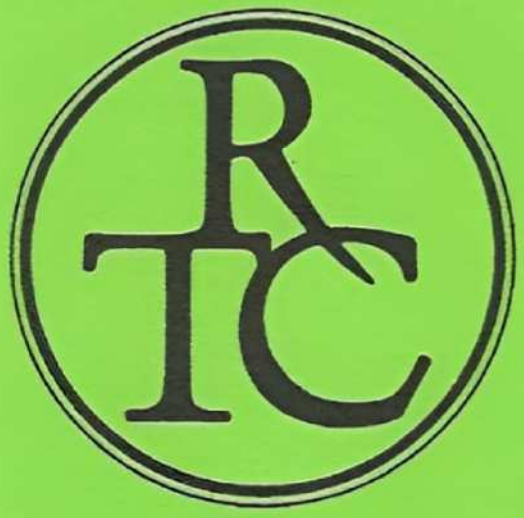

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SIMPLE BUT PROFOUND

We live in an age when language is changing rapidly. The editors of the Oxford English Dictionary must regularly add new terms to this volume. Many of these new words are of course obscure technical terms which will be used and understood by very few people.

Our age is also one which is becoming more and more skilled at deliberately obscuring meaning even while using words which are familiar. Public statements from many quarters often hide as much as they reveal.

The purpose of this Journal is quite different. It is, like that of the preacher of the Gospel, not to make truth difficult to comprehend, but to expound it openly and simply. Truth is both simple and profound. The writers of the Westminister Confession of Faith recognized that in the chapter on the Holy Scriptures, 'those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned but the unlearned in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them'. The constant challenge to the theologian whether in his writing or in his preaching, is to proclaim profound truth simply.

Preaching in 1844 JW Alexander said 'Many who do not reject the truth yet so cover her with robes of their own weaving that she cannot be seen in her lovely simplicity'.

This Journal is committed to the truth. It is committed to helping all who love and preach the truth of God's Word. In this we seek to be both scholarly and clear. The one pattern which we keep always before us is that of Christ Who is the Truth and of Whom it could be said 'the common people heard Him gladly'.

C.K.H.

INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF ACTS

by Edward Donnelly

Edward Donnelly is Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at the Reformed Theological College, Belfast and Minister of Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church, Newtownabbey. *The following article is the substance of the Opening Lecture of the 1997/98 College year and the oral form has largely been retained.*

'You can prove anything from the Bible'. The sneer is well-worn, yet still common. It may spring from old-fashioned unbelief, the idea that the Bible is a jumble of contradiction and confusion. Or it may have a postmodernist tinge, implying that, far from being objective and absolute, truth is merely what each individual chooses to accept as valid. In either case, the authority of the Word of God is compromised.

What makes matters worse is that Christians themselves provide much of the evidence for this charge. Believers have an unfortunate capacity for travelling from a single starting-point to a bewildering variety of incompatible destinations. They all use the same raw material. They regard the Bible as their infallible standard. Yet this initial unity seems to splinter into conflicting interpretations. Calvinists differ from Arminians in their understanding of the operation of God's saving grace. Baptists and paedobaptists argue their opposing cases from the same source-book. A single passage gives birth to contradictory eschatological systems.

The book of Acts is a particularly fertile ground of disagreement. This may seem strange, for it would appear to be one of the easier New Testament books to understand. It is fascinating, accessible, intensely readable. There are few exegetical cruces and little apocalyptic symbolism. In contrast to the detailed reasoning of some of the epistles, it consists mostly of narrative interspersed with preaching. Yet varied and opposing conclusions have been drawn from its pages.

These range from comparatively minor matters to issues of considerable significance. Episcopalians, presbyterians and congregationalists all argue from Acts for their systems of church government. Details of worship, the pattern of spiritual experience and missionary policy are debated on the basis of Luke's material. Most crucial, however, is the current debate over the work of the Holy

Spirit. For Acts portrays miraculous happenings - mass conversions, speaking in tongues, healings, visions - all flowing from the mighty event of Pentecost. These chapters have become a battleground on which believers seek to advance their views and confound their opponents.

It is, in may ways, a less than edifying spectacle. Such disagreements seem to confirm unbelievers in their scorn for the Bible. They lead Christians to become irritated with one another, perplexed at the failure of brothers in the faith to see what seems to them so obvious. Worst of all is the neutralisation of the power and efficacy of God's Word. It is being used as ammunition for debate rather than as food for the soul or guidance for the church. The cause of Christ inevitably suffers.

What has gone wrong? We know that there are no contradictions in Scripture. As God's perfect revelation it has a clear, single meaning. So the fault must lie with our interpretative approach. As Christians study Acts they are, to a greater or lesser extent, misunderstanding it - either by using the wrong methods or, more probably, asking the wrong questions and so obtaining misleading answers.

We should begin by realising that interpretation, not exegesis, is the storm-centre of current debate. Agreement can be reached relatively easily about the doctrines which Acts teaches and the events which it records. But what is their relevance for us? Here is where difficulties arise.

The analogy of Scripture

A key problem is that of historical precedent. Acts, while clearly a narrative, is nevertheless treated differently from other narrative books. Few would argue that the events of Judges, for example, are normative for Christian behaviour or church life. Even when believers espouse the dubious practice of 'putting out a fleece', they do not imitate Gideon exactly, but 'contextualise' his method of discerning God`s will.

Yet Acts is taken by many as a precise model for the church in every age. The so-called Restoration movement, with its charismatic emphases, urges that this book be treated as a blueprint for today. When this is done, they claim, the church will once again experience a spectacular outpouring of the Spirit, with the accompanying phenomena, leading to an era of outstanding blessing.

We might point out that, despite claims to the contrary, no-one applies this principle consistently. Not even the most ardent charismatic expects the Spirit to come with 'a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind', accompanied by 'divided tongues, as of fire' (2:2,3). Constitutions of Restoration churches do not, as far as we know, make provision for discipline by supernatural capital punishment (5:1-11). Nor is inconsistency confined to any particular theological tradition, for all Christians pick and choose according to their preferences, habits or prejudices. Some who insist on a weekly Lord's Supper as the only scriptural pattern, for example, are not noted for a willingness to sell their possessions and hold all property in common (2:44,45).

It is clear that the mere recording of an event or experience in Scripture does not mean automatically that we are to expect to reduplicate it. Historical precedent is not a sufficient warrant for establishing duty or doctrine. Slavish copying of all that Acts records is an untenable hermeneutical approach. Peter goes to preach in a Gentile home (10:1ff) and he also heals a lame man (2:6ff). Paul takes a Nazirite vow (18:18), appoints elders (14:23) and quarrels with Barnabas (15:36ff). The disciples wait for the coming of the Spirit (1:12ff), speak in other languages (2:4) and go everywhere with the gospel. Are all these activities a pattern for us? Some may be, some not. To defend a practice simply by pointing to its occurrence in the Bible leads to absurdity.

The answer must be found from the analogy of Scripture. This was a key principle of the Reformers. Events must be interpreted in the light of exhortations, duty by doctrines and commandments. We should be chary about accepting as obligatory anything not confirmed elsewhere by clear command or precept. This very basic rule is today honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Fundamental to any serious interpretation of the Bible, it is widely and irresponsibly overlooked, yet could minimise, if not eliminate, many current disagreements.

The purpose of Acts

There can be no argument among conservative evangelicals about the authority of every syllable of Scripture (2 Tim.3:16). Such is the cornerstone of our belief. But much of the authority of the Bible lies in its intent. To apply a passage for purposes for which it was never designed is to misuse it. Which brings us to the question of the purpose(s) of Acts. What is the book 'for'? Can we discern from the text Luke's reasons, under the inspiration of the Spirit, for writing?

He is not interested in providing us with a complete history of the early church or a full set of biographies of the apostles. Little is said about the geographical expansion of the Christian movement in directions other than in a more or less straight line from Jerusalem to Rome. Most of the apostles are barely mentioned and nothing is told us about their labours for the gospel. A number of statements are made about the organisation and government of the church, but these are more side-references than a topic of major concern. Conversions are described and the spiritual experience of some believers, but the author does not seem to be concentrating on providing a manual for devotional guidance.

If, then, Acts is not meant to be a history of the church, a manual of church order or an account of normal Christian experience, what are its purposes? If we can move towards an answer, we will be helped in interpreting the book more accurately. No attempt can be made in the scope of this article to provide a comprehensive analysis of Luke's possible purposes. Yet various clues offer help in understanding the intent of Acts, and to these we now turn.

1. We begin, where Luke does, by reminding ourselves that here is the second volume of a work already begun: 'The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach' (1:1). This is, in other words, a continuation of the Gospel according to Luke. In that book, Jesus was anointed with the Spirit to proclaim the good news of God - the arrival of salvation in Jesus Christ and the welcoming of the Gentiles into the fellowship of his people. At the end of the gospel, a hint is provided about the subject matter of the next volume: 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His (Christ's) name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high' (27:47-49). Acts will tell this story of the spreading of gospel preaching through men appointed by the Lord Jesus and empowered by God the Spirit.

2. This interpretation is supported by a clear *thematic text* early in chapter one: 'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth' (1:8). Luke could scarcely have made his intent more plain. He will show the mighty activity of God's Spirit in sending out preachers from the ancient centre of Israel's faith to the far places of the world. The gospel of salvation will be taken to the Gentiles so that they may come to put their faith in Jesus Christ. This plan is implemented in what follows. Chapters

1 to 7 focus on Jerusalem, chapters 8 to 10 on Samaria and chapters 11 to 28 on the wider outreach. Rome, where the book concludes, is not 'the end of the earth', a phrase which must be interpreted in the light of the quotation of Isaiah 49:6 in 13:47 and which almost certainly refers to a mission to all the peoples of the world.[1] But it provides, to paraphrase Winston Churchill, an appropriate end to the beginning of the missionary enterprise and may even serve as the beginning of the end.

3. Luke appears to have composed his book in six sections and these are indicated by five *summary statements,* each of which serves to round off a section, before the narrative takes off in a new direction. They also emphasise what is important to the author:

i) 6:7: 'And the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith';

ii) 9:31: 'Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied';

iii) 12:24: 'But the word of God grew and multiplied';

iv) 16:5: 'So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily';

v) 19:20: 'So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed'.

