighties," comments the awed journalist, "this animated academic makes no concession to age." The vicar, Canon Philip Gray, after noting her academic achievements, states that when he had met Morna a few weeks earlier, he was surprised at the number

of interesting questions she was asking about the church's activities in Holy Week, and the article finishes with a statement from Morna: "Once I am in my stride with my sermons ready for delivery, I hope to have plenty of time to familiarise myself with the beauties of the town and countryside about which I have heard so much." One wonders whether that activity included a visit to any local windmill (there are at least twenty-one in the area), for one of Morna's great enthusiasms is molinology, an interest which she attributes in part to the fact that she spent some of her childhood in Mill Hill, a suburb of London, which, perhaps unsurprisingly, sported a mill as its symbol; but, more importantly, she states, to the aesthetics of the windmill, and perhaps more obscurely, but appropriately for a person who has made it her business to be interested in detail, to their gearing, the complexities of which, I imagine, place the difficulties encountered in the study of the New Testament in the shadow. Coincidentally, the mill section of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings was first introduced in the year of Morna's birth.

Morna's energy and her enthusiasm for life, to which the newspaper article just quoted so vividly witnesses, are seen in many other ways, too: in her ongoing activity for her college, Robinson, where as one of the prefoundation fellows, she remains an active member of the Governing Body and a regular attendee of many college events; in the way she continues to write and research (at our meeting last month she commented to me rather ruefully that she hadn't written much recently, an observation which reminded me of the title of a talk to be given by the then 98-year-old distinguished Cambridge epigraphist, Joyce Reynolds, entitled, 'Plans for future research'); and in her attendance of this very seminar, which for many years she chaired, and to which she continues to contribute. She appears to remain forever green, appropriately perhaps, when one recalls, as I am sure some of you present here with botanical interests will, that there is a famous version of green paint, known as Hooker's green, devised by the botanical, and especially pomological, illustrator, William Hooker, in the first third of the nineteenth century. It's a pity that Morna is not related to this talented man (though she is related to another talented Victorian botanist and illustrator, Sir William Jackson Hooker, the first director of Kew Gardens, who lived at approximately the same time). Commenting on 'Hooker's green,' one expert notes that it "is lightfast, meaning that it's stable for decades and centuries, with little degradation in hue."

As we celebrate your ninetieth birthday, Morna, may we all not only applaud you for your many achievements as scholar, teacher, and leader in the field, marvel at your vibrant longevity, express our gratitude to you as a colleague and a friend, but may we also wish you more years of fulfilling and happy living.

The Art of Asking Awkward Questions: Some Themes from the Scholarship of Professor Morna D. Hooker

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Thanks to George van Kooten, and to Morna D Hooker for the opportunity to celebrate her ninetieth birthday.

Professor Morna Hooker is a remarkable scholar of the New Testament. In the early years of her career—indeed from her master's thesis onwards—she made decisive contributions to the cutting-edge 'quest for the historical Jesus', with her work on *Jesus and the Servant*, her essays on method, and her study of *The Son of Man in Mark*. Later, she returned to the study of Jesus in her *Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus*. As her work on the Son of Man took her into Mark's Gospel, she went on to write one of the very best commentaries on Mark—and easily the most accessible—a work that continues to hold its own alongside more recent, gargantuan commentaries. At the same time, she developed her third major area of work, her studies of Paul, with some of her most seminal essays collected in *From Adam to Christ*. Alongside these top-level contributions to scholarship, she has always had an unusual ability to communicate scholarship in a readable form to a wide audience, and generations of students and laypeople have benefited greatly from her *Pauline Pieces*, her *Paul: A Beginner's Guide*, alongside her compact but highly accessible books, *The Message of Mark*, *Beginnings*, and *Endings*, to name but a few. Professor Hooker has a gift for memorable metaphors (who can forget her talk about telephone conversations, jigsaw pieces, the wrong tools, pearls on a string, etc.?), and she has managed to convey clearly some of the most complex disputes in New Testament scholarship to a remarkable range of people, from interested church members, to first year undergraduates, to groups of experts at SNTS. All of these have benefited enormously from her straightforward, clear-headed, and direct way of approaching topics central to New Testament studies.

