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Reviews

Arthur B. Crabtree. *The Restored Relationship: A Study in Justification and Reconciliation.* 208 pp. 21s. Carey Kingsgate Press.

Professor Crabtree's book which embodies the Whitley Lectures for 1961 is concerned with what is, by common consent, a central Christian doctrine—Justification. The choice of such a subject should ensure a ready reception of the published lectures. Yet to describe the book as a study of the doctrine of Justification would be to tell only half the story, for the author makes it clear from the outset that this central theme cannot and will not be divorced from the entire process of reconciliation to God. To "justify" in Biblical and theological usage is best understood as the relational concept which describes how the sinner is brought back into harmony with God; it includes both the forensic declaration that he is "accounted righteous," and the dynamic assurance that he is accepted by God and transformed by His grace. It is false, the author affirms, to divide into two separable terms what belong so inextricably together, namely, justification and sanctification. The twin errors which he would warn us against are the concept of justifying faith when it is treated in isolation from that love to God and man in which its essence is found (cf. Gal. 5 : 6, which is a verse which runs like a thread through the entire book), and the dichotomy of justification and sanctification. The insistence upon "by faith alone," he avers, is characteristic of Luther, while the erroneous division of justification and sanctification was perpetuated by Calvin. It is in the Reformed confessions (notably in the Westminster Confession of 1647) that the synthesis is achieved and "justification by faith" is accurately defined as the faith "that is ever accompanied with all other saving graces." Yet a case could be made out for the view that this is exactly Calvin's teaching (*Institutes* III. ii. 8, for example). This synthesis, moreover, is being re-discovered in the modern Protestant-Roman Catholic debate, and Barth and Hans Küng are declared to be consistent witnesses to the newer approach which Professor Crabtree enthusiastically champions.

The earlier parts of his study are devoted to a survey of the Biblical materials and a sketch of the history of Christian thought as far as the doctrines of grace are concerned. In New Testament study his mentors are the German scholars whose conclusions are

accepted in preference to much Anglo-Saxon theology. This is seen in their taking far more realistically the New Testament concepts of the Divine wrath and treating "propitiation" as a placating of that wrath. Thus the author insists that reconciliation is "a mutual event involving a change of attitude on the part of God as well as on the part of man" (p. 43). This position is justified exegetically, but we miss some recognition of the fact that in the New Testament God is never said to be reconciled.

The fortunes of the doctrines are traced through the Christian centuries in a competent and clear way. At one serious point, however, issue may be taken with the author. After a lucid account of the rise of a doctrine of merit in Tertullian and Augustine, he turns to examine Aquinas whose formula for the sinner's response to God's grace was "faith formed by love" (*fides formata per caritatem*). In such a formulation, Crabtree avers, he is "merely expressing in Platonic-Aristotelian terms what Augustine and Paul meant by "faith working through love" (p. 123). Luther misunderstood this (p. 141) as he was reared in the Scotist-Nominalist tradition, and unnecessarily launched an attack on a Roman position in the name of a more-than-doubtful *sola fide* doctrine. But this reading of the Reformer's reaction (which is stated in Burnaby's *Amor Dei*) raises the vital question of whether Aquinas and Luther meant the same things even when they used identical terms. The key terms "grace" and indeed "love" carry different connotations in the two writers, as Philip Watson in his *Let God be God* (pp. 52-59) is at pains to point out. His analysis makes a very interesting complementary (and corrective?) study.

The style throughout is clear and the material well organised. Indeed, the voice of the lecturer may be heard in a number of places (cf. the apostrophe, "O excellent Wesley!" p. 155) as well as in the occasional broken syntax (p. 23), the use of homiletical licence (pp. 9, 10) and some questionable aphorisms (p. 65 on baptism and faith). Printing slips are rare and are mainly confined to transliteration from Biblical languages (pp. 27, 47). The book does great credit to the publishers, and not least in making available, at fair price, a most useful, informative and provocative treatise.

RALPH P. MARTIN

Raymond Chapman. *The Loneliness of Man.* 124 pp. 10s. 6d. S.C.M.

This is the first in a new series. These "Green Back" books are "an experiment in linking the public with Christian authors who have something fresh to say." Raymond Chapman, lecturer in English at the London School of Economics, writes with insight and feeling on human loneliness.

