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A table of contents for *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_sbet-01.php

EDITORIAL

This year's Autumn edition of the Bulletin includes articles relating to – in order of appearance – historical theology, church history, practical theology and a second historical theology paper.

Professor Stewart's paper raises an interesting study relating to 19th century teaching on the second coming of Christ. The subject presents an example of how even a prevalent teaching can be recast and yet in its time received and believed. Later, upon inspection it is shown to be a folly. While reading Stewart's paper it is worth reflecting on our own practices in evangelical circles. Do we make every effort to be accurate in our accounts of what others say and teach? And are we ready to be corrected when incorrect? The paper shows the importance of accurately describing the views of others, even if – especially if – we do not agree with them. Otherwise the outcome shall prove the same.

Douglas Somerset's paper on the Reformation in Glasgow will be of interest to many readers, one for the connection many will have to Scotland's most populous city, but also for the lack of widespread knowledge about the reformation in Glasgow. The story of reformation in Scotland generally has for its focal points, places and people closer to the east or west coasts. This is understandable given the prominence of events that occurred elsewhere, but Somerset's paper gives us insight into the religious life of the city, controversies and developments at the time.

Ron Michener's paper on prayer provides a thoughtful discussion on a popular motif associated with prayer – that of a weapon. He queries a use of language that has become common currency in Christian circles. The question Michener takes up, which is surely the question to take up is, 'is it biblical'? In doing so he not only addresses the subject, he also expands upon what prayer is. More widely applied, the paper raises to our attention the importance of discerning the roots of Christian expression.

Finally, we have a paper from Mark J. Larson on Charles Hodge's acquaintance with Friedrich Schleiermacher. This discussion is one of importance for the church today. If we could produce a heat map of influential theologians today Schleiermacher would be among the most prominent for his belief that intuition and feeling is revelation; a by-product of which must be the cooling of a person's relationship to God's word. Despite this, as Larson discusses, Hodge had a favourable view of Schleiermacher's personal salvation. It reminds me of M'Cheyne's comments following Edward Irving's death, 'He is now with his God and Saviour,

whom he wronged so much, yet, I am persuaded, loved so sincerely.¹ M'Cheyne could speak warmly of Irving's faith in Christ despite his errant theological views. Above that, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 raises the importance of addressing matters such as those Larson discusses of intuition, feeling and revelation. These are matters of highest significance for they concern the eternal welfare of the present-day church.

¹ Quoted by N. R. Needham, 'Irving, Edward,' in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, ed. by Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), p. 437.

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Professor Stewart's paper was originally delivered at the ETS annual meeting (United States), held online on 16th November 2020.