But Professor Hooker is a remarkable scholar in more ways besides. The number of glass ceilings she has shattered is extraordinary (an experience that I know has sometimes been as painful as it sounds): the first woman as Lady Margaret's Professor in the Divinity Faculty at Cambridge University; the first female president of SNTS; the first female Cambridge DD; the first woman to co-edit *JTS*; the list could go on and on. (As her PhD student at Cambridge, I was shocked to witness the blatant sexism which she sometimes encountered there.) In breaking all these barriers, Professor Hooker has opened the way for so many other great female scholars in her wake. If you look at the bibliography in her first book, *Jesus and the Servant* (1959), you will be hard-pressed to find a *single* female scholar listed there (I certainly could not identify one, but that may be my fault). That is not, of course, because Professor Hooker neglected them, but simply because there were none to cite! From that point on, M. D. Hooker had to be on everyone's bibliography and although the gender balance is by no means yet right, the world of New Testament scholarship has changed in that respect radically in her lifetime, partly due to her, and greatly to our common benefit.

I want to focus this afternoon on one feature of the style of Professor Hooker's scholarship. If I could use a metaphor of my own, it would be to imagine Professor Hooker as a cyclist—and many of us have witnessed her cycling around Cambridge—weaving skilfully in and around the traffic of New Testament scholarship, much of which was sitting comfortably in a tram, moving forward but on preset tramlines that had their destination already determined. Those of you who have cycled on city streets that also have trams will know how dangerous that is: if you get your wheel stuck in a tramline, you are bound to suffer a crash! But the confidence to take risks has always been one of Professor Hooker's strong points, and my mental image of her scholarship is of her capacity to operate independently of the scholarly consensus, the "assured results" and the taken-for-granted axioms of New Testament scholarship, following her own path with the freedom of the cyclist, while other scholars were stuck travelling along tramlines that too often ended in dead-ends!

This freedom is not wilfulness, although it might be related to her lifelong commitment to Methodism, the kind of people that establishment Anglicans used to label 'nonconformist'. The freedom comes from her skills in asking

simple, straightforward, but awkward questions which insisted on asking for one thing above all: evidence. That trait was clear from the very beginning, in her *Jesus and the Servant*—surely the most influential master’s thesis ever written in our field (and reprinted in 2010)! At the time she wrote that work, there was a strong consensus, with heavy theological backing, that in Jesus’s own self-consciousness, or at least in the view of the Gospel writers, Jesus was “the Servant”, an individual Messianic figure profiled in Isaiah 52–53. With characteristic care, “Miss Hooker” (as she was then called by her mentor, C. K. Barrett) went carefully through the evidence to expose the weakness of this “assured result”. With equal fame, she took on almost the whole New Testament establishment—led by figures as influential as Norman Perrin and Reginald Fuller—with her devastating critique of their use of the criteria of “dissimilarity” and “coherence” in the quest for the “authentic” Jesus. What was so effective here was not only her insistence that they were presuming knowledge that we simply don’t have, but also her well-argued claim that the methods they were deploying predetermined the results. In a form of critique that we might now label “metacriticism,” she showed that the search for the “unique” Jesus—a Jesus unlike what anyone could evidence in Second Temple Judaism—was built on the presumption that “unique” was by definition good, and that it would be disappointing, even unwelcome, to find a Jesus who was actually in important respect *like* his fellow Jews. In other words, the so-called scientific method was controlled by ideological (perhaps anti-Jewish) prejudice. She also pointed out that when we search for what was distinctive about Jesus, that word “distinctive” can mean more than one thing: it can mean what is unique, or what is characteristic, but these are not the same thing. As she rightly pointed out, the ambiguity in English masks a real confusion in argument: by that simple but profound act of clear-headedness, she undermined a whole industry in New Testament scholarship. It took some time for her points to sink in, but now it is widely recognised, not least by Dale Allison, that the old criteria for authenticity, once hailed as a crowning achievement of New Testament scholarship, were not fit for the purpose.