Our society assumes that loneliness is a bad thing and struggles to alleviate it. Chapman wants to question this attitude. He maintains that loneliness is a fact arising from our human condition. It is not to be evaded, but it is to be used as a spring board into deeper waters. So the contemporary desire to overcome what Chapman calls "aloneness" is to be carefully scrutinised. "The need for group membership, wrongly conceived as a refuge from loneliness, is widespread enough to become a commercial proposition." But there is no escape for inner loneliness. Money cannot buy the answer, conformity will not give solace, and even human affection is not the complete solution, for the death of a loved one brings a new and terrible loneliness.

How does a Christian see all this? "The problem of loneliness is a paradox to the Christian . . . In itself it is a blessed state, for it produces something fundamental in the earthly life of Christ. Yet it is to be relieved by all means when it is found in other people." Therefore the Christian approach is creative. Through our loneliness we understand the loneliness of Jesus—"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Through our loneliness we can enter other men's lives with understanding and compassion, for we all share in this experience of being alone. Here is the starting point for faith and understanding. We must know and accept our loneliness before we understand the Gospel of our fellow men.

All very true and it needs saying today. Even in the church we too easily assume that the fellowship of the group means the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The book is well written and produced but I was left with the uneasy feeling that those who take the trouble to read it will have already understood "from the inside." For we know this inner loneliness of which Chapman speaks, and we know that this has preceded our own faith and pastoral care. Those who need the book are unlikely to read it—that is the problem of communication we all face. The writer gives us the ammunition, we have to direct the fire.

C. MARCHANT

Allan Brockett (Ed.): *The Exeter Assembly: the Minutes of the Assemblies of the United Brethren of Devon and Cornwall,* 1691-1717. xvi, 157 pp. Devon and Cornwall Record Society, N.S., vol. VI. 1963. Obtainable from Mrs. Miller, 7 The Close, Exeter. 45s. post free.

Edwin Welch (Ed.): *Dissenters' Meeting Houses in Plymouth to* 1852, vol. XCIV (1962) of The Transactions of the Devonshire Association.

It is good to have the *Minutes of the Exeter Assembly,* 1691-1717 (Gilling's Transactions) from the Devon and Cornwall Record Society, who publish them as their contribution to the 1662 Celebra-

tions. The 132 pages of minutes are edited by Allan Brockett, a Congregationalist who worked on them for his recent *Nonconformity in Exeter,* 1660-1875. He also contributes a 16-page introduction.

A primitive adventure in ecumenicism, the Assembly united Congregationalist and Presbyterian ministers in Devon on the pattern of the 'Happy Union' established in London in April 1691, which itself was of unhappy duration: it barely lasted three years. The Exeter Assembly, however, was still influential in Devon and Cornwall as late as 1753. These notes by Rev. Isaac Gilling (often the Assembly's scribe) reveal a vivid picture of church life under the later Stuarts. The ministers began with two emphases: (i) their partial union in the Assembly was not to prejudice a greater unity; (ii) they determined not to 'intermeddle with state affairs, but keep within the bonds of our calling' (p. 1).

Recruits for the ministry occupied much of their thinking, though it nearly brought them to early disaster. The ministers encouraged one another to be ever watchful for 'young men of pregnant parts' who might be called to be pastors, and one of the most frequent entries in the accounts is a student's name, and the words, 'to buy books.' Here are the texts on which they were required to preach trial sermons, and the questions for their disputes in Latin—'An Paedobaptismus sic licitus?' was Joseph Gilling's (Isaac's son) question in 1695 (p. 24.) A year earlier the Assembly decided that all ordinations should be by its consent, provoking an Independent reaction through the voice of Rev. Stephen Towgood who proposed 'that it is utterly unlawful for any minister . . . to deny ordination . . . to any person . . . because he doth not submit unto any power . . . superior to that in a Particular Church' (p. 38). But the Assembly survived and Towgood remained a member of it — in practice it was the particular church's call that was the efficient precedent to ordination, and so the Independent conscience was satisfied.

The continued influence of the Assembly over 60 years was nothing short of a miracle when individual churches found it difficult to avoid divisions. The Assembly had constantly to play the reconciler between minister and congregational parties. More congenial was its work to settle and aid ministers. Yet here its willingness to help was limited by its income—the difficulties of central funds to achieve the people's support has a long history—grants were often made with a degree of scepticism—'if the Fund will bear it.'

