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A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership
Volume 8 • Number 2 • SPRING 1999

Man can no more organize revival than he can dictate to the wind.

JOHN BLANCHARD

A revival never needs to be advertized; it always advertizes itself.

D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES

Though some would wish it to the contrary, if we put all the recorded revivals together, we shall find that these "phenomena," or unusual things, make up a very small part of the whole. Revival itself is unusual, and the great work of conviction, conversion and the creation of a holy life put all other things into the shade.

BRIAN EDWARDS

BOOK REVIEWS

SURPRISED BY THE VOICE OF GOD: HOW GOD SPEAKS TODAY THROUGH PROPHECIES, DREAMS AND VISIONS

Jack Deere

Grand Rapids: Zondervan (1996).

384 pages, cloth, \$24.95.

I must confess no small amount of weariness in reading this book. One cannot read Deere without seeing his concern for Christians to experience real spiritual growth. He genuinely wants to see the church undergo revival—but then so do a lot of people who do not share Deere's charismatic avidity. I reviewed Deere's *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit in Reformation & Revival Journal* (Vol. 4, No. 1, Winter 1995) and have since corresponded with Dr. Deere in the hope that some of our differences could be addressed. In my earlier review, I took sharp issue with how Deere portrayed non-charismatics as having not only bad doctrine (in his opinion) but also serious moral and spiritual problems. Deere continues exhibiting this trait in his most recent book. Evangelicals unsympathetic with Deere's charismatic claims are again depicted as being proud (pp. 236, 239, 255, 256, 268, 308, 317), decidedly unspiritual (people who simply don't love God enough; p. 215), inflicted with a deistic mind-set (pp. 251-69) and, in most cases, having a warped allegiance to the Reformers (p. 249), which to Deere's turgid way of seeing things makes them the theological heirs of the Pharisees (p. 28).

Theologically (pharisaically?) speaking, the chief weak-

ness in Deere's books, in my opinion, is that according to Deere Scripture is *insufficient* for one's Christian life (pp. 252-54). This theme appeared in the first book and is repeatedly played in the second as well (pp. 67-68, 112, 268, 327). No one, Deere never tires of telling us, can live an acceptable and meaningful Christian life merely by relying on Scripture and the other traditional means of grace. Those who do, demonstrate a perfidious faith, and are in fact guilty of dishonesty in their handling of Scripture (pp. 256-57) and, no doubt, have some ugly sin hiding somewhere in the deep recesses of their souls (p. 317).

Deere argues, in a way that leaves me gasping for breath, that since Jesus heard the voice of God (audibly) then so should we.

What do we have in common with Jesus, the apostles, Stephen, Philip, Agabus and other New Testament prophets, and all the charismatically gifted believers in the New Testament churches like those at Corinth, Rome, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and elsewhere? According to the apostles, what we share with them is the very same power that gave them the supernatural ability to hear God and work miracles (p. 47).

It is hard to believe one's eyes here. Does Deere actually believe that Christians should be able to duplicate *everything* that Jesus did? Talk about taking the concept of WWJD to the extreme. Deere does advocate this very thing. This is indeed a staggering thought—turn water into wine, feed five thousand people with scant provisions, walk on stormy seas, raise the dead. Is this really what Deere is saying? This seems to clearly be the case. Here are his words:

Since we share the same Holy Spirit who empowered Jesus and his followers in the first century, why not let them be our models for what is possible in the Christian life? After

all, on more than one occasion Jesus taught that "everything is possible for him who believes" (Mark 9:23; Matt. 21:21-22; Mark 11:23). Even the dead can be raised when we believe (John 11:40). I can't recall a place in the Bible where Jesus took back this teaching, nor can I think of a place where the apostles "toned it down" in their writings (p. 47).

Is it too much to expect from someone who holds a Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary that he at least be aware of Geerhardus Vos and the flow of redemptive history? Even Deere's fellow charismatic sympathizer, Douglas A. Oss, recognizes the importance of Vos's redemptive-historical approach to interpreting the Bible (cf. Douglas A. Oss's contributions to *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, ed. Wayne A. Grudem [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996]). Deere obviously is oblivious to Vos. There is not the slightest indication that he understands that ultimately the gospel itself is imperiled if the distinction between redemption accomplished and applied is not recognized.

Deere confidently assumes that whatever happened in biblical times should also happen today. An extraordinary claim that Deere fails to substantiate and manages only to demonstrate is that, despite his own seminary training, Deere is guilty of using a seriously flawed hermeneutic. And what is Deere's hermeneutic? It seems to me to be the worst one possible: Deere reads the Bible in the light of his personal experiences. Thus Deere's experience becomes the final arbiter of truth. Deere warns his readers about the dangers of misinterpreting the Bible (p. 257), but has no doubts about his abilities to always interpret the voice of God speaking outside of Scripture (p. 296). He is absolutely sure, for instance, that God spoke to him through (of all things) a country Western song (p. 128).

Deere relates in his first book his own lack of genuine spirituality and concludes that since his spiritual life before his charismatic conversion was dry as dust, then this must

be the case with everyone else. This is a pattern that seems to characterize charismatic people who move from a non-charismatic position to a charismatic one. My biggest fear is that Christians who do buy into what Deere has written will come to the same conclusion—noncharismatics are proud, arrogant, harboring secret sin and really do not love the Lord—a formula, I assure you, for disaster in any church. I have over the course of my pastoral ministry encountered this mentality a number of times—and nothing I said could convince these people otherwise. They were absolutely sure God had spoken to them (sometimes in the most bizarre ways). In each case these individuals took a position very similar to the one that appears in Deere's book: Christians who did not have a charismatic experience were pawns of Satan and wandering around in the darkness.

Deere acknowledges that in his early efforts to convert people to his charismatic theology he sowed division and dissension (p. 161), but apparently does not see the danger of the readers of this book taking their cue from him and doing the same thing. Despite his protest to the contrary this is exactly what will follow in his wake.

Deere's feeble attempts to distinguish degrees of God-inspired revelation (pp. 191-93) is, in many respects, the most disturbing part of this book. How those like Deere can advocate this strange concept of inspiration in a theologically coherent fashion *and* insist that they also hold to a close canon remains a deep concern. While Deere wants to affirm as emphatically as possible the authority of Scripture, he ends up equally emphatic in his denial of Scripture's sufficiency since the Bible (in his view) *must* be supplemented by ongoing contemporary revelations. In the final analysis Deere ends up with Scripture being subservient to a charismatic experience.

Sola scriptura is not a concern to Deere. This is not something new, as students of church history will readily

recognize. The Reformers had to deal with this phenomenon when confronting certain extremists in what is known as the radical reformation. One such individual was Thomas Müntzer, who, like Deere, was deeply concerned with spiritual issues, particularly the need to be really sure of divine direction. This assurance could not come from the Bible (misinterpretation abounded on every hand). The only way Müntzer could have the kind of assurance he sought was for God to speak directly to him, which he claimed happened. Müntzer was prepared to claim that he could always rightly interpret the voice of God outside of Scripture. Martin Luther responded to Thomas Müntzer with his famous statement: "I would not listen to Müntzer if he had swallowed the Holy Ghost feathers and all!" Jack Deere, like Müntzer before him, is calling the church to seek divine revelation *outside* the Scripture, and like Müntzer, Deere is supremely confident in his abilities to rightly interpret these extra-biblical sources of revelation. The sons of the radical reformation are still with us. I would much rather follow Luther and the rest of the Reformers in affirming *sola scriptura*.

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VAN TIL'S APOLOGETIC: READINGS AND ANALYSIS

Greg L. Bahnsen

Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed (1998).
763 pages, cloth, \$39.99.