While the tram trundled on for awhile along its criteria-obsessed tramlines, Morna Hooker cycled off merrily in another direction. As she rightly pointed out, all the materials in the Gospels come to us at the hands of the believing community, and while others regarded that as a problem for historical reconstruction, she saw it as a feature we should analyse with more positive appreciation. Nowadays, her point is taken up within memory studies—the analysis of how early Christian memory both preserved and shaped the image of Jesus in ways that don’t allow us simply to peel off interpretation from underlying ‘fact’. From the very moment something happens, its lodging and its recounting in memory shapes its reception, such that there could be no uninterpreted ‘events’ even in the lifetime of Jesus. In this respect, although she might not put it this way, Morna Hooker was in the avant-garde of the turn from scientific positivism to postmodern hermeneutics, not by moving away from the evidence, but by making us face squarely what the evidence actually is.

The same feature can be seen in Professor Hooker’s work on Paul, though in a different form. It is perhaps hard for us to appreciate this now, but when she began her groundbreaking work on Paul in the 1970s, Pauline scholarship was still largely dominated by the Bultmannian school of interpretation: besides Bultmann himself, Bornkamm, Käsemann, Hübner, and Conzelmann were the leading names in the field. There were voices of dissent from Scandinavia (Stendahl and Dahl) and a British tradition resistant to Lutheranism (W. D. Davies and Denys Whiteley), but no one had developed an overall grasp of Pauline theology that could match the individualistic reading of justification by faith and the sharp antitheses between Paul and Judaism that was dominant in German readings of Paul. True to form, Morna Hooker insisted on looking at the evidence, and especially at the evidence that was generally overlooked or regarded as a residue of mythological thinking not characteristic of Paul. ‘Mystical’ notions of union with Christ, highlighted by Albert Schweitzer, were features of Paul’s thought that no one knew what to do with, except to attribute them to the conceptual world from which he had emerged and which he had, uniquely, ‘broken through.’ Morna Hooker was by now rising through the ranks at King’s College London, then Oxford, and finally Cambridge, and in a series of seminal essays, she examined the echoes of Adam in the letters of Paul, with an attention to allusion and echo that pre-dated the work of Richard Hays. The more she saw Jesus as Second Adam in Pauline thought, the more she appreciated the importance for Paul of Jesus’ humanity, and that led to her famous essays in the 1970s (and through to the 1980s) on ‘interchange in Paul’. Once again, observe the skilful weaving of our Cambridge cyclist, who manages to avoid the tramlines and the either/ors of mainstream Pauline scholarship. Paul was of course focused on the cross, but *also* on the incarnation (and therefore the human nature) of Jesus; he spoke about the individual, *but also* about the community in Israel and in the church, a corporate dimension that simply did not fit the Bultmannian schema. He expressed sometimes sharp antitheses between Christ and the law, but always within a schema of fulfilment, not Marcionite binaries. His theology was of course based on the kerygma of Jesus crucified and risen, but the ethics is integral to the theology, and the two should

not be played off against each other. Of course, Paul emphasised faith in Christ, but this was part of the believer's participation in Christ's own faith: thus, her reading of *pistis Christou*, a topic on which she changed her mind with characteristic candour, through repeatedly puzzling over the evidence.

In her work on interchange—the mutual participation by which Christ participates in the human condition so that humans can share his life and destiny—Morna Hooker provided a frame within which many parts of the Pauline jigsaw (to use her metaphor) could start to fit together. Here again, she was at the forefront of a shift in scholarship: her work was influential on E. P. Sanders in his emphasis on participation in Christ, and it has helped shape one of the major trends in Pauline scholarship since that time. Susan Eastman's analysis of participation, Michael Gorman's claim that Paul advocated a version of *theosis*, the work of Douglas Campbell and Grant Macaskill, and the current industry of research on Paul's 'in Christ' formula (e.g., by Teresa Morgan)—all these follow in the wake of Morna Hooker's 'interchange in Christ'. Scholars and students alike continue to return to her essays for their clear and precise articulation of this theme.