The general impression created by these statements is overwhelmingly positive. David S Rosner comments that: 'The summaries confirm not only that progress is taking place, but that the expansion is impressive and far reaching' and quotes H J Cadbury's assessment that they 'indicate that the material is typical, that the action was continued, that the effect was general'.[2]

The main reason for this dramatic forward movement is made clear by the extraordinary emphasis given to the proclamation of the Word of God. At least 30% of Acts consists of apostolic preaching. Peter's explanation of the events of Pentecost is allotted almost twice as much space as the events themselves (2:1-36). Similarly, the healing of the lame man in the temple is considerably expanded in the re-telling (3:1-26; 4:8-12). The fact that the book ends with a preacher preaching in Rome is a fitting commentary on Luke's estimate of the importance of the ministry of the Word.

4. Another feature in Acts is the presence of *repeated accounts*. Initially, these may seem redundant, even tiresome, to the modern reader and we may wonder why a skilful writer such as Luke has repeated so much material. Repetition is however a literary device found in the Old Testament, where it is employed to emphasise the importance of an event, as, for example the lengthy reports in Genesis 24 of the search of Abraham's servant for a bride for Isaac. Just as a key theme may re-occur again and again in a musical symphony, so an ancient writer would signal a particularly significant topic by judicious repetition. Three, among others, may be underlined here:

i) The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is described in chapter 2 and then by Peter in his post-Cornelius speech to the Jerusalem church: 'Then I remembered the word of the Lord... You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If therefore God gave them the same gift as he gave us' (11:16,17). A third reference is made at the Jerusalem Council (15:7,8).

ii) The conversion of the Gentiles gathered in Cornelius' house is recorded in chapter 10, including a repeated account of the centurion's vision (10:9-6, 30-32). Peter then provides another full account in 11: 4-17.

iii) The conversion of the noted persecutor, Saul of Tarsus, is recounted in 9:1-30, then twice more by Paul himself (22:1-16; 26:2-18).

These events are repeated because they are hugely significant in Luke's overall theme: the giving of the Spirit, God's grace bursting out from Israel to the Gentiles and the commissioning of the great apostle to the Gentiles. Luke wants us to take note of these things, not to overlook them.

5. Familiar as we are with the story of Acts, it is all too easy to fail in our imagination and underestimate the *broadening of vision* which it describes. For the scale of the change involved is enormous - from a Jewish to a supranational religion. 'Christianity grew out of Judaism as it reacted, under the instruction and direction of the Holy Spirit, to the problems and challenges it met with on its road to world-wide witness in the name of Christ'.[3]

Luke makes this very clear. He begins with an intensely Jewish church, where believers still associate with temple and synagogue. The Hellenists then go with the gospel to Diaspora Jews or 'almost' Jews, such as the Samaritans and the Ethiopian proselyte. Stephen develops a theology of extension from his understanding of the Old Testament and seals his radical new understanding with his life. The Gentile Cornelius is converted and Greeks are evangelised in

Antioch and formed into a church. This fellowship despatches missionaries into the Gentile world of Asia Minor and questions arising from the new policy are settled at the momentous Jerusalem council. Expansion continues westward into Europe, as the Jews reject the gospel and Gentiles welcome it. Paul eventually reaches the capital of the world empire.

Step by step, Christianity is moving away from Judaism. Jesus of Nazareth is confessed as risen Lord. The time-honoured approach to God through temple and sacrifice is seen to be out-of-date. Circumcision and the Old Testament food laws are no longer mandatory for God's people. The very character of the covenant community changes drastically with the influx of many from pagan backgrounds and lifestyles. The church at the end of Acts is almost unrecognisable from that described at the beginning.

6. A final point worthy of notice is the apparent disproportion of the *last quarter* of the book. Luke devotes from the middle of chapter 21 to the end to Paul's imprisonment, trials and journey to Rome. This seems remarkable. There is so much about the early church which we long to know but are not told. Yet Luke describes these episodes in minute, exhaustive detail. Deliberations of Gentile officials are painstakingly recorded, three long defence-speeches of Paul are included, with much repetition and parallel material. Why should a careful historian and skilled writer seem guilty of such imbalance?

Because the Bible is essentially practical and pastoral in nature, Luke is not an abstract historian or academic theologian. He is writing to help people like Theophilus, who were facing increasing difficulties in the latter half of the first century. He uses this last part of his book to show them that, no matter how blameless they may be, Christians will face opposition and injustice from a hostile world. Their duty, in these circumstances, is to keep on speaking out, refusing to be silenced.

> Acts 21-28 portrays Paul as the missionary prisoner, fulfilling in a particular way the call to suffer for Christ given to him in 9:16 ...Readers are encouraged to follow the example of the earliest believers, and Paul in particular, by holding fast to the same gospel and continuing to be active in its dissemination, even in the face of persecution...[4]

This narrative is a graphic illustration of the way in which God's people are preserved through many crises. In storm and shipwreck Paul cannot drown, since God has a purpose for his servant. His enemies may secure his imprisonment, but the very authorities to whom he is handed over are means in the

Lord's hand for bringing him safely to his appointed destination. Christians called to witness in hostile world will read these closing chapters with fascination and find in them much pastoral encouragement.

Conclusions for interpretation

Noting these factors will certainly not solve all problems of interpretation. But they may at least help us to approach Acts in the right direction. The Restorationists are mistaken when they want to repeat the phenomena of the book. But there is a worse error, that of closing our eyes and ears to the enormous challenges which Luke presents. Acts should be interpreted in the blazing light of three convictions, which are all too painfully lacking in much of conservative evangelicalism.

1. The mission of the church

We are called by our Lord to reach out with the gospel - always and passionately. Acts rebukes us for our lack of creative evangelistic endeavour, our lukewarmness in preaching and witnessing. We cannot honestly read its pages without becoming uncomfortably aware of the multitudes of unconverted in our communities whom we are so signally failing to impact with the good news of salvation. 'The church marched across the ancient world on a powerful wave of enthusiasm for Jesus Christ. The recapture of this open-faced, unashamed and self-sacrificial love for Jesus and for lost men and women is surely the most pressing need for everyone who professes to be a Christian'.[5]

It reminds us also that we may not find the lost to whom we are sent particularly compatible at first. How difficult it must have been for those pious Jewish Christians to welcome as brothers and sisters raw converts from a pagan background! They would have brought with them into the church the scars of past moral vileness and remnants of intellectual confusion and gross superstition. But, amid stress and strain, they were incorporated into the church and Jew and Gentile learned, painfully at times, to live together as one body in Christ. Multitudes today are similarly alienated from our habits of thought and patterns of behaviour. If converted they will, of course, change. But Acts shows us that the church too will have to change, to sacrifice some of its precious traditions and time-honoured practices to make room for the new-comers whom God is saving. Such a process of adjustment will be difficult, but infinitely preferable to the alternative of fruitless stagnation.

2. *Reliance on the Spirit*

The book was not called 'The Acts of the Apostles' until approximately one hundred years after its composition, perhaps to show Marcion and his followers that Paul was not the only faithful apostle of Christ. A more accurate, though cumbrous, title would be 'The Acts of the risen Lord Jesus by means of the Holy Spirit', for the Spirit's leading is crucial in every advance which is made. Here is a great need among us. In the words of Dennis E Johnson:

> Our meagre prayer lives, our anxiety, our hope in technology to solve spiritual problems, our doubt that loving discipline can restore wandering brothers - all these testify to our unspoken assumption that God's real action is in the past and in the future, but not in the present... If we were convinced that God is present and at work among us... his power would dispel our discouragement, his authority would melt our stubbornness, his terrible purity would banish our temptation to compromise. Surrounded by his peace, we would laugh at our fears [6]

Acts brings us into a realm of faith and witness in which the Spirit is a mighty, vibrant reality. To experience such an empowering fulness from the third Person of the Godhead, we can do no better than soak ourselves in its pages. The advice of Martyn Lloyd-Jones is emphatic: 'Live in that book, I exhort you: it is a tonic, the greatest tonic I know of in the realm of the Spirit'.[7]

3. *The conviction of the triumph of the gospel*

Living as we do at a time when Western Christianity is everywhere in retreat, it would be easy to become discouraged. Yet Acts will not permit such faint-heartedness. For it shows us how, in circumstances every bit as unpromising as our own, the message of the gospel began to spread among the nations. Gordon D Fee writes: 'We are to view this triumphant, joyful, forward-moving expansion of the gospel, empowered by the Holy Spirit... as God's intent for his continuing church'.[8] J Gresham Machen concurs: 'Jews and Gentiles, rulers and kings, the sea and its tempests - all are powerless before the march of the gospel. Joyous, abundant, irresistible power - that is the keynote of the book'.[9]

Luke has been accused of ending his work too abruptly and leaving his story unfinished. But that was because it was unfinished, and still is - and we are among those called to take the narrative forward. Nothing, indeed, could be more thrilling than the implicit challenge of the final verse, picturing Paul, in custody and facing an uncertain future, yet undaunted still: 'Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, ***unhindered***' (28:31).

> Just as Luke's Gospel ended with the prospect of a mission to the nations (24:47), so the Acts ends with the prospect of a mission radiating from Rome to the world. Luke's description of Paul preaching 'with boldness' and 'without hindrance' symbolizes a wide open door, through which we in our day have to pass. The Acts of the Apostles have long ago finished. But the acts of the followers of Jesus will continue until the end of the world, and their words will spread to the ends of the earth. [10]

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THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM
Shepherd, Guarding Companion, Generous Host

by Hugh J. Blair

For some thirty years Hugh J. Blair was Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in the Reformed Theological College, Belfast.

There is a story of an actor who was entertaining a group of people, who asked him to recite various passages of literature. One old man in the audience asked him to recite the twenty-third Psalm. He did it so beautifully that the audience broke into spontaneous applause. Then, moved by an impulse that he scarcely understood, the actor said to the old man, 'Would you like to recite the Psalm?' The old man did so with none of the rhetoric of the actor, and yet with a sincerity that shone through every word. At the end there was no applause, but there were tears in many eyes, not least in the eyes of the actor himself. Deeply moved, he said to the old man, 'I know the Psalm; you know the Shepherd.'