Illuminating emphases include the questions (p. 25) 'Is pronouncing the blessing a prayer or an act of ministerial power and authority? If it be an act of authority how can candidates pronounce it?'; (p. 52) 'What is to be done in case a person can't

drink wine? Whether beer or cyder may not be received by such a one in the Lord's Supper? In Muscovy they have no wine but use the drink used in that country.' Fines were imposed on ministers absent without approved reason and they agreed 'all our treats be as little costly and expensive as is convenient, viz: not above 2 dishes.' (p. 56.) Mr. Mudj, a grant-aided minister they castigated for his vanity—p. 88. 'Some dislike his fine wig, etc., and think he ought to go as one maintain'd by charity.'

An ecumenical adventure—but it was clear that there were some who could never come within the *οἰκουμενη* — namely the Anabaptists who were attracting 'hearers' away from some of the congregations of the United Brethren, and it was no less than salt in the wound for the Assembly to learn that several of the most able of the Anabaptist preachers had been educated in their own Academies at Taunton and Axminster. This, they said, must stop. But in fact the real danger to the Assembly came from within, and not from without, in the form of Socinian heresy, but the minutes now published end just before those debates begin.

The Devonshire Association also makes a contribution to Tercentenary Celebrations with the publication of Edwin Welch's *Dissenters Meeting Houses in Plymouth to* 1852. A primary source for the history of nonconformity, as yet little used, is the registration of its chapels. But in this record of bricks and mortar is told the story of the early difficulties of Dissent — though the Civic authorities of Plymouth were always more indulgent than the Naval authorities at Devonport who required a Church Baptismal Certificate of all their workmen. The registers then tell how this situation changed, first, with the Methodist Revival and the new life that it brought to Old Dissent, and then with the suburban greed of the nineteenth century population explosion. In the new areas the chapels almost arrived before the people, whilst Church extension lay paralysed by the legal requirements of Establishment.

Plymouth seemed to specialise in indigenous religious groups. The Universalists who registered four buildings between 1809 and 1850 gained greater support in America than England. Of one of their Plymouth ministers John Harris said, 'His discourses were more like spouting than Lecturing and was attended by the most Infamous Characters.' (p. 588.) Recorded too are the Plymouth origins of the Brethren, with the arrival of J. N. Darby from Dublin in 1830, and his schism in 1845 on apocalyptic questions to found the first Exclusives.

Though Baptist witness began in 1648 with the baptism of Abraham Cheare, their fortunes after the Restoration were uncertain until 1748 when Philip Gibbs of Kingsbridge, a convert of George Whitfield's, became pastor. Within three years they had to build a larger chapel and thereafter chapels multiply as the Bap-

tists reaped the benefits of the Methodist Revival and the population increase.

Free-church historians have in these two documents good reason to be thankful to those engaged in the spade-work of local-history research, which must always be particularly important to the church historian, especially when that historian's theology commits him to a confidence in the competence of the local church. Our thanks are also due to the two learned societies who have so sympathetically sponsored this work.

J. H. Y. BRIGGS.

F. F. Bruce (ed.): *Promise and Fulfilment.* Essays presented to Professor S. H. Hooke in celebration of his 90th birthday. 214 pp. 25s. T. & T. Clark.

Those who owe much to the scholarship of Professor Hooke will be glad to have their attention drawn to this volume containing a personal appreciation of Professor Hooke by the Dean of St. Paul's, a good photograph, a list of his principal works and thirteen learned articles by members of the Society for Old Testament Study and others. Dr. Henton Davies contributes an essay on "The Ark in the Psalms" and there is one, "Old Testament Theology and its Methods," by another Baptist, the Rev. A. A. Anderson.

Horton Davies: *The English Free Churches.* 2nd Ed. 208 pp. 10s. 6d. Oxford.

It is twelve years since this book first appeared and it has proved its worth as an introduction to the history of the Free Churches. In this fresh edition a new paragraph on 20th century preachers reflects one of Dr. Davies special fields of research and the select bibliography has been brought up to date. Reliable and readable books such as this have a special usefulness in a day when Christians are seeking to know more about each other.

LIST OF BOOKS RECEIVED

J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles.* Black's New Testament Commentaries. 264 pp. 28s. A. & C. Black.

Rudolph Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition.* Translated by John Marsh. 456 pp. 50s. Basil Blackwell.

J. Arthur Baird, *The Justice of God in the Teaching of Jesus.* New Testament Library. 283 pp. 35s. S.C.M.

E. F. Kevan, *Salvation.* 130 pp. $2.50. Baker Book House.

Reginald H. Fuller, *The New Testament in Current Study.* 159 pp. 7s. 6d. S.C.M.

Douglas Stewart, *Easter is on Monday.* 95 pp. 6s. S.C.M.