But the legacy of Professor Hooker's scholarship is not only in its substance but also in its style, which I call the art of asking awkward questions. And if there is any awkward question that persists most notably through her scholarship, it is this: what is the evidence? It is characteristic that the conclusion to her *Jesus and the Servant* begins: 'The evidence which is relevant to our study has now been investigated' (147). Along the same lines, her famous essay, 'On Using the Wrong Tools,' ends: 'Of course, one must have working hypotheses; but it should never be forgotten that these are only hypotheses, and that they must continually be re-examined' (581). Going back to the evidence—all of it, in detail, observing what is not there as well as what is—that is the hallmark of Professor Hooker's work. It has been essential in the training of numerous PhD students—including myself—who have had to answer her sympathetic but probing questions in their supervision. But it has also been essential in keeping international New Testament scholarship honest and grounded.

One might think that this is a lesson that does not need repeating; of course, we attend closely and fully to the literary evidence of the text and to the historical evidence that lies in it and behind it. But it is not a procedure one can ever take for granted, and the rigour of Professor Hooker's questioning of the evidence is something we need now, perhaps more than ever. In our justifiable efforts to relate our text to our contemporary social, political, and ideological concerns, it is frighteningly easy to ride roughshod over the evidence, or to make it say what we want it to say. Selective citation, glossing over the contrary evidence, impressionistic summaries of complex text to make it fit our agenda—these have always been temptations for New Testament scholars, but are perhaps more in evidence now than ever before. In the wars that rage in and around our discipline, there is a notable trend to inhabit incompatible worlds, simply ignoring contrary views (with the excuse that there is too much to read), sometimes with the accusation that close attention to the text is the boring work of 'splitters' (less exciting than the views of 'lumpers') and often with more confidence in rhetoric than evidence. Of course, the text and the history have to be interpreted; they are never just naked facts that dictate their own meaning. But if New Testament scholarship is to remain honest and if it is to retain its intellectual integrity in a threatening environment, the one thing it must do is remain accountable to the evidence, continually beholden to what is there, and honest about what is not. If we lose this honesty, we may achieve short-term political gain, but the long-term consequences will be disastrous.

In other words, now more than ever we need people with the character of Morna Hooker, who ask, non-aggressively but fearlessly: where is the evidence? Character, I say, but what sort of scholarly and personal character is that? An honest willingness to go where the evidence leads; an open-mindedness sufficient to be corrected and to change one's mind; a refusal to be fobbed off with obfuscation and convenient ambiguity; a confidence to speak the truth as you see it, even if all the 'big names' in the room think you are being silly or difficult; and above all, the independence to get off the tram and to steer your bike in your own direction, as the evidence requires. I don't know where you gathered all those scholarly traits, Morna, but my goodness are we glad that you have them, and that you have displayed them consistently across all these decades, in your service to our discipline. I, for one, have been properly corrected by your awkward questions, challenged by your demand for evidence, tutored by your non-nonsense style of teaching and writing, deeply encouraged by your warm support, and inspired by all your marks of scholarship.

So here is a ninety-fold "thank you" from all of us, to accompany our warm congratulations. And here's hoping for a similar conversation when you reach your centenary, in ten years' time!

Obstinacy and Serendipity: Professor Morna Hooker, The Lady Margaret's Professor, emerita, University of Cambridge

After hearing those totally undeserved tributes, I now know what it is like to listen to one's own obituary—except, of course, that John and James have both been much kinder than they might have been had they not known that I was listening in!

People sometimes ask me, 'How did you get where you are?'—a question that I myself find a puzzle. I have two suggestions—and the first, as you see from my title, is sheer obstinacy. John and James have both hinted at this. If I am told that I cannot do something, I immediately want to do it and indeed, become the more determined to do it. So, when I was told that I couldn't go to University, I promptly dug my heels in and decided that that was where I was going. And when my teachers said 'You can't read theology: women don't study theology', I started to root around to see whether and how it might be possible. Since I was left to do my own research, I ended up at what was certainly not the most obvious University to study the subject. Having ruled out King's College London, which would have meant living at home, I sent for two prospectuses, from Durham and Bristol. Durham stipulated study of both Hebrew and Greek, so I turned in horror to the prospectus from Bristol, which made no mention of Hebrew, but suggested I could study Maths and English in my first year, two subjects which I loved and had indeed thought of studying at University. I applied to Bristol and was accepted. In those days, they didn't bother with interviews.