It is possible to see the whole Psalm as a Psalm of the Shepherd, but there are pictures in some of the later verses that do not quite fit in to the shepherding metaphor, and it seems best to follow the suggestion of J. A. Motyer in the New Bible Commentary, 21st Century Edition, writing on Psalm 23, that in the Psalm we have three parts, 'the sheep and the Shepherd (1-3), the traveller and the Companion (4), and the guest and the Host (5,6).'[1]

1. THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not lack

My Shepherd and my need

The LORD

It is important to begin where the Psalm begins - and where it virtually ends as well - with the LORD, the personal name by which God revealed himself to his people. Moses learned the meaning of it at the burning bush, when God told him that it was I AM who was sending him to deliver his people from Egypt. What that meant for Moses and for Israel - and for us - is revealed in Exodus 3.

(a) If the LORD is the I AM, he is eternally present with his people. He said to Moses, 'This is my name for ever, the name by which I am to be remem-

bered from generation to generation' (Exodus 3:15, NIV). He is not only the God of the past - the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - but the God of the present, Israel's present as they were in captivity in Egypt, and our present today, 'the same yesterday, today and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8).

(b) The LORD is not only eternally present with his people; he is personally involved with his people. In Exodus 3 he deliberately involved himself with Israel's need, and entered into a covenant to deliver them and to be their God. 'My people,' he said (vv. 7,10). This Name is a covenant name, a name which speaks of God's personal relationship with his people; he binds himself to be their God.

(c) The Lord is personally involved with the salvation of his people. That comes out very clearly in Exodus 3:7,8: The LORD said, 'I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt. So I have come down to deliver them.' The name is a salvation name. That salvation is personal as well as for God's people as a whole. The LORD saved Israel from Egypt and brought them into Canaan. He also redeemed his people as individuals. Jacob gives us a good example of that. When, near the end of his life, he came to bless the sons of Joseph, he said, 'God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.' (Genesis 48: 15,16). Passages in the Old Testament which refer to 'the Angel of the LORD speak of One who is both the LORD himself and distinct from the LORD, appearing for example, to Abraham as the Angel of the LORD (Genesis 22:15) and in the next verse speaking as the LORD. This is God himself appearing in human form. This encourages us to see in the Angel of the LORD, who shepherded Jacob, Christ the Good Shepherd himself.

My Shepherd

The thirty-fourth chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel can provide us with a guide to the functions of the Good Shepherd. There we have a vivid contrast between bad shepherds and the Good Shepherd. The bad shepherds - the leaders of Israel - had thought of the sheep as there for their benefit and their advantage. God challenges them in verses 3,4: 'You do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost.' Those were the things that the sheep were needing - to be fed, to be strengthened, to be healed, to be brought back, to be found. And those are the things that the Good Shepherd says he will do: 'I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out...I will bring them out from the peoples...I will feed

them in good pasture...' (vv. 11-14). When the LORD takes the name 'shepherd' that is what he is saying he will do, exactly what we need, in all the different details of our need.

John 10 gives a more familiar guide to the functions of the Good Shepherd: he lays down his life for the sheep, he protects them from their enemies, he provides pasture for them, he goes before them, he knows them one by one. All this, and far, far more, is what Christ the Good Shepherd is to his people.

The word 'my' in the opening verse of the twenty-third Psalm must be emphasised, for it brings all that the Good Shepherd is and does into personal experience. The LORD is *my* Shepherd.' It can mean 'He shepherds me', with all that that means for me. And it can mean that he is the Shepherd whom I have claimed as mine.[2] He shepherds me, and I gladly accept all that his shepherding means. What does it mean? Let the second half of the verse tell us: he meets my need.

My Need

In green pastures...beside the still waters...He restores my soul

There is an old Scottish version of the 23rd Psalm, which translates the first verse like this;

Lord is only my support,
And he that doth me feede;
How can I then lack anie thing
Whereof I stand in need?

Those last two lines catch exactly the meaning of 'I shall not want.' 'I shall not lack anything of which I stand in need.' To say 'The LORD is my Shepherd' is to express a conviction of adequate resources to meet every situation and every need. The word translated 'lack' occurs frequently in the account of Israel's pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan and elsewhere in the Old Testament.[3] The Israelites who gathered the manna, whether they gathered much or little, 'had no lack' (Exodus 16:18; Deut. 2:7; Nehemiah 9:21). In the midst of famine, as recorded in I Kings 17, the widow's jar 'did not run dry', literally, was not lacking. In Psalm 34, written according to its title when David was in desperate peril, the word occurs repeatedly: 'There is no lack to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.' David's confidence in the LORD's provision for his need justifies his exhortation, 'Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good'

(Psalm 34:8), for his shepherd is the Good Shepherd, and so he will not lack any good thing.

Verses 2 and 3 of Psalm 23 give vivid pictures of the resources that are available to counter the stresses of life. 'He makes me to lie down in green pastures,' literally, 'pastures of tender grass.' There will be an abundance of provision to meet every need as that need comes.

'He leads me beside the still waters,' literally, 'waters of quietness.' That can be taken in two senses. It can mean 'quiet waters,' indicating the times and places of quietness that the LORD gives us to refresh our souls. And it can mean 'waters that bring quietness,' the Good Shepherd's provision of relief from the tensions that rob us of our peace of mind. Here is a prescription to deal with life's stress: 'He makes me to lie down in pastures of tender grass; he leads me beside waters of.quietness.' And what that means, laying aside for a moment the lovely metaphors of verse 2, is the wonderful reality summed up in verse 3: 'He restores my soul.'

'He restores my soul' is literally, 'He brings my soul, or my life, back.' Different senses in which the word translated 'restore' is used will help us to understand what is meant by the restoration of the soul. In Psalm 19:7 it has been translated, 'The law of the LORD is perfect, *converting* the soul.' That is the basic turning back that is needed. The writer of another Shepherd Psalm - Psalm 80 - was very much aware of his need, and the need of his people, to turn to God, and equally aware of the fact that he could not turn by himself. And so three times in Psalm 80 we find this prayer: 'Restore us', literally, 'Cause us to turn and we shall be saved.' That prayer is answered when 'He restores my soul.' The word translated 'restores' has a direct link with the refreshment promised by the green pastures and the quiet waters. It occurs three times in the first chapter of Lamentations in the picture of the siege of Jerusalem and the people's desperate need for food and water: 'They seek bread; they have given their valuables for food to restore life' (v.11 and similarly in vv. 16,19). 'He restores my soul' can mean 'He refreshes my soul as with food and drink.'

The restoration of the soul is not an end in itself; its purpose is indicated in the second half of verse 3: 'He leads me in paths of righteousness.' The scene is moving towards the second part of the Psalm, where we will see the traveller and the Companion. The restored life needs to be directed in paths of righteousness. The metaphor of the shepherd is not necessarily discarded; there are other Psalms which speak of people being guided as sheep by a shepherd, for

example, Psalm 77:20 and Psalm 78:70-72. It is people who are in view now. 'You my sheep, the sheep of my pasture, are people', declares the LORD through his prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 34:31, NIV). And his purpose is to lead them in paths of righteousness.

'Paths of righteousness' can mean 'right paths'. Verse 3 gives a timely reminder that the paths by which the Good Shepherd leads his people are right paths, for verse 4 will see the traveller traversing a path through the valley of the shadow. Derek Kidner comments, 'The dark *valley,* or ravine, is as truly one of his 'right paths' as are the green pastures - a fact that takes much of the sting out of any ordeal.'[4] 'Paths of righteousness' can also describe the righteous walk of those who travel on them. That is the evidence of a restored soul: 'He leads me in paths of righteousness.'

Why does the Good Shepherd do all this, making us lie down in green pastures and leading us by quiet waters, restoring our souls, and leading us in right paths and paths of righteousness? For our sakes, certainly. He wants all this for our good. But there is a deeper motivation than that: 'for His name's sake.' The Good Shepherd does all that he does for the sake of his own good name. It is a serious reflection on a shepherd if he loses even one of his flock. Christ has staked the honour of his name on his saving and his shepherding of his people. And to his name, to all eternity, will be all the glory.

II. THE GUARDING COMPANION

I will fear no evil

Through a Dark Valley

The right paths of verse 3 may lead through a dark valley, 'the valley of the shadow of death'. Translators take the phrase 'shadow of death' - one word in Hebrew - in two ways, depending on whether they underline the word 'shadow' (meaning 'darkness') or the word 'death'. If 'shadow' is emphasised, then 'of death' is taken as the kind of shadow or darkness that is meant, a deadly, death-like shadow, deep darkness. If 'death' is emphasised, the reference is to the dark shadow that literal death casts. Both senses can find support in the occurrences of the word in the Old Testament. In Amos 5:8, literal darkness is meant. Amos is speaking of the greatness of God's power, and urging his hearers to seek such a great God. He is the God who made the constellations in the heavens, the Pleiades and Orion. The same God is the One Who turns darkness into light with each new dawn, and ends the day with the coming of darkness:

Seek Him Who turns deep darkness into
the morning, and makes the day dark with night.

It is deep darkness, literal darkness that is meant. Similarly, in Job 24. 17 Job is speaking of burglars for whom darkness is their friend: 'For all of them, deep darkness is their morning; they make friends with the terrors of darkness.' (NIV). So 'shadow of death' may mean simply deep darkness.

It may also mean the darkness of the spirit. Psalm 107. 10 pictures the dark desolation of those who are held in bondage, 'those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and irons,' and verse 14 tells of their liberation from the darkness of their bondage: 'He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their chains in pieces.' At the end of Isaiah 8, there is a picture of deep darkness of the spirit: 'They will see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.' But the first verse of chapter 9 says that that gloom will not be unrelieved, and verse 2 goes on: 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.' 'Shadow of death' can mean a darkness of the spirit.

It can mean the darkness of death. It meant that for Job in Job 10:21,22: 'Before I go to the place from which I will not return, to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land as dark as darkness itself, as the shadow of death, without any order, where even the light is like darkness.'. Job 38:17 sets the 'shadow of death' parallel to death and synonymous with it, when God asks Job, 'Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?'

