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**SCOTTISH
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EDITORIAL

The challenge of Paul to Timothy to 'do the work of an evangelist' (2 Tim. 4:5) can hardly be more relevant to those engaged in the ministry of the church. A plethora of statistical reports, historical surveys, sociological analysis and books on church growth remind us that if the church is to be faithful to its calling, it must share in the mission of God to a lost and lonely world. We live in a society which is anything but Christian. Steve Bruce reminds us that 'Britain was once religious, it is now secular'¹ with only '14 percent of Scots' attending church.² If the recent analysis of church growth in Conservative Evangelical churches in America is similar to that of Scotland, then even growing churches are gaining their numbers through 'switching saints' rather than converts.³ As we draw near to the year 2000, facing the challenge of secularisation and postmodernity, we need to relate the gospel, church and world in creative ways and engage in a missionary encounter with our contemporary culture.

This is the challenge which faces not only the leaders of denominations in Scotland today but also those of us who are directly involved in the theological formation of future leaders within our evangelical constituency. Andrew Kirk reminds us that 'theology by its nature is missionary... for it has as its object the study of the ways of a God who is by nature

¹ Steve Bruce, 'The Truth about Religion in Britain' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1995 34.4, p. 428.

² Steve Bruce, 'Religion in Britain at the Close of the 20th Century' *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1996, p. 264.

³ Robin D. Perrin, Paul Kennedy and Donald E. Miller, 'Examining the Sources of Conservative Church Growth: Where are the New Evangelical Movements Getting their Numbers?' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 1997, 36.1, pp. 71-80. Calum Brown from University of Strathclyde has recently made the comment that 'Only one denomination which has experienced membership decline in Scotland has sustained a late-twentieth-century reversal – the Baptist Church. Baptist membership declined from the 1930s until 1976, and then started a modest but steady growth in the last quarter of the century.' However, he goes on to comment that the growth may be due to the fact that the 'Baptists have been recruiting amongst disaffected members of the Church of Scotland.' See Calum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997), p. 159.

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missionary and a foundational text written by and for missionaries'.⁴ If our study of theology is genuine it will lead us 'to participate in mission... to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is the fountain of sending love'.⁵

Although the issue of 'relevance' can be over-emphasised, the question of how we relate a curriculum of theological reflection to the issues of our contemporary culture is one which cannot be avoided. Indeed the strict disciplinary boundaries which continue to dominate theological education make it all too possible to become engrossed in the theological enterprise for its own sake rather than for the sake of the *missio Dei*. Throughout our theological studies we need to make connections with the needs of the church and the lostness of the world.

I am not arguing for a programme of spiritual formation which is untheological. Nothing could be farther from the truth. We need to equip women and men for the future leadership of the church who will be enabled to follow Paul into the 'market place' of our own communities and 'try to convince' our contemporaries by 'speaking out boldly, and arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God' so that the unreached peoples of Scotland 'hear the word of the Lord' in a way that makes sense.

For example, as Evangelicals we are convinced that the cross reveals God's act of reconciling the world to himself in Christ. Yet as you trace the historical development of the doctrine of the atonement down through the centuries you discover that at different times, in different contexts and within different cultures, the doctrine of the cross has been understood in different ways. The message of the cross has been contextualised, made relevant to the different perceived needs of human beings at specific times in history.

Although the biblical message is that 'all have sinned' and that 'Christ died for our sins' the way in which different words are used for sin makes us realise that the awareness of the basic human predicament will change from age to age and so will the particular emphasis we make in our presentation of the message of the cross. This does not mean reducing the message of Christianity so that it becomes palatable to human taste. Rather, we should allow Christ crucified to be seen as the reality which men and women need to know within their hearts because contact points

⁴ J. Andrew Kirk, *The Mission of Theology and Theology as Mission* (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1997), pp. 48, 50.

⁵ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, 1991), p. 390.

have been made, bridges have been built between the message of the first century and the lives of people in the twenty-first century.

For instance many people have a sense of alienation or estrangement, of being divided from other people and thus in need of reconciliation. Then there are others who feel a sense of failing to find fulfilment and purpose in life – falling short ‘of the glory of God’. Furthermore, sin indicates that failure in personal relationships with God and other people and the world is, in Emil Brunner’s memorable phrase ‘a theatre of revolt’. To each of these situations, a different facet of the gospel message of the cross will be expressed. Thus there are various images of the work of atonement which will illustrate the divine act of redemption.

Perhaps the most common understanding of the cross in the New Testament period was that of sacrifice in which the blood of Christ was seen as an agent of cleansing and so images of washing and fresh clothing abound. Still in our own culture the idea of moral defilement prevails and so we speak of a ‘dirty trick’, ‘foul language’ and ‘a clean driving licence’. We may have a shower to make us feel clean again, not only after a difficult and tiring day but also when we feel that we have been spiritually and morally affected by the world.

The metaphors of atonement which the church has used from one age to the next are not mutually exclusive and to choose only one and reject the others is to rob oneself of the richness of the New Testament proclamation of the cross. Each metaphor has a distinctive and vital contribution to make to our understanding and proclamation of the gospel, helping us to make sense of its meaning and message and enabling us to preach Christ crucified within our communities.

In our modern setting any preacher must know the situation of his congregation and the relevance of the gospel to that situation if he is to bring out the full richness and relevance of the Christian proclamation for them. The complexity and diversity of the human situation is matched by a corresponding richness of our understanding of salvation – with the fundamental insight being retained that salvation is primarily about being restored to fellowship with God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Lausanne Covenant challenges churches to be ‘deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture’. It is a principle which we readily accept when we send missionaries to work in foreign cultures. They learn the language and customs of the people to whom they will minister and yet it is a concept which we rarely take on board within our contemporary context. Yet if the church is to communicate the good news

of Jesus to our secular society we must express it in ways which are meaningful. This will involve ministers in a pattern of initial and continuing education in the concepts and context of our world, engaging in a critical analysis of the times in which we live so that we understand the way people think, the perplexing issues they are grappling with and thus apply the good news of God's love to the lives they are living. In this way the church will be able to engage in 'the prophetic and missionary calling which is the fundamental task of the followers of Christ'.⁶

Scripture is a rich resource of material which is as relevant in the twentieth century as it was in the first. As preachers we need to work hard, not only in our understanding of how the text of Scripture was interpreted in ancient Israel and the Christian communities of Asia Minor but how it is to be applied to the contemporary situation of Aberdeen, Alloa and Abbeyhill and make our application of Scripture explicit. Haddon Robinson makes this point well when he says that 'early in the sermon, the listeners should realise that the pastor is talking about them – application starts in the introduction not in the conclusion'.⁷ Preaching which is biblical will be authentic but only relevant preaching can be classified as being biblical.

Our own postmodern culture is crying out for a compelling presentation of the gospel of Christ which makes connections with people in their daily living, offering a message of hope in the midst of despair. As preachers, let us hear and heed the words of Paul to Timothy to 'do our best to present ourselves to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth'.

⁶ David W. Smith, *Transforming the World: The Social Impact of British Evangelicalism* (Carlisle, 1998), p. 112.

⁷ Haddon W. Robinson, *Expository Preaching* (Leicester, 1980), p.164.

PETER MARTYR AND THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY

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The two most excellent theologians of our times are John Calvin and Peter Martyr, the former of whom has dealt with the holy Scriptures as they ought to be dealt with – with sincerity, I mean, and purity and simplicity, without any scholastic subtleties.... Peter Martyr, because it seemed to fall to him to engage the Sophists, has overcome them sophistically, and struck them down with their own weapons.¹

In Martyr's *Commonplaces* there is great perspicuity of diction. In Calvin's *Institutes* as well as in his Biblical commentaries, though industrious and studious, it seems that a tortuous serpent deceives and conceals from the reader the form which meanders so much that he sees only the tail which he can scarcely hang onto.²

What these two seemingly contrary estimates have in common is their ranking together of John Calvin (1509-64) and Peter Martyr (1499-1562) as the twin titans, the Atlas and Axis, of the Reformed faith. The quotations originate from very different men: the first, from the French Reformed humanist Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609), historian, linguist, philo-Semite and anti-Jesuit, champion of religious freedom; the second, from the Roman Catholic controversialist Cornelius Schulting, who in 1602 undertook to refute Calvinism in five volumes, identifying it with the teachings found in Calvin's *Institutes* and Martyr's *Commonplaces*. Clearly Martyr had a quite brilliant reputation among friends and foes alike in the sixteenth century. Calvin himself commended Martyr to archbishop Thomas Cranmer as 'the best and purest of men', and said of the eucharistic controversy that, 'The whole was crowned by Peter Martyr, who has left nothing to be desired.'³

This brilliance, however, has been strangely effaced by the passage of time. Few today have more than a passing acquaintance with Martyr.

¹ Quoted in B.B.Warfield, *Calvin as a Theologian* (London, n.d.), pp. 1-2.

² Quoted by M.W.Anderson, *Peter Martyr* (Nieuwkoop, 1975), p. 55.

³ J. C. McLelland, *The Visible Words of God* (Edinburgh, 1957), p. 279 (referred to hereafter as McLelland).

Gordon Rupp compared Martyr's *Commonplaces* to an extinct dinosaur;⁴ T.F. Torrance called Martyr's demise one of the tragedies of Reformation history.⁵ The question, then, inevitably arises: what was it that made the Florentine Reformer so special to his contemporaries, but which subsequent generations have missed?

Influence of Aristotle

A clue may be found in Scaliger's description of Martyr's method as 'sophistic', and Schulting's esteem for its clarity. Undoubtedly both are referring to the fact that Martyr was a committed Aristotelian in matters of logical discourse. In Martyr's own day this reflected praise on him, even from enemies like the Roman Catholics who heard his lectures on 1 Corinthians at Oxford and 'much admired his learning and the methodical arrangement of his discourse'.⁶ However, in our own day Martyr's Aristotelianism has led to his being pejoratively bracketed with Theodore Beza (1519-1605) and Jerome Zanchius (1516-90) as one of the founding fathers of Reformed scholasticism – of a theology logical at the expense of the Bible, decree-centred at the expense of Christ.⁷ Is this correct? From what I have read of Martyr, I do not think so, and I hope a fairer, more attractive picture will emerge in the course of this article. I intend to begin by looking precisely at the vexed question of Martyr's Aristotelianism, since its methodology (and to some extent its epistemology) shaped his doctrine of the sacraments.

Martyr imbibed his Aristotelianism at the university of Padua, where he studied as a young Augustinian friar from 1519 to 1527. Padua University 'boasted one of the proudest traditions of Aristotelianism in Christendom'.⁸ During Martyr's stay it also boasted two outstanding Aristotelian thinkers. One was Branda Porro of Milan, 'without any question called the prince of the philosophers of his time',⁹ who according

⁴ Gordon Rupp, 'Patterns of Salvation in the First Age of the Reformation', *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte* 57 (1966), p. 63.

⁵ Introduction to McLelland, p. vi.

⁶ M. Young, *The Life and Times of Aonio Paleario* (London, 1860), p. 477.

⁷ E.g. by Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvin and the Amyraut Heresy* (Madison WI, 1969).

⁸ P. McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy* (Oxford, 1967), p. 107.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

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to Philip McNair was a 'potent formative influence on Martyr's mind'.¹⁰ The other was Marc Antonia de Passeri, 'in his own time the most famous peripatetic [Aristotelian] in the world' and an ardent Averroist.¹¹ The version of Aristotle dominant at Padua was indeed that of the Spanish Muslim philosopher Averroes (1126-98), as interpreted by the French scholastic Siger of Brabant (1235-82); among its unorthodox teachings, combated by Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura, were a denial that reason could prove the soul's immortality, the assertion that the highest human bliss was to be found in the present life (consisting in philosophical meditation), and too carefree an admission that the truths of reason could contradict the truths of revelation. Martyr was never to propound such views, but he may have reacted against them, in his insistence on the rationality of God and Scripture. At any rate, he learnt Greek at Padua specifically to read Aristotle in the originals, and he found in Aristotelian logic a lifelong method for clear thinking and lucid argument.

Two other powerful influences on Martyr at Padua were Aquinas and Augustine. Aquinas was one of the two theologians he chiefly studied. Padua itself was a bastion of neo-Thomism, and it was while teaching here that cardinal Cajetan (1464-1534) wrote one of his famous Thomist works, *De Ente et Essentia* [*On Being and Essence*]. However, Martyr's references to Paduan Thomism were scornful after his conversion to the Reformed faith.¹²

The other theologian Martyr studied in depth was Gregory of Rimini, the fourteenth-century Augustinian (d. 1358). Gregory was a Nominalist of sorts. A disciple of William of Occam (1285-1347), he denied the independent existence of universals, holding that they are simply mental concepts constructed from the particulars of experience. This probably influenced Martyr's philosophical outlook, which was strongly empirical. Gregory was also an ardent devotee of Augustine's soteriology, and spent much of his time seeing Pelagians under every doctrinal bed. Human nature, he argued, is totally corrupt, human beings cannot will what is morally good without grace, and election to salvation is wholly gratuitous. The similar hue of Martyr's own soteriology must have been partly derived from his studies in Gregory. Martyr also read Augustine himself. The library of St Giovanni of Verdara at Martyr's Paduan monastery was a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

'fortress of Augustinianism'.¹³ In McNair's words: 'of the three A's who contended for the mastery of [Martyr's] mind, Aristotle outrivalled Averroes, but Augustine outclassed them both: in the life of this Augustinian, Augustine was to remain his favourite reading after the Bible'.¹⁴ Augustine and Aristotle – a rare combination of expertise in Martyr's day.

With respect to Martyr's 'scholasticism', we should observe that he often qualified his use of Aristotle. Accused by Lutherans like Johann Brenz (1499-1570) of defiling Christology with Aristotelian logical categories, Martyr replied that human reason must indeed be 'formed by the Word and Spirit of God'.¹⁵ Likewise in his lectures on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* at Strasbourg (1553-6), Martyr warned that 'human reason will never be sane and right unless it is formed by the Word of God'.¹⁶ In fact, throughout these lectures Martyr tested Aristotle against the Bible. Sometimes he found the Greek in error. Aristotle's doctrine of happiness, for instance, was in Martyr's view profoundly false in itself, because Christians place their happiness not in the good life but in 'reconciliation with God through Christ'.¹⁷ Theology, Martyr pronounced, must be based solely on Scripture; philosophy was but human wisdom, and could be made compatible with Scripture only within certain limits.¹⁸ Martyr especially avoided the perils of importing Aristotelian ontology into Christian theology. In his *Oxford Disputation* of 1549 he wanted to reverse Aristotle's order of first determining something's being, then its manner and purpose. He also refused to use the terms *realiter* and *substantialite* because they were unscriptural.

Union with Christ and Incarnation

Above all, Martyr's doctrine of predestination – the hallmark of scholastic Calvinism – was in crucial ways not scholastic. Karl Barth, so critical of the Reformed tradition on this score, noted two examples in his *Church Dogmatics* of what he considered the correct, biblical, Christocentric presentation of election: Calvin's first draft of the 1537 *Genevan*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ McLelland, p. 212.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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Catechism, and Martyr's *Commonplaces*.¹⁹ I cannot survey this in any detail, but it is worth looking at a few points to see how Martyr's predestinarian thought was primarily scriptural rather than metaphysical.

First, the governing concept in Martyr's doctrine of election was union with Christ – the foundation, in fact, of all his theology. This means that predestination was, for Martyr, not structurally part of the doctrine of God, but rather an important postscript to justification by faith. Hence Barth's praise for the Christocentric architecture of Martyr's presentation of election. 'Free justification should perish if we were not rightly taught of predestination', argued Martyr, for unless we know that our salvation is wholly of God we will be incapable of showing him proper gratitude, depending on him unreservedly, and enjoying full assurance of his grace.²⁰ For Martyr, predestination's practical function as a doctrine came only after saving union with Christ.

Second, the elect are not predestined to salvation as such, but to union with Christ; 'none is predestinate, but only to this end, to be made a member of Christ'.²¹ All the blessings and benefits of salvation are the incidental though natural fruit of union with Christ in his death and resurrection. By earthing predestination so deeply in the salvation-history soil of Christology and soteriology, Martyr demonstrated that Christ and the sanctified life, rather than the eternal decrees, were his central concern.

Third, Martyr refused to follow Calvin in teaching predestination to damnation. 'Under the name of predestination we will comprehend the saints only.... I separate the reprobate from the predestinate, because the Scriptures, nowhere that I know of, call men that shall be damned predestinate.'²² Human beings are damned solely by their own culpable refusal to trust God.

It seems unfair, then, to characterise Martyr's Aristotelianism as a metaphysics of causation dominating the way Scripture is read. It was for Martyr basically a tool, a method of thinking, organising data and arguing. But there can be no disguising Martyr's optimistic affirmation of this tool: 'Dialectics is a noble gift of God: nor is there any other art of more value to the refuting of error.'²³ This Hellenic note of reason, clarity, directness,

¹⁹ J.C. McLelland, 'The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination according to Peter Martyr', in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8 (1955), p. 255.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 263.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 263, and McLelland, p. 73.

²³ McLelland, p. 182.

was a constant in Martyr's thought. Also, as befits a disciple of Aristotle (and Aquinas and Gregory of Rimini), Martyr retained a strong grasp on the certainty of the external world, and worked with an empiricist form of epistemology, as we will see in his polemics against the Roman and Lutheran doctrines of the eucharist. Before examining Martyr's eucharistic thought, however, we must first look at his important teaching on the knowledge of God, without which his sacramental theology will be unintelligible. Martyr's thinking here fell into two distinct but related categories: the doctrine of analogy, and the incarnation. Let us try to probe each of these.

The Reformation saw a fresh and powerful accent placed on the transcendence and incomprehensibility of God. Calvin expressed it classically:

All men have sought to form some conception of the majesty of God, and to make Him such a God as their reason could conceive Him to be. This presumptuous attitude to God is not, I maintain, learned in the philosophical schools, but is innate, and accompanies us, so to speak, from the womb. It is evident that this evil has flourished in all ages, so that men have allowed themselves every liberty in devising superstitious practices. This arrogance, therefore, which is here condemned [Romans 1:18ff.] is that, when men ought in humility to have given glory to God, they sought to be wise among themselves, and to reduce God to the level of their own low condition.²⁴

God in his own essence was, for the Reformers, utterly beyond human comprehension. To bridge this awesome metaphysical chasm, Peter Martyr developed a complex doctrine of analogy. It was not his own invention; he learnt it from Aquinas (although there was a basic difference between Aquinas's and Martyr's use of analogy, as we shall see). For Martyr as for Calvin, humanity cannot know God in his essence, 'for finite things cannot fully receive what is infinite, nor is the creature able to comprehend fully and perfectly his Creator'.²⁵ Human reason stands mute before the divine majesty. Two things must therefore happen if human beings and God are to meet: divine revelation and divine accommodation, in which God graciously condescends to show humanity not what he is in his own infinite essence, but who he is as far as humanity is concerned. Human knowledge of God is thus not direct or immediate, but rather the kind of

²⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary on Romans* (Edinburgh, 1961) on Romans 1:22.

²⁵ McLelland, p. 78.

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knowledge which is appropriate to humanity's creaturely status – a finite, limited, anthropopathic knowledge.²⁶ In Calvin's famous analogy, revelation is God's baby-talk, like the prattling of a mother to her cradled infant.²⁷ The truth communicated thereby did not, in Martyr's view, sustain a one-to-one univocal correspondence with the ineffable essence of God, not even when God ascribed to himself moral perfections: 'He is far otherwise good, just and wise than men either are or are called.'²⁸ Human beings know God mediately, by analogy.

However, the decisive point for Martyr is that it is the self-revealing God who sovereignly chooses the analogy. And he does not choose arbitrarily or irrationally; the analogies are always appropriate and fitting. For 'if signs had no similitude with those things that are signified, then they should not be their signs'.²⁹ There is both likeness and diversity of proportion in the God-given analogy, a distinction crucial to Martyr's doctrine of the eucharist. Where Martyr differed from Aquinas was in subordinating all other analogies in a relationship of proportion to what he saw as the supreme analogy, the normative revelation of God which controlled all human knowledge of God: Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate. We cannot directly know God in his essence, but we can know analogically, and by grace, what he is like. He is Christlike.

It would be hard to overstate the significance of the incarnation in Martyr's theology. Everything else flowed from this fountain. It comes as no surprise to learn that Martyr had drunk deeply of patristic sources; and indeed, none of the first or second generation Reformers was so intellectually and spiritually drenched in the fathers as Martyr, except perhaps Bucer, Calvin and Cranmer. Martyr's knowledge of patristic literature was immense, and his facility for quoting the fathers in debate almost uncanny. His written works bristle with patristic quotations – Tertullian, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose of Milan, Chrysostom, Gelasius, Theodoret of Cyrhus, and of course Augustine. Martyr could cry *ad fonte* as fervently as any humanist:

When innumerable corruptions, infinite abuses and excessive superstitions have grown everywhere into use in the Church of Christ, it is impossible that a proper reform can be effected unless those things

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

²⁷ *Institutes* 1:13:1.

²⁸ McLelland, p. 75.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

which have been perverted to abuse be restored to their true origin, their most pure sources, and unadulterated beginnings.³⁰

The Christology of the fathers constituted one of these 'pure sources' because it articulated with richness and clarity the central Christological and soteriological truths of Scripture. Martyr summed them up thus:

The humanity of Christ is like a kind of channel, through which not only sanctification, but also all the life-giving graces can flow from God to us.... For the Spirit and Word of God, that is, the divine nature, is the efficient cause of our sanctification. But the medium through which He transfuses that sanctification to us is the humanity of Christ. Therefore if we would speak rightly, the human nature is rather the instrument of the divinity, that is, of the Word and Spirit.³¹

Consequently the deity of Christ was the lynchpin of Martyr's soteriology: 'He that sees not the divinity of Christ, sees nothing.'³²

In Christ, then, divinity and humanity have been united, so that the former may transfuse its life and immortality into the latter. However, if sinful human beings are to share in this life, they must be united with the humanity of Christ. Union with Christ – here is Martyr's central theme, pervading all his teaching. Following Cyril of Jerusalem, Martyr expounded the 'three degrees' of union in which inhered the saving bond between Christ and his Church. The first degree was incarnational union, in which Christ is organically one with the whole human race, our kinsman according to the flesh, 'the later Adam, who to enter upon marriage with the Church in the highest union, took flesh, blood, bones and true human nature from the Virgin's womb, that He might communicate in all these with us'.³³ Martyr was insistent that this was a universal union, involving every human being: 'the Son of God is joined with all men, because He took upon Him human nature'.³⁴ Christ is the new head of the race, the Second Adam, bonded to all as brother; this fact provides human beings with the assurance of God's philanthropy, his common fatherly love for humankind.