It was only when I arrived in Bristol that I discovered that the Theology degree had just been made an honours degree, and that if I wanted honours, I must learn Hebrew. The fact that I was forced to learn both Hebrew and Greek from scratch in my first year has, I'm afraid, left me with little sympathy with students who insist that they are incapable of learning the elements of Greek when they arrive at University.

I continued to be obstinate. At the end of my first year, the authorities seemed puzzled to find that they'd accepted someone who wasn't a member of one of the Bristol theological colleges. I insisted that I wanted to study at the best of them, and be taught by the best scholars. Early on, I had decided that I wanted to have a career as an academic, though I knew that there were—with rare exceptions, such as the post at Newcastle—no openings for women, since posts were restricted to Anglican clergy, and this was a time when women (even Methodist women!) were not ordained. So at the end of my studies, I turned to religious publishing as a possible alternative, and found myself editing (and writing) Sunday School lessons, as James has described. It was anything but a fulfilling job, though it did give me experience in editing and proofreading, which proved useful in later life.

My other suggestion, more important than obstinacy, is serendipity, most clearly seen in the fact that although, in the early years of my career, every door appeared to be closed, once I got a toe in the door, then things seemed to drop into my lap. The first 'lucky break', though at the time it appeared to be a stumbling block, was the insistence by the University authorities that I must learn Hebrew. Although at the time this demand was a shock, I later came to be eternally grateful, since a knowledge of Hebrew proved essential for the work I wanted to do.

The second piece of luck was the subject that was suggested to me as a subject for research: the topic of 'Jesus and the Servant' developed into what was essentially a study of the use of the Old Testament in the New. At the time, this was a less well-explored area of study, but in the intervening years it has burgeoned into what is now known by the grander title of 'intertextuality'. I was fortunate in stumbling straight away on an issue which—in my mind at least—raised an obvious question, since I found that every scholar who had written on the topic appeared to take what was clearly the 'orthodox' view, leading me to wonder what was going on: had they actually examined the evidence, or were they simply repeating what others had said before them? I looked at the material, and found

myself out on a limb, but I was used to being on my own, since there were no other theology graduates doing research of any kind.

When it came to appointing examiners, there was clearly a problem! My internal examiner was Kenneth Grayston, who was, I knew, persuaded by my arguments, but puzzled to know who might examine the dissertation with him, since—as he remarked—‘you’ve been rude about every scholar in the country’. Fortunately, he found one exception, someone who was equally sympathetic—Kingsley Barrett. When the book was finally published, other scholars crept out of the woodwork, and said ‘I’ve been thinking this for a long time’! Inevitably, some reviewers were dismissive; Vincent Taylor, for example, said that my book might have been written by a pious Jew, a comment I regarded as an unintentional compliment, since it suggested that I approached the text without bias, rather than with the in-built assumptions of someone determined to find good ‘Christian’ conclusions. But the tide was on the turn, and a few years later, another scholar described my views as ‘the new orthodoxy’! I’m afraid I didn’t really appreciate that comment, since I had come to enjoy being regarded as heretical, and didn’t wish to be considered orthodox.

The appearance of my book in early 1959 led to an invitation to write a commentary on Mark for a new series of commentaries based on the New English Bible—a completely new translation that had recently appeared. I agreed to write it when I had completed my PhD – which, delayed by a heavy load of teaching, took a further eight years. The commentary made equally slow progress; over the years, the publishers abandoned the NEB translation (on which I had made copious notes) for the RSV, and eventually, tired of waiting for my contribution, dropped the series altogether. With typical obstinacy, I continued to work on what I had begun, and one day many years later was fortunate to meet my colleague Henry Chadwick in the corridor of the Divinity School in Cambridge, who asked, ‘Do you happen to know anyone who would like to write a commentary on St Mark?’ And so I was signed up to write the *Black’s New Testament Commentary* on Mark—which meant abandoning my comments on the shortcomings of the NEB and RSV translations and making my own, a far more arduous task.