*T*s Van Til's apologetic a simplistic Bible-presupposing fundamentalism, or a subtle import of neo-orthodoxy? Is it an unjustified leap of faith, or a circular, Calvinistic cul-de-sac? (This review will not answer these questions. But the book reviewed may.) It is unfortunate that Van Til, a major

name in the galaxy of apologetic stars, is so diversely understood. At the Fiftieth Anniversary Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Orlando (November 1998), the Evangelical Philosophical Society hosted a panel discussion on apologetic methodology. The participants were Gary Habermas (evidentialist, i.e., begin with the resurrection), William Craig (classical approach, i.e., begin with the cosmological argument for God's existence), Paul Feinberg (cumulative case, i.e., there is no best place to start), and Richard Pratt (taking John Frame's place as the presuppositional representative in the Van Tilian tradition). Unfortunately, no one was able to represent the "new Reformed epistemology" of Alvin Plantinga, et al. (However, each of these approaches will be represented in a Zondervan "five views" book soon to be released, edited by Steve Cowan.) It is regretful that John Robbins (the intellectual clone of Gordon Clark's variety of presuppositionalism) was left standing without a chair, on the panel and in the book.

Each of the panelists would have benefited greatly if they had read *Van Til's Apologetic* before this discussion. Perhaps the non-Van Tilians would not have generally misrepresented Van Til's variety of presuppositionalism as fideism (no rational basis for faith) if they had read that "Christianity is the only rational faith!" (116). Or that "Christianity is objectively valid and that it is the only rational position for man to hold" (74). Or it alone "can ultimately make any sense of 'science,' logic, experience, reason, self-consciousness, morality, etc." (701). Or that the unbeliever "ought to be refuted by a reasoned argument instead of by ridicule and assumption" (74). Or "there is absolutely certain proof for the existence of God and the truth of Christian theism" (78). Or "Faith is not blind faith. . . . Christianity can be shown to be not 'just as good as' or even 'better than' the non-Christian position, but the only position that does not make nonsense of

human experience" (75). Or "Hence Warfield was quite right in maintaining that Christianity is objectively defensible" (42). Perhaps the above three panelists would be surprised to learn that Van Til would place them in a "second and less consistent class of fideists" (77)!

To date, Bahnsen certainly provides the definitive presentation of Van Til's apologetic. Dr. Bahnsen completed this 763-page tome shortly before his death in December 1995. Published under the oversight of the Van Til Committee, the Foreword says the Committee "believed [Bahnsen] eminently, even uniquely, qualified among Dr. Van Til's former students for the task" (xv). In this book, "Three feet of material have been reduced to less than three inches" (698). A visible feature of the book is typographical. Bahnsen's explanations and analysis are presented in the standard font, while Van Til's words are in a distinct script (an Arial-like typeface). Copious footnotes (not endnotes!) are ever present in Bahnsen's informed, analytic style. The arrangement is nine chapters with two levels of subdivision in each. He moves from an introduction to the epistemology, psychology, and philosophy of apologetics, with a concluding summary on how to defend the faith. The first chapter includes a very informative biography of Van Til, explaining his unusual ascendancy to his life-long teaching post at Westminster Theological Seminary. The book concludes with an extensive bibliography of Van Til's writings and helpful name and subject indices.

Among others, a central need for Bahnsen's analysis arises from Van Til's writing style: "Van Til's own terminology arises from the arcane parlance of a bygone generation of idealistical philosophy 'principle of individuation,' 'limiting concept,' 'concrete universal'" (xx). Bahnsen was trained both under Van Til at Westminster and at the other end of the philosophical spectrum in the linguistic analysis tradition at the University of Southern California. While

Van Til is abundantly conversant with post-Kantian idealism, through Bahnsen's presentation he gains the clarity of expression the analytic emphasis in philosophy offers. At the same time, both Van Til and Bahnsen breathe the air of the confessional Reformation theology (both were Orthodox Presbyterian Church ministers). Van Til was a Dutchman wearing wooden shoes under the tutorship of old Princeton. He received his graduate training in the educational tradition of old Princeton (Alexander, Hodge, Warfield, and Machen), but his thought is painted with the vivid colors of Amsterdam's Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. In his apologetics he was "standing on the shoulders of Warfield and Kuyper" and building "on the main thrust of their thought . . ." (611). "I have tried to use elements both of Kuyper's and of Warfield's thinking" (597). Bahnsen is more than perceptive when he says, "A person who can explain the ways in which Van Til agreed and disagreed with both Warfield and Kuyper, is a person who understands presuppositional apologetics" (597).

Thus, Bahnsen presents Van Til's legacy as a philosophical vindication of consistent Christianity (the Reformed faith). It is the only rational philosophy (Warfield) and is the antithesis to all non-Christian worldviews (Kuyper), including rationalistic ones. The defense of the faith is to be done exclusively by means of the theistic transcendental argument: Christianity is true because it alone accounts for the preconditions of intelligibility. To illustrate, suppose an atheist comes to town and preaches that Christianity is irrational. After common grace communion with ginger ale and ginger snaps, Van Til would ask the atheist to account for the standards of rationality on the basis of the atheist's own view of reality. The atheist, though he would not like to say it this way, must admit that his legislative, rational standards come from an utterly irrational universe. If the atheist is correct about reality, rationality came from total

irrationality by the predestination of blind chance. Now the atheist seeks to use what an irrational universe miscarried, as the Judge of what can be in reality. Van Til thus teaches us that all forms of anti-Christianity fail to account for the very preconditions of reasonable interchange. Perhaps even more importantly, what resounds like a silver bell is that we know this by grace alone.

GREGG STRAWBRIDGE
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THE JOY OF FEARING GOD

Jerry Bridges

Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press (1997).

268 pages, hardback, \$19.95.

The title arrests you. Three of the words alone, "joy of fearing," set up a tension in the mind. But as we reach the final word—"God"—the tension is complete. Even Bridges concedes this tension when he says, "The title of this book is not an oxymoron, but a glorious truth" (10).

He writes:

There should always be a healthy tension between the confidence with which we come before God as His children and the reverential awe with which we behold Him as our sovereign Lord. There's a difference between holy and unholy familiarity with God (99).

Would "Unholy Familiarity with God" make a fitting caption for today's cult of "pop" evangelicalism? TBN personalities run around looking like baptized Power Rangers, bronzed behemoths break concrete blocks "to add punch" to the gospel, and "clown ministries" cartwheel around the pulpit. In these settings the subject of fearing God doesn't

play well. Maybe that's a good thing. The thought of Bozo honking his nose through a lecture on the fear of the Almighty creates a whole different kind of tension.

Whether combating clowns or casual carelessness, Bridges' new book brings holy familiarity and fear into prominence once again. He organizes the subject into three parts: defining *the fear of God*, discussing *the attributes of God*, and offering practical instruction in how to grow *the joy of fearing God*. Over half the book is devoted to the final section of practical instruction, which won't be surprising to those familiar with Bridges' style. He is as passionate about Christian obedience as he is about Christian knowledge.

In defining the fear of God, Bridges makes use of a military illustration to give perspective. Though the illustration doesn't answer all the elements of this complex issue, it does aid us as a starting point for the wealth of Scripture, explanation, and definitions which follow. Fearing God is not something easily summarized in a single sentence and cannot be understood apart from revelation. As Bridges writes, "a profound sense of awe toward God is undoubtedly the dominant element in the attitude or set of emotions that the Bible calls 'the fear of God'" (18). Although this "awe" is the "dominant element," Bridges goes further to demonstrate that it is only one of several elements. In any attempt to define the fear of God, the question arises, "How is the believer's fear of God different from the non-Christian's?" Bridges here cites Sinclair Ferguson's distinction between servile fear and filial fear as "that indefinable mixture of reverence, fear, pleasure, joy and awe which fills our hearts when we realize who God is and what He has done for us. *This is the only true fear of God*" (27).