This generic incarnational union is the context of the second degree, the mystical union, by which human beings are made one with Christ through the Holy Spirit, 'the middle, secret and mystical degree...

³⁰ Young, p. 433.

³¹ McLelland, p. 103.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

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expressed in holy Scripture under the metaphor of members and head, husband and wife'.³⁵ The key on the human side to the mystical union is faith, 'for just as soon as we believe in Christ, we are made partakers of this communion'.³⁶ Although it is inward and spiritual, Martyr fused the mystical union with the outward and visible institution of the church, for she, through her ministry of word and sacraments, is the mother of faith, begetting it, nourishing it, maturing it.

Itself founded on the first degree of incarnational union, the second degree of mystical union supplies the third degree, the sanctifying union, whereby Christ sends his risen humanity streaming into his members, through the Holy Spirit, making them alive with his glorious life: 'from the immortal and heavenly head, whom we now possess in actual fact through faith [the mystical union], are derived unto us various gifts, heavenly benefits and divine properties'.³⁷ Through the sanctifying union, believers are conformed to the perfect humanity of Christ.

Approaching the Lord's Supper

This doctrine of threefold union with Christ, then, is the conceptual framework for Martyr's eucharistic theology. He defined a sacrament as follows: 'A sacrament is a divine promise concerning the remission of sins through Christ, signified and sealed by an outward or visible symbol according to the divine institution, in order that faith should be raised up in us and we should be more and more bound unto God.'³⁸ Elaborating on an idea of Augustine's, Martyr called the sacraments 'sensible words of God' – divine words addressed to the senses in physical form. The eucharist is 'the visible gospel'.³⁹ God's word is accommodated into physical, sacramental form according to the analogy of faith: union with Christ, which means rebirth (the visible word of baptism) and new life (the visible word of the eucharist).

Martyr's doctrine of analogy is the key to this. Subordinating sacrament to incarnation, he explained that the sacramental clothing of the proclaimed word in eucharistic bread and wine was in proportion to the incarnational clothing of the eternal Word in human flesh and blood. As in the incarnation divinity and humanity were united without confusion, so

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

by analogy in the eucharist Christ's humanity and the bread and wine are united without confusion. Yet there is a crucial diversity in this analogy, for the incarnation is not and cannot be re-enacted in the eucharist. The substance and reality of the sacrament are the unique person of Christ the God-man, present not incarnationally (the first degree of union) but mystically (the second degree), for it is in the Holy Spirit that Christ is savingly united to his Church, and through the Spirit that he sanctifies her.⁴⁰ The sacramental elements of bread and wine, although simply symbols in themselves, become through the Spirit 'an instrument with effect. Because these symbols are not only signs of the body and blood of Christ, but also instruments which the Holy Spirit uses to feed us spiritually with the body and blood of the Lord.'⁴¹ This feeding is by faith – by apprehending Christ as he is visibly, tangibly and saporifically proclaimed to us in the sacramental word, looking to him alone for our justification, sanctification and glorification. If we wish so to feed on him, we must (in a metaphor of John Chrysostom) fly away in spirit to heaven where Christ is, at the right hand of the Father, and not dote like papists on the bread and wine:

For there [at the Lord's table] you must not think either of the bread or of the wine – your mind and sense must cleave only to the thing represented unto you. Therefore it is said 'Lift up your hearts' [*sursum corda*, the ancient patristic exhortation at the start of the eucharist], when you lift up your mind from the signs to the invisible things offered you.⁴²

Here was one of Martyr's deepest concerns – to make the person of Jesus Christ himself central in the eucharist, that Christians may hold communion with him in the Spirit by faith, rather than trusting in the magic of a rite.

Martyr used an illuminating analogy in this regard. The written words of the Bible, he argued, do not physically 'contain' Christ. There is no corporeal presence of Christ in the printed page. But these scriptural words bear witness to Christ and present him to our souls by way of signification. So there is an analogical relationship between the written words and the incarnate Word, and the Holy Spirit uses this relationship to draw the believing soul up through the words to the Word, to a heavenly and spiritual union with him. The Bible itself is a sacrament!

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 185

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

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And the Holy Spirit uses the sacraments to give us Christ spiritually, to be embraced by the soul and faith: just as we are said to receive salvation by the words of God; not that salvation lies hidden in those words, or stands in a real presence, but is contained by signification. And this comparison with divine words is very agreeable to the sacraments, since by Augustine's judgment they are visible words.⁴³

Still, if we have the Bible and Christ conveyed to us therein, what need of baptism or eucharist? Martyr answered this question in what seems to be a somewhat Lutheran fashion. We need sacraments, he argued, because human beings are physical, flesh-and-blood creatures. Rejecting any Platonic body-soul dualism, Martyr mocked the ancient Greek sages with cutting sarcasm, advising us to slay ourselves into incorporeal bliss if their views are true. For Martyr, 'Flesh is the workshop of spirit', the body is 'the most fit instrument' of the soul, the physical, the fleshly, is the appropriate God-ordained context of the spiritual.⁴⁴ Martyr indeed showed a pronounced distaste for spiritualising. He affirmed, for example, in his *De Resurrectione* that the resurrection body would be fully physical and human in continuity with the body's present condition. It would be a 'spiritual' body only in the sense that it would wholly serve the Spirit. Moreover, he taught that our bodies are themselves nourished for eternal life in the eucharist. This is patristic:

We understand our union with Christ to extend not only to spirit and soul, but also to body and flesh. Whence no wonder the old fathers said, in the Lord's Supper not only is our soul and spirit quickened by the flesh and blood of Christ, but also our body and flesh are fed from thence, so that they are restored more fit and firm to the use of good works, by which Christ is served.⁴⁵

In the eucharist our bodies and souls enjoy a mystical foretaste of resurrection life.

In the controversy over the eucharist, Martyr had three fronts on which to fight: the Anabaptist, the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic. Of these the last two were the most important, and to a considerable extent involved the same issue, the bodily presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Before examining them, however, I will briefly look at Martyr's treatment of the Anabaptist view.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Martyr certainly had no great liking for Anabaptists. To him they were 'the furors and plagues of our time'.⁴⁶ Of their sacramental views he was dismissive. He proved the truth of infant baptism by the continuity of the Christian church with Israel, with special reference to birth membership of the covenant community. 'We judge the children of the saints to be saints, so long as by reason of age they do not declare themselves to be strangers from Christ.'⁴⁷ As for the Anabaptists' symbolic-memorialist interpretation of the eucharist, 'they take no account of the Holy Spirit'.⁴⁸ Their metaphors are irrelevant. The common one of remembering a friend, Martyr disqualified ironically: 'For a friend, being comprehended in thinking and conversant in mind, does not change him that thinks of him; he does not nourish his mind, nor restore his flesh so that it is capable of resurrection.'⁴⁹ In fact, both corporealists and memorialists make the same mistake about the eucharist. Neither can imagine a real presence of Christ except in physical terms: the former accept this, the latter throw the baby out with the bath water, and say that if Christ is not present physically, he cannot be present at all. They take no account of the Holy Spirit. Even worse, Anabaptist and Romanist both reverse the whole movement of the eucharist from God-to-us to us-to-God, thus evincing themselves to be unholy partners in legalism. The Romanist offers up his mass to God to acquire merit, the Anabaptist offers up his precious faith to show God and the world what a good Christian he is. Therefore 'the Anabaptists sin, who make the sacraments only outward tokens in which they publicly declare their faith and are distinguished from the rest of men, promising a holy life and manners worthy of a Christian'.⁵⁰ I thank you God, that I am not like others...

Refuting Transubstantiation

Martyr's polemic against transubstantiation was much more extensive than this. It is to be found in two major works: the *Oxford Disputation* of 1549, and the *Defence of the Ancient and Apostolic Doctrine concerning the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, against Stephen Gardiner*, published in 1559. Playing a prominent role in the English Reformation during Edward VI's reign as Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford from

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

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1548 to 1553, Martyr's performance at the public disputation on the eucharist was decisive in dispelling the corporeal-presence/no-presence antithesis. A distinctive non-Lutheran doctrine of the real presence of Christ was at last sounded forth clearly. This paved the way for the acceptance by the Reformed English church of the sacramental doctrine of Bucer, Martyr and Calvin. Martyr's work against Gardiner was written on behalf of a group of Marian exiles in Zurich. McLelland considers it 'probably the greatest single work on the Eucharist of the entire Reformation'.⁵¹ With lucid Aristotelian logic, Martyr marshalled Scripture and the Fathers to refute transubstantiation, which he saw as a philosophical faux-pas and a theological heresy offensive alike to reason and revelation.

'O thou holy Supper of the Lord, how many ways art thou here miserably dishonoured and polluted! O mass, mass, mass, what remains sound in thee?'⁵² Martyr shared all the standard biblicist objections to the distracting ritualistic gaudiness of the late medieval mass, and could be very severe against this.⁵³ However, his central objections were philosophical and theological. This devoted disciple of Aristotle accused the Catholic scholastics of perverting his master's teaching. Transubstantiation, Martyr declared, was a 'new philosophy'.⁵⁴ According to Martyr, Aristotle's true teaching distinguished between substances whose accidents were separable – e.g. God and the soul – and those whose substance was inseparable from accident – e.g. the human body which cannot exist without *locus*, a defined space. Thus in the external world, the world of bodies and bread, there is an indissoluble connection between substance and accidents. Here we encounter the powerful element of empiricism in Martyr's thought; he held it as a sacred philosophical truth that sense-experience is trustworthy. Without this basic supposition (and its implicate that accident corresponds with substance), Martyr believed that human beings would fall under a 'despotism of accidents'.⁵⁵ That is, we could never tell whether any given sense-data were true, for bread and wine might turn out really to be flesh and blood.

On this basis, Martyr charged Romanists with transgressing a first principle of philosophy when they affirmed that Christ's body was present

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

corporeally but non-quantitatively in the eucharist. This, Martyr argued, was a logical impossibility. A body could not non-quantitatively occupy space. It was literally nonsense to apply the term 'body' to something that flouted the known characteristics of a body. The standard defence of such doctrines – God's omnipotence – Martyr strongly rejected, for he judged it no compliment to God to credit him with the ability to perform logical absurdities. Reason might be unable to comprehend God's essence, but God had demonstrated a consistent rationality in his works. The Creator esteemed his creation, and he worked in and with and through created things according to the nature he had apportioned them.⁵⁶ We must therefore maintain, concluded Martyr, that the human body of Christ is a true quantum, for the sake of avoiding nonsense in philosophy and docetism in doctrine. 'It is a perilous matter to delude the senses by transubstantiation, because the proof of the true resurrection of Christ then perishes... The Marcionite heretics would soon have said that Christ had no true human body, but only its accidents and figure, as you say of bread.'⁵⁷

In dealing with the key text, 'This is my body,' Martyr marched out on parade the familiar figurative interpretations. The 'is' was a 'topical substantive'; other scriptural examples were the texts which said that John the Baptist is Elijah, Christ's words are spirit and life, the gospel is the power of God, circumcision is the covenant, the cup is the New Testament, the blood is the life, and God is a consuming fire.⁵⁸ Martyr cited impressive patristic support for this view from Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome and Augustine. However, we must not think that Martyr was wholly negative on this point; indeed, a strikingly positive feature of his eucharistic theology is found precisely here. He contended that the words of consecration, 'This is my body,' referred only secondarily and derivatively to the bread. Their primary and essential reference was to the congregation. 'Yes, we ourselves are more joined unto Christ than is bread. For Christ is joined in the way that He is to bread to this end, that we should truly be united to Him. And the words by which bread is called the body of Christ belong more unto us than unto that which by nature understands nothing and believes nothing.'⁵⁹ The true transubstantiation takes place in the congregation: 'We ourselves by a faithful participation

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

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in the Lord's Supper are fed and in a manner transelemented, by a certain kind of spiritual change, into the body of Christ.'⁶⁰ Turning the Roman dogma on its head, Martyr used transubstantiation as a cipher for the edification of the church by the ministry of its presbyters:

I would to God the Romish priests would also consider this, and not count all their honour to consist in their transubstantiating the nature of bread (which is but legerdemain and a vain device) but that they would finally understand themselves to be called by God to this, that by Word and doctrine as by good manners and examples, they should transubstantiate men into Christ and make them His lively image.⁶¹

Having denied transubstantiation, Martyr also rejected Rome's propitiatory-sacrificial perception of the eucharist. In line with the other Reformers he stepped over the later Western medieval doctrine, which had tied the eucharist ever more exclusively to the passion of Christ, and instead drank deeply of the early patristic sources, where he learned to relate the eucharist to the person of the risen, ascended, exalted Saviour, who now quickens his people in the Spirit with the power of his resurrection, by virtue of the once-for-all atoning sacrifice offered on Calvary. Gregory Dix thought that this was a rediscovery of 'the eschatological conception of the primitive rite', at least partly.⁶² Like Luther, Martyr affirmed the indissoluble bond between Christ's dying and rising, for if he did not rise, we have no living Redeemer with whom to be united, that we may taste the efficacy of his death. Again the centrality of union with Christ in Martyr's theology is apparent. In a vivid metaphor, he described how this union with the risen Lord gave life to the church: 'Tell me, I pray you, will you not judge him to have escaped the danger of death who, falling into a swift river, holds up his whole head above those deep and dangerous waters, even though the rest of his members are still drowned in them?'⁶³ The eucharist, therefore, rather than being a propitiatory sacrifice, was the transfusion of the life of the crucified and risen head into his body the church, through the mystical union of the Spirit.

Did Martyr leave any room for a sacrificial interpretation of the eucharist? Yes; in his view, the Lord's supper was quite literally a eucharistic sacrifice, a sacrifice of thanksgiving. This sacrifice was both

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁶² Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London, 1945), pp. 621ff.

⁶³ McLelland, pp. 112-13.

inward and spiritual, as the congregation offered its praise and gratitude to God for the all-sufficient expiation of Calvary, and outward and visible in the symbolic breaking of the bread. In Martyr's words: 'Inasmuch as by the same action we celebrate the memory of the death of Christ, give thanks for the benefits received, [and] consecrate and offer ourselves to God, it is and may be called a sacrifice, since we give most acceptable oblations to God.'⁶⁴ Based on Romans 15:16, Martyr portrayed the evangelical preacher as the true priest, who in contrast to the mass-monger must sacrifice his hearers to God through the gospel: 'God is so desirous of our salvation that He counts the conversion of every one of us a most acceptable sacrifice.'⁶⁵

This, then, is the substance of Martyr's polemic against the Roman mass. It is philosophically false, a perversion of Aristotle, and theologically offensive, undermining the perfect sacrifice of Christ. However, it would give an unjust impression if this picture of Martyr in controversy were left unqualified by his ecumenical willingness to discuss the matter with his opponents in search of unity. This aspect of Martyr is best illustrated by his role in the French colloquy of Poissy in 1561, a year before his death.

The colloquy was a complex affair. Summoned by the Italian regent of France, Catherine de Medici, in the interests of reconciliation between French Catholics and Huguenots, it reflects the confused situation of France on the eve of her 'religious' wars. Gallicanism scored against papalism when Catherine deliberately opened the colloquy before the arrival of the papal legate, cardinal Hippolyte of Ferrara. During the inaugural ceremonies, Catholic liberals cocked a snook at conservatives by celebrating a rival mass in both kinds in the parish church, while high pontifical mass was being sung officially in the abbey.⁶⁶ Most of the Roman delegates simply failed to turn up; 113 were summoned, but only 46 appeared (6 cardinals, 40 bishops). To prejudice things further, the Jesuit general, Diego Lainez, arrived at Poissy a few days after the assembly had legalised the Jesuits in France, only to inform the fathers and brethren that the colloquy itself was illegal, because canon law forbade provincial councils to meet after a general council (Trent) had been proclaimed. Most of the Roman Catholics proved intransigent, especially

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 252-3.

⁶⁶ Henry O. Evennett, *The Cardinal of Lorraine and the Council of Trent* (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 288-9.

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after Lainez's advent.⁶⁷ The Reformed delegates, led by Martyr and Theodore Beza, kept complaining that they felt as if they were on trial, rather than at an amicable colloquy. The remarkable thing is that out of such a gathering an agreed joint statement on the eucharist could emerge.

The statement was drafted by a committee of ten theologians, five from each side. Martyr, Beza and three Huguenot pastors met with the bishop of Séz, bishop Montluc of Valence, Claude d'Espence, Jean Bouteiller and Jean de Salignac. The five Roman delegates were all 'Catholic Evangelicals'; d'Espence, a Sorbonne divine, was well known for his ecumenism, while Montluc, Bouteiller and Salignac had all taken part in the rival utraquist mass at the opening of the colloquy. Their appointment shows how determined the French crown was to secure an agreement. After much discussion, the ten committee members drew up and submitted the following joint Catholic-Reformed statement:

We confess that Jesus Christ in the Supper offers, gives and truly exhibits to us the substance of His body and blood, by the operation of the Holy Spirit; and that we receive and eat, spiritually and by faith, that true body that was slain for us; that we may be bone of His bones and flesh of His flesh, and so be vivified by Him and made to partake of all that is wanted for our salvation. And whereas faith, resting on the divine Word, makes what it perceives to be present; and we by this faith receive truly and efficaciously the true and natural body and blood of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit; we acknowledge in this respect the presence of the body and blood themselves in the Supper.⁶⁸

Martyr had some private reservations about the statement. He wanted more emphasis on the upward movement of faith which 'lifts up our soul to heaven and gives it opening and entrance to the throne of His majesty'.⁶⁹ But he did not publicly dissent. Thus we have the spectacle of a doctrinal agreement on the eucharist between Roman Catholics and Reformed – indeed with Reformed representatives as illustrious as Martyr and Beza – reached after Trent's decree on transubstantiation, and reached in France four months before her first religious war.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 367-9.

⁶⁸ Cited by John W. Nevin, *The Mystical Presence: A Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (Philadelphia, 1846), p. 78.

⁶⁹ McLelland, p. 287.

However, it did no good. The Sorbonne rancorously condemned the agreement, which sealed its doom at the colloquy. The Catholic Evangelicals were always in a minority: the five who had collaborated with the Reformed heretics in producing the statement spent the rest of their days under a cloud of dark suspicion, except for Salignac who burst the cloud and became a Calvinist. The affair at least reveals that not all openings were closed, and Martyr's involvement shows his willingness to discuss doctrinal differences reasonably and face-to-face, although never to yield over what he was persuaded was the truth of God.

Refuting Lutheran Eucharistic Teaching

This brings us to Martyr's polemic against the Lutheran doctrine of the corporeal presence of Christ in the eucharist. It had a sweeter tone than his anti-Roman controversial work, for however much Lutherans and Reformed differed in their views of the eucharist, they were united in repudiating the meritorious, sacrificial character imputed to it by Rome. Martyr recognised this unity and sought to uphold it. In the *Oxford Disputation*, for instance, he reviewed the Luther-Zwingli quarrel of the 1520s, and ruefully concluded that 'there was stirred up a contention more than was meet, and was a cause of great mischief. Whereas, indeed, the contention was rather about words than about the matter.' With a broad ecumenical gesture, Martyr then said with judicious indifference, 'which of the two [doctrines] is appointed we do not greatly care, if it be understood soundly'.⁷⁰ This exhibits a rare breadth of outlook, especially in the perception between 'words' and 'matter'. Many Reformed churchmen were not so tolerant of the Lutheran view. For example, John Parkhurst (1512-75), Reformed bishop of Norwich, communicated the following gem of charity to his mentor Heinrich Bullinger in 1561: 'I wish the Ubiquitarians [Lutherans] a better mind; if indeed they have a mind at all.'⁷¹

Martyr himself did not adopt a controversial pose against the Lutherans until his second period in Strasbourg (1553-6). That he was then driven to it was the fault of the strict Lutherans, led by Marbach, who tried to force him to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession and Wittenberg Concord, which taught that unbelievers receive the true body and blood of Christ in the eucharist. Martyr refused. The controversy became increasingly bitter.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 205. Ubiquitarian refers to the Lutheran belief in the ubiquity of Christ's human nature.

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Particularly infuriating to Martyr was the fact that the Lutheran ministers denounced the Reformed from the pulpit, but would not enter into open debate. Finally in 1556 Martyr departed from Strasbourg in disgust to become professor of Hebrew at Zurich on Bullinger's invitation, where he referred to the Strasbourg Lutherans as 'those who are daily prepared impudently to declare – but not to prove – that cakes and pieces of bread are the very body of Christ'.⁷²

In 1560 one of these Corporealists, Johann Brenz, published a work entitled *Concerning the Personal Union of the Two Natures in Christ and the Ascension of Christ into Heaven*, a striking defence of the corporeal presence from the standpoint of Christology. The hypostatic union, Brenz asserted, makes Christ's human body share in the omnipresence of his deity. Martyr felt moved to respond, and in 1561 produced his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Natures in Christ*, his only anti-Lutheran controversial work.

The Dialogue is between two characters called Pantachus (from the Greek *pantachou*, 'everywhere') and Orothetes (Greek for 'fixer of boundaries'). The central issue is the ubiquity of Christ's human nature. Martyr's anti-Roman arguments against the corporeal presence still applied. In the *Dialogue*, he concentrated on a defence of God's rationality and an attempt to prove that ubiquitarianism was the Eutychean heresy revived.