Psalm 23:4 then has a message of assurance to meet the fearsome valley of a deep darkness of the spirit and the fearsome valley of death: 'I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.' The dark valley of depression can never be taken lightly. It often means living in a perpetual dark cloud, in a shadow that can be felt almost as a physical presence. Two words in this verse can begin to point a way to an answer. The first is 'walk'. In spite of everything, it is possible by God's grace to keep going on, one step at a time. The second word is 'through'. The valley is not endless; one day the darkness will be left behind, and the path will lead into the sunshine again. The same two words have their encouragement for the dark valley of death: 'walk'; there is a journey to be made, there is a passing from one place to another: 'through'; there is a destination to be reached, for the believer heaven is waiting. Perhaps the word 'shadow' can bring its own message of

comfort. Spurgeon has made the comment that just as the shadow of a dog cannot bite, so the shadow of death cannot really hurt. More than that, for there to be a shadow there must be light. There is light over death, the light of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Death has been conquered, and for those who are in Christ its shadow cannot hurt. But the Light that makes death into a shadow is more than a victory that has happened; it is a Presence that remains; it is a Companion on the road.

A Sure Presence

You are with me

The change in personal pronouns that occurs as we come to verse 4 is significant. Up until now it has been 'He': 'He makes me to lie down...He leads me...He restores.' But now it is not 'He'; but 'You'. Before you come to the dark valley you may talk *about* the Good Shepherd; when you are in the dark valley you talk *to* Him: 'You are with me.' Many have proved that true in the dark valley of depression and in the dark valley of death. The LORD, the Good Shepherd, was there, a guarding Companion.

That means deliverance from fear: 'I will fear no evil; for You are with me.' Note how carefully it is put; not, 'I will not fear', but, 'I will fear no evil .' That can be applied to death. Many people are afraid of death, or, more accurately, of dying, for dying can be a painful and difficult thing. But if we know that death can do no real evil to us, can do us no real harm, then its sting is drawn. The same is true of anything that might make us afraid. If the LORD is with us, then, no matter how unpleasant it may be, we will fear no evil from it. The Apostle Paul proved that in a dark hour for him. On trial for his life in Rome, he found that there was no one to stand with him. He wrote to Timothy, 'At my first defence no one stood with me, but all forsook me.' But then he corrected that: 'But the LORD stood with me and strengthened me.' 'I will fear no evil; for You are with me.' A sure Presence makes all the difference.

Guarded and Guided

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me

The shepherd's rod was a club used to defend the sheep from predators or enemies; the staff was a crook used to guide and control the sheep. Both were needed to bring the shepherd's comfort to his flock, so that they would fear no evil. One of the things that might make us afraid is the strength of the enemies confronting us. But the protection of the Good Shepherd's rod means that we

need fear no evil. 'The LORD shall keep you from all evil' (Psalm 121:7). Another thing that might make us afraid is our lack of confidence in ourselves. We are so prone to choose the wrong path; there are dangers that we, like wayward sheep, stupidly run into. The Good Shepherd's crook can draw us gently back, to control us and to guide us in a right path. Guarded and guided, 'I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.'

III. THE GENEROUS HOST

You prepare a table before me

Provision prepared in front of enemies

The generous host's provision is 'in the presence of my enemies.' That means that the enemies are there, and that they will do their utmost to prevent the LORD's provision reaching his people. It also means that all the efforts of the enemy will prove ineffective. The Hebrew means literally, 'You prepare a table before me *in front of* my enemies'; they can only watch in chagrin and dismay as the provision is given and received.

The Hebrew word translated 'prepare' means literally to arrange or set in order. There is nothing haphazard about the provision that is made; it is carefully arranged and prepared, like a military exercise; the word often means 'set in battle array'. The enemies may be marshalled: so is the provision. There are other significant contexts in which the word is used. One is in Genesis 22:9 in one of the details of the story of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son: 'Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there *and placed the wood in order;* and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar.' (The word is used repeatedly in the first chapter of Leviticus in the instructions given for the sacrifices). That preparation that Abraham had to make gives a glimpse into the preparation that God had to make for us. His provision for us involved the sacrifice of his Son. That very wonderfully guarantees his provision for every need we have. 'He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?' (Romans 8:32).

Another significant use of the word translated 'prepare' is found in II Samuel 23:5, where we find David rejoicing in the sureness of the covenant that God had graciously made with him: 'Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, *ordered* in all things and sure.' We can be sure of God's provision, for behind it is God's everlasting covenant with his people.

The Gladness of the Provision

You anoint my head with oil

Attempts have been made to carry through the thought of the shepherd's care for the sheep to the closing verses of the Psalm. The anointing with oil is seen then as the shepherd's provision for the treatment of any wounds or sores that the sheep may have suffered. But it is better to take this fifth verse as describing a feast. The gladness of the feast is marked by the anointing with oil - the basic meaning of the word used is 'to make fat' - for anointing with oil was a symbol of festivity and joy. When Simon the Pharisee invited Jesus to his home for a meal, it should have been the occasion for a party. But Simon failed in the duties of hospitality, on many counts; and Christ specified his failure to make the occasion a glad and happy one: 'You did not anoint My head with oil' (Luke 7:46). There had been the provision of a meal, but the accompaniment of gladness was missing. Our Host adds gladness to his provision.

The Super-abundance of the Provision

My cup runs over

'My cup runs over.' But the Hebrew is stronger than that: 'My cup is super-abundance', literally, saturation. We have the same thought in Psalm 36:8: 'They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house' (AV) - the same abundant supply, the fatness that is provided; and the same sense of super-abundance.

Even in times of trial and and affliction super-abundance is there. The writer of the 66th Psalm knew what it was to pass through times of testing: 'You brought us into the net; you laid affliction on our backs. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out to abundance' (vv. 11,12). It is with no niggard hand that the Host spreads the table for his guests.

IV. THE LORD'S BLESSINGS OF GOODNESS AND GRACE

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

A summary, and the source, and the setting of all that is promised in Psalm 23 are found in the concluding verse: 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.'

Summary: The LORD's Goodness

The word 'goodness' is a summary of all that God is and of all that he gives. The Shepherd is the Good Shepherd. What are the green pastures and the quiet waters but evidences of his goodness meeting the needs of his people? The good consequence is the restoration of the soul. The paths of righteousness are good paths. When life's path leads through a dark valley, the LORD's good hand is upon his people even there, close enough to guard and to guide. His provision for every need of every day is good and abundant, and his good feast is a feast of gladness.

An alternative translation of 'Surely' in this last verse is 'Only'[5] Both translations certainly apply to the LORD's goodness. To say 'The LORD is my Shepherd' implies assurance of his goodness. But is it possible to say with similar confidence, '*Only* goodness shall follow me'? Is that really borne out by experience? Perhaps I may be allowed to use a boyhood experience to answer such questions. Once on a very rainy day I met an old man and said to him, 'That's a bad day!' I have never forgotten his answer: 'God makes no bad days.' There may be unpleasant days, but there are no bad days from God's good hand. When Joseph was a prisoner in Egypt, he would have found it hard to say, 'Only.goodness shall follow me all the days of my life.' And yet years afterwards Joseph could say to his brothers whose hatred had sent him there, 'You planned evil against me; but God planned it for good...to save many people alive.' (Genesis 50:20). 'Only goodness...' is just as true of God's providence as 'Surely goodness....'

Source: The LORD's Grace

'Goodness and mercy shall follow me.' No one English translation is adequate for the Hebrew word translated 'mercy'. It has been variously translated 'mercy', 'lovingkindness' 'love', 'steadfast love', 'covenant love', 'leal-love' (by a Scotsman, George Adam Smith; and you perhaps need to be Scottish to know that 'leal' means 'loyal', and to recognise how good a rendering it is). Perhaps the most comprehensive, including some of the rest, is 'grace', found in the Scottish Metrical Version of Psalm 36:7: 'How precious is Thy grace.'

Better than any attempt to find an English equivalent is to see this characteristic in action, as in the Book of Hosea. The word occurs again and again in that book, and is seen in action in Hosea's going after his unfaithful wife, buying her back and bringing her home. That, Hosea realised, was what God was prepared to do for erring Israel, and so from the depths of his own experience

he brings God's message to his people: 'I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness' (Hosea 2:19). That is God's unquenchable love, God's infinite grace. In the light of that picture of steadfast love, 'grace' seems to come nearest to what this wonderful word means. There is love there, there is loyalty, there is kindness, but, most of all, there is God's unflinching love for the undeserving, God's constant giving of himself. That is what is promised and given for 'all the days of my life.'

'Goodness and grace shall follow me.' The word translated 'follow' is a stronger word than 'follow'. It means 'pursue'. Luther said of God's Word that it had feet to run after a man and hands to lay hold on him. That is equally true of God's goodness and God's grace; they run after us. And they are there for 'all the days of my life', not only for my life as a whole, but for each separate day as it comes and for each separate situation as it arises.

Setting: The LORD's House

I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever

The setting of the promises made in the twenty-third Psalm is the LORD's house. They are made real for those who are dwelling there.

An alternative translation is, 'My dwelling-place shall be in the house of the LORD for ever,' literally, 'to length of days.'[6] That would enable us to use another Psalm to define what is meant by a dwelling-place in the house of the LORD. In Psalm 27:4 virtually the same phrase is found: 'my dwelling-place in the house of the LORD' and also the same phrase as in the first part of Psalm 23:6: 'all the days of my life.' Psalm 27:4 can be literally translated: 'One thing I have asked of the LORD, it I will seek, my dwelling-place in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to see the beauty of the LORD, and to gaze with delight on his temple.' My dwelling-place is defined as seeing the beauty of the LORD, and gazing with delight on his temple. Dwelling in the LORD's house means a constant attitude of worship. It was said of Thomas Chalmers, a leader of the Free Church of Scotland in the nineteenth century, 'Here was a man busied with so many things, and yet carrying his shrine with him everywhere.' That is possible, no matter where we are, no matter what we are doing, culminating one day in the unbroken worship of heaven, 'to length of days, for ever.'

Parallelism in Psalm 23:6 itself gives its own answer to what is meant by dwelling in the house of the LORD. We can use the first half of the verse to explain the second:

> Surely goodness and grace shall follow me all the days of my life;
> And my dwelling-place shall be in the house of the LORD for ever.

Dwelling in the house of the LORD is to experience the goodness and the grace of the Lord.