It took me thirty years to complete the commentary, but here too I was fortunate, since during those thirty years, scholarly approaches to the Gospels changed enormously. I had been brought up, as a student, on Vincent Taylor’s classic *Commentary on St Mark*—popularly known as the ‘fifty shilling Taylor’ after a well-known high-street chain of tailors who traded at that time under the name of ‘The fifty shilling tailors’ because their suits all cost fifty shillings (£2 and 10 shillings, or £2.50 in today’s money). Taylor’s approach to the Gospel was to ask mainly historical questions of the text. In the years since his book was published, the questions we ask have changed dramatically, and it sometimes seems as if a different way of approaching the text emerges every year. Inevitably, then, my own approach changed over the years. As a result, my original manuscript was cut up, and new pieces were Sellotaped into the gaps. It became more and more fragmented, until eventually I decided that I must begin typing it up again. But now I was able to do so on a computer, and cut-and-paste could be done easily. Editing became a much easier process, but the changes I made to my original typescript demonstrated clearly to me how the questions that we ask of the text had changed since I had begun work. The resulting commentary was a very different book from the one I would have written had I completed it in the early 1960s.

When I found editing Sunday School lessons too frustrating and decided that I needed to undertake more research if I were ever to find an academic post, I had gone to Manchester to work with T. W. Manson on the idea of ‘interchange’ as a key to St Paul’s understanding of the atonement—a topic which later transmogrified into ‘The Son of Man in Mark’! I was able to pick up the Pauline theme later, and as I developed my ideas on participation and interchange, I found my audience becoming more and more receptive as a result of the work of E. P. Sanders—another piece of good fortune.

As I have said, serendipity is evident in the way in which teaching posts have dropped into my lap. Although I had at first been unsuccessful in finding an academic post, the decision to undertake more research work for a PhD proved fruitful. I was fortunate in being offered the research fellowship at Durham. Two years later, King's College London appointed Christopher Evans to a chair, but he could not take it up for a year, and I was invited to fill the gap. I was originally appointed for a period that was strictly limited to one year, but in fact I stayed at King's for nine years, and was very happy there. I enjoyed the work, as I have enjoyed the work in both Oxford and Cambridge. All three posts dropped into my lap, and all three were hugely fulfilling as well as enjoyable.

John has talked about my habit of asking questions, but it is important to ask the *right* question. I frequently find that when there is an impasse in New Testament scholarship, it is because people are asking the *wrong* question: there is often a need to approach an issue from a new angle. The debate about the meaning of the phrase *pistis Christou* is a good example. Scholars had been trained to approach the phrase with the grammatical questions fundamental to classical studies. But it may be that grammatical rules were not of great importance to St Paul, and that trying to decide whether the phrase was a 'subjective genitive' or an 'objective genitive' was the wrong approach; there was more flexibility in the language than commentators have often assumed.

Looking back at my first piece of research on the Servant, which I completed in 1955, I am horrified at the way I approached the topic, treating the material as basically historical—very much as Vincent Taylor would have done, even though he disagreed with my conclusions! Since then, the way in which we handle the material has changed dramatically. Fortunately, what I now regard as a very old-fashioned approach didn't affect my conclusions, since whether or not the tradition goes back to Jesus himself, there is little sign of the influence of Isaiah 53 on either him or the evangelists. What became important for the later Christian community was missing from the words attributed to Jesus.

I am sorry to learn from James that the story of the validity of my appointment being raised in Parliament is apparently untrue; but it's one more example of how an apocryphal story can nevertheless convey the truth. Such stories are created to express the ethos of the time. One tradition that I am sure is *not* apocryphal relates how R. H. Lightfoot, a scholar who was also always asking questions and who was horrified by the dogmatism of his contemporaries, often remarked: 'If only they would say "We do not know"'; I used to comment that all scholars should have those four words before them on their desks as they work. We need to remind ourselves constantly that what we *think* we know is nothing more than what we *believe* to be true.

Throughout my career, I have asked simple, obvious, basic questions. As a child, I asked questions, and at 90 I am still asking them. Listening to the glowing appreciations of someone called 'Morna Hooker', I find it impossible to believe that they are talking about me. But all my endeavours are worthwhile when I have colleagues and students of this calibre, who have kept me on my toes. I am grateful that they have allowed me to keep on asking questions, and that, indeed, they seem to expect me to continue to do so, even in my old age. So thank you!