Martyr had already accused Roman Catholics of absurdity in his *Defence against Gardiner*. Against Lutherans he was even more stringent. For sheer irrational nonsense, he declared ubiquitarianism to be worse than transubstantiation 'by a great length'.⁷³ Pantachus is shocked by such heaven-storming rationalism: 'I marvel greatly that in beginning, you cannot shake off thoughts of the dimensions of geometry, when there is dispute about the body of Christ.'⁷⁴ He accuses Orothetes of staining Christology with the maxim of Aristotle that the body is, by nature, locally circumscribed. Orothetes retorts with a quotation from the master himself, St Augustine: 'Remove spaces of places from bodies, and they are nowhere: and because they are nowhere, neither do they exist.'⁷⁵ The aim of this argument for Martyr was to vindicate the truth and integrity of Christ's humanity, and his burden can be reduced to a simple antithesis: if

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

Christ is a real human being, his human body cannot be ubiquitous; if his human body is ubiquitous, he cannot be a real human being. It was only the dogged insistence of Luther, Marbach and Brenz on God's freedom from such rational considerations that detained Martyr on the point. His attack on the Lutheran position was basic: God's omnipotence could not effect logical contradictions; God could not make Christ's human body ubiquitous and yet authentically human. 'I truly affirm against you that no power can make a created thing ubiquitous,' says Orothetes. 'For what things are facts cannot by any power be undone.'⁷⁶ God will not and cannot alter the fact that 'two contradictory things cannot be true at once'.⁷⁷ Martyr agreed with Calvin that God was not exlex, lawless, for he was bound by the inner law of his own righteous and rational being. He was 'free' neither to be wicked nor to be absurd.⁷⁸

Even more crucial for Martyr was his conviction that the absurdity of ubiquitarianism was based on a Eutychean Christology. Eutyches had been condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 for teaching that in the incarnation Christ's deity had so impacted on his humanity that the latter had been effectively robbed of its human substance and transformed into deity. Martyr detected the same error in ubiquitarianism. To Pantachus' assertion that the hypostatic union entailed the ubiquity of Christ's flesh, Orothetes replies: 'That does not follow – you are guilty of false reasoning.... In this you follow Eutyches, who confused and mingled the two natures.'⁷⁹ Martyr believed that this confusion resulted from a failure to grasp the analogical nature of divine revelation. Brenz, he said, spoke of Christ's humanity as though its relationship with his deity were equivocal – that one could directly say of the human nature the things that were true of the divine nature – thus destroying the correct proportion between them. Brenz's doctrine would 'annul the sacramentum incarnationis' and 'dissolve the hypostatic union' into Monophysitism.⁸⁰ To establish this claim, Martyr took the argument of the fifth-century fathers, Theodoret of Cyrillus (393-460) and pope Gelasius (d. 496), and reversed it. Theodoret and Gelasius argued that the bread underwent no change of substance in

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 209-10.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁷⁸ Calvin, *Institutes* 3:23:2. See also his *Commentary on Romans*, on 3:6 – God cannot be unjust, etc.

⁷⁹ McLelland, p. 207.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.103. Monophysitism is the heresy that blends Christ's deity and humanity into one.

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the eucharist, therefore neither did the flesh of Christ in its union with deity. Martyr simply put it the other way round – the flesh of Christ underwent no change of substance in its union with deity, therefore neither did the bread in the eucharist.

Martyr's underlying concern in this *Dialogue* was to set forth the meaning of the incarnation, not so much as a static union of substances, but as a person acting divinely and humanly in history, focally in his dying and rising again. It was this dynamism of incarnate personal action which revealed God, saved humankind, and made possible a personal union and communion between the two. Consequently, the *res ipsa* of the eucharist was not a substance – the flesh of Christ considered as a material thing – but the living person of Jesus Christ himself; and his saving relationship with his church was not substantial and static, but personal, dynamic, in the Holy Spirit.⁸¹ The dimension of time was as important as that of space. In the eucharist, therefore, the sacramental *action* was the medium of communion with Christ. 'This is my body' was inseparable from 'Take and eat.' Or as Martyr put it, 'The whole eucharist is founded on action: outside of that, not even its name can be retained.'⁸² It was in the taking and eating of the bread, and in the drinking of the cup, that Christ communicated his life to his people. The eucharistic elements were instruments and vectors of Christ's self-giving in this process. The Lutheran view (so Martyr feared) was dangerously preoccupied with a merely static spatial concept of Christ's presence, and this, he felt, did not do justice to the true nature of the church's union with her Saviour in the Spirit.

This, then, is a brief overview of Peter Martyr's doctrine of the eucharist. Along with Calvin, he pioneered the distinctively Reformed understanding of this sacrament, and his theology both here and in general had widespread and lasting influence in the sixteenth century. The time has come, I think, for his name to be reinstated among the very front rank of Continental Protestant Reformers, so that they read Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Bucer, Bullinger, Calvin and Martyr, if we are to pay history's due debt to Italy's most famous Protestant.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 185ff.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

‘CONTINUITY IN REACTION TO CHANGE’: THE EXAMPLE OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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Introduction

In 1889, looking back at the previous fifty years, Marcus Dods, Professor of New Testament at New College, Edinburgh, made the following observation:

It might be difficult to lay one’s finger on any half-century in the world’s history during which changes so rapid, so profound, so fruitful and so permanent have taken place as those which the past generation has seen.... Every department of human thought and activity has felt the touch of the new influences.¹

Few Churches felt that more than his own, the Free Church of Scotland, and the nineteenth century saw an enormous amount of change being reflected in its doctrine and in its worship. Hymns took their place alongside psalms in public worship, and organs and other musical instruments began to be widely used. A movement grew to qualify the Church’s commitment to its creed, the Westminster Confession of Faith. Evolution became accepted as the most reasonable explanation for the origins of life; and alongside Genesis the rest of the Bible was subjected to critical analysis and the doctrines of biblical inspiration and infallibility were called into question. All of these changes were reflected in what was seen and heard in Free Church services. Public worship frequently included hymns and instrumental music and, more importantly, the sermons preached reflected the changing theological and credal position of the times. If what is said and sung in worship is an expression of corporate faith, it is clear that the corporate faith of the Free Church was changing.

Now while most members of the Free Church of Scotland were able to accept or even actively encourage these changes in the corporate faith of the Church, for others these changes represented a departure from the scriptural basis of their worship. The result, in 1893, was a Second Disruption, during which many thousands of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders left the Free Church.² The denomination which this disruption produced – the Free

¹ M. Dods, *Recent Progress in Theology. Inaugural Lecture at New College Edinburgh, 1889* (Edinburgh, 1889), p. 6.

² See, e.g., J.L. MacLeod, ‘The Second Disruption; the Origins of the

Presbyterian Church of Scotland – has remained one of the most 'unchanged' churches in Britain, with a form of worship reflecting a set of beliefs that has not changed at all in the past hundred years. The Free Presbyterians still make exclusive use of psalmody and still allow no instrumental music in public worship. They continue to maintain a total rejection of evolutionary science. Their outlook still reflects the fact that the Church retains the Westminster Confession of Faith, undiluted, as its credal statement. They persist in the belief that the whole Bible is inspired and infallible. The style, the language, and at times even the appearance of a Free Presbyterian service today is nineteenth century, if not older, while alternative forms of worship were recently described by one Free Presbyterian minister as being 'so-called' worship, tantamount to 'offering Christ a *papier mache* crown'.³ Almost every single one of the distinctive practices and beliefs of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland was in some way under threat in the late nineteenth century; that was a direct cause of their secession, and that is a direct cause of their pugnacious defence of these positions ever since. Therefore for the Free Presbyterians, continuity – absolute, unswerving continuity – has been their *reaction* to change.

Nineteenth-Century Changes in the Free Church: Hymns and Organs

What then were the changes that so convulsed the Free Church of Scotland in the late nineteenth century? The first area to be considered is the introduction of hymns and organs into public worship. This development had taken place in many denominations although it affected the Free Church of Scotland later than the other Scottish Churches. The desire to make these changes was partly in order to address the issue of the quality of worship in Scotland's Churches, but it also reflected a change in theological outlook. Singing only the psalms of the Old Testament seemed no longer to reflect the newer evangelical mood of the age.⁴ Despite

Free Presbyterian Church of 1893', *SBET* vol. 16, no. 1 (Spring 1998), pp. 5-18. For the divide between Gaels and non-Gaels in the Free Church see J. L. MacLeod, 'The influence of the Highland-Lowland divide on the Free Presbyterian Disruption of 1893', *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, vol. 25, part 3 (1995).

³ A. MacPherson, 'Synod Sermon', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (July 1996), p. 69.

⁴ A. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland*

determined opposition from a minority within the Church, mostly concentrated in the Highlands, the Free Church had accepted the principle of using hymns in public worship by 1872.⁵ Ten years later, the Free Church began to look at the introduction of instrumental music (specifically organ music) and although there was once again strong opposition, again concentrated in the Highland region, the Church moved swiftly to sanction the use of organs and in a short time most congregations outside the Highland region contained organs.⁶ The Free Church, it seemed, was moving with the times.

Evolution

A second area of change that bitterly convulsed the Free Church in the late-nineteenth century was the acceptance of the theory of evolution. It is symbolic of its importance that Robert Rainy, the great ecclesiastical politician and Principal of the Church's New College in Edinburgh, chose for his inaugural address in 1874 the topic of 'Evolution and Theology'.⁷ Rainy was happy to admit that 'Evolution has its own rights' and that

Evolution is continually going on before our eyes in the perpetual marvel of the reproduction of animal and vegetable life. It would be absurd to suppose that one can draw an arbitrary line, and say that so much of Evolution and no more shall be admitted into our thoughts of the history of things – that so much and no more shall be held to comport with the character and matters of God.⁸

Rainy, then, was one who calmly assessed the claims of science and religion and concluded that there was an indispensable place for them both. Others in the Free Church went further. Marcus Dods' commentary on the book of Genesis had as its opening lines:

If any one is in search of accurate information regarding the age of this earth, or its relation to the sun, moon and stars, or regarding the order in which plants and animals have appeared upon it, he is referred to recent textbooks in astronomy, geology, and palaeontology. No one for a moment dreams of referring a serious student of these subjects to the

1843 - 1874 (Edinburgh, 1975), pp. 181-90.

⁵ *Proceedings and Debates of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland* (Hereafter PDG AFC), 1872, p. 327.

⁶ K. Ross, *Church and Creed in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1988), pp. 226-8.

⁷ R. Rainy, *Evolution and Theology*, (Edinburgh, 1874).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Bible as a source of information. It is not the object of the writers of Scripture to impart physical instruction or to enlarge the bounds of scientific knowledge.⁹

Coming from a Free Church minister who was about to be elected to a professorship at the New College, Edinburgh, this was not what the opponents of change wanted to hear. Dods had made his position clear before,¹⁰ and indeed at his own inaugural lecture on being appointed Professor of New Testament at New College in 1889, he referred to 'the universal light shed by the great modern doctrine of Evolution'.¹¹ Clearly, he did not see evolution as being in any way an attack on, or inconsistent with, Christianity. He was not the only Free Church professor to see evolution as the orthodox scientific position. Henry Drummond said, 'I have always believed that man has descended from the animal creation',¹² while A.B. Bruce stated in his 1897 Gifford lecture series that 'As to the animal nature of man, there is now comparatively little controversy. It is generally admitted that the human body has been evolved.'¹³

To men like Rainy, Dods, Drummond and Bruce, science was not a threat, but was a tool to aid the process of change and development in Scottish theology and worship. More than that, it was an essential tool, one which could only be ignored at the cost of regression and atrophy for the Church and its beliefs. As the world changed, they believed, so the Church had to change. To their opponents, however, evolutionary science was not a useful tool; to them it was yet another of the many changes which they saw as destroying the fabric of their faith. Crucially, the supporters of evolution were professors in the Free Church's own theological colleges, so that it could only be expected that future ministers, and their sermons, were going to reflect these changing views. Change was something to be feared, and more importantly, something to be resisted. Clearly conflict lay ahead.¹⁴

⁹ M. Dods, *The Book of Genesis* (Expositor's Bible Series, London, 1888), p. 1.

¹⁰ M. Dods, *The Book of Genesis. With Introduction and Notes* (Handbooks for Bible Classes Series), (Edinburgh, 1882), p. xvii.

¹¹ Dods, *Recent Progress*, p. 17.

¹² H. Drummond, 'Temptations. (An address to the students of Amherst College)', *The British Weekly*, 22 June 1893, p. 130.

¹³ A.B. Bruce, *The Providential Order of the World* (London, 1897), p. 30.

¹⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the background see J.L. MacLeod, *The*

Biblical Criticism

The third area of change to be considered is biblical criticism, a movement that has been called 'a typical product of the times' and 'the spirit of a new age'.¹⁵ It reflects perhaps better than anything the changes to the corporate faith which were taking place in the nineteenth century. By its closing years the core assumptions of biblical criticism were finding their way even into the worship of the Free Church of Scotland. For despite its conservative reputation on many issues, it is one of the great ironies of Scottish ecclesiastical history that the Free Church had preaching in its pulpits and teaching in its colleges some of the most eminent and influential biblical critics in Britain. One of them, of course, was William Robertson Smith, who perhaps did most to make the critical movement visible, with his popular and controversial writings in such places as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and his long-running and bitterly-contested heresy trials in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Although ultimately forced out of the Church, Smith had created a situation in which others could soon use his critical positions in their sermons.¹⁶ While he changed the theoretical background, it was others who actually changed the worship. In other words Smith changed what was thought, others changed what was 'said and sung'. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, then, the doctrines of biblical higher criticism were preached with great energy by some of the leading men of the Church, such as A.B. Bruce, Henry Drummond and Marcus Dods. Dods, in fact, once discussed biblical criticism in the following terms:

We may enter, then, on our study of the New Testament, assured that the accomplished criticism to which it has been subjected during the past generation has only added to its interest, and subtracted nothing from its power, that the fierce light which has beat upon it has only made it seem

Second Disruption: the Free Church in Victorian Scotland and the Origins of the Free Presbyterian Church (Edinburgh, forthcoming 1999), chapter two.

¹⁵ G.N.M. Collins, 'Whose Faith Follow' (Edinburgh, 1943), p. 59; J. Macleod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation* (Edinburgh, 1943), p. 308.

¹⁶ Smith's own sermons – albeit rare – were not critical; they were in fact relatively simple and orthodox. R. Reisen, 'Scholarship and piety: the sermons of William Robertson Smith', in W. Johnstone, ed., *William Robertson Smith: Essays in Reassessment* (Sheffield, 1995), pp. 88-9.

a more real and intelligible book, and that when stripped of the fictitious robes of honour which timorous and unworthy men have thrown over it, it stands out in its native majesty, and its real power is recognized... The New Testament is a mine out of which the gold has not all been brought to the surface, nor all sifted and refined...there remains much to be done, and of a kind which will attract the energies and resources of the most ambitious mind. For the preacher of Christ this study is indispensable and invaluable. It is in the New Testament he can meet with Christ and learn His mind. It is there he can get rid of all that has overlaid the figure of the Lord, and see Him face to face. It is there that he can learn from the lips of Christ Himself the gospel he has to preach; and by living through the same scenes and breathing the same air with Him, come at length to understand His purposes and enter into His Spirit.¹⁷

Dods' defence of criticism was a classic enunciation of the position of the so-called believing critics, and is symbolic of how large the gulf was between them and those conservatives in the Church who resisted change. The point is that the two groups not only fundamentally disagreed on the methods of criticism, but on the purpose of criticism and the basic validity of the critical approach. As Dods commented at the time of his 'trial' by the Free General Assembly in 1890, wearily if not bitterly, 'no theory of Scripture promulgated at present by me would be at all likely to find acceptance (from my opponents)'.¹⁸ The opponents of change viewed biblical criticism within the Free Church as an attack on Christianity and, given its popularity in the Colleges, as something that was going to affect what was being said in sermons: as one speaker made clear at the General Assembly of 1890, 'their colleges were the schools of the prophets, the nurseries of their future ministers. What was taught there would be reproduced in their pulpits; would, humanly speaking, mould the religious life of their Church.'¹⁹ Again, changes in thought were being reflected in changes in worship.

Revision of Creeds

The final change in the Free Church was the movement to revise their creed, the seventeenth-century Westminster Confession of Faith. There can be little doubt that the Free Church, as founded at the Disruption in 1843,

¹⁷ Dods, *Recent Progress*, pp. 36-7.

¹⁸ *PDG AFC*, 1890, 'Special report by College committee with reference to certain writings by Professors Dods and Bruce', p. 31.

¹⁹ *PDG AFC*, 1890, p. 179.

was a Church which broadly adhered to the Westminster Confession, but with the passing years things changed. The United Presbyterian Church revised its relationship to the Confession in the form of a Declaratory Act in 1879 and this Act was to be extremely influential and much-copied.²⁰ The Free Church General Assembly first entertained an Overture on the subject of Confessional revision in 1887, but by the summer of 1889 the mounting hostility to the theology of the Westminster Confession was becoming apparent.²¹ Principal David Brown of Aberdeen, for example, used the words 'obnoxious' and 'repulsive'²² to describe particular details in the Confession, while a year earlier a student for the Free Church ministry had described the Westminster Confession of Faith as obsolete and its framers as 'intellectually babes, and morally diseased...these blunderers and persecutors'.²³ The parts of the Confession which were particularly reviled were those which dealt with the subject of 'double predestination' – a doctrine that was becoming increasingly indigestible for nineteenth-century appetites, particularly those which had got used to the evangelism of Moody and Sankey.²⁴ Free Church congregations no longer wanted when attending public worship to listen to sermons that reflected what seemed to be an out-dated theology.

After much bitter controversy, the Free Church passed its Declaratory Act on 26 May 1892 by a majority of 346 to 195. The Act sought to ease subscription to the Westminster Confession by qualifying it in various ways – emphasising the importance of the love of God, diluting the

²⁰ See, e.g., P. Schaff, 'The Revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith', *The Presbyterian Review*, vol. X, no. 40 (October, 1889), p. 535, C. Briggs, 'The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America', *The Presbyterian Review*, vol. X, no. 39 (July, 1889), p. 469. See also J.L. MacLeod, 'Revision of the Westminster Confession. The Free Church of Scotland Declaratory Act of 1892' in L. Duncan and W. Rankin, eds., *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century* (Jackson, MS, to be published 1999).

²¹ *Free Church of Scotland Assembly Papers, No 1*, 1888, pp. 329-46.

²² *PDG AFC*, 1889, p.138.

²³ R. Mackintosh, *The Obsolescence of the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow, 1888), p. 54.

²⁴ See A. Cheyne, 'Bible and Confession in Scotland: the background to the Robertson Smith Case' in Johnstone, ed., *William Robertson Smith*, pp. 30-31.

Calvinist doctrine of predestination and concluding that ‘diversity of opinion is recognized in this Church on such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith’.²⁵ Since ‘the substance of the Reformed Faith’ was of course never defined, what this effectively did was to sanction the presence of ministers and elders in the Free Church who openly objected to some of the key aspects of the Confession of Faith. As Douglas Ansdell has said, ‘the shock of the Declaratory Act... was that it gave legitimacy to all the errors and flaws of the previous years’.²⁶ Once again, a significant change had taken place in the Free Church, and once again the out-manoeuvred and out-voted traditionalists had to watch considerable change taking place in the corporate faith of their Church despite all their passionate opposition.

The Free Presbyterian Response to Change

In response to all of these changes, there was bitter division within the Free Church, with the Church splitting dramatically in 1893. The denomination founded by those who left, The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, has been distinct over the past century by maintaining wholly unchanging positions on all of the issues already discussed. As Lachlan MacLeod, Moderator of the Free Presbyterian Synod, put it in 1989, ‘we hold on to our positions while the rest of society goes away from [them]’.²⁷ The Free Presbyterian reaction to change has been unswerving continuity, earning them the title of ‘one of the strictest churches in Britain’.²⁸ Their position is that as changes occur in every other walk of life, the fundamental truths of the Bible never change, and neither should the Church; as ‘the whole Bible is a mine of unchanging truth’ so the Church should be a mine of unchanging doctrine and practice.²⁹ While this is reflected in their writing, it is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in their public worship, where the unchanging appearance and content has

²⁵ ‘Act anent Confession of Faith (No. 8 of Class II.)’ (*Acts of the General Assembly of the Free Church*, p. 479).

²⁶ D. Ansdell, *The People of the Great Faith. The Highland Church 1690-1900* (Stornoway, 1998), p. 169.

²⁷ L. MacLeod, in ‘Free Church’s key player’, *The Greenock Telegraph*, 28 June 1989.

²⁸ G. Paterson, ‘Church too pure even for a Lord Chancellor’, *Daily Express*, May 26 1989.

²⁹ K. Macleod, ‘Changes’, *The Young People’s Magazine* (December 1996), p. 224.

become a badge of the denomination.

Hymns and Organs

First, their unbending stance can be seen in their rejection of instrumental music and hymns in public worship. The Free Presbyterian position on this issue has never changed, with a call to 'defend and continue this hallowed tradition' being issued as recently as March 1997.³⁰ In their centenary volume, the following statement was made in a chapter entitled 'Our Enduring Testimony'; 'as for our worship, we do not allow what is of the world or of man's invention to adulterate it; hence no place is given to instrumental music and hymns of human composition.'³¹ The Free Presbyterian position in 1999 is the same as it was in 1893. Continuity is seen as the only valid reaction to change, and that continuity goes back much further than just one hundred years:

If we go to the suffering church in the past and enquire, Why Psalms only? we will hear the French Huguenots, the persecuted Waldenses of the Alps, the suffering Covenanters from Scotland and Ireland, and many others, give their unhesitating answer with one voice, as David said to Ahimelech concerning the sword of Goliath; 'There is none like that; give it me.' Why Psalms only? The answer is clear. There is no substitute.³²

The Free Presbyterians clearly feel a sense of continuity with the men who founded their denomination one hundred years ago, but their sense of continuity goes much further back than that. In an age of change, that sense of continuity has only grown stronger, and on listening to a precentor leading the singing of the metrical psalms, that sense of continuity is striking. Indeed in many congregations, especially at communion seasons, the precentor will still 'give out the line', singing one line at a time and then being joined by the congregation to sing the line again together, as has been done in the Highlands for generations. It can be a remarkable experience indeed to sit in a Lowland Free Presbyterian Church and listen to a large congregation singing in the old Gaelic style the psalms that their great-grandparents would have sung; same psalm, same tune, same effect. That there is no written liturgy just makes it more

³⁰ G. Hutton, 'Why Psalms only?', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (March 1997), p. 74.