Significantly, the same kind of parallelism is found in the three sections of the Psalm: 'The LORD is my Shepherd': then, 'I shall not lack anything.' 'You are with me': then, 'I will fear no evil.' 'Goodness and grace will follow me all the days of my life': then, 'My dwelling-place shall be in the house of the LORD for ever.'

Dwelling in the house of the LORD means day by day receiving his provision; it means day by day realising his presence; it means day by day resting in his goodness and his grace; it means one day knowing the perfection of it all in heaven, when 'the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of water' (Revelation 7:17). Till then, 'May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.' (Hebrews 13:20,21).

References

Quotations from the Bible are mostly from the New King James Version, sometimes from the New International Version, and occasionally the writer has ventured to give his own translation.

1. A. Motyer, Psalms, in *New Bible Commentary*, 21st Century Edition. IVP. 1994, p.500.
2 The Hebrew construction is the participle with the first person singular suffix, and normally it means, 'The One shepherding me.' But sometimes it can refer to one who has been designated or acknowledged as shepherd. E.g., in Isaiah 44:28, God says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd,' the shepherd designated by me and acknowledged by me. It seems possible, therefore, to take both senses in Psalm 23:1.

3. The word studies on which the subsequent exposition is based have appeared in an earlier article by the present writer in the Reformed Theological Journal on 'Preaching from the Hebrew Bible' - Reformed Theological Journal, vol 5, November, 1989. The present article gives an opportunity of dealing with them in greater detail and building exposition on them.
4. Derek Kidner, *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries,* IVP, 1973, p.110.
5. Brown, Driver and Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon of the Old Testament,* Oxford University Press, 1907, at the end of the entry on the word, which can be translated 'surely' or 'only', have an interesting footnote, showing the differences between scholars in the translation of the word. Perhaps that justifies taking both senses in Psalm 23:6.
6. A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms,* Cambridge University Press, 1921, p.127, justifies the minor adjustment in pointing to read 'my dwelling-place' rather than 'I will return' by the comparison with Psalm 27:4.

A FAMILY CORRESPONDENCE

Letters of John Duncan and his daughter, Maria Dorothea and her husband, Adolph Spaeth, with extracts from Maria's Diary.

Edited by John S. Ross

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Some years ago a book hunter browsing through the second-hand shelves of a bookshop in Lochcarron, on the west coasts of Scotland, unearthed a small volume bound in brown cloth, its front cover embossed in gold leaf with the two words IN MEMORIAM. This little treasure of 277 pages, written in English and German, consisted of letters and extracts from a personal diary, to which comments had been added by an anonymous pen. It was in memory of Maria Dorothea Duncan Spaeth, daughter of 'Rabbi' John Duncan the pioneer missionary to the Jews, Semitic scholar and theologian.[1]

The letters and diary extracts reproduced here are important because of the scarcity of any material from Duncan's own pen; his minister Alexander Moody Stuart considered his letters to be 'a wonderful transcript of himself, full of the deepest religious thought and experience, and the warmest of affection, mingled with theology and languages'.[2] Moody Stuart had access to around twenty letters when compiling his biography of Duncan, but apart from some extracts he reproduced only three. We are able to provide here eighteen, making this probably the largest collection of Duncan's letters extant.

Duncan married twice. In 1831 he married Janet Tower of Aberdeen, who died in 1839. In 1841 Duncan re-married. His second wife, a widow, was Janet Douglas-Torrance.[3] Serving with the Church of Scotland Jewish mission in Pesth, Hungary, Duncan, along with all the other Jewish missionaries, joined the Free Church of Scotland at the Disruption in 1843. Shortly after the church called him to the chair of Oriental languages in the New College, on the Mound, Edinburgh. The Duncans returned to Edinburgh in 1843 and in February the

following year Maria Dorothea was born. Maria's dairy entry for February 12th 1860, her sixteenth birthday comments on her birth and early life.

> This day sixteen years ago I was brought into this sinful world. I had a narrow escape when quite an infant. Mamma and Papa were coming home from abroad with me and there was a great storm. We were nearly shipwrecked. Poor Mamma then got the beginning of a cold which ended in her death. ...when I was eight [1851], it pleased the Lord to leave me motherless.[4]

Her name, Maria Dorothea, was chosen to commemorate the Austro-Hungarian Archduchess without whose friendship and godly support the mission to the Jews of Hungary could not have been undertaken. Despite being married to a Roman Catholic Hapsburg Archduke, the Archduchess was herself a German Protestant, a Swabian and a Wurtemburg Lutheran pietist.

In May 1865 Maria entered, by marriage, into that same tradition, thus undergoing a significant change in her ecclesiastical allegiance. Though, in general, she always retained a strong emotional attachment to the doctrine and practice of the Free Church of Scotland, she carefully reconsidered such issues as the Presbyterian understanding of the doctrine of the regulative principle. She was not at all dissuaded by her father who, we ought not forget, was famous for his catholic[6] sympathies. He, as this correspondence reveals, encouraged her to think through her position with care.

The value of these letters and notes is that they give us some additional direct insight both into Duncan himself and also a hitherto almost impenetrable but most important area of his life, the world of his family relations. These relationships were virtually ignored in Knight's sketch in *Colloquia Peripatetica* and only partially recorded in the biographies of Brown and Moody Stuart. These letters reveal Maria's father as the man of great erudition we know him to be one whose knowledge is so casually exposed by his turn of phrase, scholarly allusion and use of languages. But besides, this other more interesting personal and spiritual qualities are revealed, his humour; often shines through, we see his great personal warmth, and his deep and tender care for the spiritual and temporal welfare of friends and family. It is only here, for example, that we have a portrait of the elderly Duncan indulging his little grandson in playing games with him, teaching him to walk and attempting to feed him marmalade. Duncan's influence over his daughter's mind and heart is also obvious; she shares his same religious outlook, not so much in externals of church order and theology but supremely in their devotion to Christ, his people and his cause. Duncan's great intellectual ability is exceeded by his capacity for feeling and

deep sentiment, and this is fully shared by Maria. To be sure, it had its dark side, for both could descend into moods of spiritual gloom, yet in their correspondence at any rate, much brightness radiated through the dark clouds. Their mutual values were also reflected in Maria's attractively expressed old fashioned and romantic love of Scotland, its church and people, their 'ain folk and countrie'.

More disturbingly, we discover here how Duncan's spiritual mood-swings, doubts and perplexities cast their dark shadow over his loved ones. Maria's short letter to Maggie Sandeman (October 26th, 1863) reveals a fine understanding of what lies at the very heart of caring for one who is liable to such spiritual dejection. Yet all is far from dark, for when he was able to get his eyes off himself, his sin and shortcomings, his simple love for Christ soars heavenward and gives eloquent expression to his profound gratitude for the hope of eternal salvation, a salvation in which he longed for all his family to share and in which he longs for them to grow. Rejoicing when Maria felt able to go forward to the Lord's Table, he wrote, 'I desire not only that you should be a *real* Christian, but also a *healthy* and *beautiful* one.'

Duncan died on 26th February 1870 in his 74th year. After suffering repeated and sustained attacks of illness, the symptoms of which included coughing and breathlessness, accompanied by high fevers, Maria Dorothea died on December 21st 1878, aged 30. She was buried on 23rd December, the morning text of that day most appropriately being Revelation 19.8, 'And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.'

We need Christ

DUNCAN TO MARIA (aged 13), 1857

If sinners at all we need Christ. An Israelite would not have acted wisely to say: 'When I am more severely bitten, when the poison has more deeply wrought and I feel the agony more intensely, when I am as nearly dead, as such a one, who would not look till the moment he was about to expire, - so when it comes to that I will look and not before.' Convictions are not needed to make us welcome to Christ, but to make Him welcome to us.

Conviction of sin

DUNCAN TO MARIA. (1857)

The agony of conviction in many cases and their protraction comes not simply from the depth of conviction, but from unbelief of the gospel and a proud unwillingness to be saved by grace freely, yet in this costly way of redemption by the blood of the Lamb. Convictions are not lost by our coming to Christ. The deepest convictions (I do not say terrors of wrath, oh no! but convictions) of sin and sinfulness are obtained after coming. The more progress in the divine life, the deeper conviction of abounding sin, as well as the sweeter experience of the grace which much more abounds.

Come as you are, dear child, but suspect that comfort which does not maintain and tend at least to deepen convictions. Where the Holy Spirit sows convictions, Satan seeks (and too often successfully) to mingle unbelief, doubts and discouragements. When the Spirit says: you are a sinner, the chief of sinners, you need Christ, come to Him, Satan says: you are *not* such a sinner and need not come. If that be rejected, he says: well, true enough, you are a sinner, a great sinner, the chief of sinners *and worse than that* and so you need not come, you can never find reception. If baffled there, he says: Yes convinced sinners will be welcomed, but *you* are *not convinced* or you are not sufficiently convinced, or you are not spiritually convinced. If you have conviction enough to bring you to Christ, however little it may be, it is quite enough. Though your whole soul were racked and tortured for twenty years — and you will not come to Christ, you have not sufficient conviction.

A father's joy

DUNCAN TO MARIA ON HER 14th BIRTHDAY.

February 12, 1858

MY DEAR DEAR LASSIE! — May the Lord, who has kindly spared you to see the return of your birthday, bless you and make you a blessing. I need not say what joy it is to a father's heart to see his children walking in the truth. Thanks for ever to Him, who I trust, has shown you somewhat of the plague of your own heart and of the suitableness of glorious Christ as a Saviour to save a sinner, and who has given you, I trust, not only to feel attracted and encouraged by His excellencies and invitations, but has also (I humbly think) given you some sweet tokens of that reception which He always gives to those who do come to Him. Oh be thankful, humble, watchful! Pray for grace to make and

keep you so. Cherish *trust* in the Lord, and diffidence in yourself. Even if really converted, much will depend on the thorough formation of your Christian character in the earliest stage. When grace imparted symmetrically pervades the whole character, there is not only life but beauty. Canaanites spared by Israel are also spared of God to be thorns in Israel's sides. Habitual exercise of grace strengthens the principle, and greatly contributes to make the believer's walk with God pleasant and profitable. It is an unspeakable blessing to be converted in early life, when the habits are less formed, the character more plastic, the affections more lively, and so much if God shall spare (which though uncertain is probable) lies before, on which depends whether you shall '*scarcely* be saved,' or 'an *abundant* entrance be administered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Papa is so absorbed in other pursuits at present that he is quite unfit to write verse — to poetry he cannot aspire. Take II. Peter 1:1-15 as the substitute. May our Heavenly Father grant you abundantly all the blessings enumerated in the first four verses, and incline and enable you to study and practice all the excellent practical lessons v.5-10 (incl.) so that at last you may obtain the promise of v.11.

