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0521560454 - Shame: Theory, Therapy, Theology
Stephen Pattison
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SHAME
Theory, Therapy, Theology

Shame provides an invaluable, stimulating resource for all those who are concerned with understanding shame and assisting those who live in its shadow. Psychologists, philosophers and therapists will find this a fascinating source of new insight into the theory and phenomenology of shame. It will be of particular interest to those who are interested in relationships between religion and mental health, to pastoral workers and counsellors, and to religious thinkers and theorists.

Stephen Pattison considers the nature of shame as it is discussed in the diverse discourses of literature, psychology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, history and sociology and concludes that 'shame' is not a single unitary phenomenon, but rather a set of separable but related understandings in different discourses. Situating chronic shame primarily within the metaphorical ecology of defilement, pollution and toxic unwantedness, Pattison goes on to examine the causes and effects of shame, including its use as a means of social control, before discussing means of healing shame and integrating individuals and groups whose lives are blighted by it. He then considers the way in which a particular religious tradition, Christianity, has responded to and used shame as a preface to suggesting ways in which religion might alleviate rather than exacerbating shame. His analysis raises fundamental questions for religious thought, organisation and practice in what is increasingly regarded as an age of shame.

STEPHEN PATTISON is senior research fellow in practical theology at Cardiff University. Formerly a senior lecturer at the Open University, he is the author of *A Critique of Pastoral Care* (1988), *Alive and Kicking: Towards a Practical Theology of Illness and Healing* (1989), *Pastoral Care and Liberation Theology* (1994) and *The Faith of the Managers* (1997), as well as being editor of *Reducing the Risk of Cancers* (1992), *Medical Knowledge: Doubt and Certainty* (1994), *Mental Health Matters* (1996) and *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (2000).

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*This book is for
Edmund Clarke
in the hope that he will never want to read it,
and for his parents,
John and Cressida,
in the hope that they might*

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A theologian is born by living, nay dying and being damned, not by thinking, reading, or speculating. (Martin Luther)

His disciples said: When wilt Thou be revealed to us and when will we see Thee?
Jesus said: When you take off your clothing without being ashamed, and take your clothes and put them under your feet as the little children and tread on them, then shall you behold the Son of the Living One and you shall not fear.
(*The Gospel of Thomas*)

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Preface

It has been said that authors know how their books are going to end as they start at the beginning. If this is generally true, the present volume is a dramatic exception. Almost until the last moment of writing, I have lived with the anxiety of not being able to see quite where the book was going and how it would finish. It has been a confusing and daunting voyage of discovery, replete with wrong turns, false leads and conceptual mirages. In other words, this book is the product of a genuine process of research, with all the excitement and frustration that implies.

I owe substantial authorial debts. Alastair Campbell first stimulated my interest in shame by requiring me to write an essay on chronic guilt. His book *The Gospel of Anger* also offered an important, inspiring model of how practical theologians might begin to think about emotions. Donald Capps, an American pastoral theologian, always seems to have visited the topics I am interested in before me. His own work on shame, though I am sometimes sharply critical of it, has been a constant stimulus to me. Alex Wright at Cambridge University Press commissioned this volume and encouraged me enormously by reading it in draft. I am grateful to him and to his successor, Kevin Taylor, for the patience they have exercised in waiting for it gradually to emerge. On the technical side of this book's production, I would also like to thank Joanne Hill, the assiduous copy-editor at the Press who greatly improved the text in the final stages of its production, and James Woodward, an old friend who kindly compiled the index.

This book would never have seen the light of day without the privilege of uninterrupted time for thinking and writing. This came in the form of a research fellowship in the Department of Religious and Theological Studies at Cardiff University. Cardiff has been extraordinarily generous to me, both institutionally and in the form of forbearing colleagues who have tolerated more absence than presence on my part. I want to thank the University and, more particularly, my line manager,

Paul Ballard, for appointing me to my post and supporting me in it. In addition to this, Paul has probably done more than any other single individual in Britain over thirty years to maintain and develop pastoral and practical theology as a serious area for research and teaching. I would like to pay tribute to him as a valued friend, critic, editor and colleague.

Throughout the period of writing, my drafts have been read and commented upon by two heroic friends, Gordon Lynch and Janet Bellamy. Janet also edited down the first draft. Thank you, Janet and Gordon. Without you, I would simply have drowned.

Amongst my other creditors are Peter van de Kastele, Sue McKinney, Pat Bradley, Geoffrey Whitfield, Michael Griffith, Peter Graham, Thomas Dixon and Nelson Ould. The anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press deserve my gratitude for their supportive critical comments and suggestions.

I am deeply grateful to Patricia Alderidge and the Bethlem Royal Hospital for permission to use Marion Patrick's 'The Cross' on the cover of this volume. This moving work was painted when the artist was an inpatient suffering from depression at Bethlem. It sums up the quality of alienation and abjection in shame better than any other picture I have ever seen. I am only sorry that I cannot thank Marion Patrick personally for her inspiring art; she died some time ago. It is a parable of stigma and shame that the picture could only be anonymously attributed in a public exhibition of Pictures at Bethlem in Sheffield a few years ago when I first saw it, while now she can receive the public credit for it that she deserves.

Finally, my particular thanks to Jean Way who was my psychotherapist for fifteen years, and to Charmian, Lewis, and Eliot for all their shame-dissolving love and support during the writing of this book.