³¹ J. Macleod, 'Our enduring testimony', in D.B. MacLeod *et al*, eds., *One Hundred Years of Witness* (Glasgow, 1993), pp. 212-13.

³² G. Hutton, *Why Psalms only?*, p.115.

remarkable. Despite the lack of a written liturgy, a communion Sabbath will always feature the same psalm at the same point in the service, sung to the same tune. Free Presbyterians seldom change their tune.

Attitude to Scripture

Secondly, in their approach to Scripture, Free Presbyterians have demonstrated no compromise or adjustment in the past one hundred years. One Free Presbyterian writer recently described the Church's 'initial pledge' as being 'to hold unswervingly, and with unremitting vigilance, to that testimony bequeathed to us'.³³ Clearly, continuing to preach the belief that 'the Bible is the Word of God, inspired and infallible, from beginning to end'³⁴ has been an essential part of that testimony. The attitude of the nineteenth-century Free Church to the Bible is still seen as a primary cause of the Free Presbyterians leaving in 1893. One Free Presbyterian minister preaching in 1996 called the Free Church of 1893 a 'spiritually diseased body' because of its attitude to Scripture. Evolution, he argued, 'has played a strong part in the decline of... [biblical Christianity] and the strengthening of Satan's kingdom', while biblical critics he described as 'the servants of Satan'.³⁵ These words, or words like them, can be heard during another Free Presbyterian tradition, the New Year's Day Sermon, when the opportunity is taken year after year to spell out the reasons for the Church's separation in 1893, and for its continued separation for over a century.³⁶

³³ F. Macdonald, 'Continuing the struggle 1920-1960', in MacLeod, *One Hundred Years of Witness*, p. 108.

³⁴ 'Which church?' in *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (July 1996), p. 212.

³⁵ A. McPherson, 'Synod sermon', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (July 1996), p. 201.

³⁶ The New Year's Day lecture was a tradition instituted early in the history of the Free Presbyterian Church – in July, 1898 – by which the service of thanksgiving on the first day of the year (or the second should the first day happen to be a Sabbath) should see the ministers preaching 'on the Church's principles'. This usually took the form of an *apologia* of their actions in 1893, outlining the process by which the Free Church declined from a position of divine favour to being a Church from which departure became necessary. The tradition has continued, virtually unbroken, to the present day. See D. Beaton (ed.), *History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1933),

Indeed these words are distinct echoes of the Free Presbyterian position one hundred years earlier. Neil Cameron, one of the Free Presbyterians' founding fathers, referred to critics of the doctrine of biblical infallibility and inerrancy as 'traitors to God and men'.³⁷ He described evolution as 'an absurd God-dishonouring theory, the product of irreverent imagination, destitute of any foundation in fact, and contrary to the clearest testimony of the Word of God'.³⁸ A speaker at a Free Presbyterian conference spelled out the modern Free Presbyterian view of the Bible in December 1994:

There is one Author throughout Scripture, a Divine Author who determined the very words as well as the thoughts. In the fullest possible sense, Scripture is the Word of God. It is God who speaks to us through it.³⁹

The level of continuity is again illustrated in this paper by the fact that the speaker actually quoted two nineteenth-century Free Presbyterian ministers, writing in 1896, to support his argument. While in the rest of the Christian world, critical attitudes to Scripture have ebbed and flowed, in the Free Presbyterian Church, it is clear from their sermons that the attitude has remained unadjusted and unaltered. The Bible, then as now, is believed to contain nothing but the word of God, and to be entirely free from error. As others have altered their position on the Bible and its status, the Free Presbyterians' position has remained unchanged.

Westminster Confession of Faith

Finally, the Free Presbyterian attitude to the Westminster Confession of Faith has not undergone any changes in the past century either. As creeds and confessions have become less popular with many denominations and as the Westminster Confession of Faith in particular has come to be seen as outdated and obsolete, the Free Presbyterian Church has clung resolutely to every single aspect of that controversial document. In 1996, the Free Presbyterian Magazine stated that:

A creedless church is an absurdity. The Free Presbyterian Church of

p.130.

³⁷ D. Beaton, *Memoir, Biographical Sketches, Letters, Lectures and Sermons (English and Gaelic) of the Revd Neil Cameron*, Glasgow (Inverness, 1932), p. 20.

³⁸ 'Bruce's new book', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (January 1898), p. 342.

³⁹ K. Watkins, 'The inspiration of Scripture', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (February 1995), p. 46.

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Scotland maintains a wholehearted allegiance to the Westminster Confession of Faith – a confession which, for scripturalness, comprehensiveness, and precise definition, has not been bettered.⁴⁰

One year later the same magazine described the Westminster Confession of Faith as 'the product of the collective learning and wisdom of some of the ablest and most spiritual men in England and Scotland in any generation. They possessed almost unrivalled acumen and judgement.'⁴¹ While most churches that subscribed to the Westminster Confession have changed their terms of subscription or abandoned them altogether in the past hundred years, the Free Presbyterians have not. On the contrary, they have gripped it with unfaltering strength and held it high as a symbol of their identity, quoting it on the opening page of their magazine in both September and October 1998.⁴² Continuity on this issue has been one of the Free Presbyterians' most unshakeable emblems, and that has also contributed to their distinctive identity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Free Presbyterian Church has remained virtually unchanged over the past century, and one of the major explanations for this is that the circumstances of its birth made such a stance almost inevitable. As a Church that emerged out of a protest against change, it was perhaps inevitable that change became anathema to that Church. As a Church that emerged in defence of the 'old paths', it was perhaps inevitable that it would itself stick closely, almost obsessively, to these old paths. Crucially, this has applied equally to doctrine and practice: not just what is believed, but what is 'said and sung'. If most Christian churches have the choice of continuity or change, both in belief and worship, it is clear that the Free Presbyterians fundamentally have no choice. One writer in their centenary publication described the position when he said, 'The responsibility for adhering faithfully to the testimony raised in 1893 was inherent in the very constitution of the Free Presbyterian Church of

⁴⁰ 'Which church?', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (July 1996), p. 211.

⁴¹ E. Chacko, 'A tribute to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (May 1997), p.144.

⁴² N. Ross, 'The Golden Key of Prayer', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (September 1998), p. 257; D. Beaton, 'The Westminster Assembly and Romanism', *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (October 1998), p. 289.

Scotland.⁴³ Above all else, the modern Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland fears failing to transmit intact the heritage that they believe was transmitted to them by the founding fathers of the Church.

This feeling of reluctance to change in any way the torch that had been handed on has had a marked effect on the Free Presbyterian Church. It has meant that the Free Presbyterians have reacted to changes in belief and worship over the past 106 years with a remarkable level of continuity, and with that continuity has come a very clear and distinctive identity. In part it is a Highland identity, reflecting what Douglas Ansdell calls the 'measure of discontinuity' that exists 'between Highland and Lowland spirituality'.⁴⁴ But it is more than that; it has never been a merely Highland identity, and indeed the Free Presbyterians have made their unrelenting antipathy to wider Highland secular culture, including folklore, song, dancing, fiddling and the ceilidh, another part of their distinctive identity.⁴⁵ Furthermore, they have always – from the first year of their existence until today – been keen to emphasise their unchanging position in contrast to the shifting positions of other Highland denominations, particularly the Free Church. The implication of many Free Presbyterian statements on the subject is that they have not changed their position *unlike everyone else*; this of course brings problems and conflicts, but it also brings advantages. By stressing absolute continuity and totally rejecting change, the Free Presbyterians have carved themselves a niche unique among modern Protestant churches – even among modern Highland Protestant churches. Ironically, perhaps, it is a niche that today attracts

⁴³ F. MacDonald, 'Continuing the struggle 1920-1960', in MacLeod, *One Hundred Years of Witness*, p. 78.

⁴⁴ Ansdell, *People of the Great Faith*, p. 214.

⁴⁵ It is clear that it is an oversimplification simply to describe Highland Presbyterianism as being hostile to Gaelic culture, or, in Douglas Ansdell's words, to see it as 'a monolithic scourge of Gaelic culture'. (*Ibid*, p.131). This might also be said about the Free Presbyterians who, while critics of much of secular Gaelic culture, have done much to support other parts of it through their continuation of Gaelic services, prayer meetings and psalm-singing, and their respect for such great highland spiritual poets as Dugald Buchanan and Peter Grant. For some, this will have been their only exposure to the Gaelic language, and the Free Presbyterian contribution to the survival of Gaelic over the past hundred years should not be ignored.

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attention through the Free Presbyterians' web site.⁴⁶ It is a niche that they are unlikely to leave, and are unlikely to share; it is certainly not a niche that is likely to change.

⁴⁶ The introduction of the web site was not without controversy, and interesting discussion of this can be found on the site itself, at www.fpchurch.org.uk .

**FISHERS OF MEN:
THE 1921 RELIGIOUS REVIVAL – ITS CAUSE,
CONTEXT AND TRANSMISSION**
DONALD E. MEEK, UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

Between 1976 and 1978, the Gaelic linguistic scholar, Nancy Dorian, of Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, who is best known for her work on East Sutherland Gaelic, conducted an important investigation into the social life of the fishing community of East Sutherland. Her work was subsequently published in 1985 in a very valuable book entitled *The Tyranny of Tide*. Her principal informants were Mr and Mrs A.K. Sutherland, who lived in Golspie. In conversation with Dr Dorian, Mrs Sutherland alluded to one of the bad seasons which were experienced by the herring fishermen and other fisherfolk who followed the 'silver darlings' round the east coast to Lowestoft and Yarmouth:

One year, it was an awful poor season. There were no herring, an' no money, an' ye know what happened that year? Everybody was so poor, and there were a revival. An' everybody was converted.... 'Twas the poverty an' no money or nothing.¹

The reference to 'everybody' embraced the substantial squad of fishergirls and coopers and other workers who accompanied the fishing fleet southwards in pursuit of the herring. The year in question was 1921. In November of that year, the Scottish fishermen endured one of the worst seasons on record. Bad weather around the East Anglian coast, combined with an absence of fish shoals, ensured that the fishing crews remained on shore for long periods. As a result, the supporting teams of fishergirls and coopers were unusually idle in Yarmouth. This was the cause of the poverty to which Mrs Sutherland alluded.

At the same time, the fisherfolk experienced a profound religious revival which worked its way northwards from Lowestoft to Fraserburgh and beyond.² It is particularly interesting that Mrs Sutherland makes a direct link between the poverty of the season and the appearance of the revival, in which, by her account, 'everybody was converted'. Here we have

¹ Nancy C. Dorian, *The Tyranny of Tide* (Ann Arbor, 1985), p. 74.

² The most recent general account is Stanley C. Griffin, *A Forgotten Revival: East Anglia and NE Scotland – 1921* (Bromley, 1992). This is a well written and sensitive book, to which I am much indebted. See also Jackie Ritchie, *Floods upon the Dry Ground: God working among fisherfolk* (Peterhead, 1983).

the view of someone who witnessed events at first hand, but evidently stood outside the revival, or was by now sufficiently distanced from it, to be able to explain it in this way.

The Chiliasm of Despair

Mrs Sutherland is not alone in ascribing the cause of religious enthusiasm to economic uncertainties. It is common among secular historians of certain schools (often political or economic) to ascribe religious enthusiasm of any kind to political or social uncertainty or dysfunction. Thus Dr Callum Brown writes of the east-coast revivals of the 1920s:

Slumps in fishing and in coal in the early 1920s, together with coal strikes in 1921 and 1926, instigated the growth of revivalist and teetotal movements encompassing different evangelical sects and temperance organisations. At Inverallochy on the Moray Firth in 1921, the fishing depression brought 200 men to bible readings at the harbour; a journalist reported that 'after each parable had been explained they knelt down wringing their hands and swaying their bodies to and fro.'³

While duly noting the evangelical flavour of the communities which experienced such revivals, and thus their propensity to revivals, Brown nevertheless gives primacy to economic factors in 'instigating' the growth of revivalist movements. Brown adheres to broadly the same theory as John Lowe Duthie, who regards the difficult economic circumstances of the fishing communities of the North-east as the main reason for 'the fishermen's religious revival'. Duthie summarises his theory as follows:

A sense of relative deprivation among the fisher folk helps explain the revival as well as its millennial offshoot. A buoyant pre-war market and a war-time boom in earnings were followed by the anxieties of 1919 and 1920. These bred unprecedented conflict throughout the herring industry. After two years' anxiety came the hopeless despair of an unrelentingly disastrous year. Comparing their past with their present circumstances, the fishing communities felt sorely deprived. Their loss was not only material. The patent uselessness of strikes and stoppages to improve their position in 1921, by getting the Government to repeat the guarantee scheme or by maintaining their bargaining power with the curers, hit at their sense of their own status

³ Callum G. Brown, 'Religion and Secularisation', in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (eds), *People and Society in Scotland, Volume III, 1914-90* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 59.

and self-worth. Difficult or poor times, and the human problems they engendered, were one reason for the religious activity.⁴

Like Brown, Duthie accepts that there are other dimensions to revival:

Religious enthusiasm and millennial dreams cannot be reduced simply to a matter of economics. In their straitened circumstances, the fishing communities could have become apathetic and demoralised. Their psychological and cultural make-up dictated otherwise.⁵

The key factors in the fishing communities' 'psychological and cultural make-up', Duthie argues, were their 'deep emotionalism', deriving from their dangerous occupation, their earlier experience of religious revival in 1859-60, and the 'psychology of the crowd'. Fiery preachers were able to take advantage of 'jam-packed congregations' to instil their message deeply into a group of intense listeners who shared a common set of worries. The revival, *in toto*, 'satisfied the intense yearning for the spiritual-cum-psychological comfort of an easier future – in the next world, if not this one.'⁶

Explanations of this kind, which put religious revivals down largely to economic uncertainty, psychological predisposition, manipulation of the masses, and 'pie-in-the-sky' optimism, are fairly common among secular historians. Duthie's theory echoes the arguments of the radical historian, E.P. Thompson, with regard to early Methodist revivalism; it was he who famously coined the phrase, 'the chiasm of despair', for such movements.⁷ 'Portmanteau theories' which link spiritual experience to secular dislocation may be convenient, but they are often just too handy, too easy to take off the ideological shelf. Their validity as an overarching framework is discredited by the simple, self-evident fact that economic or social changes, in and of themselves, do not automatically produce spiritual movements. If economic determinism were the main cause, the British Isles ought to have produced a significant amount of religious revivals in the 1920s and 1930s, and no small number in the last twenty-five years, but this has not happened. Revivals are, in reality, complex phenomena, and must be seen in a number of different perspectives.⁸

⁴ John Lowe Duthie, 'The Fishermen's Religious Revival', *History Today* 33 (1983), p. 27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1986), p. 411.

⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 919, where Thompson states (in response to his critics):

Economic circumstances may indeed be one consideration, but there are others, including the theological and cultural contexts of these movements, in their wider (national) and narrower (local) perspectives. To ascribe the cause and progress of a religious movement to one particular factor, or to assign pre-eminent significance to that factor, is potentially dangerous, and may say more about the biases of the commentator than the circumstances of the revival.

The aim of the present paper is to demonstrate the different perspectives in which the 1921 revival may be viewed. The paper does not intend to add substantially to what is already known about the course of the 1921 revival. Rather, its aim is to re-assemble existing information, so as to set the revival in a number of different contexts, all of which have a bearing on the initiation and maintenance of the movement, and also on its ultimate exclusion from the mainstream of British evangelical life.⁹

As has already been suggested, we should not dismiss economic factors out of court. They may well be part of the reason for the manner in which the fishing communities of the North-east accepted revival movements. The loss of 'human props' no doubt helped to give a sharp relevance to the scriptural truth that 'here we have no continuing city'. Life was also fraught with particular dangers for fishermen. Furthermore, in the case of the 1921 revival, the periods of idleness resulting from the poor herring season undoubtedly allowed the fisherfolk to devote much more time to attending religious meetings, and it also seems entirely feasible that the loss of income during that period caused many to think about their lack of human security. To that extent, economic circumstances may have been a catalyst in the movement, but the poor season was not, in itself, the root cause of the revival. There is more than a semantic difference between 'instigation' and 'facilitation'. The 'instigation' of a revival may lie beyond the community which absorbs it, and the reasons for its absorption and facilitation in that community may be quite different from the reasons which triggered its 'instigation'.

'Revivalism is not a phenomenon which admits of a single hold-all explanation.'

⁹ For wider discussion of revivals, see (for Scotland) D.E. Meek, 'Revivals', in Nigel M. de S. Cameron et al. (eds), *The Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 711-18; and (for the British evangelical context) D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), pp. 14-17.

The religious context: a national setting

The chronology of the 1921 movement as a whole shows that the economic theory does not stand up to detailed scrutiny. When the Scottish fishing fleet arrived in Yarmouth in the late autumn of 1921, the religious meetings which generated the revival were already under way. These were associated particularly with Lowestoft, where a Baptist minister from London, Arthur Douglas Brown, had been preaching since early March of that year.¹⁰ By autumn, however, Brown and other preachers were busy in Ipswich and had reached Yarmouth itself, just as the main Scottish herring fleets were coming in. What was the religious setting in which Brown worked?

The impulse which brought the religious meetings to Lowestoft, and triggered the revival, was provided primarily by the desire of Lowestoft churches to replenish their numbers in the difficult years after the First World War. To that end the churches, notably London Road Baptist Church, were holding special meetings with revival as their ultimate goal.¹¹

The desire for revival following the First World War was related not only to the wish to fill empty pews, but also to a new sense of apocalyptic urgency which the war had generated. As Dr David Bebbington has observed in his splendid account of Evangelicalism in modern Britain, 'the apocalyptic atmosphere of wartime encouraged prophetic speculation', and evangelicals of national stature were 'reading the signs' (including the Balfour Declaration) with a view to anticipating the second coming of Christ. As a consequence, the Advent Testimony and Preparation Movement was formed to promote a premillennial understanding of the Christian future.¹² According to this perspective, the second coming of Christ would be followed by his thousand year rule with the saints. As the world would darken before Christ returned, mission to the unconverted was

¹⁰ Aspects of Brown's life are discussed in Griffin, *Forgotten Revival*, who also gives some biographical details. Brown (1874-1940) was minister in Herne Bay, Bristol, and London (Ramsden Road Baptist Church), and latterly, from 1934, in Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. He was President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1929-30. A full assessment of Brown's life and influence would be very useful.

¹¹ Griffin, *Forgotten Revival*, pp. 12-16.

¹² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp. 192-3.

stimulated, and became a matter of the greatest urgency. This urgency was reflected in events in Lowestoft.

If the premillennial understanding of the second coming of Christ had not already reached Lowestoft, it did so in the preaching of Douglas Brown. Brown was a member of the Advent Testimony movement.¹³ His sermons show that he placed considerable emphasis on the second advent. The same teaching was reaching some of the Scottish fishing-ports before the 1921 revival, through the efforts of the body known as the Pilgrim Preachers. The Pilgrim Preachers were active in Wick at the beginning of October 1921, just as the fishing fleet was arriving in Yarmouth.¹⁴ In many of the east-coast ports, the type of understanding promoted by the Pilgrim Preachers and the Advent Testimony movement would not have been new; Brethren groups, which were strong in the east-coast ports, had long espoused a premillennial view of Christ's second coming. The Salvation Army was also a potent influence.¹⁵

The fishing-ports of the east coast of Scotland and England thus shared in a new sense of spiritual anticipation which was conducive to revival in the early 1920s. This futuristic view of Christian destiny was, however, linked to a sense of history, and to an intensely conservative awareness of the pivotal role of revival in creating the Christian communities of the past. In the Scottish fishing ports, there was a specially deep awareness of revival. From the time of the 1859 revival, east-coast fishermen were well used to periodic visitations of what they would have regarded as divine favour. Revival was part of their identity; it was central to the Brethren communities in the east-coast fishing ports.¹⁶ Indeed, as Neil Dickson has so ably shown, the Brethren movement in Scotland had been rooted in the north-east in the context of the 1859 revival, which continued into the early 1860s.¹⁷ Revival, then, was programmed in to the mind-set of many east-coast fishermen. In revival, they re-lived their origins as a Christian

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Ritchie, *Floods*, p. 74.

¹⁵ It is important to note that, in addition to Brethren, several other evangelical bodies were active in the fishing ports of the north-east; see Robert Smith, *One Foot in the Sea* (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 78-87.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁷ Neil Dickson, 'Scottish Brethren: Division and Wholeness 1838-1916', in Harold W. Rowdon (ed.), *Scottish Brethren 1838-1916 and other Papers*, Christian Brethren Review, 41 (Exeter, 1990), pp. 5-41.

community; revival enabled them to grow as a community, and helped them to survive in the face of adversity. Revivals were a special reminder of the Lord's presence among them, taking them back to their foundations and giving them hope for the future.¹⁸

It is not therefore necessary or accurate to ascribe the 1921 revival which came to the east-coast ports solely to economic determinism. There were special emphases in the theological tenor of the post-war years which heightened people's desire for spiritual awakening, and the pro-revival mind-set of the fishing communities specially predisposed them to the absorption of spiritual awakening and, indeed, continuous re-awakening. When the spark was lit, the spiritual impulses ran through traditional and well-prepared channels, and were moulded by the social setting of the communities.