In Part Two, "The God We Fear," Bridges further expounds the difference between regenerate and unregenerate fear. There is a tendency to think of God's wrath as the

only source for the fear of the Lord, but Bridges points out that the love of God is also integral to the believer's awe as well: "This is when we really start to enjoy fearing God: when we realize in the depth of our being that we justly deserve the wrath of God, then we see that wrath poured out on Jesus instead of on ourselves. We're both awed at His wrath and astonished at His love" (104).

Fear for the believer is nourishing because it is intermingled with a sense of what He has done for us. To drink from the cup of regenerate fear is to drink deeply of life and strength, not death and despair.

Some of the book's best material is contained in this second section as Bridges expands the exposition to include the greatness, holiness, and wisdom of God. In light of who God is and who we are, he notes the distinct lack of humility on our part when we question God's ways and wisdom. He notes:

God's wisdom, however, is infinite; ours is finite. This absolute difference is one thing that we fail to grasp. We tend to assume we would understand if God would just explain. We don't really believe that "his understanding no one can fathom" (Isaiah 40:23) (89).

He also emphasizes our attitude in worship if we are to seriously seek growth: "In order to render heartfelt worship to God, we must be gripped in the depth of our being by His majesty, holiness, and love; otherwise our praise and adoration may be no more than empty words" (236).

When one considers the weird stuff that passes for Christian worship, it's exhilarating to be reminded, "The fear of God and the worship of Him feed each other. The more we fear God—bowing before Him in reverential awe—the more we'll be compelled to worship Him" (239). This is the kind of work we've come to expect from Jerry

Bridges as an author. It's both informative and provocative.

DOUGLAS SHIVERS
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ABRAHAM KUYPER: A CENTENNIAL READER

James D. Bratt, editor
Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,
1998.
498 pages, paper, \$29.00.

**CREATING A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW: ABRAHAM
KUYPER'S LECTURES ON CALVINISM**

Peter S. Heslam
Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,
1998.
310 pages, paper, \$28.00.

The year 1998 marked the centennial of Abraham Kuyper's visit to America, where he toured extensively and delivered the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary. It is fitting therefore to commemorate these events and to celebrate the influence that the great theologian-statesman from the Netherlands has conveyed to subsequent generations. These two books do so in a very helpful manner, so both are profitable reading, especially for believers who need help in thinking Christianly about all of life as sacred and subject to Christ.

Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader is a carefully chosen and edited selection of Kuyper's writings, some of which appear for the first time in the English language. Editor James Bratt, a historian at Calvin College, has contributed a helpful introduction to the life and work of Kuyper, after which he has arranged the primary docu-

ments under the headings Beginnings, Church and Theology, Politics and Society, and Culture and Education. In the opinion of Bratt, Kuyper was

... one of those rare intellectuals who actually led a popular movement. He thought it not enough to articulate a worldview but built the organization needed to implement it—a newspaper, a complete school system, his country's first mass political party. He was at once a national-class scholar and stump-speaker extraordinaire, a writer of pious devotions and of ruthless polemics, conversant with Protestant scholastics, Parisian philosophes, German poets, and contemporary science (2).

In line with this appraisal, Kuyper's writings in this *Reader* show that he was an encyclopedic genius who strove to translate his fervent Calvinistic faith into an all-inclusive worldview, one which affirms the right of Christ to dominion over every area of creation and every institution that His creatures produce.

Kuyper maintained a pronounced hostility toward modern secularism, and he cited the excesses of the French Revolution as the consequences of subscription to the autonomy of human reason and its correlative belief that nature is in a normal condition despite the presence of sin. The essays in this fine collection provide his perceptive analyses of conditions in his own era, and to a degree, they express his proposals to combat secularism and thereby to affirm the crown rights of Christ and the earthly rights of His people.

Kuyper had a profound understanding of the noetic effects of sin, so he thought realistically about human nature and the institutions which sinful people maintain and operate. He was not a visionary but a practical leader of Christians who respected the rights of unbelievers but denied that they are entitled to impose the values of secularism upon

the people of God. This is especially evident in his essay "Uniformity: the Curse of Modern Life", in which he indicted socialism with its assumption that the state should control education and decide where children should go to school and what they should learn. Kuyper decried the tendency to obliterate the divinely created distinctions between the sexes in order to achieve "a neutral hybrid of the two" (28), and he lamented the condition of the Dutch Reformed Church, which had succumbed to the allurements of modernism. The prominent items in this first of sixteen essays suggest the emphases in the rest of the book, a tribute to the editor's skill in the selection of material.

Thanks to the publication of this volume, English language readers for the first time have access to "*Confidentially*," an autobiographical piece which relates Kuyper's pilgrimage from doubt to the certainty of faith in the entirely sovereign God of Scripture. The account of Kuyper's conversion, of one who once doubted even the resurrection of Christ, is very moving. In his own words, "from that moment on I despised what I used to admire, and I sought what I had dared to despise" (54). He admitted that, due to his university education in rationalism, he had ignored orthodox authors. His professors had portrayed orthodox Christianity in "such a ludicrous, caricatured way that it seemed a . . . waste of money . . . to spend anything on such misbegotten writings" (56). Yet this man became leader of Reformed orthodoxy in the Netherlands. Kuyper's account of his embrace of truth is exciting and encouraging to read. It is worth the price of the book.

Church and state, church and sect, the dignity of manual labor, the case for Christian education, the preservation of constitutional liberties, and other timeless themes occupied Kuyper's attention, and his thoughts about them appear in this anthology. A suggestive bibliography adds to its value. Reformed Christians would do well to read and

ponder the works of Kuyper, his devotional and theological writings, which have been available for many years, and now this collection which supplements them appropriately. It is now possible to obtain an accurate, balanced understanding of the great Dutch Christian in his own words.

Creating a Christian Worldview by Peter S. Heslam is an analysis of Kuyper's 1898 Stone Lectures, a series of presentations which has been available in English ever since he delivered them. Heslam is an Anglican clergyman and a lecturer in theology at Cambridge University. His persuasion is strongly evangelical and Reformed, and this book originated as a doctoral thesis at Oxford University.

The great value of this study is its systematic treatment of each of the six lectures delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary. In this manner Heslam has produced a penetrating examination of Kuyper as a theologian and an analyst and critic of politics, religion, science, and art. The author contends that these *Lectures on Calvinism* (the published title) display Kuyper's mature thinking about the topics he addressed in 1898. Kuyper presented Calvinism as a life-system, a worldview, rather than just a school of theology. He did not object only to specific arguments of various non-Christian views but to the principles that undergird them. Heslam has correctly perceived that Abraham Kuyper was a principal thinker, one who went to the root of beliefs and showed how they reflect the axioms upon which people construct their arguments. Kuyper contended that historic Reformed orthodoxy alone offers an adequate worldview, and he demonstrated that assertion as he interpreted the areas he addressed at Princeton. He believed that all of life is religion, and like it or not, all people operate on the basis of faith, even though it is not Christian faith in most cases.

For those who have read *Lectures on Calvinism*, this book should be a stimulating refresher. For those who have

not, it should excite them to do so. Heslam writes in a pleasing style, so appreciation of his work does not require extensive previous knowledge of the subject. *Creating a Christian Worldview* is a fine introduction to the thinking of an outstanding exponent and defender of biblical truth.

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STUDIES IN PERFECTIONISM

Benjamin B. Warfield
Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958.
464 pages, cloth, \$19.99.

B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) is known as one of the major exponents of the Reformed view of theology. He studied at what is now Princeton University and Seminary, graduating from the latter in 1876. He taught first at Leipzig, Germany, but was later the successor to Archibald Alexander Hodge as professor of systematic theology at Princeton Seminary. He died in 1921. During his life he earned several distinguished degrees. He wrote theology profusely. This book was taken from the original ten-volume series of Warfield works first published by Oxford University Press and which has been popular for years as a corpus of his writings.