As white as snow

MARIA TO DUNCAN[7]

Kilmory, Arran, March 12th 1858

There has been a good deal of snow this week. The Ayr coast and Ailsa Craig look beautiful with their white robes. Whenever I see snow, especially here in the country where it is undisturbed and consequently beautifully white, I think of that gracious promise that though our sins be scarlet, they shall be white as snow, and of David's assurance, that if the Lord would wash him, he would be whiter than snow. Oh, how I wish I could see in myself that growth in holiness, that shining more and more into the perfect day, which the path of the just is said to be! It is a solemn thought to think that there can be no standing still, that we must be either going forward or back. It is a disobedient, proud, rebellious spirit, I find my greatest enemy. 'When I would do good, the evil is present with me.' Do you think, dearest Papa, one who has so much sin in her yet, can indeed be chosen of Christ? But then it is a sin to think, that because of my great sin I cannot be forgiven, for that is doubting God's power to save.

The regulative principle

DUNCAN TO MARIA, 1861[8]

You ask why we do not keep Christmas. We in Scotland are the only people who do not keep it and the other three great festivals. To explain this, I must begin with the great principle which distinguishes the reformation of Calvin from that of Luther. The latter adopted the state of the Church as it was then: only subject to the correction of Scripture. The question then came to be: Where does Scripture deny such and such a doctrine or forbid such and such a practice? If not, let it remain. The principle of the Calvinian Reformation is the *allsufficiency* of Scripture as a rule of faith and practice, to the teaching of which it is as unlawful to add as to detract. Additions to worship it holds to be will-worship, God alone having authority to dictate all that concerns His service. So the question comes to be: Where in Scripture is it enjoined? This principle however was carried out into fuller consistency by Knox in Scotland, than by Calvin in Geneva. The Sabbath we hold to be the only *stated* time appointed by God in the New Testament. Mark *stated* time, fixed by periodical return and so a statutory ordinance. For we hold, that times for public worship in circumstances where God by His providence is calling for them (such as fast and thanksgiving days) or as affording opportunities for the better discharge of what Scripture enjoins as a duty (as sacramental fast days, not the fast day, but repentance being of God required to right participation) may be recommended and enjoined by the Church.

'The four great holidays'

DUNCAN TO MARIA

March 16th, 1861

MA CHERE MARIE! — Your plan for Germany meets with my entire approbation. The kingdom of Wuerttemberg is distinguished for the number of pious people that live in it. I am glad that you have found such a friend, and think that living in a private religious family is much preferable to a *pension*.

I have already told you of Christmas and the three other festivals. We Scotch, when we have got a principle, are accustomed to follow it out all lengths. God alone can sanctify place and time. Under the N.T. dispensation no place is more sacred than another. The Sabbath, which was sanctified from the beginning when God rested from all His work of creation, remains sacred, after the Mosaic dispensation of Law is done away in Christ. No other time is sacred.

When I was in Hungary I always availed myself of the four great holidays to have divine service in our little chapel and preached too on the subject of these days, always however guarding myself from being misunderstood, and my hearers from being deceived, by distinctly stating that the glorious doctrine of the atonement should be kept in grateful remembrance equally on that day as on all the other 364.

What I insist on, is that man cannot sanctify i.e. give *peculiar* sanctity to any portion of time and that God has now done so to the Sabbath alone. This granted, I have no objection to Christians agreeing to set apart any portion of time for uniting together in the service of God. If God had sanctified those days, the non-observance of them would be sin. As God has not sanctified them, the binding of them in any way on conscience, is towards God *will*-worship, towards man tyrannical imposition. When no such claim is urged, then 'He who keeps them to the Lord he keeps them, and He who keeps them not, to the Lord he keeps them not' neither judging nor despising.

Growing in grace

DUNCAN TO MARIA.

May 28th, 1861

MY DEAREST MARIA! — I suppose you will have very warm weather now in Switzerland, though not quite so hot as here . Yet it is not more severely hot than I feared it would be, nor, I think, quite so much.

I hope you, dear Maria, are seeking to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are conducting yourself in dutiful obedience to Monsieur and Madame, with kindness to your companions and diligence in the prosecution of your studies. As you now must be well grounded in your French Grammar, and have a pretty ample stock of words for almost all subjects, let me remind you to pay much attention to idiom, for your letters read often like translations from English. Idiom is what is most difficult to acquire, and is that which is most easily acquired in daily intercourse with those to whom the language is vernacular.

Adieu for present,

Yours, etc.

Coming to the Lord's Table

DR. DUNCAN TO MARIA.

Edinburgh, September 28th, 1861

I am delighted to learn by Mons. Troyon's letter that you have found your way sufficiently clear to encourage you to go forward to the table of the Lord. The most solemn moment in a man's life is that in which he as ready to perish closes with the freely offered Saviour of sinners. Next in solemnity is that in which he fully joins himself to Christ's visible church, when 'believing with the heart unto righteousness, he with the mouth makes confession unto salvation.' All experience goes to show, that even if conversion be real, — the heart sincere, much of the beauty, strength, loveliness and utility of the afterlife depends on the earliest cast which 'the new born babe' receives. I desire not only that you should be a *real* Christian, but also a *healthy* and *beautiful* one.

Dady Duncan

Learning a language

DUNCAN TO MARIA.

December 16th, 1861[10]

I see you are looking anxiously to the time of your return home. I am sure that you will not impute what I am going to say, to any less desire on my part to have you with me. I know, however, that, though an elementary knowledge of German is of very easy acquisition, a thorough acquaintance with the language is a matter of considerable difficulty and requires time and practice. I think, therefore, that it would be a pity that you, being in the country, should lose an opportunity such as you may likely never have again, of becoming *tout au fait* mistress of it.[11]

Climbing the Pabstein

MARIA'S DIARY.

Teplitz[12] July 2nd 1863[13]

Had breakfast a little early and taking a boat crossed to the other side of the water, then up the hill on our way to the Pabstein. What this Pabstein was, however, we scarcely knew. Our landlord told us many travellers went there on account of the fine view. The hill was pretty steep, but Papa proved himself a

good climber and walker. We passed through a mountain village, then through a wood, where we had a good feast of blueberries and then — lost our way. Got up on a hill, speculated if it were the Pabstein or not. Papa seemed inclined to think it was. Certainly I was disappointed, — was this all after our long walk and climb? What were we to do? Seeing an eminence before us, I was determined to gain it and leaving Papa sitting among the heather, I clambered up, lost sight of Papa and of every foot-path and knew not which way to turn. Happily from a height I got a glimpse of Papa and found my way back again, having gained very little except extra fatigue for my trouble. We went on a little way to see. Came upon a party of gypsies, who told us we were going in the wrong direction, pointed to a high precipitous hill before us and told us we must go back, that was the Pabstein, but the road was on the other side. It looked hopeless; we poor, weary, worn-out, heated travellers, how were we ever to gain that height? We had no time to lose in consideration, as we had to be in an hour or two at the station in Kreppin. Arrived at the road which led up, it looked so steep and long; we despaired of being able to accomplish it; we had already walked three or four miles up hill. A woman passing said a quarter of an hour would take us up. 'Courage then, Papa,' I said, 'I will go, if you are too tired, stay for me here.' 'No, I will go a bit with you.' Half way he did manage, but coming to a flight of steps, he could attempt no more and sat down on a bank, while I ran on, saying 'Excelsior,' and determined to gain the very top. And I was rewarded for my trouble. I found myself on an enclosed pinnacle, high above the neighbouring hills, with a most glorious view on every side over a great portion of Saxon-Switzerland. Hills and valleys, plains and woods, curious shaped rocks, villages and cornfields all lay stretched out for many miles on every side. After taking a moments breath and a glance round on every side, I saw there was here what a German must have everywhere, a refreshment house and garden. I felt thankful to the Germans for it then and quickly ordering a glass of beer to be sent down to my poor, weary, thirsty Papa, I eagerly seized a glass of lemonade myself. Then round and round into every nook and pinnacle I ran, till the boy returned from Papa with the message I was to go down immediately. Glancing once more on every side, I obeyed the summons, but ere I had gone very far I met Papa trudging up, his beer had refreshed him and a woman had encouraged him to come on. I turned back with him and after enjoying the fine view and air together for some time, we returned to Kreppin, where we had to wait about an hour till our train came. We arrived in Teplitz about 5 p.m., after having had a hard day's work and were very glad to get soon to bed.

Loneliness

DUNCAN TO MARIA.

(Summer 1864 but undated)

I can well sympathise with you in your solitude, which is all the greater and more *ennuyant,*[14] that it is in the midst of plenty of unknown people. But surely it cannot be long before you form some acquaintances.

Meanwhile seek to be enabled to realise these blessed words: 'Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.'

Your loving father,

John Duncan

Doubts: Like father like daughter.

MARIA TO MISS M. D. SANDEMAN

3 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, October 26th 1863

Papa, I am sorry to say, is far from being well. I cannot tell you, dear Maggie, how very trying it is for me to be with him alone when he is in this depressed state. It is indeed difficult to comfort the wounded spirit and to hear all the doubts and perplexities of another when you are yourself but too prone to fall into them. There is, no doubt, on the one hand a great danger of supposing that doubts and fears are essential parts of religion as the woman did, who on being questioned by the minister as to her evidences of being in a gracious state after mentioning several things which she thought were evidences, concluded with, 'and then sir come the doots' — and these as part of her evidences. But then there is a sort of doctrine abroad of an easy sort of faith, to be got in a sort of listless fashion, a forgetting that faith is a living active principle and that Christ has said: 'Strive or agonise to enter in.' There seems to me also a forgetting from whence doubts arise. It is not a doubting of Christ's willingness and power to save us if we come, but when we see much sin in us and comparatively few of the fruits of the Spirit, then comes the fear that we are not yet born again and have not truly come to Christ.