The social setting: a community context

The fishing communities were tailor-made for the absorption and transmission of revival impulses when these were stimulated. The fishing communities of the east coast, in both England and Scotland, formed a special 'extended family' which was bonded by a common occupation. Very close bonding existed within the different segments of that 'extended family'; individual families often owned, and crewed, their own boats, and networks of kith and kin ran deep in the communities.¹⁹ When revival movements came, the crews of individual boats could be converted in a group, and the impulses would spread through the family network and further afield. The *Northern Ensign* for 21 December 1921 reported the story of the Wick fishing-boat, the 'Mizpah', which

is manned entirely by men who have professed Christianity, and their departure last week for the Stornoway fishing was a scene of the greatest interest in the harbour. The boat sailed with the Salvation Army flag flying from her masthead and the crew and their friends sang revival hymns.²⁰

¹⁸ Such optimism was undoubtedly a great comfort within communities which drew their livelihoods from dangerous occupations such as fishing and mining. A sense of the supernatural, in all its manifestations, was also a deeply ingrained feature of such communities.

¹⁹ Ritchie, *Floods*, has numerous references to such networks.

²⁰ Cited *ibid.*, p. 105.

The impulses were spread in a number of ways, but of fundamental importance was the sharing of experience. The sharing of experience, in song and story, was central to the fishing communities, in both the Highlands and Islands and the east coast. Religious experience was readily shared, especially when the sharer belonged to, or empathised with, the social group. The crews of the boats which returned from Yarmouth told what had happened to them while they were in the south, and this led to further conversions in the Scottish fishing ports.²¹

The absorption of the 1921 revival within the fishing communities was facilitated by the fact that the key preachers were able to empathise closely with the fisherfolk. This is evident in the case of Douglas Brown. Although Brown was primarily a Baptist minister in an unlikely urban setting in London, there was another dimension to him. He was, in fact, a seafarer himself. He did not enjoy good health, and, in order to improve his health, he used to sign on as a sailor with the White Star Line. His manse in London had a ship's wheel on the landing. When he arrived in Lowestoft, he was in poor health, but his health improved markedly in the course of the revival.²² He was, of course, in his element, and he knew how to make his sermons relevant to the world of the fisherfolk. When preaching in the Seamen's Bethel in Lowestoft during the first week of his mission, he spoke of Peter walking on the water to Christ.²³

The compatibility of preacher and listeners is saliently underlined in the man who is particularly closely associated with the first stage of the revival in Yarmouth, namely the Wicker called Jock Troup, a cooper who had come south with the fleet. Troup, who later lost his job as a cooper, probably because of his intense involvement in the movement in Yarmouth, epitomised the essence of the Scottish east-coast fishermen. He spoke their language, and sang their songs. He was a rough diamond of a man, but he was precisely the person to make an impression on the fisherfolk in the initial stages of the movement, when it touched the Scottish contingent in Yarmouth.²⁴ When Troup moved north to Fraserburgh, Douglas Brown (already familiar with Yarmouth) took his

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 72: 'There were impressive scenes at Hopeman and Burghhead as the men returned from Yarmouth, and likewise among the women as they made their journey home by train and bus.'

²² Griffin, *Forgotten Revival*, pp. 81, 83.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-66.

place, and did so most acceptably.²⁵ When the movement took root in individual Scottish fishing ports, local workers and fishermen who were also preachers, such as David Cordiner in Peterhead, assumed importance as leaders of the revival.²⁶ Like Jock Troup, these men had an intimate knowledge of their own communities, and could address their people in appropriate cultural terms.

The making of the message: a cultural context

We can argue, then, that the social setting of the fishing communities, and the close matching between the preachers and their audiences, were of significance in the transmission of revival impulses in 1921. But it is also important to observe that the Christian message at the heart of the revival was accepted, and readily absorbed, because it was moulded to fit the conventions of the fishing communities. The New Testament itself showed the early disciples following their occupation as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee, with Christ occasionally accompanying them. It was but a short step to transfer the message to the sea-going context which the fishermen knew so well; in so doing, the fishermen made it uniquely their own. As the *People's Journal* reported in December 1921:

At testimony meetings these weather-hardened fishermen speak of 'The Great Captain', call Christ 'The Skipper', or [speak] of 'Having the Pilot on board' because they are bound for the 'Port of Heaven'. The chart is the Bible, so with such a chart and such a captain, 'We canna' gang wrang', they say.²⁷

The fishermen had a predilection for hymnody which expressed their feelings in images derived from seafaring, and these became immensely popular in times of revival, in the early 1920s and at other periods. Their favourites included 'Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?'. They also composed their own hymns, with resounding images of seafaring which were applied to the spiritual voyage of life.²⁸

In these ways, through testimonies, sermons and hymns which drew on sea-going metaphors, the Christian faith was contextualised in a manner which was directly relevant to the day-to-day experiences of the community. By this means the fisherfolk articulated what, to them, would

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Ritchie, *Floods*, pp. 45-53.

²⁷ Cited *ibid.*, p. 103.

²⁸ For an example of a local fisherman's hymn, composed by John Innes of Portknockie, see *ibid.*, pp. 68-9.

have been the main, if not the sole, reason for the revival, namely that the sovereign God of heaven and earth, in his grace and glory, had touched them savingly with the power of his spirit.

Marginalising the movement: a ministerial setting

One of the great hopes created by the 'fisherfolk's revival', as it developed, was the possibility that it might instigate a wider national revival of religion within the British Isles. This hope was not, however, realised, and it is worth exploring why the revival remained 'marginal' to Britain and also to evangelicalism itself.

The most significant factor, both in introducing the movement briefly to a wider evangelical constituency, and in ensuring that in the longer term it remained safely on the geographical and spiritual periphery, was the Keswick Convention, a major annual gathering of evangelicals, initially predominantly Anglican, in the Lake District. Established in 1875 with the aim of promoting practical holiness, the convention provided a platform for prominent evangelical speakers.²⁹ The speakers often had distinctive doctrinal emphases, and the extent to which they swayed the Keswick Convention could influence not only the shape of 'Keswick' but also trends and patterns within British evangelicalism.³⁰ The 'East Anglian Revival', as it was known in England, drew the attention of key leaders of the Keswick Convention, and the report of the revival given in 1921 created considerable excitement. The ministry of Douglas Brown was brought within the Keswick network during the autumn of 1921, and in 1922 he took the morning Bible Readings at the main convention. His pivotal role in the East Anglian Revival raised expectations, and his addresses ran true to form. As a result, what Dr Ian Randall has termed 'an explosion of spiritual energy' burst upon Keswick.³¹ Yet that 'explosion' produced varying reactions, not least the response of Graham Scroggie, the highly influential minister of Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Edinburgh, who had become a force to be reckoned with, not only in Scotland, but increasingly at the Keswick Convention. At the evening convention meeting, following one of Brown's addresses, Scroggie, sensing that

²⁹ J.C. Pollock, *The Keswick Story: The Authorised History of the Keswick Convention* (London, 1964).

³⁰ Ian Randall, 'Capturing Keswick: Baptists and the changing spirituality of the Keswick Convention in the 1920s' *The Baptist Quarterly*, 36, No. 7 (July 1996), pp. 331-48.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 338-40.

emotion had outstripped reality, warned his hearers that 'Faith is not credulity; faith is not ignorance; faith is intelligent; faith is open-eyed; faith has a reason as well as emotion, and the man is in grave peril who is resting on emotion rather than upon intelligent understanding.'³² Although Scroggie's remarks were doubtless not intended to be applied *ad hominem*, Douglas Brown's fate was sealed as far as future Keswick ministry was concerned; Keswick did maintain an interest in his work, but he gradually moved away from the heart of the convention.³³

Theological perspectives thus played their part in keeping 'the fisherfolk's revival' from sparking a wider movement in the British Isles. Yet differences in culture and community may also have been significant. Keswick catered for a largely middle-class 'gathered' community linked by distinctive spiritual aspirations, and not by the social bonding of fishing or coal-mining. 'Raw revivalism' was apparently not its style. Its focus was on the deepening of the spiritual life of those already converted. Its unease with revivalism had already been amply demonstrated earlier in the century. After the Welsh Revival of 1904-5, several hundred enthusiastic Welshmen attended in 1906, but the convention appears to have been unhappy with the experience and was apparently relieved to return to 'customary ways' by 1908.³⁴

Paradoxically, that same Welsh Revival had exerted a major influence in revitalising Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Edinburgh, which, in 1917, called Graham Scroggie to its pastorate. Here, an interesting parallel can be drawn with his role at Keswick. Far from perpetuating the revivalist ethos which he inherited from his predecessor, Joseph Kemp, Scroggie steered the Chapel away from its revival origins. When he arrived, vociferous 'Amens' were still prone to interrupt his addresses, but these were soon eliminated in favour of a quieter style.³⁵ It is highly likely that, in responding as he did to Douglas Brown, Scroggie was trying to steer the Keswick Convention away from the excessive emotionalism which had accompanied the Welsh Revival and its associated 'hot spots' in Scotland and elsewhere.

The hard-headed rationalism of Scroggie quietened Charlotte Chapel, and also steadied the course of the Keswick Convention after 1921. Yet, even if Brown had been able to move the convention more obviously in

³² *Ibid.*, p. 340.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Pollock, *Keswick Story*, pp. 119-29.

³⁵ William Whyte, *Revival in Rose Street: A History of Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, n.p., n.d.), pp. 43-7.

his direction, would the East Anglian Revival have made a wider impact? Brown did not lack supporters. There were undoubtedly those who responded to his messages, and who, despite Scroggie's warning, saw revival as the way to spiritual renewal. Brown's addresses to the Keswick Convention were in print by the end of 1922, and immediately went through two impressions.³⁶ The punchy little volume carried a Foreword by Albert A. Head, described on the title-page as 'A Chairman of the Keswick Convention'. Head, a London banker and Keswick Trustee, had chaired the first 'Keswick in Wales' convention at Llandrindod Wells in 1903, immediately prior to the Welsh Revival.³⁷ He wrote:

I earnestly and tenderly recommend the perusal of the accompanying Revival Addresses to every one who is desirous of knowing more of the facts and features of such a Movement, and who is longing for the experience which the oft-repeated desire expresses in the words: 'O Lord, send a revival, and let it begin in me.'³⁸

Yet, despite the interest in Brown's book demonstrated by its reprinting, there were no significant related developments in the heartlands of England, Wales or Scotland, though small-scale local revivals, possibly related to the east-coast movement and transmitted (in part) by fishermen, occurred in the Hebrides during the 1920s.³⁹ The 'East Anglian Revival' came to be associated with a particular group, and it is hard to escape the conclusion that, when a revival has been triggered and embedded in a particular context, it operates through distinct communities, bonded by their occupations and range of experiences. How large, or how small, a revival is may depend on the size of the community, or the number of communities, in which it operates. Where there is no community or sense of community, or where the community lacks social bonding (as at Keswick), there is (in human terms) little prospect of revival. The revival movement which began in Lowestoft, and influenced most, if not all, of the fishing-ports of the east and north-east coast of Scotland, from Eyemouth to Wick, also affected people who were not fishermen, but, as it

³⁶ A. Douglas Brown, *Revival Addresses* (London, 1922).

³⁷ Pollock, *Keswick Story*, pp. 121-2.

³⁸ Brown, *Addresses*, p. v. A national revival of religion was also Brown's overall desire; see Griffin, *Forgotten Revival*, pp. 77-83.

³⁹ These small-scale, local revivals appeared in Lewis and Tiree in the early 1920s. My father, Hector MacDonald Meek (1906-84), was converted in the Tiree revival of 1922-4, under the preaching of the Baptist evangelist, Francis William Taylor.

developed, it functioned most effectively within a distinctive community, and sub-sets of that community.⁴⁰

Douglas Brown's Keswick addresses indicate that he was very much aware that the convention was a very different theological and cultural constituency from the fishing-ports of East Anglia. 'You will forgive me, won't you,' he challenged his listeners, 'but for eighteen months I have been working in the midst of the men of this country, rough men who know nothing' about theology; and they come to me and they say: "Douglas Brown, we are going to believe the Christian Church when she is real."⁴¹ 'Rough men who know nothing about theology' were not likely to attend Keswick, nor were the ways of Keswick necessarily those that would win the souls of such people. Brown was aware of what others expected from Keswick: 'A commercial traveller recently approached me in a railway carriage, and said: "You know we worldly men are looking to Keswick for a lead in regard to the great spiritual salvation of England." I am looking to the Holy Ghost!'⁴² What Douglas Brown offered was not, in fact, an account of the East Anglian Revival; rather, he issued a challenge to the Keswick Convention at a critical time in its history. That challenge rose directly from his own experience in East Anglia. It evidently provoked a mixed reaction, as Scroggie's response and Head's Foreword indicate. Keswick was divided in the short term, but Scroggie's perspectives held sway in the long term.

Seldom has any well-established ecclesiastical institution, large or small, welcomed a revival movement with open arms. Wariness, based on a fear of subversion of the *status quo*, is perhaps the natural first response. The institutional door may then be partially opened to a revival, or completely closed against it, although the instruments and fruit of that revival may gain admission and even a position of honour. So, in broad terms, it turned out for the Keswick Convention's encounter with the man who spoke with the breath of the East Anglian Revival. Keswick and similar gatherings with a mainstream ethos were to become the theological trend-setters within British evangelicalism in the years ahead, and revivals of the traditional kind gradually lost their central significance. They could not be accommodated readily within the *douce environs* of middle-class

⁴⁰ The relationship between religious revivals and the communities which they affect is worthy of much further research. This article is part of a wider project towards that end.

⁴¹ Brown, *Addresses*, p. 41.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

evangelical conventions.

It is interesting to reflect that the twentieth century has witnessed the progressive marginalisation of 'traditional' revival movements in the British context. From the time of the Welsh Revival of 1904-5, revivals were no longer likely to enter the British evangelical mainstream, though they could generate occasional 'hot spots' through individual influences. The evidence shows that such movements have tended to be restricted to the northern and western edges of the British Isles.⁴³ Some of the key figures of twentieth-century revivals have tended to become isolated, even in their own time. Evan Roberts, one of the most prominent figures in the 1904-5 Welsh Revival, lived a life of comparative seclusion thereafter.⁴⁴ Douglas Brown, by contrast, assumed wider roles within the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, including that of Evangelist from 1924, but his power as a revivalist preacher appears to have declined markedly.⁴⁵ Yet, in the early 1920s, he was a 'chosen vessel' in taking the gospel message to the East Anglian fishing ports. Without him, there might not have been a revival of any kind, despite the (seemingly) favourable economic, social and cultural factors which we have considered above. Through Douglas Brown's obedience and faithful preaching, 'rough men who know nothing about theology' came to know much about God's love, and many, both men and women, were lastingly converted. The ocean of God's grace has no periphery.

Conclusion

In explaining the circumstances of any religious revival, it is not enough to rely solely on economic theory. A wide range of perspectives needs to be taken into account, including those of national, local, spiritual and cultural significance. Part (but only part) of the key to the success or failure of a religious revival is the way in which it is absorbed into the circumstances and social context of a particular community, or a set of related communities. One can see the general point clearly enough across

⁴³ The most recent revival which attracted national interest was in the island of Lewis in 1949-53. There have been several smaller movements in Lewis since that time.

⁴⁴ Roberts suffered a nervous breakdown; see Pollock, *Keswick Story*, p. 129

⁴⁵ Griffin, *Forgotten Revival*, pp. 81-2. Griffin comments on Brown's recurrent ill health, including his tendency to neuritis. He also notes that, latterly, Brown himself felt that 'the power' had left him.

the centuries: the coalminers of Kingswood, Bristol, touched by the preaching of Whitefield;⁴⁶ the small farmers and tinminers of Devon and Cornwall, influenced by Wesleyan Methodism in the early nineteenth century in a series of revivals which were productive of the 'Bible Christian' movement;⁴⁷ the crofters and fishermen of the Hebrides, and of Orkney and Shetland, at different stages;⁴⁸ the leadminers of Lanarkshire in the 1920s;⁴⁹ and the east-coast fisherfolk whose experience we have discussed in this paper. This same revival illustrates the importance of a single figure (Douglas Brown) in providing the initial momentum in the national context, and of local leaders (such as Jock Troup and David Cordiner) in rooting the revival in specific communities; it also demonstrates the crucial role of a major national gathering (the Keswick Convention) and of a significant national leader (Graham Scroggie) in determining the course and development of a spiritual movement relative to the 'mainstream'. In this case, Scroggie's influence over the Keswick Convention helped to ensure that 'the fisherfolk's revival' remained largely on the coastline and also on the periphery of British evangelical life.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: Evangelist of the 18th-Century Revival* (London, 1990), pp. 48-53.

⁴⁷ D. Luker, 'Revivalism in Theory and Practice: the case of Cornish Methodism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 34, pt 4 (1986), pp. 603-19. This is a particularly fine article on revivals in the Cornish cultural context.

⁴⁸ For the Scottish Highlands and Hebrides, see my forthcoming paper, 'Gaelic Bible, Revival and Mission: the spiritual rebirth of the nineteenth-century Highlands', in the special issue of the *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, to be devoted to the Scottish Highlands.

⁴⁹ I am very grateful to Dr Ian Randall, Tutor in History, Spurgeon's College, London, for drawing this movement to my attention. I am also very much in Dr Randall's debt for reading the original version of this paper, and for providing important references to his published research on the Keswick Convention.

⁵⁰ This paper was originally written for, and delivered to, a conference on religion and religious traditions in North-east Scotland organised by the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, in the autumn of 1997. I am very grateful to Professor James Porter for permission to publish this extended version of the original paper.

REVIEWS

Edward Irving: The Trinitarian Face of God

Graham W.P. McFarlane

Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1996; vi+89pp., £5.99;
ISBN 0 7152 0719 9

Graham McFarlane is a lecturer in Systematic Theology at the London Bible College. He is something of an expert on Irving and his doctoral thesis has recently been published by Paternoster as *Christ and the Spirit: The Doctrine of the Incarnation according to Edward Irving*.

This little book is in 'The Devotional Library' series which has previously included short volumes containing the devotional writings of John Knox, John McLeod Campbell, Thomas Erskine and others. The editors, in their general introduction, give the rationale for the series: 'In a time when shops are crowded with books on spirituality and mysticism that sometimes fail to live up to their advertisements, we think it is valuable to return to deeper and richer well-springs of Christian devotional thought, to thinkers renowned for loving God with their minds.'

This volume, like the others in the series, begins with a short (13pp.) introduction by the author to the subject's life and thought. In this introduction, McFarlane seeks to show not only Irving's relationship to such contemporaries as McLeod Campbell, but also to argue that the significance of some of his theological insights has only recently (in the work of Barth and others) been recognised. This introductory section is completed by the inclusion of a bibliography of Irving's writings.

Part two of the book contains McFarlane's choice from Irving's own writings. The first selection consists of three short expositions of Ephesians 1:2 under the title, 'The God who makes himself known'. This is followed by the second selection, entitled, 'The Act of God in Christ' which includes expositions of Psalm 15:6-8, John 8:31 and Luke 1:35. It is in the third of these expositions that Irving broaches the controversial subject of Christ taking 'fallen' human nature.

The third selection, entitled 'The Human Creation and Condition', is a short extract from *Morning Watch* sub-titled 'On the prophetic aspect of all God's works and ways'. In it Irving explores his view that the end of all creation was the coming of the Son of God. He considers the first Adam in comparison to the last Adam and seeks to understand the purposes of God.

The fourth and final selection is entitled 'The Human Spirit'. This explores some Trinitarian themes but focuses particularly on the Holy

Spirit, not least on the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost'. Irving's views on this subject are well known and to some extent prefigure the later charismatic resurgence – although this extract is more devotional than polemical.

A.T.B. McGowan, *Highland Theological Institute, Elgin*

By Faith Alone: The Doctrine that Divides

R.C. Sproul

Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1996; 193pp., £6.99; ISBN 0 340 63063 9

The sixteenth century is an irrelevance, we are told. Who is interested in the fevered battles of monks, cloisters and frock-coats? What has Wittenberg to do with the World Wide Web? Sproul's careful work illustrates an astonishing millennium-end fact: the argument about justification through faith alone, the one that shook the medieval church's foundations, still has plenty of light and heat left in it. From the heavyweight bout amongst North American Evangelicals (John F. McArthur and friends v. Zane Hodges and Charles Ryrie: *The Lordship of Christ v. True Freedom?*) to the consultation called *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* (ECT) which received qualified positive comment from J.I. Packer, no less. R.C. Sproul is pleased at the resurgence of interest in the Reformation doctrine, but mainly troubled at the sanguine (his word) approach of Evangelicals.

Sproul's main point is that Evangelicals are in danger of betraying not just the Reformation but the very gospel itself. Indeed most of the book is making just this point. Justification *sola fide* (justification by faith alone) is of the very essence of the gospel. A gospel not clear on this is not the gospel at all. More precisely, it is faith *alone* that is essential. Sproul has little difficulty in showing that this was the heart of the Reformation plea. Equally, he shows that it was at the heart of the Counter-Reformation decrees at the Council of Trent. But does this show enough to support his main thrust, which is concerned with *Evangelicals* and their alleged failure?

Certainly the biblical and logical case is strong if one starts with Paul (though there is no awareness in this book of the recent suggested shifts in New Testament scholarship). Sproul is reasonably successful in harmonising the New Testament book of James with what he sees as the centre of the New Testament gospel. He also demonstrates well the significance of the '*sola*'. The book is well worth reading for such a spirited defence of Reformed / Evangelical traditional teaching. But some

loose ends trailing leave doubt as to the complete conclusiveness of the case.