The original work, *Studies in Perfectionism*, included material on "German rationalists as Ritschl, Wernle, Clemen, Pfeleiderer, and Windisch."¹ For the use of the present audience this one-thousand-page work was truncated by excluding this material. The study's foci are on such men and movements as Asa Mahan, Charles Grandison Finney, Hanna Whitall Smith, the Oberlin teaching, the Higher Life teaching, the Fellowship movement, Keswick, and the

Victorious Life movement, mostly as they appear in English-speaking countries.

Perfectionism is a phenomenon which, if dealing exclusively in the Christian context, has appeared in Catholic, Arminian/Weslyan, Quaker and Quietist circles. It has been most prominently displayed in the Keswick and Victorious Life movement. The dominant theme of Warfield is that sin is undervalued and underappreciated by these perfectionists, and that sin consists of *any* failure to conform to the law of God. In Warfield's view, the perfectionists discussed have a theoretical rather than actual perfectionism. Salient arguments and a great deal of vital history make this a very useful book.

"Perfectionism was first given standing in the Protestant churches through the teaching of John Wesley, although he himself never claimed perfection."² Warfield's initial concern, however, is with the Oberlin College situation and the two men, Asa Mahan and Charles G. Finney, and the development of what is called "Oberlin Theology." His evaluation? "The cold, Pelagian system of the new divinity has been attached to the engine of fanaticism."³ This "New Divinity" emphasis on the ability of man stood in direct opposition to the teachings of Jonathan Edwards which had predominated prior to this time. In its earliest days the Wesleyan perfectionistic view took hold at Oberlin. A second stage of the Christian life was called by the different names of "entire sanctification," "holiness," "Christian perfection," and sometimes "the baptism of the Holy Ghost."

Finney's theological perspective was largely shaped by the Congregationalist N. W. Taylor. A distinctive aspect of this perfectionism is that "what is taught is a perfection that consists in complete righteousness, but in a righteousness which is adjusted to fluctuating ability."⁴ A person is not responsible for righteousness beyond what he knows that perfection to be.

As their perfectionism developed, a more serious "sea change" occurred, centered around the doctrine of "the simplicity of moral action." The end result was that Finney and Oberlin Theology taught that man was either entirely holy or entirely sinful in each and every action. There could be no mixed actions. The doctrine turned further into the message that a man

to be a Christian at all must be perfect: and the concern of the Christian is not to grow more perfect, but to maintain the perfection which belongs to him as a Christian and in which, not into which, he grows. What, then, he seeks after is not holiness—he has that. Nor more holiness than he has—if he has any he has all. What he seeks after is "establishment."⁵

This shift leaves no room for two classes of Christians, a view which was first held by these Oberlin theologians.

Finney's Pelagianism is seen in his belief that the Christian "is justified no further than he obeys, and must be condemned when he disobeys."⁶ This means that the person continues to move between justification and damnation, depending on his obedience. Finney also taught that atonement had nothing to do with the Augustinian system of imputation by which the sinner is justified, even though a sinner. "The penitent soul remains justified no longer than this full-hearted consecration continues."⁷ Additional doctrines of the Oberlin system and Finney are drawn upon by Warfield to establish the Pelagian underpinning of their theology.

Coming back to the Wesleyan influence on sanctification, Warfield lays out the life of W.E. Boardman and the Pearsall Smiths. Boardman wrote the definitive beginning book on sanctification, however poorly written, titled *The Higher Christian Life*. Mrs. Smith wrote the most popular holiness book of all time, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy*

Life. Though she had discovered her views through Methodism, she recalled that she had first heard them in her Quaker circles. In this she rejoiced. She remained a Quaker all of her life.

The "higher life" is built upon the double conversion theory, dividing justification from sanctification. The latter is obtained as the former through an act of faith. The product of the latter is rest in Christ and the complete victory over sinning, hence the inclusion in this book on perfectionism. There are two kinds of Christians in this movement—the sanctified and the merely justified. One is supposedly freed from the guilt of sin in the first conversion, and the power of sin in the other.

Boardman, the Smiths, and the Oberlin faction of perfectionism, among many others, came together in the great Oxford Union Meeting in England in the last quarter of the nineteenth century for an historic gathering. They are alike in this: they all want perfection, and they all believe that it comes, not by work, but by faith. There is this also which distinguishes them: they give a very large place to the will. It is the strong place of the will in choosing to allow the perfection work of Christ to take place.

The Smiths taught that man could sin constantly, even though a Christian. But when he chooses to abide in Christ, then there are perfect rest and holiness. This is perfectionism, though not in constancy—only as the will is operative to abide in Christ.

They also stressed the place of faith in opposition to works in sanctification. In other words, contrary to the Reformed position which gives the law a continued use and obedient works a rightful place, the "higher life" teaching puts all its emphasis on faith. It is "resting, not working," that is the principle.

It is interesting to note, as a sideline, that Mrs. Smith was a universalist in her view of salvation, but this does not

show up in her holiness teaching.⁸ And it is of even greater interest for our discussion that Mahan and the Smiths were together in the formation of the Keswick movement which continued this same two-tiered life of the believer.

Warfield discusses the German Fellowship movement and the Victorious Life movement with Charles Trumbull in largely the same vein. The purveyor of the latter was *The Sunday School Times*, edited by Trumbull and Robert McQuilken. Here again we have the motif of "let go and let God." Trumbull goes in some ways even further by saying, "It is not *your* faith. You have no faith in you, any more than you have life or anything else in you You have to take His faith as well as His life and healing, and have simply to say, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God.' . . . It is simply Christ, Christ alone."⁹

This book hits the nerve of modern evangelicalism. I have often seen the encroachment of the higher life movement in America's view of revival, for instance. It is most disconcerting to find that, for the most part, those who host conferences on revival do so with the intention of promoting the "deeper life" view of things. In other words, most of such meetings more or less become extended "deeper life" conferences. My suspicion is that many of the religious leaders in evangelicalism today were affected heavily by the resurgence of this sort of teaching in the 1970s and believe that coming back to it in force will bring some of the joys they experienced when younger. I consider this a grave mistake.

Some might contend that what Warfield was addressing in the later part of the book on the "higher life" is not related to the subject of perfectionism. Yet it is germane. Today we might call such movements "semi-perfectionism." We can see that the idea of the purveyors of this teaching believe that man is somehow suspended above two types of living—the one carnal, the other spiritual. As

long as the spiritual is operative, that is, Christ through the believer, then there is *perfect* rest and victory over sin. In this way *Christ* works *through* you, and He works perfectly because of His nature. This is a transient state, however, for when the carnal, or merely natural human aspect of our being is in charge, the result is entirely selfish and sinful. Here we can see the results of the Oberlin teaching and the "higher life" teaching. This entire holiness or entire sinfulness descends directly from Finney's view of "the simplicity of moral action" stated above. The suspended will theory is more akin to that of the Smiths and the Keswick people. I have personally espoused this view in former days and can vouch for its inaccuracies and frustrations.

For Warfield there is the knowledge that it is God's intention to sanctify with whatever means He chooses. He will do that with every person who is His without need for a second "conversion" (cf. Heb. 12:14; 1 Thess. 5:18, etc.). Sanctification is not ultimately dependent upon our will, but upon God who promises "He will do it" (1 Thess. 5:19). The believer progresses in his sanctification, aggressively disciplining his life because God is in him, "both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13).

In the overall look at this kind of perfectionism seen today, we can observe the following: 1) There is a lack of appreciation for the place of the demands of God through the law. For Warfield, an understanding and appreciation of the moral law is needed. Instead, everything is adjusted in terms of the law so that rectitude is not adherence to the law precisely, but to whatever we interpret to be the highest state. There is a vast difference. In other words, these perfect people are not really perfect, except in relation to their own perception of perfection.