It casts quite a gloom over the house and over everything when Papa is this way, and I can assure you I have often a hard, hard struggle to keep down my nervousness. I am glad that, my health being much better, I am able not to succumb under it as I did before.

The two covenants

DUNCAN TO ADOLPH SPAETH[15]

3 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, Dec. 5th, 1863[16]

Maria tells me that she has referred the presentation of a theological question to me.

Certainly there are only two covenants, viz: The covenant of works and the covenant of grace, and no one can be under both at the same time. The quickening of the dead in trespasses and sins is the bringing from a state of spiritual death to a state of spiritual life, but between life and death there is no intermediate (though life be capable of various degrees of strength.) 'He that hath the Son of God hath life, he that hath not the Son shall not see life,' etc. He that *had* not, receives and *hath*; here no intermediate, either having or non-having, receiving or continuing not to have. Justification is an *act* i.e. a judicial act, otherwise the whole Protestant (Lutheran) and Pauline doctrine falls to the ground and must be surrendered to the Romanists. But between justification (the state of *jus* into which we come by the *act*) and condemnation (the previous state of all) there is no state intermediate. 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.' There is not a third or intermediate kingdom lying between that of the God of this world and that of the living and true God.

It is true that in the experienced phenomena of spiritual life, one who 'has passed from death unto life' may not be able to state the precise time of the transition, nay may at times be in doubt if it has really taken place. For we are to judge *a posteriori,* by the fruits of the Spirit. Yet this does not hinder that there was a time when the transition did take place and that this is known to Him 'of whom we are in Christ Jesus.'

Creeds.

Diary: August 8th, 1864

A Church Creed is a powerful thing. It stamps a man's mind, his thoughts and feelings are all tinged by it. A mighty deep work in the heart, wrought by the Holy Ghost might indeed deliver a man from this thraldom, and yet we see men of whom we can have no doubt that God is their teacher, who, from this stamp of their creed have spoken and written in an unprecise and often contradictory way about divine things. God keeps His own children from going very

far wrong. He leads them to His truth in spite of an unorthodox creed — 'if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.' — And yet we should have a fear of the poison. If we drink it willingly, knowing it to be poison, God may bring us into great depths and darkness! — My mind is full of many great and perplexing things. Oh that the Lord would teach me and guide me! —

'A pretty sea girt town': Portrush

Diary. August 19th, 1864

We (Papa, Miss S., Maggie and Miss A. S. from Tulloch) left for Ireland on Monday. We went first to Glasgow where we met Mr. and Mrs. S., who kindly saw us on board. We had a delightful calm passage over to Belfast, where we arrived early on Tuesday morning. Though riots were going on there, the streets through which we drove looked uncommonly quiet and deserted. We took the train to Port Rush, where we have succeeded in getting very nice lodgings. We bathe in the mornings, take walks before dinner and read, sleep or go out in the afternoon and evening. This is a very pretty sea girt town, built on a peninsula and a delightful sea-bathing place. The air is so delightfully fresh and pure and also so exhilarating that we declare it goes to our heads. We are certainly very merry.

To his prospective son-in-law

DUNCAN TO ADOLPH.

Edinburgh April 20th 1865

My very dear Adolph! The most precious jewel which I now possess on earth, I now send, committing her to your tender care, and to the tender mercies of Him, to whom she belongs more than to either of us.

I feel this to be one of those occasions, in which, when there is mutual understanding and sympathy, it is better to leave the friend's heart to divine what one would fain wish to say, than to attempt to give it what is sure to be most inadequate expression. Maria will speak for me.

And now (supposing this bit to be read with your hands joined together) may the God of all grace bless you both individually and conjoinedly and make you a blessing to one another and to the Church of God; may he 'cause all grace to abound towards you so that having all sufficiency in all things, you may abound in every good work;' may it please Him to spare you long together and

may we in His good time be gathered together into His eternal kingdom and glory.

Yours with warmest paternal affection,

J.D.

Maria to Miss Mary Sandeman

May 6th 1865

Well, in two days now,[17] if it is the Lord's will, I will be a wife. Oh it does seem so strange, I cannot realise it. I feel and see that mine will be in many respects a difficult and responsible position, and yet, I think, with God's blessing, a happy one. I feel wonderfully calm and composed and far happier than I expected to be. I will have a wide field for usefulness if I get grace to improve it. I do feel sometimes frightened and wonder how I am to fill that place, but if the Lord has called me to it, surely He will give me the necessary grace. You must pray for me, for us very, very much. I am happy but feel solemnised. Who am I Lord, that Thou shouldst send me?

Kirchliche Feste (Church Festivals)

DIARY.

June 4th, 1865 (Pfingstsonntag)[18]

My mind was naturally called to the subject of the Holy Spirit and His work in the soul and I felt it good that a particular subject be brought before the mind on a particular Sunday (this being Pfingstsonntag) as it helps considerably to concentration of thought and gives a special request to a throne of grace.

I felt influenced in favour of Church Festivals. May I not be so prejudiced as to shut my eyes to what may be good and right in other Churches beside my own. Still there is a use and purpose in one Church at least disregarding those days and keeping strictly to God's command alone: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Home Sickness

MARIA TO MISS SANDEMAN

June 2nd, 1865

My heart was cheered this morning (if it needs cheering) by the arrival of three Daily Reviews containing accounts of the Assembly-meetings. I have not yet had time to read them, but it was with a peculiar sense of pleasure, almost enthusiasm, that I glanced at the well-known names and could not help exclaiming, rather, I expect, to A's amusement: 'Well, after all, what country is at all equal to my own dear fatherland, what Church like the noble Free Kirk of Scotland?'

Home-sick for Scotland

MARIA TO ADOLPH.

(During his first absence at the meeting of Synod at Easton) June 1865

I made myself quite home-sick this afternoon lying in the study devouring my Daily Reviews (containing the account of the General Assembly's proceedings.) One speech by Dr. Cairns from Australia quite over came me. 'After twelve years' absence,' he says, 'Scotland is dearer to me than ever. I love her better, I love her in every feature and in every aspect, I love her beautiful scenery, her mountains and streams, her mists and her winter torrents, her wimpling burnies and her bonnie Highland lochs. Dear to me are her quiet glens and her heathery braes. Dear to me her strange eventful romantic stories. But dear to me as these all are, beyond expression dear also is the memory of all her noble army of martyrs and confessors from Hamilton, from him of the lion heart and the eagle eye, down through the noble and illustrious succession of sons of God, of whom this world was not worthy, to him of many sons, the brightest and fairest of them all, the great champion of righteousness, goodness and truth, that tongue of fire, the old man eloquent, the benignant, gracious, kindly, incomparable Chalmers.

Oh why left I my home?
Why did I cross the deep?
Oh why left I the land,
where my forefathers sleep?

I sigh for Scotia's shore
and I gaze across the sea,
but I canna get a glimpse
of my ain countrie.

But here I quite broke down and had to shut my paper and you will not thank me for filling my letter with such a home-sick extract. And yet I would not wish, I could not be there now without you. Strong as is my love to my 'ain dear countrie' and to the 'auld folks at home,' there burns a still stronger love now in my heart, which enables me to say 'whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge, thy people shall be my people, thy God my God, where thou diest, will I die and there will I be buried, the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.'

Your constitutional fault

DUNCAN TO MARIA.

July 6th, 1865

My dear Marie! I was much interested in various ways by your last letter. Your account of the state of German society in Philadelphia is precisely such as I anticipated. But in your intercourse with it, you must seek rather to give than to get. Now, on the whole, I think on this point, your judgement and wish will accord with mine. But remember, dear, the constitutional fault of your character. You do wish, I am sure, to do to others all the good you can, but then you wish to force it upon them in your own way and this is taken as pride of superiority and there is too much of this maybe *very latently* at the bottom. Love, gentleness, condescension, (so real as to act without showing itself as such) patience, these things seek as *graces,* and aim to practice as *duties,* ultimately they will become *pleasures.*

About home-sickness — there are elements in it which I would fain see preserved, but also others, which I would wish removed. But into this analysis I cannot enter now. Only remember ever (I know you will) auld Scotia and her Kirk and study not only contentment with your lot, but gratitude for your many great mercies. Amongst these the increase of mutual conjugal affection has no mean place.

I would have wished to send you some verses on your marriage, but all I can make out for an epithalamium is one poor verse:

By a sweet tie together bound
which nought save death can sever;
to Christ - in Him together - joined,
that bond endures for ever.[9]

A picture of home

DUNCAN TO MARIA (age 21)

Summer, 1865

You often think of Devana Cottage, but I cannot fancy to myself your dwelling. I can think of the 'Esquimaux'[20] and I some times do and smile. Could you not favour me with a sketch, however rude, of the room in which you sit by yourself and of that where you are with A.? Also you might send us some views of Philadelphia, for I am sure that go-a-head Jonathan cannot be behind us in that respect. I would like Philadelphia to be to me something more than a name or an abstract idea, a place that I could, in imagination at least, walk about and when tired, step in and enjoy a rest and a crack[21] in.

Election and Gospel offer

DUNCAN TO ADOLPH.

December 27th, 1865

I have no need to say how glad I am that you are all so well, and so engaged in evangelism and other congruous subsidiary work in the congregation. May an abundant blessing be vouchsafed upon your labours in the conversion of sinners, and the building up of believers in the faith, holiness and comfort unto eternal life.

In one of her letters Maria told me that upon the ground of election and particular redemption you would feel yourself precluded from *freely* preaching the gospel. I think this difficulty arises from confounding genuine Calvinism with that which we oppose as Hypercalvinism and to which is some times given the harsher name of Antinomianism. Now most undoubtedly the gospel is the command of the eternal God to be preached to every creature under heaven. This gospel is proclaimed by the Apostle Paul: 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' By the angel: 'I bring you glad tidings of great joy, *which shall be to all people, to you* is born a Saviour' By the Heavenly Father: 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.' By the Saviour Himself: 'God so loved the world' etc. Indeed if the gospel inclusive of the offer or gift of the Son of God to be received by faith be not to be made to sinners or mankind indiscriminately, what gospel (glad tidings of great joy) is there at all? None. A certain universality there must therefore be and this universal aspect must be the war-

rant of appropriating (i.e. receptive) faith. This is the doctrine of our church (as well as yours.)