For instance, what do we *mean* when we say justification by faith alone is of the essence of the gospel? Do we mean that the gospel is not preached unless this teaching is clearly expounded? If so, why do so few (if any) New Testament evangelistic sermons refer to it? What do we make of people who seem genuinely to have come to Christ without understanding even a simple form of it? Or do we mean only that a pure faith, free of all other props, can alone save? The problem then is that the faith of all believers is not always so strong and pure even at conversion. Neither was Calvin confident about the consistent quality of faith even of true believers, and observation shows just how prone believers are to smuggle in confidence in 'works'. Does this mean suddenly we are not saved, or is it rather just a question of a weak or mixed faith? Is there any place in Sproul's scheme for such a faith?

Towards the end of the book, the author denies that he is saying that the *doctrine* of justification is of the essence of the gospel for no-one is saved by faith in a doctrine. True on the second point. But to say that justification by faith alone is of the essence of the gospel must be to say that the *doctrine*, however simply expressed, is of the essence of the gospel. Sproul's anxiety to avoid being pushed into this speaks volumes. In fact, he unwittingly illustrates how difficult it is to express the doctrine simply. For in explaining and vindicating it he adopts the most scholastic and complex of methodologies classically represented in Turretin. In other words, the main claim of the book falls to its knees under the weight of a thousand qualifications.

Moreover, there are historical problems. We search the writings of the fathers and intervening theologians in vain to find the author's claim vindicated, though it is fair to say that much may not be emphasised there because it is already assumed. Even in the best of writers, including Augustine himself, justification by faith hardly sticks out like a sore thumb. Did they all preach 'another', 'apostasised' gospel? Inadequate, devalued, reduced, yes – but *another* gospel? There are other concerns too. We all know that some Catholic theologians, and even bishops, are deeply sympathetic to salvation through faith *alone*. They are searching for a way back across the bridge. Some want to historicise and marginalise the Tridentine decrees as time-bound and overtaken. Does it really help them in their cautious pilgrimage towards Evangelicals to cast up in their path, remorselessly and legalistically, decrees which do not really embody *their*

vision? In other words do we demand that they renounce decrees and dogmatic constitutions before we recognise them as non-apostate teachers?

In conclusion, Sproul has helped the discussion considerably by insisting, I believe rightly, on that tiny word *sola*. Whether his main thesis is proven is an open question, but I suggest that Evangelicals could start to respond appropriately to his challenge by re-affirming that 'justification by faith *alone*' is certainly of the essence of the gospel's *purity, fullness and power*.

Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow

Theology through the Theologians

Colin E. Gunton

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; xi+248pp., £22.50; ISBN 0 5670 8527 9

This book is a collection of essays which seeks to explore the various doctrines of the Christian faith through study of, and interaction with, the work of various significant theologians. The essays were written over a considerable period (1972-1995) and although some of them have been published before, others have not.

Clearly it is difficult to summarise or assess a volume of this nature because the chapters were each prepared for a specific purpose (conference, journal article, public lecture, *etc.*) and do not 'flow' in the way that Gunton's other books do. It must be said, however, that this is a valuable book for gaining a deeper understanding of Gunton's thought, particularly for the way in which it allows us to share the insights which he has gleaned from various theologians.

Several of the chapters concern theological method, not least an essay focusing on Anselm and Coleridge which explores the question as to whether such a thing as an 'English Systematic Theology' is possible. His answer is that it is possible, that some attempts are already being made to achieve this. He is encouraged by the fact that scientists, artists and philosophers are asking theological questions. His word of caution is that this task must not be undertaken in isolation from the wider theological constituency, nor must the work and tradition of past centuries (Puritans *etc.*) be ignored.

Also on theological method, and continuing the study of English theology, is a chapter discussing 'The Nature of Dogmatic Theology' focusing on Newman. Gunton recognises the contribution of Newman but believes that there were serious weaknesses, particularly in his battle

against enlightenment thinking. By dismissing the Reformation as an aspect of modernity, and failing to learn from the best elements of modernity, Newman proves to be less helpful than Coleridge and others.

Several of the chapters in the book are devoted to Karl Barth's theology. Interestingly, Gunton explains that he has 'over the years attained a measure of distance from Barth's theology' arguing that 'certain aspects of the content and structure of his *Church Dogmatics* have come to appear problematic'. To this end he has re-written a couple of the chapters and added a most illuminating final section to chapter 6: 'Karl Barth's Doctrine of Election as part of his Doctrine of God'. Gunton believes that Barth's doctrine of election needs to be re-assessed, partly because of his unhappiness at Barth's use of 'event' language in describing the ontology of God, and partly because he detects a residual existentialism in Barth which, Gunton believes, raises a number of problems, not least Barth's understanding of God's freedom.

Gunton follows this chapter by going straight into a chapter on the Holy Spirit. This chapter is not linked to the thought of one particular theologian but ranges through the tradition. One key element in the chapter is the way in which Gunton seeks to relate Christology and Pneumatology, a theme which appears at several points in the book, not least in the chapter on Edward Irving's Christology. It is not insignificant, then, that Gunton suggests in his introduction that he sees the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as something of a unifying factor through the book.

Readers of this volume may well find themselves drawn to particular chapters because of their interest either in the doctrine being discussed or in the theologian who is the focus for discussion. This reviewer was particularly fascinated by the chapter on the doctrine of the church, looking at the work of John Owen and John Zizioulas. This is a most stimulating chapter despite being, on the surface at least, a slightly unlikely combination! Gunton's section on Owen's doctrine of the transcendence of the Spirit was particularly helpful.

All in all, a challenging and thought-provoking book, providing insight into the development of one of Britain's most distinguished systematic theologians. It is to be commended.

A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

Persons in Communion: Trinitarian Description and Human Participation

Alan J. Torrance

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; xii+388pp., £24.95; ISBN 0 567 09740 4

This volume, Alan Torrance's doctoral dissertation, explores the meaning of the word 'person' as used in Trinitarian theology. This is a wide ranging study, examining not only the legitimacy of 'person' language, but also seeking to demonstrate the implications and results of such usage. Although the sub-title of the volume is 'with special reference to Volume One of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*', Torrance does not confine his examination to one scholar, indeed one of the strengths of the book is his interaction with Rahner, Zizioulas and others.

Dr Torrance does not merely engage in a survey, however, rather he seeks to challenge certain existing models for theological reflection and replace them with a new one. More specifically, he believes that there are serious weaknesses in Barth's 'revelational model' and argues that a doxological or worship centred model is the most appropriate for theology. He develops this critique of Barth by demonstrating that Barth's use of the word 'Seinsweise' rather than 'person' helped to establish a theology of communication rather than a more dynamic theology of communion.

It should not be thought, however, that Torrance is arguing against the mainstream of Barth's theology. The very fact that this volume is based on the *Church Dogmatics* is tribute to the regard in which Torrance holds the great Swiss theologian. Rather, this is an attempt to balance one emphasis with another, revelation with communion. It is in essence an attempt to critique and correct one element within the Barthian theology, albeit a crucial one.

More than this, however, Torrance is arguing that the very understanding of who we are as human beings can only properly be grasped when we understand the triunity of 'persons' who is God. More particularly, both our understanding of the divine triunity and our understanding of human being must be contextualised by the Christ-event, which provides the focus and content of all theology.

Even apart from the central thesis, that a proper understanding of 'person' language in Trinitarian theology leads to the replacement of a revelational model with a doxological one, there are other significant areas of interest in this book. Like much Trinitarian theology written in the past few years, particularly from the Barthian school, there are lines of thought

which impact upon the dialogue between Reformed and Orthodox scholars, and there is also engagement with Catholic and feminist theology.

This is not a book for the faint hearted! It is an erudite and scholarly work of considerable depth and density which requires (but repays) careful and sustained study.

A.T.B. McGowan, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

Moral Leadership in a Post-Modern Age

Robin Gill

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1997; 167pp., £12.95; ISBN 0567 08550 3

This book contains a collection of papers written since 1992 by the present holder of the Michael Ramsay chair in the University of Kent. Its primary purpose is to examine the challenging role of moral leadership at a time when paradoxically, an increasingly pluralist society appears to be searching for greater moral certitude. Some essays emphasise more the role of a distinctive Christian ethic in a post-modern context. Others focus in turn on moral exponents and church structures, underlining the paramount need for Christian leaders to be concerned about a structural and moral leadership that connects with the real world. Christian ethics, according to Gill, should always engage distinctively with secular thought while at the same time remaining as inclusive as possible.

This thesis is articulated in three ways. In part one, entitled 'Morality and Post-modernity', Gill addresses the question of what it is that makes Christian ethics valid and distinctive in our post-modern society. Earlier he states in his introduction his conviction that Christian ethics should question illogical moral positions, strengthen theistic or Christian perspectives and encourage future moral vision. Here the author argues positively for certain bridging principles such as beneficence, autonomy and justice which might be agreed upon by otherwise divergent groups. Also religious communities are different from their secular counterparts by virtue of a tradition that is rightly suspicious of changing fashions, and communities of worship that point to a reality beyond themselves. In addition, Christians have much stronger grounds for believing in a moral order than other secular visions that emphasise merely chance or evolutionary frameworks.

Subsequently, the author argues that self-regarding interest is an inadequate basis for moral behaviour and in some cases even negates the very notion of moral action. Secularists who argue for autonomy need,

according to Gill, to look again at worshipping communities which sustain and express a mutuality and morality that is rarely found as extensively or qualitatively elsewhere. Of course, it is all too easy to make claims for churches as moral communities. The great challenge, says Gill, is to find a way of expressing Christian moral distinctives without exaggerating the actual theological or sociological differences. Within the Christian church itself, Gill is convinced that unified positions can be reached on a whole variety of issues but in most cases, they are unlikely to represent the whole of Christianity. Gill suggests that the best way of resolving difficult moral issues is often to recognise frankly the divisions that do exist between Christians and then look for some unity in diversity for what he calls 'the values-in-tension' of the church. When we recognise the tension between biblical values such as grace and law, or peace and justice, or rights and responsibilities, maturity and real growth are possible.

Finally, commenting on the Christian realism of Reinhold Niebuhr, Gill argues that when we take seriously the claims of globalisation, Christian ethics can still be distinctive because there are some moral 'planks', ethical common ground, that actually apply across all cultures.

In part two, faith and family issues are considered in relation to post-modernity. The papal encyclicals *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae* are also analysed as is John Sacks' *Faith in the Future*. The latter, an orthodox Jew, argues cogently for the dependency of morality on faith. Three particular responses to the major challenges of sexuality and the family are expressed here. First, Gill argues we must not baptise every dominant but passing secular fantasy. Some, such as promiscuity, be it heterosexual or homosexual, child pornography or adultery are clearly sinful on the basis of biblical virtues. Secondly, other forms of behaviour such as faithful co-habitation, the author contends, are not so inherently sinful, but are still less than ideal. Here the author believes we need to be much more discerning and compassionate as some forms of less moral behaviour have nonetheless certain aspects in common with biblical values. Thirdly, there is, of course, the biblical norm which Gill seems reticent about calling a better way, though the implication is obvious.

In part three, the author looks in greater detail at certain contentious moral issues from euthanasia to genetics, values and management to religious education. A broad ethical map is sketched out as the general theory of the opening two sections is thus earthed in helpful and specific applications to controversial areas. The tendency of many Christians to reject certain management theories is turned on its head by Gill who

argues, in my view convincingly, that most management theories can be treated as technique rather than theology. More than that, some of the new management concepts far from being inappropriate secular ideas are, in reality, theological borrowings. Mission statements and accountability are two such concepts. The two chapters on euthanasia and genetics are largely briefing papers dealing with specific events, such as the Cox and Bland cases and the whole issue of germ line therapy.

This book will undoubtedly be of special interest to Christians who are determined to think through their faith and live within the market place of society without abandoning the firm foundations of historic Christianity. It rightly eschews easy answers in the midst of post-modernist complexity and honestly engages with the twin role of Christian leadership to be biblically distinctive without being morally exclusive.

At times, the disparate nature of these collected essays is unsatisfactory and militates against a more integrated understanding of the issues. Occasionally too, comments about the inadequacy of 'slippery slope' arguments or the denial of 'the sacredness of life' (passed off as a merely Hindu notion) jarred with this reviewer. The importance of biblical revelation as a basis for morality is also understated while the lack of any serious empirical study of moral communities, spiritual or secular, is a serious omission which the author himself rightly acknowledges.

This book's great merit, however, is its challenge to all Christian leaders to really understand the times we are living in and seek to make a distinctive Christian response which will commend itself to those who do not share our presuppositions or convictions.

David J.B. Anderson, Glasgow

Healing Through the Centuries: Models for Understanding

Ronald A.N. Kydd

Hendricksen Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1998; 235pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 913573 60 4

The author of this book teaches in the Eastern Pentecostal Bible College in the USA. Healing has been part of his academic agenda since 1974 when he began teaching it as part of a course on Pentecostal distinctives.

His book is an historical account of miraculous or divine healing. The author defines divine healing as 'restoration of health through the direct intervention of God'. He goes on to say that 'the products of such

intervention are miracles' and that 'this kind of healing is divine because of God's direct intervention'.

The Introduction is in two parts. The first part provides an overview of the study which covers the whole history of the church from the ministry of Jesus to the healing practice of Oral Roberts. The author maintains that divine healing has continued throughout the history of the church, but at no time has it been so evident as it is today. However, claims for divine healing have often been overstated, especially in the United States. The second part deals with the problem of verification of divine healing and discusses the question of how such weight should be placed on scientific observation as a means of validating the miraculous.

The first chapter considers the healing miracles of Jesus which form part of the divine response to illness. These miracles were not isolated events, but were part of 'the big picture' of the conflict between the force of evil and the kingdom of God; a conflict which has continued throughout the history of the church and been reflected in its ministry of healing.

The thirteen chapters which form the rest of the book are taken up with a presentation of 'models for understanding' healing. These models of healing activity in the church are classified into six different types and examples of each type are provided. These models are presented in a more or less historical sequence and described as confrontational, intercessory, reliquial, incubational, revelational and soteriological. The confrontational model corresponds closely to the biblical picture of the ministry of Jesus. However, there is no space in a short review to give details of these categories or to name all the examples provided. The modern examples of the confrontational model are given as Johann Christoph Blumhardt and John Wimber; those of the incubational model include Dorothea Trudel, and the soteriological model is illustrated by Oral Roberts.

The author's classification of healing ministries in the history of the church is an attempt to impose some sort of order on very diverse phenomena. He admits that, in fact, the reality is not nearly so neat as his classification might suggest.

The book ends with a select bibliography which occupies fifteen pages, followed by brief subject and Scripture indexes. The book is warmly recommended, not least because of the biographical detail it includes and the numerous references to relevant literature (both English and German) which it provides as footnotes.

John Wilkinson, Edinburgh

Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History

Joachim Gnilka

Hendricksen Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1998; xiii+346pp., n.p.; ISBN 1 56563 164 1

English-speaking readers are indebted to Dr Siegfried Schatzmann for his translations of a number of German works of scholarship into English. His present offering is a full-length study of Jesus by a Roman Catholic scholar, Joachim Gnilka, who is well known for his critical commentaries on several books of the New Testament and a theology of the New Testament. As the title and preface make clear, this is not a biography of Jesus, and indeed no attempt is made to reconstruct the historical outline of his life and career; in justification the author cites the work of K.L. Schmidt, but he was obviously not to know that simultaneously D.R. Hall (*The Gospel Framework: Fiction or Fact?* [Carlisle, Paternoster, 1998]) has sharply questioned the validity of Schmidt's hypothesis.

Nevertheless, this book represents yet another step in the march away from Wrede and Bultmann to a more positive appraisal of the Synoptic Gospels (John is scarcely used) as a record of the message and impact of Jesus, although the author assigns rather more material to the early church and the Evangelists than conservative scholars may find it necessary to do.

There is a freshness and originality throughout the presentation, largely due to the author's wide learning and ability to present familiar material from a different angle. He places Jesus in his historical background, and then discusses in fair detail the major issues – the Kingdom of God, discipleship, conflict, death and Jesus' authority in mission (*i.e.* the question of Jesus' own role and status). Only at the end of the story, however, in Passion week, does he think that the gospels give something more like a biography of Jesus, and at this point he himself shifts from simply describing the teaching of Jesus to an exploration of the history. Surprisingly, the resurrection material merits no more than a two-page epilogue, even though the author clearly believes in the resurrection.

What Gnilka has given us in total is a very positive picture of the work and words of Jesus as they appear to contemporary German scholarship, and in this respect he stands closest to J. Jeremias, L. Goppelt and P. Stuhlmacher among his contemporaries. (There is some, but not a lot of reference to English works; English-speaking scholarship on the Son of man, for example, is scarcely mentioned.)

However, the result is a rather static account of Jesus and his work, organised by themes treated in a systematic kind of way. Any sense of

movement and development in the ministry of Jesus is missing. There are no surprises and no excitement, which is perhaps not altogether strange when one considers how difficult it is to be original when so much has already been written by others about Jesus. This is a book that students will undoubtedly find to be a useful textbook about Jesus with much significant detail that they will not pick up so easily elsewhere, but they will find Tom Wright rather more stimulating.

I. Howard Marshall, Aberdeen

The Trinity in Asian Perspective

Jung Young Lee

Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1996; 225pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 687 42637 5

By the author's own admission, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* seeks to 'present an alternative view of the Trinity from an Asian perspective' which complements rather than supplements the traditional Western doctrine. Lee considers there is a need for non-Western Christians to create their own theology based on their indigenous worldview, rather than through the surface contextualization of Western doctrine. As an Asian (albeit living in a Western context) he is aware of the intrinsic philosophical, moral and religious value of the yin-yang symbolism which undergirds much of Asian life and thinking. It is, therefore, with this symbol that he begins his quest to resymbolise the doctrine of the Trinity from an Asian perspective.

The Trinity in Asian Perspective is a detailed and technical work. The book begins by giving an overview of the history, development and influence of the concept of yin-yang, followed by a brief description of the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Lee then begins the development and defence of his main argument which is that the East Asian symbol of yin-yang may be understood as Trinitarian, therefore yin-yang symbolism can express the doctrine of the Trinity in a way that is accessible and relevant to the East Asian worldview. He then devotes separate chapters to each person of the Trinity, followed by two concluding chapters which offer a practical application of his thinking.

Lee's resymbolising of the Trinity is very challenging, with several controversial suggestions such as the understanding of the Son as both male and female; or that the Trinity should be understood more like the family unit with the Father as the male member, the Spirit as the female, and the Son as the 'product' of the two. These ideas are consistent with the

thought of other Asian theologians, as well as with the philosophical understanding of yin-yang, but are not always supported by reference to biblical texts. Nonetheless they challenge much of traditional theology and highlight issues which need to be addressed, such as the relevance of the person of Christ to women and to people of a non-Western culture. The chapter on the Spirit particularly draws attention to the 'forgotten' member of the Trinity with attributes and a purpose within the Trinity.

Lee's greatest contribution in this book is arguably in his emphasis on relationality and in his cyclic understanding of time and life and even God himself which he identifies as 'change'. This is not a uniquely Asian idea, but it is a predominant theme in such thinking. This emphasis on relationship is important in all areas of Christian life all over the world, and by focusing on the mutability of the Trinity he highlights the immanence of the Godhead in the changeable and uncertain world.

The book is systematically structured with clear sections and themes in each chapter. Lee makes good use of secondary sources, particularly other Asian writers, especially when he is referring to the philosophical thinking of yin-yang. All the footnotes are grouped together at the back of the book, which can often be awkward, as is the bibliography and index. The index is detailed which is helpful in such a technical work, and the bibliography is extensive. A good mixture of modern as well as older scholarship is used by Lee, and he helpfully directs the reader to a variety of works should they wish to explore certain topics further.

Regardless of theological background or nationality, no-one could deny that Lee presents an interesting and challenging 're-symbolising' of the doctrine of the Trinity. He is often controversial, and sometimes more of a philosopher than a theologian, but there is no doubt that in this world of religious pluralism, where not only Asians are looking towards Eastern religion and philosophy, he offers an intellectually relevant presentation of the Triune God.

Julie Green, St Michael's Church, Linlithgow

Mission in Bold Humility: David Bosch's Work Considered

Edited by Willem Saayman and Klippies Kritzinger

Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1996; 184pp., \$20.00; ISBN 1 57075 087 4

The title of this book is based on a moving quotation from David Bosch's great book *Transforming Mission* in which he calls for witness in 'bold

humility'. This is required of us, he says, because, while we believe that 'the faith we profess is both true and just', we proclaim it 'not as judges or lawyers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high pressure sales-persons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Lord'.

The essays which make up this volume are stimulating and helpful in a number of ways. First, they provide interesting biographical references to Bosch and, in so doing, confirm that the man who wrote the words quoted above exemplified in his own life the 'bold humility' which he urged on others. The African theologian John Pobee observes that mission of the kind advocated by Bosch is costly and will often involve passing through 'the valley of persecution'. Pobee refers to his South African brother's sense of loneliness and 'the attacks on his integrity' by people he tried to help. Pobee suggests that, while seeking to bear faithful witness to Christ and to the gospel message of reconciliation and justice in a situation riven by ethnic and racial tensions, David Bosch found himself misunderstood from both sides of the great divide created by *apartheid*. By its very nature this book allows us only brief glimpses of Bosch's life but these are sufficient to give rise to the hope that it will not be too long before a full biography of this remarkable man is available.

Second, the essays in this *Festschrift* provide an excellent critical survey of Bosch's work. The wide impact of his huge book *Transforming Mission* is reflected in the international and inter-denominational nature of the contributions to this volume. Without exception these writers praise the book, many seeing it as a truly seminal work. At the same time, critical comment is not absent. Frans Verstraelen argues that, despite writing in South Africa, Bosch's perspective was largely that of a Western theologian, and consequently 'the African context is virtually absent in Bosch's major works'. Willem Saayman notes other significant omissions from Bosch's survey of mission: he says little about women's contribution to mission and is almost totally silent on the Pentecostal contribution to mission. From an evangelical perspective, Chris Sugden claims that, because he largely ignored the momentous changes which the Lausanne Congress set in motion among Evangelicals, Bosch's treatment of this tradition was dated and one-sided. According to Sugden, Bosch misunderstood contemporary Evangelicalism and failed to dialogue properly with the mission concerns of those 'who now make up the majority and the center of gravity of the world church'. In Sugden's view this significantly lessened the value of *Transforming Mission*.