2) The "higher life" teaching produces a certain passivity. In "letting go and letting God," all of the Bible's commands are not brought to bear on the believer's life. All he

is concerned about is relaxing in Jesus.

3) The "higher life" teaches a two-tiered view of the Christian life which is unbiblical. The carnal life mentioned in relationship to the believer in 1 Corinthians 3 is largely misunderstood and has damaged many. Because we teach that one can be saved without sanctification, masses of unconverted church members are lulled to sleep and end up in hell. The Bible teaches that "without holiness, no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). This teaching abuses the doctrine of perseverance.

4) This type of teaching creates a lack of self-examination about one's state with God. One is admonished to look away from himself to Christ for sanctifying life. As in most theories, there is some measure of truth in that thought, but the Bible also enforces the need to look at ourselves seriously and to take responsibility for sin. This is a seminal book on the subject of perfectionism and is relevant to our day. In fact, it is almost uncanny just how appropriate it is, though written almost a century ago.

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Notes

1. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), Vol. 2.
2. *Ibid.*, x.
3. *Ibid.*, 34.
4. *Ibid.*, 58.
5. *Ibid.*, 140.
6. *Ibid.*, 159, from Finney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (1851), 985.
7. *Ibid.*, 155, from Finney, *Lectures*, 157ff.
8. *Ibid.*, 287.
9. *Ibid.*, 386; cf. Charles Trumbull, "Himself," 10-12.

THE LIFE AND LABOURS OF ASAHIEL NETTLETON

Bennet Tyler and Andrew Bonar
Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust (Reprint 1975).
454 pages, paper \$18.00.

The author, Bennet Tyler, was a pastor for many years in South Britain, Connecticut, where he knew Asahel Nettleton (1783-1844) intimately. He eventually became the president of Dartmouth College. He is famous for his polemics against the liberal Nathaniel Taylor and the New Haven theology, a view which countered the Edwardsian and Augustinian view of depravity. This became known as the "Tyler-Taylor controversy." The end result was the constituting of a new seminary, first called the Theological Institute of Connecticut and later Hartford Theological Seminary, where he served as president until his death. Asahel Nettleton was also instrumental in beginning this new institution.¹

Andrew Bonar (1810-1892) was a Scottish minister who "remodeled in some parts" this work. He is known for his association with the revival movement in Scotland and his association with the well-known Robert Murray McCheyne, whose memoirs he wrote.²

According to the author, Asahel Nettleton was instrumental in the conversion of 30,000 souls. What evangelistic leader would not want to know about such a man? Nettleton first received his religious impressions at age eighteen in North Killingworth, Connecticut. His agonizing bout with conviction lasted ten months. He was converted in the midst of revival. In fact, the then new publica-

tion called the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine* recorded his conversion as part of its revival intelligence.

Though an average student, he maintained a good relationship at Yale with President Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards, who gave him warm approbation. Nettleton read nearly all of Edwards's works while in school, and those of his two most famous students, Belamy and Hopkins.

Though his missionary intentions were thwarted due to debt, he eventually paid off that debt, and, through the providence of God, began itinerant work. He had studied the ill effects of James Davenport, gathering as much information as possible. Davenport had itinerated during the Great Awakening in the mid-1700s and had caused much turmoil with his caustic manner. The result was that the influence of several pastors was marginalized, some churches split, and general confusion prevailed. Nettleton, much the wiser for this knowledge, was diligent to avoid such sophomoric behavior. He never came uninvited into another's parish, and sought to build up the pastors, submitting entirely to their authority over their churches. The end product was revival and recovery of trust in the very "waste places" which had been created by Davenport's wake half a century earlier.

Nettleton was a man of poor health, perhaps suffering from a recurring form of malarial fever. However, his preaching had a powerful effect. A Dr. Humphrey of the *Religious Intelligencer* described one message as "one continued flash of conviction."³ One observer said:

The chief excellence of his preaching seemed to consist in great plainness, and simplicity, and discrimination—in much solemnity and affectionate earnestness of manner—in the application of the truth to the heart and conscience—in taking away the excuses of sinners, and leaving them without

help and hope, except in the sovereign mercy of God.⁴

Nettleton is noted for his use of "meetings of inquiry," usually done in the following way:

After a short address, suited to produce solemnity, and to make all who were present feel that they were in the presence of a holy and heart-searching God, he would offer prayer. Then he would speak to each individual present in a low voice, unless the number was so large as to render it impossible. When that was the case, he would sometimes have one or two brethren in the ministry to assist him. He would converse with each one but a short time. The particular object of this conversation is to ascertain the state of each one's mind. He would then make a solemn address, giving them such counsel as he perceived to be suited to their condition; after which he closed the meeting with prayer. He usually advised them to retire with stillness, and to go directly to their closets.⁵

The great conflict of Nettleton's life was with the revivalist Charles Grandison Finney, against whose denunciatory attitude and novel methods Nettleton chafed. Finney (1792-1875) was railing against time-honored doctrine and even the finest of pastors, if they took exception to him, only three years after his conversion. The veteran Nettleton did not appreciate this. His chagrin over the *New Measures* of Finney was expressed in a long letter to a Mr. Aikin, which was eventually published for all to see. Much of it is reproduced in this book.

The book ends with a sampling of anecdotes demonstrating his effectiveness and wisdom as a counselor, spiritual logician, and preacher.

If this book suffers from any lack, the most glaring would be an overmuch affinity for Nettleton by the author. However, in biographical literature, one learns to read around this. Though the subject of Finney was addressed, I

felt that the author dealt with the issues concerning Finney only slightly, out of proportion to the actual facts. For instance, there is virtually nothing on the New Lebanon conference which had been designed to resolve conflicts between the old school and the new thinking on revivals of religion. This meeting is strategic in the history of the Second Great Awakening. In my estimation, the author did not want to reduce the aura of Nettleton's impact for his readers, and therefore did not say much about it.

The author adds a delightful section of numerous anecdotes from Nettleton. These experiences of Nettleton are useful in understanding the man, and are, in some ways, what makes this particular work effective. I felt much closer to the man after reading them. To illustrate his emphasis on repentance and his understanding of the law, for instance, Tyler writes:

An Antinomian complained to him that ministers dwelt so much in their preaching on the demands of the law. "Believers," said he, "are not under the law, but under grace." "Is it not the duty of believers," said Dr. Nettleton, "to repent?" "Certainly," he replied. "Of what is it their duty to repent?" said Dr. Nettleton. The man saw at once the precipice before him. If he said, 'Of sin,' he perceived that the next question would be: What is sin but a transgression of the law? And if believers are not under obligations to obey the law, what can there be for them to repent of?⁶

I am always intrigued by the theology of revival. Consistently I see the greater, more lasting, impact of Reformed theology on revival. It underlies so much of what happened in the visitations of God in the history, especially prior to Finney. Nettleton carried this theology forward. Tyler states:

It was the full conviction of Dr. Nettleton, that all genuine religious experience is based on correct views of the doctrines of grace; and, consequently, *that the religious experience of those whose views of these doctrines are defective, or essentially erroneous, will be, in like degree, defective or spurious.*⁷

My research into the subject of revival yields the same conclusion. The vast difference in the longevity of converts, for instance, between Finney and Nettleton is enough alone to demonstrate the rationality of his argument. It has become apparent to me that otherwise good men who are wrongly informed in doctrinal areas may, unwittingly, find themselves working against the effective extension of the kingdom of God. Our doctrine definitely lays the ground for the revival we experience. Some think that revival is always unifying, and, in some way, perfect as it works itself out in the life of the larger church and the community. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our doctrine makes all the difference. What we believe when revival comes will likely be exaggerated during revival. The ramifications of wrong doctrine at the outset are staggering, and in part explain the abuses which sometimes follow (consider Davenport). This is not to say that we do not need revival, but that we also need reformation. In some senses, we need the later first.