Criticism of this kind is surely healthy and it is a considerable achievement of this *Festschrift* that it avoids becoming mere hagiography.

At the same time, I believe that such responses in fact confirm the real greatness of David Bosch's work. Having just spent two terms working through *Transforming Mission* with a group of students, I can recognise the validity of the critical comments made in this *Festschrift* but am equally certain that the book is of enormous importance. It will never be possible to produce a definitive missionary theology, but it is unlikely that anyone will come closer to doing so before the end of this century than the late David Bosch. For that reason we can be profoundly grateful to him while also expressing thanks to the writers of these essays for increasing our understanding of his life and work.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

Mission in Bold Humility. David Bosch's Work Considered

Edited by Willem Saayman and Klippiess Kritzingler

Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1996; 184pp., \$20.00; ISBN 1 57075 087 4

To any Christian with a serious interest in missiology the work of David Bosch will have become familiar. This volume presents us with a valuable list of his writings and a number of contributions from scholars of differing theological persuasions and contexts. The editors have gathered together some most helpful appraisals of Bosch's work, with particular reference to *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* 1991, and, in Chapter 1, some fascinating insights into his background and development in South Africa. In Chapter 2 F.J. Verstraelen describes in some detail the influence of Africa upon Bosch and touches on his place within the apartheid system and also on his methodology. He describes this as 'theology from above' where content is more important than context, or theory more important than practice. Bosch is seen as producing principles and leaving others to make appropriate application. Interestingly, E. Castro in the last chapter identifies Calvinism as the presuppositional framework for Bosch and also argues that this is a basis for ecumenicalism which would embrace liberation theology. He views Bosch as a genuine ecumenist though most of the other contributors prefer to link ecclesiology rather than ecumenism with mission. J.S. Pobeie makes much of the humanity of Bosch and talks of 'mission in bold humanity' and 'mission in bold humility' with an emphasis on the missiological quality of his life as exhibited through loneliness and suffering. There is much on mission context in this

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volume. C. Cadorette tries to apply Bosch to the Latin America of today with its severe social problems and history of liberation theology. An appeal is made for an ongoing incarnational approach – love-in-action – contextualization in the context of poverty. J. Kavunkal also refers to poverty from an Indian perspective in Chapter 6. He also writes of the multi-religious culture of India and suggests that deeds are of more worth than words. He places mission in an eschatological framework. Other religions is a theme of G.H. Anderson in Chapter 9 where he argues that the problem peculiar to our present epoch is that of witness to those of other faiths. The importance of the theology of religion is clearly on his agenda. If Anderson emphasises context, Chapter 7 by W.R. Shenk emphasises content. This is a lucid argument for the essential place of mission within theology. W.R. Burrows is concerned to apply Bosch to Roman Catholic mission situations and adds a seventh paradigm to the six of Bosch, which he calls an ‘Inculturation Paradigm’. An informative history of the work of the Jesuits is given and the writings of Ross, Pieris and Pannikar are also discussed. W. Saayman gives some highlights of the life and work of Bosch in Chapter 3. He does not see the role of the church as either incarnational or totally foreign but adds a ‘colonizing’ role and has something to say about the effect of the Protestant Reformation with regard to fragmented and introverted Christianity as well as the effect of the emphasis on preaching rather than social action. He criticises Bosch for not mentioning Pentecostalism and feminist theology but clearly regards *Transforming Mission* as essential reading. Chris Sugden in a very useful contribution also takes up the importance of Bosch and his failure to deal with Pentecostalism. Sugden gives three tools with which to critique Bosch’s work and also applauds his emphasis on the urgent need to examine thoroughly the relationship between theology, especially ecclesiology, and mission. The feminist issue is taken up with a delightful article by D.L. Robert on the influence of Mount Holyoke and certain American women upon Afrikaner women. With all this writing on mission it is refreshing to find a stimulating contribution from M.E. Guider on what kind of missionaries are required for this post-modern era. Bosch does not concentrate on this issue. Guider, basing her ideas on Kegan’s five orders of consciousness, reminds us that paradigms do not produce perfect missionaries but gives some useful categories for our consideration. Reading this book along with *Transforming Mission* gives maximum benefit, but this book alone should certainly provoke prayerful study and is, for the main part, a readable collection.

Ralph W. Martin, Glasgow

The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith

Andrew F. Walls

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; 266pp., £13.95; ISBN 0 567 08515 5

In 1983, having returned from my missionary service in Nigeria with a host of questions concerning the interface between African culture and the gospel, I entered the University of Aberdeen to pursue a degree in Religious Studies. Within weeks I became aware that I was privileged to be studying under a man of quite exceptional knowledge and insight. Professor Andrew Walls combined the gifts of a first-rate historian, an acute theological thinker with a remarkable awareness of the real issues facing Christianity at the close of the twentieth century, and the self-effacing humility that, in an earlier age, would have been associated with a 'Christian gentleman'. I treasure the notes taken during those Aberdeen lectures like no others since they not only pointed me in the direction of the answers I sought in entering the University, but opened up new and wonderfully stimulating lines of enquiry and thought. Not surprisingly then, for me (and I suspect for hundreds of AFW's former students around the world) the appearance of this volume was a very special event.

All the major themes that have distinguished Andrew Walls' academic work are dealt with here: the unique relationship between Christianity and culture, the structure of Christian history as a series of cross-cultural transmissions of faith, the challenge of the 'third Church' (especially in his beloved Africa), the continuing importance of primal religions, and the historical significance of the modern missionary movement. These are big subjects on which Andrew Walls makes vitally important (and often highly original) contributions. But he can also offer surprising insights on lesser topics – for example, a chapter on 'The Western Discovery of Non-Western Christian Art'. He can also disturb comfortable assumptions, especially when arguing (in what is one of the most important sections of this volume) that the missionary movement is now 'in its old age' and that quite new ways and means are needed in order to fulfil the call of Christian mission today.

It is impossible to overstate the value of this book. No one who has sat under Andrew Walls' teaching will need convincing of the significance of its publication, while other readers can now discover here for themselves a rich source of information and a stimulus to radical biblical reflection.

This volume is warmly welcome, yet I am tempted to paraphrase Oliver Twist and to say, 'Please Sir, we want some more!'

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

Readings in Modern Theology: Britain and America

Edited by Robin Gill

London, SPCK, 1995; 399pp., n.p., ISBN 0 2810 48193

It can be a rather confusing time for young theologians. While most of us are trying to get a grip on 2,000 years of the theological past, along comes *modern* theology, a whole new challenge to attempt to understand. Thus, while trying to understand and appreciate Moses, Jesus, Paul, Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther and Barth, the young student is faced with the task of wrestling with the likes of David Tracy, George Lindbeck and David Burrell.

In light of this predicament, it is helpful when someone puts together a compendium to help the rest of us catch up. *Readings in Modern Theology: Britain and America*, is just that kind of book. Gill has culled together 36 essays from 35 writers, covering a broad range of contemporary theological issues. Well-known theologians who contribute to this volume include Rosemary Radford Ruether, Gordon Kaufman, David Tracy, Sallie McFague, Colin Gunton, George A. Lindbeck, David H. Kelsey, Edward Farley, Ronald Thiemann, Stanley Hauerwas, and others. Gill included only works written between 1984 and 1994, making the volume's contents current. Contributions consist largely of previously published journal articles, one notable exception being excerpts from George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine*. Gill divides up the book into three parts. Part 1, 'God and Creation', features three sections: 'God as Creator', 'God as Mother', and 'God as Trinity' (no, there is no section on God as Father). Part 2, 'Christ and Plurality', features three sections: 'Christ and Other Faiths', 'Christ and Postmodernism', 'Christ and the Academy'. Part 3, 'Spirit and Community', features sections on 'The Christian Life' and 'Christian Communities'. A very helpful ten-page introduction summarises the book's contents and is an excellent place for the novice to begin. Each section begins with bibliographical information on the contributors. Gill closes the work with a brief epilogue which offers his perspective on the issues which have been raised (and this epilogue is itself a helpful taste of the book's contents), as well as an author index.

In short, the book is an excellent resource for many current trends in contemporary theology. Perhaps most helpful for many readers will be the section, 'Christ and Postmodernism'. George Lindbeck and David Tracy, two of North America's most significant theologians, who both work in the area of contemporary theology (although moving in different directions), are featured in this section. Segments from Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine* are included, and three other contributors offer reviews of Lindbeck. Tracy contributes his article, 'Theology and the Many Faces of Postmodernity', which offers his vision of the future of Christian theology.

While Gill has attempted to draw from a variety of theologians, it is clear that he has chosen contributors who generally fit in the liberal / postliberal / postmodern theological camp. It may be that the term 'liberal' is becoming outmoded. Whereas it once referred to a fairly distinct theological movement, current trends, whether postliberalism, postmodernism, or whatever, seem at times somewhat difficult to include under the one term, 'liberal'. At the same time, some Evangelicals are interested in embracing postmodernism at least to some degree (e.g. Stanley Grenz, Brian Walsh, and Richard Middleton). Nonetheless, probably most contributors to Gill's volume would generally not consider themselves Evangelicals in any meaningful sense (Colin Gunton and perhaps a few others might possibly be exceptions). Thomas Oden in North America would have been a worthy contributor, while someone like Alister McGrath in Europe would have likewise been appropriate. Interaction with evangelical scholars would make this volume a more comprehensive reader in modern theology. While Gill would surely concede that the volume makes no effort to include Evangelicals, the volume is still worthy of study. Read the introduction and epilogue, and then begin to work through those sections which may help one to understand better an aspect of contemporary theology which is of interest, paying particular attention to the section on postmodernism.

Bradley Green, Waco, Texas

A Primer on Postmodernism

Stanley J. Grenz

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996; 199pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8028 0864 6

The evangelical bogey buzzword is postmodernism (post-Evangelicalism being trivial by comparison). You will pace a few miles of bookshelves

before you find a primer as good as this one on the contemporary state of Western intellectual culture. The book lives up to its title and has the merit of knowing, and explaining, the difference between postmodernism and postmodernity, and making cautious commentary on the relationship between them. It is also up-to-date, fair and perceptive.

Grenz's analysis of the trail to modernity, and to postmodern-ism/ity (its rebellious stepchild), is first class. This almost makes it required reading for all who are concerned about 'winning the West' and have time to read only one book as a primer. Grenz has carefully formulated 'bookends' as he calls them – the first and final chapters respectively of the book. The first chapter brilliantly lays out the symptoms in our culture of the postmodern mind. The final chapter assesses the implications for the communication of the gospel. In between is a series of highly skilled cameos of some key figures in the odyssey of Western thought, tracking especially landmarks in the journey towards postmodernism. Grenz is never better than when unpicking slippery minds and concepts. He makes difficult writers, and the key notions in postmodernism, as available as they are ever likely to be, to a wide audience.

It has to be admitted that the book is disappointing in its second bookend. This final chapter, entitled 'The Gospel and the Postmodern Context', is only 13 pages long. The story that Grenz has told raises all kinds of questions for Christian faith. He is right to point out the conspiracy sometimes present between rationalism and Christian apologetics. But the author's comments on the dangers and promise inherent in the new postmodern view of the world are very thin, and raise as many questions as answers. We might especially be pleased to learn that the Christian story survives the modern abolition of the 'metanarrative', the large 'wrap-around' explanation of all things. But we will also want to know by what method this claim is made. Equally, we look in vain for a solid extended critique of postmodernism, though it is plain that Grenz has his reservations.

The great torch-bearers of the age of reason and the rationalist enterprise are suitably savaged (Descartes, Locke, Kant especially). The pioneers and exponents today of the postmodern backlash get off lightly by comparison, though they must surely be capable of mistakes too! One should particularly like to see a critical assessment of the absolute claims for an orthodoxy of relativity and for the privatisation of all ideologies. This dilemma is caught splendidly in the quotation Grenz deploys from Richard Rorty: 'The postmodern philosopher can only "decry the notion of having a view while avoiding having a view about having views".' In the same

way the contradiction of the very word postmodernism invites a much more sustained scrutiny than is given in this book.

But perhaps this is only saying that the author has set himself up very nicely for the sequel. The final, surely introductory, stab at evaluation could be the second part in embryo. It would be an excellent partner to an outstanding and skilled primer. This book is not just of value to practitioners – it is actually designed for them and deserves their attention.

Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow

The Road From Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought and Ministry

Edited by R.N. Longenecker

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, 1997; 253pp., £16.99; ISBN 0 8028 4191 0

The second volume in the McMaster New Testament Studies series, sponsored by McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, this book contains eleven essays which investigate the significance of Paul's conversion on various aspects of the apostle's thinking. The headings are well chosen, and the book as a whole provides a good overview of present scholarly opinion. The quality of writing and scholarship is, on the whole, very high, and the collection should be a valuable tool for preachers as well as students of Paul who want to think further about the impact of belief in Christ Jesus on practical as well as strictly 'theological' matters.

Bruce Corley begins the collection with an interesting history of interpretation of Paul's conversion which not only covers scholarly thought on the matter but contains enjoyable snippets of information about treatment of the topic in popular art, literature, plays and sermons from the patristic age until the present day. R.N. Longenecker provides a very sensible essay in which the centrality of Christology in Paul's thought (so often lost sight of in scholarly debate) is rightly emphasised. What took place, he reminds us, was 'an overwhelming realisation that God's salvific purposes for both creation in general and humanity in particular are now to be understood as focused in the work and person of Jesus of Nazareth'. Seyoon Kim bears this in mind in an analysis of 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 which traces Paul's idea of reconciliation back to his conversion experience, as does Howard Marshall on the origin of the apostle's Gentile mission. Bruce Longenecker and Stephen Westerholm provide excellent essays on the relationship between Paul's conversion and

his thinking on covenant theology and Mosaic Law respectively. Both have important things to say in the debate on the relationship between the church and Judaism.

Gordon Fee's essay on 'Paul's Conversion as the Key to Understanding of the Spirit' is appropriately cautious but stimulating in a time of renewed interest in the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. J.G.D. Dunn gives a summary of his views on justification by faith and the Law, and describes Paul's conversion as a fresh discovery of the roots of his ancestral faith, while Terence Donaldson tackles the question of the origin of Paul's Gentile mission. K. Hansen writes on ethics, and Judith Gundry Volf gives a fascinating picture of Paul's thinking on women both against his Hellenistic Jewish background and in the light of his understanding of freedom in Christ.

According to its editor, the book is intended to make first-class biblical scholarship available but 'in a manner capable of capturing the interest of intelligent lay people, theological students, and ministers'. With this broad readership in mind, the book eschews footnotes, and each contributor is limited to sixteen items of bibliography. Generally, although more suggestions for pastoral application might have been helpful, it succeeds in its aims.

Marion L.S. Carson, Glasgow

Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World

Terence L. Donaldson

Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1997; 409pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8006 2993 0

This book takes up the familiar question why Paul became the apostle to the gentiles. Since the 'new perspective' has shown that Israel is much more important to Paul than had previously been thought, Donaldson wants to know why Paul should have felt so strongly about a mission to the gentiles. Finding previous explanations unsatisfactory (*e.g.* the failure of the Jewish mission), he maintains that Paul, a 'covenantal nomist', underwent a 'paradigm shift' in his thinking at conversion, 'a transfer of allegiance from one set of world structuring convictions to another'. The book consists of an account of this shift, and attempts to describe Paul's thought about the gentiles before and after the Damascus-road experience.

The thesis is as follows. Prior to his Damascus experience Paul wanted to attract proselytes to Judaism, believing that salvation was to be found

through Israel. Post-Damascus, Paul accepts that which he had previously rejected – that Christ died and is risen and becomes the new ‘boundary marker’ for Israel rather than Torah. However, ‘not Torah’ does not mean ‘not Israel’. Paul still believes Israel is a channel of salvation for the gentiles, but Torah has only a preparatory role. At the parousia, Israel will accept the gospel (Rom. 11:25ff.). In the meantime the gentiles can and must be given the chance to become part of Israel.

This is a well-researched book, which shows a good grasp of both modern views and ancient texts. Although Donaldson tends to think in terms of Paul’s cognitive shift rather than apocalyptic (J.L. Martyn is strangely absent from the bibliography), this is an honest attempt to find a balance between the *Heilsgeschichte* and eschatological approaches to Paul. The idea that Paul thinks the time before the parousia is the time of the gentile mission is interesting, as is the use of Thomas Kuhn’s book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and its notion of the paradigm shift as the basis for scientific development. However, I should have liked some critique of Kuhn rather than wholesale acceptance of his thesis.

The principal problem with the book’s argument is the belief that we can deduce Paul’s pre-conversion beliefs from his letters. For example, readers will have to determine for themselves whether Donaldson’s exegesis supports his view that, prior to conversion, Paul preached circumcision (Gal. 5:11). So too, we have to ask if the suggestion that unconverted Paul had some sense of a Torah-Christ antithesis is legitimate.

Donaldson’s method is rather problematic. It examines what Paul says about the gentiles in relation to certain important aspects of his thought (*i.e.* God; generic humanity; Torah; Christ; Israel; the apostolic call), and thus tries to separate out components of Paul’s thought which are in fact closely inter-related. The result is a good deal of repetition and the book is overlong.

Diagrams illustrating the ‘remapping’ of Paul’s thought served only to confuse this reader. Otherwise, the book is attractively and clearly laid out with useful indexes of primary texts and modern authors.

Marion L.S. Carson, Glasgow

For Such a Time as This

Edited by Steve Brady and Harold Rowdon

Evangelical Alliance and Scripture Union, London, 1996;
304pp., £7.95; ISBN 1 85999 034 7

This collection of theological, historical, pastoral and personal perspectives, from 34 contributors, was brought together to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Evangelical Alliance and the work of the evangelical elder statesman Gilbert Kirby.

Kirby has held a number of significant positions within British Evangelicalism, including Principal of London Bible College and General Secretary of EA. Steve Brady offers a generous tribute to him, and hints at an unpublished autobiography, whose publication is awaited with interest. Don Carson offers a section on 'The Biblical Gospel', and Howard Marshall writes on 'Paul's Idea of Community'. Some of the most interesting and illuminating material deals with the history of the Evangelical Alliance, and this points up the need for further treatment of this important field.

The work has its prophetic notes. John Stott calls for the 'recovery of biblical preaching'. Don Carson urgently calls for a return to Christian basics – 'in all our efforts to address painful and complex societal problems, we must do so from the centre, out of a profound passion for the gospel'.

The range of contributions is wide, but there are frustrations. Where is the chapter celebrating the role of women in Evangelicalism? Why no analysis of how it took EA until 1983 to realise that it was mainly white and based in south-east England? David Bebbington, whose definition of Evangelicalism has proved so helpful, wrestles with its diverse nature, and debates whether there is such a thing as evangelical unity. At times the book itself, whilst celebrating Evangelicalism, illustrates this problem. Don Carson offers a robust footnote defending the reality of hell against Evangelicals subscribing to annihilationism. Alan Gibson sounds an alarm about a weakening amongst Evangelicals on justification and other issues. The Evangelical Alliance rightfully focuses on primary issues, and sets aside the secondary. But what issues are secondary? What happens when a secondary issue is treated as primary? What happens if primary matters are undermined, even if only gently, by professing Evangelicals?

The later chapters direct attention towards the future, and address the issue of maintaining unity. Problem areas are highlighted, but solutions are less clear. Perhaps the voice of Thomas Chalmers, an early supporter

of EA, is helpful. Writing in 1846 he stressed the unifying power of gospel work itself: 'Let us be one in well doing; and this wherever there is real sincerity and right good earnest, will prove the high-road to being one in sentiment.' Echoes of this are found in the contributions of Michael Baughen and Donald English. For too long Evangelicalism has been defined, and has found its unity, in what it opposes. It has been in the modern parlance reactive, rather than proactive and attractive. The continuing challenge for Evangelicals is to express their unity meaningfully in coherent structures, yet not be diverted from the positive proclamation of the gospel. Without this, Evangelicalism is not being true to itself. History suggests that such activity promotes the unity so desired.

Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow

Belief, Ritual and the Securing of Life: Reflexive Essays on a Bantu Religion

Malcolm Ruel

E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1997; 270pp., £56.25; ISBN 9004 106 405

The author of this book was a lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge and an acknowledged expert on the Kuria people of East Africa. The volume consists of a series of ethnographic essays dealing with the religion, ritual and cosmology of the Kuria. The studies are clearly based on careful research extending over many years and they evidence both meticulous attention to detail and (as the subtitle suggests) a willingness to engage in critical, cross-cultural reflection in the light of the author's findings.

The book provides a particularly interesting example of the way in which the ethnographic work of anthropologists can offer assistance and challenge to those engaged in mission among primal peoples. Not only does Ruel provide a valuable introduction to the social structure, culture and religion of the Kuria, he raises quite specific questions with regard to the contrasts between Christian and Kuria understandings of reality. For example, chapter 2 consists of a long and fascinating discussion of the place of 'belief' in religion in which it is argued that most traditional peoples (and certainly the Kuria) have no concept of 'belief' in the sense of 'self-conscious credal or doctrinal' affirmations. It is a fallacy, Ruel argues, to imagine that 'belief' of this kind is central to all religions. If this is true it clearly has implications with regard to mission in primal contexts.

Missiologists and theologians might also benefit from reading Ruel's discussion of conversion in Africa and his comments on the cross-cultural

tension on the issue of individualism and collectivism. It comes as something of a surprise toward the end of this volume of ethnographic essays on an African people to discover a discussion of the painter Lucian Freud! However, this illustrates the range of the author's thought and his determination to break down the artificial walls between cultures in a process of cross-cultural comparison and genuine reflection.

While this book is certainly not an easy read, it is warmly recommended to anyone with a serious interest in African culture and religions. It offers important insights and challenges for all who are concerned with the effective prosecution of the missionary task in a multi-cultural world today.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

'Just As I Am': An Autobiography

Billy Graham

Harper Collins, London, & Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1997; 760pp., £9.99; ISBN 0 5510 3144 1

The first thing which came to mind when I lifted up this book was what was there left to say about Billy Graham. A glance at my bookshelves reveals approximately fifteen volumes about or by Billy Graham? William Martin's book, *A Prophet Without Honour*, which was released seven years ago was a thoroughly-researched, well-written, quite outstanding, critical at times, reflection on the life and ministry of the world's best known evangelist. So what else was still to be written?

'Just As I Am', however, is an autobiography. For the first time we are able to read Graham's own views, and it is this which sets this book apart and may explain its popularity, as it has remained high on the list of Christian best-sellers since its initial publication.

The book begins by looking at the early life of Billy Graham, growing up in the 1920s and 1930s in the rural south of America. He rapidly moves on to meeting his wife Ruth and the beginning of his ministry. Chapter 9 reflects on the 1949 Los Angeles crusade and the turning point that these meetings were to be for him. It seemed that at this point Graham's ministry took a quantum leap from relative obscurity to conducting missions in the major cities of North America and abroad.

The sections which deal with Graham's friendships with American presidents (Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton) and other world leaders were for me very revealing and are well worth a read in themselves. Yet, there does at times seem to be a naivety

about Graham's grasp of human nature. This is especially the case in his relationship with Richard Nixon, who as far as I know never publicly expressed any kind of remorse, not to mention repentance, for his more obvious misdemeanours while in office. This issue raised its head again when on a recent breakfast television programme in the USA, Graham seemed to be soft on Bill Clinton's alleged sexual activity. This caused such a furore in America that later the same day the Graham Organisation contacted the *New York Times* and arranged for Graham to write an editorial entitled 'The Weight of Moral Leadership'. This piece was considerably more balanced and biblical than his sound bites of the live interview.

Graham's international ministry I found at times breathtaking in its scope, especially his visits to the former Soviet-bloc countries and more recently his contact with President Kim II Sung of North Korea. Such a ministry of course is never problem-free and Graham touches on some of the problems he has faced, including his seemingly influential friendships with American presidents, his innocence in accepting invitations to minister in Communist Russia, his apparent public support for the war in Vietnam, his perceived laissez-faire approach to civil rights issues in the 1960s, and criticism by Christian groups who felt that the broad-based support which he engenders for his missions was too inclusive. Since writing the book Graham has again been at the centre of controversy, when, during a television interview with Robert Schuller, his emphasis on the sovereign call of God seemed to suggest that salvation was possible without belief in Christ.

For the British reader Graham's meetings in London and Glasgow of the 1950s will be especially moving, yet I was sorry not to read of his own reflections on Mission Scotland in 1991. This of course highlights one of Graham's own frustrations in writing the book, namely, how to condense four decades of ministry into a single volume. He goes to some length in the Acknowledgements to explain his regrets in being unable to do so.

Reflecting back on the book, I suspect there is more to be told. Has the Graham team run as smoothly as it seems for over forty years, have there never been moments of personal crisis, does the Graham Association simply go from one successful mission to another? For many the one question which remains unanswered is why Billy Graham has been so successful. If you are seeking an answer in '*Just As I Am*' you will be disappointed. Perhaps Graham himself is not the one we should turn to for the answer, and perhaps only eternity will fully answer such a question.

I have met Billy Graham on several occasions and although these meetings were brief I was struck by the fact that he is simply a man like many others. He chats about the weather, his grandchildren, his most recent mission, yet when he speaks about spiritual things, there seems to me to be an intimacy with God that I have found in no other. Could it be that God has quite simply called, set apart and anointed Billy Graham for the ministry of evangelism, or is this too simple an explanation for this high-tech, mobile, complex, information age in which we live?

As I came to the end of the book, my final conclusion was that Graham's relationship with Christ, his obvious humility, his passion for the proclamation of the Gospel, his belief and confidence in the effectual calling of the gospel message and his prayerful dependence upon God are clearly his greatest strengths. It is such qualities that, when all the analysing and evaluating are complete, the contemporary church needs to relearn and apply today.

For me *'Just As I Am'* has been late night reading over several months. At times I lay awake to the early hours wondering if we would ever see the likes of Billy Graham again. I warmly commend *'Just As I Am'* to as wide a readership as possible and prayerfully hope that, in terms of the proclamation of the gospel, Graham's final chapter, 'The Best is Yet To Be', will become a reality in our own generation.

Richard Gibbons, Advisor in Mission and Evangelism, Church of Scotland

Making Christ Known: Historic Documents from the Lausanne Movement, 1974-1989

Edited by John Stott

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996; 288pp., \$30.00; ISBN 08028 4315 8

This volume brings together the major statements issued under the auspices of the Lausanne Movement, from the Covenant drawn up at the Congress itself in 1974, to the elaboration issued following the Manila Congress fifteen years later. In between these reports are found such ground-breaking documents as the Willowbank statement on 'Gospel and Culture' (1978) and the 'Report on Evangelical and Social Responsibility' issued in 1982. Those who have lived through the period covered by these reports will need no convincing with regard to their immense significance; others may here discover for themselves the evidence of the development and maturity of Evangelicalism within the last quarter of the twentieth century. The publishers are to be thanked for bringing together in one

volume these key documents – and it is surely appropriate to acknowledge with gratitude the role of the editor, not simply in gathering this material for publication, but for his role as leader, writer and courageous Christian thinker at the heart of the Lausanne movement throughout this period.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford

The Theology of John Calvin

Karl Barth (transl. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley)

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1995; 424pp., \$25.00; ISBN 0 8028 0696 1

Geoffrey Bromiley has made a unique and fascinating work available to the reading public. Karl Barth gave his lectures on John Calvin more than seventy years ago, but the publisher's double claim that it offers brilliant insights into Calvin and sheds light on Barth's own development holds so very good. It is a strange sensation, if not chronologically disorientating, to read Barth of 1922 making right up-to-date interpretations of sixteenth-century Calvin's right up-to-date theology! And there is an additional bonus. Although we are hearing the authentic Barth, he seems more accessible, more vital and more relevant than the one often encountered in the *Church Dogmatics*. The distinguished translator of Barth's works has triumphed both in his choice of text and smooth rendering of language. I have heard of German theology students reading Bromiley's English translation of the *Church Dogmatics* in order to better understand the master. The same high standard is present here.

Of course, the decades have taken their toll. You sometimes read Barth lamenting preoccupations 'today' and then wake up to realise that he is chastising the liberalism of many years ago. But it rarely matters. As often as not it fits today just as well. More important, in spite of the exciting explosion of interest in Calvin in the last few decades, Barth can still come up with insights which seem to stand on the shoulders of more recent commentators. But what would you expect from someone who claims that the Reformers speak to every age, not just pre-Reformation or contemporary Reformation? In his view they are a challenge 'to all churches in all times'. Sometimes the value of a comment from Barth is just its sheer timeliness, such as the casual reminder that the Reformers did not always consider themselves epoch-making. Just to remember *that* can make a difference to the whole hermeneutic study on the Reformers' writings.

The value of Barth's lectures is not just in the field of theology either. He puts Calvin himself, and the turbulent history of his work, under the microscope too. Although some of his primary sources may be considered inferior today, they are still formidable and his use of them more formidable still. With great carefulness and balance he grapples with the Genevan saga – still very sharp and worth reading, even though one cannot always feel convinced.

The bad news is that Barth never finished the project, falling short of fully covering the fruitful second Genevan period. But in some ways the first half was more interesting, like a thriller with the hero in his tightest spot. It is a loss that the reader will be able to bear bravely because of the riches to be found here.

Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow

The Christian Story. A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrine, Volume 1

Gabriel Fackre

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996; 271pp., \$18.00; ISBN 0 8028 4107 4

Theologians ought to be good storytellers – so long as they still believe in story, especially the big one. Unfortunately most of us are quite poor at it and so are many of the preachers that we turn out. Gabriel Fackre has no illusions about the difficulties of telling the Christian message purely as story, for he also recognises the place of discourse and truth claims alongside storytelling in conveying the Christian faith. This does not stop him from returning to the book that made him so well known – to reaffirm and fill out the points first made in the original edition of this book in 1978. He has kept abreast of a number of developments but the substance of the original text remains mainly intact.

Not surprisingly, the further the author heads into theological territory the more difficult it becomes to maintain a purely narrative form. Still, it is especially helpful to read again of his three keys to communicating the Christian faith: source (Scripture), resource (Christian tradition, in the broadest sense) and setting (the receptor culture). But drawing our attention to such things methodologically is a falling back on discourse to help us with telling a story. That said, Fackre does us a service in re-issuing this Volume 1 because the story today languishes in philosophy and critical studies just as it thrives in popular media.

Fackre's book still impresses with the vividness and power of the Christian story and calls us to know that narrative. Fackre interprets Christian belief as 'chapters in the biography of God'. He illustrates this by tracing the biblical message as a story of creation, covenant, renewal, church and salvation through to consummation. Fackre's is not just a story flatly told but imaginative, interpretative, exciting and pastoral, bringing out many insights. He integrates the Christian history also into his narrative and makes some powerful apologetic points as he does so. There are many merits: the extensive use of the motif of light, reminiscent of Athanasius; a beautifully balanced and clear statement on the issues relating to the unity of Christ; fresh thinking on the marks of the church, distinguishing helpfully between marks of *validity* and marks of *faithfulness*. And much, much more.

The main shortcoming which strikes a reader today is the fairly light treatment of postmodernism, the phenomenon which not only imperils the 'big story' but the whole concept of story. Fackre's review of the 'revival of systematics' since 1978 is a useful survey. But it seems to ignore the deep peril in which the sanctity of story stands today under the crushing blows of deconstructionism and localisation. He may feel that merely exemplifying the qualities of imagination and narrative provides adequate defence of them. But the story method perhaps deserves more of a robust defence – even if it turns out that this involves a journey into less narrative language to achieve the end in view.

Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow

Early Anabaptist Spirituality. Selected Writings

Transl. and edited by Daniel Liechty

Paulist Press, New York, 1994; 304pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8091 3475 6

Capturing the spirit of the Anabaptists is much more difficult than a similar exercise with the 'magisterial' Reformers. The Anabaptists were a variegated lot and could include leaders who wanted continuity with the tradition and others who did not disguise their contempt for formal established religion and their passion for novelty. Selection is key, therefore, and Daniel Liechty has chosen with care here. He presents us with the most sincere and serious face of Anabaptist spirituality. What is striking about what is supposed to be a 'radical' Reformation is the reactionary nature of much of the thinking on, for instance, justification by faith. Works get a better innings here than at Luther's hands. The

lesson is that 'being radical' can result in reimposing burdens, negativity and law when this is not really intended. What breathes through these writings is an authenticity of Christian discipleship, a love of credible Christian living and a willingness to suffer. Persecution has left its mark on the piety expressed here and if the result is a narrow form of faith, the fault is as much with those who caused that oppressed concentration of mind as with the Anabaptists themselves.

This said, one cannot escape the distance between Anabaptist preachers and the Reformers in some important areas: election, revelation, the nature of faith, the security of believers. These writings focus on spirituality, but doctrinal influences are felt. So what is needed now is a fuller selection of the serious theological thinking that underlay the spirituality – not easy to find when so much paper-burning went on. But perhaps the translator of this volume can oblige. Someone looking for originality in this collection will not find it. Someone looking for authenticity will find what they seek.

Roy Kearsley, International Christian College, Glasgow

Great Souls: Six Who Changed The World

David Aikman

Word Publishing, Nashville, TN, 1998; 400pp., £14.99;
ISBN 08499 09651

The author is a former senior correspondent with *Time* magazine, a fact that is reflected in the clarity and ease of style found on every page of the book. Aikman defines a 'Great Soul' as someone 'of preeminent attainment characterized by one or more character qualities of greatness'. He acknowledges that his selection of people fulfilling this description is personal, subjective and to a degree arbitrary, but it is shaped by the fact that he has personally met the people he describes and by the enormous influence each of them has had on the modern world.

Readers will be anxious to know who makes Aikman's list: his six 'Great Souls' are Billy Graham, Nelson Mandela, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II and Elie Wiesel. Each is described sympathetically and the biographical sketches are informative and challenging. For example, I was moved by Graham's comment: 'My greatest fear is that I'll do something or say something that will bring disrepute on the Gospel of Christ before I go.' That surely is the sentiment of a 'great soul'. There are similar gems in every chapter and Aikman

succeeds in conveying to his readers an intimate miniature portrait of each of his chosen subjects.

It may seem churlish to raise a question about John Paul II, but the phrase 'Great Soul' does not seem to fit well with a pontiff who continues to place a theologian of the stature of Hans Küng under an official ban. One wonders too whether history will not in fact view the work of John XXIII as having had a much greater impact on the world in the twentieth century and whether his claims to the description 'Great Soul' are not far more impressive than those of his conservative successor. Aikman's book has other peculiarities: C.S. Lewis would be very surprised to discover himself described as a 'cultural anthropologist' and we hardly need to be told that 'there is a disproportionately greater moral impact from the life and work of Elie Wiesel than from the life and ideas of Michael Jackson [and] Madonna...'. Still, the book is an excellent read and (if the word is not too antiquated) has a truly uplifting quality. It would make an excellent Christmas present.

David Smith, Whitefield Institute, Oxford.

Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism: The Battle for Gospel Preaching

Iain H. Murray

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1995; 164pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 85151 692 0

The remarkable ministry of C.H. Spurgeon continues to attract interest. It was marked by a series of controversies, of which the Downgrade is the best known. In *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism* Iain Murray turns his attention to one far less well-known, and largely confined to a small group of Strict Baptist churches. In addressing this issue Murray sees no current revival in Hyper-Calvinism, but as his subtitle suggests, fears a loss of belief in evangelism amongst Calvinists: concern for purity of doctrine has overridden the 'biblical priority of zeal for Christ and the souls of men'. With this in mind he includes a chapter of lessons to be derived from the conflict.

In the controversy itself, James Wells, the revered and highly successful pastor of the Surrey Tabernacle, publicly criticised the youthful Spurgeon who had quickly become a pulpit sensation on his arrival at the New Park Street Chapel (John Gill's former church). Murray deals with this largely by way of quotations from the *Earthen Vessel Magazine*. Spurgeon's response is illustrated largely by quotations from his sermons

(although a reader of the *Earthen Vessel*, he did not correspond with the magazine). Wells was maintaining the fight of William Gadsby and others against Andrew Fuller's 'duty-faith' teaching, which he saw continued in the preaching of Spurgeon. He viewed the loss of Gill's pulpit to such teaching with alarm, and even went so far as to express his 'doubts as to the Divine reality' of Spurgeon's conversion (which Murray graciously omits to mention). The role of C.W. Banks, the editor of the *Earthen Vessel*, who was drawn to Spurgeon personally but largely upheld the theological perspective of Wells, is intriguing.

Spurgeon continued to hold Wells in high regard, a feeling Wells seemingly reciprocated later in his life; the controversy was no mere personality clash as some have assumed. However, Murray suggests that the division in the ranks of Calvinistic Baptists over the issue of duty-faith made them less able to respond to the doctrinal indifference amongst Baptists that Spurgeon highlighted in the later Downgrade controversy.

More could have been said in the book about the enigmatic James Wells. He was undoubtedly a pulpit genius who, like Spurgeon, could preach to 10,000 in the Surrey Gardens Music Hall. Iain Murray's perplexity why Wells was nicknamed 'Wheelbarrow' Wells is probably resolved by his printed sermon 'A Wheelbarrow Spiritualised' of 1831, in which he refuted suggestions that a labourer was fitted to preach the gospel, and humourously illustrated his message from the components of a wheelbarrow.

Generally, this is perhaps not vintage Iain Murray: the collection of supporting chapters has a somewhat patchwork feel. Nonetheless, it is an interesting volume into another aspect of the increasingly less 'forgotten Spurgeon'. As would be expected from one who has done much to publish works by, and about, Spurgeon, he is ably defended. And a warning note is clearly sounded: 'When Calvinism ceases to be evangelistic... when acceptance of doctrines seems to become more important than acceptance of Christ, then it is a system going to seed and it will inevitably lose its attractive power.'

Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow

BOOKNOTES**Luther**

Hans-Peter Grosshans

Fount, London, 1997; 102pp., £4.99; ISBN 0 00 628027 7

This contribution to the Fount Christian Thinkers series is an accessible introduction to the life, and especially the thought, of Martin Luther. It is written by Hans-Peter Grosshans of the University of Tübingen, in a clear, succinct style. A minimum of technical apparatus is used, but brief and relevant quotations from Luther's writings are included, with two pages of suggestions for further reading. Luther's life is dealt with only very briefly, before the core of the book which deals with Luther's thought. This is divided into themes – the Word of God, Faith, Jesus Christ and Salvation, the Priesthood of Believers, the Christian Life, and The Concept of Theology. The writer closes with a call to mirror Luther's unconditional commitment to the truth of the Word of God. This commitment to truth, Grosshans argues, caused the Reformation, and 'should be at the centre of the life of all Christian churches'.

Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow

The Cambuslang Revival: The Scottish Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth Century

Arthur Fawcett

Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1996; 256pp., £6.95; ISBN 0 85151 702 1

It is most welcome to see the late Arthur Fawcett's *Cambuslang Revival* in print again, this time in paperback. Well known to an earlier generation, it still merits a wide readership. The work contains analysis of the background of the revival, the revival itself, and its wider impact. Not only is this a work of thorough scholarship, it also reflects the writer's pastoral heart. Spiritual developments are assessed sympathetically, and realistically. Fawcett's book has been widely acclaimed. Donald Meek describes it as 'a landmark of sober, evangelical scholarship in this underworked field'. The reader now enjoys the benefit of T.C. Smout's further analysis in 'Born Again at Cambuslang', *Past and Present* 97 (1982).

Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow

A History of the Christian Tradition, Volume 2

Thomas D. McGonigle and James F. Quigley

Paulist Press, New York, 1996; 286pp., \$17.95; ISBN 0 8091 3648 1

This volume covers the period from the Reformation to the present. Written as a basic textbook, the emphasis is on overview rather than detail. The style is simple and uncomplicated. Some chapters contain suggestions for further reading, although these usually refer only to other general historical works and encyclopaedias. The scope of the work is comprehensive, but the weighting towards the American scene, and Roman Catholicism, is clear. This is both a weakness and a strength. Some events in Protestant history are treated in sketchy fashion, although not unsympathetically. At times there is a lack of precision – the impression is given that George Whitefield visited America only once, and his Anglicanism goes unmentioned. The later chapters increasingly focus on Catholicism in the modern era. Herein lies a strength, offering introductory insights missing in some textbooks from the Protestant stable. In spite of its limitations, the book has value as a complement to other works at a basic level in general use.

Ian J. Shaw, International Christian College, Glasgow

Paul and the Historical Jesus

David Wenham

Grove Books, Cambridge, 1998; 24pp., £2.25; ISBN 1 85174 369 3

This booklet summarises Wenham's more detailed research into the relationship between Paul and the 'historical Jesus'. The short chapters affirm that Paul built on Jesus' teaching; that Paul's writings confirm the Gospel narratives; and that Paul was interested in the traditions about Jesus. This clearly written work will whet the reader's appetite for Wenham's excellent monograph.

Alistair I. Wilson, Highland Theological Institute, Elgin

Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland

Edited by Duncan Forrester and Douglas Murray

T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1996; 208pp., £12.50; ISBN 0 567 08504 X

The first edition of this invaluable guide was published in 1984. This partial revision still focuses largely on liturgical styles, with little attention to Highland and Gaelic traditions (except in the chapter on Roman Catholic worship by Mark Dilworth) and none to the charismatic movement. *Songs of God's People* rates a mention but not *Mission Praise*. But worship (however we define it; not surprisingly there is no trace here of recent evangelical debate on this question) is not an area of evangelical strength (ministerial energies have tended to be spent chiefly on the sermon), and historical surveys like this one should contribute to review and renewal, so long as we do not allow them to trap us in the past, whether remote or recent.

D.F. Wright, New College, University of Edinburgh

As You and the Abused Person Journey Together

Sharon E. Cheston

Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1994; 64pp., \$3.95; ISBN 0 8091 3513 2

This short book tells of the nature and effects of sexual abuse through the story of a woman named Jessica. Sharon Cheston, a Professor in Pastoral Counselling, reveals this most sensitive subject for what it is: a private, often hidden nightmare of painful memories and necessary survival reactions. Having introduced Jessica, she goes on to show how people in the different roles of husband, friend, pastor and counsellor can best help and accompany the victim on the long painful journey to wholeness. The effects that such trauma can have on faith and a relationship with God are also considered. Simple and thoughtful, this booklet can be read in one sitting, and offers considerable insight into sexual abuse, but also encouragement that healing and wholeness are possible. It gives information and understanding for any who know an abused person. A bibliography offers further reading, though the publishers are American.

Fiona Barnard, St Andrews

Their Blood Cries Out. The Untold Story of Persecution Against Christians in the Modern World

Paul Marshall with Lela Gilbert

Word Publishing, Dallas, TX, 1997; 233pp., n.p.; ISBN 0 8499 4020 6

The introductory chapter by M. Horowitz draws parallels between the persecution of the Jews and the present persecution of Christians. In the face of this the silence of the West (America) is labelled as ignorance. In Part One, Marshall and Gilbert have gathered shocking facts from Near and Far Eastern countries, Africa and Europe to dispel this ignorance. It is not comfortable reading but neither is it sensationalist. Part Two describes American apathy and Western secularism with specific examples and some possible reasons for the seeming indifference. There is no discussion of the 'inevitability' of persecution or of the place of prayer for those in positions of authority, but the final chapter gives sensible suggestions for action. This publication is of more value for American readers but the facts and the challenges are not easily avoided by us. Useful appendices are included.

Ralph W. Martin, Glasgow