I was stimulated to try arranging in my future meetings for a new approach which directly relates to Nettleton's inquiry room procedure. A deliberate meeting with those seeking answers at a special time could be an important tool, provided the apparent conviction of the people calls for it.

Finally, I have been again impressed with the humility of Nettleton. I hope that I can emulate it. Mr. Cobb of Taunton, Connecticut, said:

He was remarkably free from the love of applause. When anyone spoke to him of the good he was doing, he would sometimes reply: "We have no time to talk about that." And frequently I have known him to turn pale and retire from the company, and prostrate himself before God as a great and unworthy sinner.⁸

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Notes

1. Daniel G. Reid, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, and Harry Stout, editors, *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 1191-92.
2. J. D. Douglas, general editor, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church, Revised Edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974, 1978), 141.
3. Bennet Tyler and Andrew Bonar, *The Life and Labours of Asahel Nettleton* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, reprint 1975), 160.
4. *Ibid.*, 282.
5. *Ibid.*, 309-10.
6. *Ibid.*, 401-402.
7. *Ibid.*, 394.
8. *Ibid.*, 421.

GLORY FILLED THE LAND, A TRILOGY ON THE WELSH REVIVAL OF 1904-1905.

Richard Owen Roberts, editor; H. Elvet Lewis, G. Campbell Morgan and I. V. Neprash
Wheaton, Illinois: International Awakening Press, 1989.
204 pages, cloth, \$20.00.

This is a compilation of the reports of three men on the 1904-05 Welsh Revival.

George Campbell Morgan visited Wales during the 1904-1905 revival for a short time and then returned

to report about it. The material by Morgan in Roberts' book is a sermonic report preached at Morgan's church, the well-known Westminster Chapel of London. It was printed in both the *Christian Commonwealth* and by the Pilgrim Press. The second reporter was Howell Elvet Lewis who writes as a native Welshman who participated in the revival. Professor Neprash, who authored the third segment, makes his contribution as a close friend of the principal figure of the movement, Evan Roberts (1878-1951). He is one of the few people who had intimate contact with the leader during his period of obscurity.

H. Elvet Lewis's comparatively large section, "With Christ Among the Miners," commences with the picture of "two old pilgrims who had never forgotten the Revival of 1859-60, but had kept their Simeon-like watch." These men "suddenly sprung to their feet at a prayer-meeting, and with arms uplifted, shouted: 'Here it comes! Old '59!'"¹ The author, after giving characteristics of the Welsh situation, leads us through the actual chronology of the eighteenth and nineteenth century revivals in Wales, including the succession of 1829, 1839, 1849, and 1859 preceding the last of the Welsh revivals, the 1904. Wales is often called "The Land of Revivals." The editor states that Wales has experienced at least sixteen major revivals in the last 300 years.

Evan Roberts was the young man who played such a prominent part as a human instrument in the national awakening. He had been actively involved in the work of the church and had been seeking revival for thirteen years. While attending preparatory school in preparation for the ministry, he heard the words, "And Lord, bend us," in a prayer by Seth Joshua. He began to pray, "Lord, bend me, bend me, bend me." At this time he said that he felt "a living force entering my heart; it held my breath; my legs trembled violently . . . increasing, increasing, almost to

bursting."² He and his friends soon agreed to ask for 100,000 souls! The result was the 1904-1905 revival in which at least that many were in fact converted.

The following characteristics accompanied the revival throughout: "The congregational petition for the sending of the Spirit, the four rules of the practice of faith, the missionary's conviction of direct communications from the Holy Spirit bearing on every detail, the insistence on direct prayers for specified blessings."³ The four rules mentioned above which guided the revival were as follows: "1. A confession to God of all sins of the past hitherto unconfessed. 2. The giving-up of everything doubtful. 3. Open confession of Christ. 4. Ready and immediate obedience to every impulse of the Spirit."⁴

Lewis displays the general sweep of the revival with some special attention to some of the mystical aspects, including visions and unusual behavior. Of particular note was Evan Roberts' "clairvoyant expressions"⁵ which were occurring with more frequency during the later days of the movement. As the activity went on, Evan Roberts finally came to his strange "silent week," stopping his crusades for a season. Later, mysteriously, he moved out of the public sphere altogether.

Lewis continues his consideration of the revival by looking at the results of the revival, though he felt it was too early at his point of time to get the fullest evaluation. According to one survey by a Professor Edwards, about 80 percent of the converts were still standing after five years. The most important of the concluding chapters of Lewis' portion, from my viewpoint, was on the subject "Signs and Wonders," in which, again, some of the more mystical elements are disclosed. He finishes his survey of the situation by reciting some of the notable hymns which received attention during those days.

The final two authors take a much smaller portion of

the book. G. Campbell Morgan gives us the three characteristics of the revival (singing, prayer, and testimony), then takes a brief look at Evan Roberts himself, the revival's origin, and some of the peculiarities. I.V. Neprash tells of the experiences of the eight months he spent with Roberts following his removal from revival activity.

The book is of uneven value. There is some notable historical benefit for the student from reading these reports, though understandably shy of the more careful and scholarly analysis of such an important period of history. I found the larger section to be especially loaded with that kind of flowery language and vacuity in content which makes for dull reading. The book is halting in its style. Elvert Lewis's section is the most substantial of the book; however, Neprash's is the most enlightening. The first-hand accounts of the history is the real reason it should be read. It is a period response and naturally retains the language style of the day.

The authors take an advocacy position on the revival itself. These are three men who loved and appreciated what happened. Even so, there are some hesitations in their presentations. They are attempting on the one hand to approve of what has happened and to promote it, but on the other hand to say something about the level of mysticism which concerns them. It is on this issue that I believe the book has its greatest usefulness to me, reinforcing and advancing some thoughts previously espoused about revival and about the leadership of the Spirit. The actual first-hand data about this "illumination" are helpful. Evan Roberts was entrenched in this method of guidance. Just prior to the revival Roberts had the following experience:

While on my knees, I was caught up into space, without time or place—communing with God. Before then I had only a God at a distance. I was frightened that night, never afterwards. I trembled so that the bed shook. This woke my

brother who feared I was ill. After that experience I used to be wakened every night a little after one. After waking a little past one I would spend about four hours, without a break, in divine communion. What it was I cannot tell except that it was divine. Then about five I would be allowed to sleep again until near nine, and then I would be taken up to the same divine communion and so till twelve or one. . . This lasted about three months.⁶

Roberts' direct communications with the Lord permeate the record. Others experienced the same. There were visions, lights, voices, and other unusual phenomena in village after village. Toward the end of his brief months in leadership of the revival, Roberts began to have visions which he could not distinguish as easily. He felt that they were from Satan. His relationship with manifestations continued and grew in the later period as he moved into something like a depression or period of exhaustion. He began to do some strange things such as not attending his mother's funeral and closing himself off from guests who had come to visit him. He eventually removed himself from ministry and lived in near seclusion at the home of the Penn-Lewis's, Keswick leaders.

It is obvious to me that this revival, unlike most others experienced in Wales, was experience-centered rather than Word-centered. Evan Roberts often did not speak at all in the meetings. At other times he might speak seven-to-ten minutes only. I believe that the evidence is clear enough that God Himself did visit those people and that many were genuinely changed; however, the lack of biblical preaching was a glaring problem. One reason why the meetings were not characterized by preaching perhaps relates to the higher criticism prevalent in the training of the pastors at the time. Had they allowed for preaching from such leaders there is no doubt that the revival would have ended even more quickly.

I have read of phenomena in other revivals; repeatedly,

however, there has perhaps been no revival quite like the 1904 as to its mystical nature. One finds in reading revival literature that the revivals stabilized on the truth were far longer and more effective. This revival along with the 1858 revival, as it touched America, were certainly hampered by lack of preaching. This fact is noted by many, and is mentioned by the editor as well. This serves as a warning to us in our day. We already see the insatiable appetite among our culture for experience, and we have seen the "Toronto Blessing" and the Pensacola Pentecostal experiences demonstrating the extremes to which people can go in this realm. If it had not been for a reservoir of truth in some of the older believers in Wales, I have no doubt that there would have been even more difficulties. The mystical elements did bring the revival down eventually. We are a nation enamored prior to revival by the very experiences that normally bring about the demise of revivals. Who knows what that will mean if God chooses to visit us? Revival, though coming from God, passes through human hands.

Neprash tells of Evan Roberts lying on the floor, crying to the Lord to bring men's worship of him to naught so that all the glory should go to God alone.⁷ All of the writers, even when they struggle with Roberts' mysticism, have the deepest appreciation of him as a person. And concerning his mysticism, they are reluctant to rule it out entirely because so much lasting work was done in the revival.

Though not recorded in the book, I discovered while visiting the site of the beginning of the 1904 revival in South Wales that the funeral of Roberts was attended by large numbers, and several were converted even in that memorial service. He retains the respect of most of evangelical Wales, even though reservations about certain practices abound. No one seems to have the final word about his absencing himself from the revival activity so soon after it

began. Perhaps it has to do with failure to receive counsel, a common problem in illuminists. If he had received wise counsel, he might have preserved his strength and more effectively led the people for a longer time. Perhaps it may conjointly have something to do with his humility.

Read this book, not for its literary style or even its inspiration, but for understanding what some first-hand observers thought and experienced.

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Notes

1. Elvet H. Lewis, G. Campbell Morgan, I. V. Neprash; edited by Richard Owen Roberts. *Glory Filled the Land, A Trilogy on The Welsh Revival of 1904-1905* (Wheaton, Illinois: International Awakening Press, 1989), 5.
2. *Ibid.*, 39.
3. *Ibid.*, 45.
4. *Ibid.*, 44.
5. *Ibid.*, 94.
6. *Ibid.*, 36.
7. *Ibid.*, 200.

SCOTLAND SAW HIS GLORY

Richard Owen Roberts, compiler and editor
Wheaton, Illinois: International Awakening Press, 1995.
351 pages, cloth, \$21.95.

Richard Owen Roberts, president of International Awakening Ministries, has taken out-of-print sources to compile this book. One source was issued in a limited edition of only thirteen copies; the earliest source is dated 1743. No information is given on the lives of the authors. Roberts claims no originality; the works he uses are fully incorporated, with almost no quoting. He mixes and complements the six primary sources to accomplish his purpos-

es. It is of note to mention that Roberts' own personal library on revival is one of the largest in the country, and that he also helped build Wheaton's revival collection into thousands of volumes. Mr. Roberts is known throughout the United Kingdom and the United States for his work in the history of revival.

The book is a chronology of major revival events and personalities in Scotland from the Reformation days of the fiery John Knox in the 1500s to the visit of the evangelists Moody and Sankey in the 1800s. The survey stops in the nineteenth century due to the sources chosen, all of which were written before the stirrings of revival in the 1850s on the Isle of Lewis.

Scotland has seen the glory of God! The recurring revival waves built what was at one time a mighty witness in Scotland. The beginning wave was the Reformation itself, a movement of life and spiritual verve and associated with Knox the Reformer. There were, of course, other men, such as Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart, William Cooper, and the larger-than-life John Welsh, who were sixteenth-century men of note. But all revivals cool at some point and another shower must refresh the soil. This first happened through the ministry of John Davidson when the participants of the Reformation were advanced in years. In 1596 at St. Giles in Edinburgh the pastors of the nation met in a solemn assembly under his spiritual leadership, until a great breaking took place, the effects of which rippled throughout the land through the various synods.

Some thirty years later (1625) in the sleepy town of Stewarton God came again. The town certainly "has little or nothing otherwise to commend it"¹ than the revival which goes by its name. According to Fleming, one of the sources, "This great spring time of the gospel did not last for a short time merely, but continued many years."²

One of best-known of revival experiences followed at

Kirk of Shotts in 1630 when the young preacher John Livingstone took the last service of the communion period. Over 500 were converted as they listened, standing in the rain. This same man preached one other occasion and a thousand were converted.³ On both occasions he had been up all night in prayer and had minimal preparation time.

The Cambuslang revival under the leadership of a very mild and quiet-spoken preacher named William M'Culloch, also has become a standard. Though sometimes associated with Whitefield, the revival commenced four months before Whitefield's first visit.⁴ The crowds associated with this season of revival sometimes reached thirty thousand, especially during the two communion periods. This great work about which so much has been written began in a church that was spiritually stagnant, and through a pastor who was so average in his preaching skill that he was called a "yill minister."⁵ This term was used at the time to mean that "his rising to speak during field preaching [before the revival] at communions was taken by many as the signal to seek refreshment." But revival changes a man; on his tombstone was written, "He was eminently successful in preaching the gospel."⁶

The author continues his sketch by a survey of several other lesser movements such as Moulin in 1799, Arran in 1812, Skye in 1812, Breadalbane in 1816-17, Lewis in 1824-33, and Kilsyth in 1839. The revival of 1859-60 is well known transatlantically because of its connection with America and the Prayer Revival of 1857-58. In fact, the 1859 revival affected all of the British Isles, especially Wales, Ireland and Scotland, under such men as Brownlow North and Edward Payson Hammond and others. Roberts ends his survey with the visit of Moody and Sankey. A notable characteristic of the 1859 revival was the emphasis on the Holy Spirit, and Moody's own "baptism with the Holy Ghost"⁷ added to that emphasis.

Roberts has done a yeoman's work in compiling the data and in making the book read as if it were authored by one individual. The use of language is even throughout. The flow of the work is agreeable and covers the salient history. For many this will be an excellent introduction to the work of God in Scotland, without overbearing detail. The book reads well, though the American reader will continually struggle with getting the "feel" of the country geographically. It does move me. I have already recommended that others buy the book for its ability to stir the emotions and to excite the vision for revival.

At first I was disappointed that Moody and Sankey were included. They certainly do add a very different tone to the book, being more akin to the mass evangelists of today. Indeed, it is commonly known that they are the first of the truly organized of the mass evangelists. They put the "city-wide" into crusade evangelism. Though evangelism is on the center stage of revival, one almost never thinks of revival as an organized evangelistic effort. Perhaps I could say, in defense of Roberts' choice that the *contrast* was important and the shift we see in Moody has been more or less permanent. For this reason we need to engage these two men. Roberts did include a revealing footnote from one of his sources, noting that their success "arose and was maintained in connection with the preaching of the theology of the Westminster Confession."⁸ What this means is that the previously sound theology, even though Moody did not fully espouse it, was instrumental in the effect which their message had. I have seen this phenomenon in other revival literature. It is not uncommon for American Finney-styled theology (Moody was a direct descendant of Finney methodologically, though less catastrophic theologically) to have an immediate effect in reaping what years of better theology have prepared. By that admission I still personally do not espouse the Moody way of conducting busi-

ness, even if he is a powerful and engaging figure. I do think that he was a godly man, but his ways were too manipulative and set a problematic precedent.

I was again struck with the place of preaching on regeneration which is seen in Scottish revival history. Let me develop this by quoting Mr. Roberts in three places:

The minister [William M'Culloch, prior to the Cambuslang revival] in his ordinary course of sermons for nearly a twelve-month before the work began had been preaching on those subjects which tend most directly to explain the nature, and prove the necessity, of regeneration according to the different lights in which that important matter is represented in Holy Scripture.⁹

Robe [of Kilsyth in the 1742 revival] traces the preparation made for the revival back to a series of discourses on regeneration which, like his friend M'Culloch of Cambuslang, he preached to his people. "It is probable that both ministers were influenced by Doddridge's Letters on Regeneration, which were at that time in the enjoyment of a considerable popularity."¹⁰

In that month [March, 1799, at the inauguration of the Moulin revival] Stewart . . . began a series of discourses on regeneration, founded on the story of Nicodemus.¹¹

The significance of this information is that of correcting common misconceptions about revival. In our day, we think of revival in terms of the Christian life. Questions such as how one can live effectively and handle stress and cope with family problems, loom large in our thinking. We must address these. But historically revival was more centered on the foundational doctrines of salvation. It really was gospel work, in that larger and more doctrinal sense. And at the heart of it all was the repeated call to regeneration. The doctrine was tuned to the sin of the day in this way. Since regeneration, or the giving of life to dead souls,

is knowable in the true Christian's life ("by their fruits you shall know them"), a professed believer can be challenged to examine himself to see the evidence of it. This kind of preaching made regeneration a searching doctrine. Many souls were brought under conviction by the preaching of this truth. I am convinced through this further evidence that we must preach regeneration again today. No doctrine fits our day quite like it.

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Notes

1. Richard Owen Roberts, editor, *Scotland Saw His Glory* (Wheaton, Illinois: International Awakening Press, 1995), 99.
2. *Ibid.*, 108.
3. *Ibid.*, 119-20.
4. *Ibid.*, 127.
5. *Ibid.*, 128.
6. *Ibid.*, 129.
7. *Ibid.*, 320.
8. *Ibid.*, 332. Taken from *Religious Life in Scotland*, 279. Author unnamed.
9. *Ibid.*, 130.
10. *Ibid.*, 148.
11. *Ibid.*, 207.

HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF ACCOUNTS OF REVIVAL

John Gillies

Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust (reprint 1981).

582 pages, cloth, \$44.99.

“*A*nd there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10). How many of us sat with previous generations to ask, “What is the meaning of

these 'stones'?" How many fathers catechize their children to make certain the next generations know not only the Lord, but also the *great* things He has done for His people? If you long for reformation and revival, if you love the Reformers and Puritans, if you desire powerful godliness, then read this book.

Through *Historical Collections Relating To Remarkable Periods Of The Success Of The Gospel*, compiled and published in 1754 by Rev. John Gillies, succeeding generations can be invigorated as they humbly learn to hope for God to grant remarkable periods of gospel success. Gillies' *Accounts* were reprinted and continued to "the present time" (1845) by another friend of revivals, Rev. Horatius Bonar. Bonar rearranged the *Accounts* into six books. Except for Book I, with the title, *Success of the Gospel From the First to the Sixteenth Century*, Books II-V each cover one century, the sixteenth through the nineteenth. Book VI continues the record of revivals up to 1845.

The obvious question for us is, Why has there been no "continuation to the present" in our time? Where is Book VII? In the editor's preface their intent and duty are clearly stated: "Its object is to trace out their story and record it for a memorial to all generations. The world has written at large the history of its sleeping multitudes; it becomes the Church of Christ to record the simpler, briefer annals of its awakened ones" (v).

The prefaces and introductory remarks are worth the price of the book. They read like the psalmists of old with their cries of the soul for God to awaken the church. Bonar longingly writes,

Oh that the Churches of Christ would awake at the sound of his voice! Oh that they would recognise the Holy Spirit's hand and power, from the beginning downwards to the present hour. Oh that they would cease to think of him as some

vague diffusive influence, and acknowledge him as the Living Spirit of God, by whose personal indwelling and inworking in our souls, we are quickened, convinced, converted, comforted, sanctified, and made meet [fit] for the Kingdom! (iv).

As the Bible is mostly narrative, so too are these remarkable accounts. They are taken from primary sources—journals of the men God used in revival and their firsthand observations.

Here are the "eyewitnesses of His majesty." In this volume you'll find forgotten names with unforgettable stories of the extraordinary visitations and withdrawals of God's manifest presence, felt and known.

Dr. Gillies does not actually write a new history; rather he quotes source after source in a chronological fashion. He is more an arranger of other peoples' historical accounts. One criticism directed to Gillies' *Accounts* has been the noticeable lack of accounts for not only the first three centuries, but also only two paragraphs given for the sixth through the twelfth centuries! Are we to assume that there were no records of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit during these centuries? Is this an unspoken critique of monasticism, scholasticism, and the Crusades? Indeed, the Middle Ages saw a decline in gospel success in direct proportion to a decline in preaching the gospel of grace. For although there were the courageous missionary efforts of Raymund Lull and others, there seems to have been a long period of decline until the fifteenth century when Gillies picks up again to end Book I.

Gillies' original two volumes, printed in 1754, end on page 496. In 1761, he published a 250-page volume, called *An Appendix to the Historical Collections*. And in 1796, Dr. Erskine published some manuscripts of Gillies' titled *A Supplement*. The editors did not like the way the manuscripts "did justice to the subject nor to the author," so

"something like a better arrangement and condensation has been attempted" (496). The actual "continuation to the present" done by Bonar and the editors is actually rather brief (five pages), but it was a noble attempt recording the "doings of the Spirit of God" in Scotland for the first half of the nineteenth century.

WHY PURCHASE AND READ *ACCOUNTS OF REVIVAL*?

First, because there is no other volume, next to the Bible, that contains so many of the accounts of the outpourings of the Holy Spirit throughout the history of redemption. The conclusion begins, "Thus ends the Work of Gillies—a work in which is contained a fuller and completer history of the wonderful doings of the Spirit of God than any other extant" (556). Other than Jonathan Edwards's attempt preempted by his death, such a work isn't readily available.

Second, because nothing teaches us more about the sovereignty of God and the impotency of man more than accounts of revivals. John Knox writes of the cause of such great gospel success in such a short period of time in Scotland: "For what was our force, (saith he) or number, to bring so great an enterprise to such a close. . . ? God gave his holy spirit to simple men in great abundance" (159,46).

Third, because we are stirred up to lay hold of the ascended Christ's willingness to pour out His Spirit again in large measures. Perhaps you have heard of Robert Bruce.

At prayer meetings among his brethren and fellow Christians, he was sometimes remarkably answered while still praying. A little before his death, while on a visit to Edinburgh, at a private meeting for prayer, there was such a movement of the Spirit as he prayed, that scarcely any were able to restrain themselves; and one minister afterwards exclaimed, "O what a strange man is this! For he knocked down the Spirit of God upon us all." And he was one of that

praying company, who spent the most of five days and nights in prayer at the Kirk of Shotts, during the week that preceded the amazing shower of the Spirit (179).

Fourth, because it exposes the poor theology of revivalism and the dead orthodoxy which is often opposed to the effects of revivals. These revivals were never planned, organized, or worked up. You won't learn any revivalism techniques in this volume. "Iniquity abounds, and is allowed to proceed onward apparently unchecked, as if God had forsaken the earth. . . . Then suddenly God steps in, makes bare his arm, does his own work, puts aside the instrument, manifests special grace, and reaps special glory to his name" (xvii). Dead orthodoxy is also exposed. Whitefield's *Journals* are quoted:

At dinner, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me again, and enabled me to speak with such vigour against sending unconverted persons into the ministry, that two ministers, with tears in their eyes, publicly confessed, that they had laid their hands on young men, without so much as asking them whether they were bourn again or not.... [O]ne old minister was so deeply convicted, that, with great difficulty (because of his weeping) he desired our prayers; for, said he, "I have been a scholar, and have preached the doctrines of grace for a long time, but I believe I have never felt the power of them in my soul" (xiii).

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? May there arise another generation in the twenty-first century who knows the Lord and the *great* things He has done recorded in the Bible and in Gillies' *Accounts*. So I pray.

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