The question then is not who may (I don't say can i.e. are able, but *may* i.e. are warranted and ought,) but who *can*, will and do so receive Christ Jesus the Lord. You must not therefore confound us with the Hypercalvinists, who object to gospel offers and invitations. We do preach the gospel most freely. Do we so consistently, in connection with absolute election, particular redemption and grace effectual simply by its own divine and so omnipotent efficacy? This is another question and must be reserved for another time.

Longing for Scotland

MARIA to MISS SANDEMAN

April 21st 1866

This evening it is a year since I left you all at Devana Cottage and set off for the Far West. It seems a short year to me and has been a happy one and yet on looking back how far, far short I have come of the many resolutions and intentions with which I entered into the married life. I have indeed much to be thankful for, but also much, much to repent of. Oh how I would like to set sail and in a fortnight be in my own dear home again and to spend a week or two with those so very dear to me there. If I were only rich enough I think I would do it, the voyage I would take very easily and I would be back here again in a few weeks. But these are vain wishes and I must not indulge in them or else I may get very homesick, for those days, those opening days of spring bring you and Pappie so vividly before me and also my dear Maggie with whom I often long to have a talk. What a pity there must be so much separation here! I sometimes indulge in the thought how delightful it would be to gather all those we love and respect around us and to have intercourse, exchange of thoughts and feelings with them whenever we like, but this would not be good, we must continually be reminded that this is not our home, that we are strangers and pilgrims here below and then it is good to learn and mix with those, who are not so congenial to us, that we may learn that great lesson of true Christian love and charity, which is often - at least to me - a hard task.

Desiring a visit from her father.

MARIA TO MISS SANDEMAN.

January 22nd, 1867.

- Do you think Papa would not be able for a trip across here this coming spring? It is such an easy journey and the sea journey might be as it has often been - beneficial to him. I scarcely like to cherish the idea. I am afraid it would make me *too* happy, but I could not help thinking about it lately a good deal. If he is ever to come it would seem, humanly speaking, necessary that he should come ere he becomes still more feeble and infirm and as it seems likely that our sphere of labour is to be here in America (for I do not think A. would suit Germany now at all) and as there is no prospect of our coming home even for a visit in the meantime, I think it would be of value to dear Papa to see and know where and under what circumstances his *only* lassie now is in God's providence placed. I feel so often I would like him so much to see things as they are here and to have his opinion and hear his advice about so many things about which it is impossible to write and I do believe if he should see his way clear to come, God might make his being with us for a short time a great blessing to us all in many ways. I rely somewhat on his intense love of roving which even now in his old age comes so strong over him and I am sure he would find here much that would deeply interest him and after leaving us he would be so much more able to think of us, to give us advice and to remember us in our special needs and circumstances at a throne of grace. I can truly say it is the most ardent earthly wish, which I at present have to see my own dear Pappie *here.*

'Glorious Republicanism'

MARIA TO E.B

— I have not at all become a convert to the system of 'glorious republicanism' here and think a well managed and limited monarchy a much more agreeable thing to live in, however grand and imposing the maxim of 'all men being born free and equal' may be and I do not deny is. America has done more than we expected it to do...

The'Union' Question.[22]

DR. DUNCAN (AGE 71) TO MARIA.

May 2nd, 1867

Although I write but seldom, I peruse your letters with increasing satisfaction. About the 'Union' paper I know not what to say. The articles are of very different quality. Some of them have an air of decided vulgarity. What the Union desired it is difficult to determine. It would seem not to involve ecclesiastical incorporation. That those who hold the truth in the love of it should unite as far as possible in efforts for the defence of the gospel and the conversion of sinners is most desirable, and differences between evangelicals should not be exaggerated nor estranged from one another.

But existing differences will not be so easily got rid of e.g. between paedobaptists and anti-paedobaptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, Lutherans and their abhorrence of the decretum absolutum, and Calvinists, who find it in scripture and hold it logically involved in the essential doctrine of salvation to be altogether of grace — of grace alone — not of grace and free-will (Arminian) or of grace and non-resistance (as Lutherans seem to me to think) - but of grace which prevents or overcomes resistance and renews the will. While theologians exist these points will be discussed and while symbolic books remain (which are needed to guard against error and vagueness, the parent of error) the churches formed upon them will retain their affection for these safe-guards.

Still brotherly love should remain and increase among those who hold to fundamental truth. As such I would enumerate the plenary inspiration of the Scripture, the Trinity in Unity, the Fall of Adam, Salvation altogether of grace, the person of Christ the God-Man, Redemption by His blood, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, Justification by faith alone *(sola sed non solitaria)* Sanctification by the Holy Spirit (by means of the word and ordinances), the obligation of the ordinances of Christ on believers. On these points I believe there is room for most friendly communion in various ways among all the friends of gospel truth.

With much love to A. and to E.

I remain your loving father,.

John Duncan

Balance

DUNCAN TO MARIA.

May 16th, 1867.

MY DEAR LASSIE! — On the whole I believe that A. has done the right thing in accepting the call to the new church.[23] There are times when all to whom the glorious gospel and gospel holiness (the doctrine which is according to godliness and the godliness which is according to the doctrine) are dear, have special need to stand fast and close together for the hope of the gospel.

To sail between latitudinarian indifference on the one hand and ignorant bigotry on the other, so as neither to be wrecked on Scylla or Charybdis is very difficult. Medio tutissimus ibis. But to find and keep this medium requires higher than human skill. May the Holy Ghost pilot His church in the track which He has marked out in His inspired Word.

Much love to A. And E.

Your, etc.

Liturigal forms

MARIA TO DR. DUNCAN.

November 1st 1867.

Surely it should not be so difficult to get something to say to your lassie so far away, who takes such a deep interest not only in every little detail of the home life of the little family at Devana Cottage, but also in all news relating to her much beloved Scotland and more especially in all church news. I should like to hear your opinion for example on the union question. Do you still decidedly think matters are in too immature state for decided action? I should also like to hear your opinion on the liturgical question. Not so much that side of it, which Dr. Candlish took up in his closing address, which had mostly reference to written forms of prayer used by the minister. The Lutheran Synod of Pennsylvania as well as those other Synods who sympathise and agree with her in doctrinal points — are decidedly liturgical, urging more especially the desirability of the congregation having an active part in the service of the temple. I myself have a strong prejudice against written prayers, yet I cannot but enjoy our short and appropriate liturgical service, much shorter and simpler than that used in the Episcopal Church; the responses are chanted by the congregation

with great warmth and heartiness and A. often says, he has often gone drooping and fainthearted to church and been wonderfully refreshed and stirred up by the prayers or responses of the congregation. The principle arguments of the supporters of the liturgical worship here among the Lutherans is that the people ought to have more opportunity of taking an active part in public worship and of course in order that this may be done becomingly and appropriately a certain form must be prepared.— I cannot remember to have seen and heard this side of the question criticised at home and should therefore be very glad to hear something about it from you. Here it certainly seems very plausible when no one can help lamenting— and no one I am sure would lament more than you, dear Papa — at the apathy of the majority of the congregations (Presbyterians not excepted) during public worship. The Lutherans deprecate this exceedingly and I am sure you would too and that you would much enjoy to hear our German congregation joining with soul and heart in the singing of a good, sound German Choral, which remind me much more of our psalms than those too often 'wishy-washy' hymns with newfangled tunes in such general use.

Speaking of the Union Question — there is to be a large meeting of New and Old school Presbyterians to consider the question of Union in Dr. Wylie's church next week. It is most likely, I think, that there will be a Union very soon. From what I hear, however, I do not think the differences are so slight as they are often represented to be. I sometimes fear that the love of Christian Union among the Americans and the desire for peace and harmony in order to be able to do more as they say for the cause of Christ make them rather careless and easy about confessions of faith and sound doctrine. I am afraid that much that goes under the name of Christian charity and love does damage to the love of the *truth* and paves the way to much looseness and disorder in the church. In this respect I cannot but agree with you in admiring and respecting that portion of the Lutheran Church here, which is determined to stand fast to the truth as she believes it, contained in her confession and I cannot but think her principle is right, though of course not being Lutheran, there are many points on which I differ. On the great and essential truths on the Reformation, man's depraved and guilty state by nature, the necessity of Regeneration as a work of the Holy Spirit and Justification by faith alone her ministers give out, I do think, no uncertain sound (the sacramental doctrine of course differs from ours) and though dear A. and I still feel very sorry that there are some points in which we cannot come to a full and satisfactory agreement, yet we can rejoice and feel truly grateful to God that on the great and essential points we are one, and then, though those other things do still sometimes cause us a little trouble and a warm discussion and leave me sometimes a *little* sad, then those minor points (though certainly important and essential) seem to dwindle away and almost vanish.

'My Dear Queen'

MARIA TO MISS SANDERSON AND DR. DUNCAN

January 14th, 1868

A is reading aloud to us just now in the evenings when he has time Queen Victoria's book on Prince Albert, and I like it very much. The mixture of English and German feeling suits us so well and I am quite in love with my dear Queen. I can however quite understand the dislike of many of the English people and their harsh criticisms, she is too 'gemuethlich'[24] for them, (beg pardon, dear Miss S., but it is really impossible to translate that word) and they are exceedingly jealous of a foreigner.

'Crack'[25]

DR DUNCAN TO MARIA

Well Mia Dearie! — I have again to say, as always, that I have nothing to say, tho' no doubt, if you were beside me, we could spin out a crack as long as the day and the *morn* and a great deal longer too, — If you would ask me questions, it would put me on my mettle to try and answer them. Between A. and yourself, I think you could manage it. Many thanks for your long letter and the German paper. I am glad to find dear A. so usefully employed. I sympathise with him in the pressure of his many avocations amid his infirmities. May the Lord bless his labour to his own good and that of many others.

I am glad that your Lutheran Church aims to show an example of simplicity amidst the gauds, which (proh pudor!) disgrace even Presbyterians.

Your affectionate father, JD

The birth of a Grandson

DUNCAN TO ADOLPH AND MARIA.

October 15, 1868

My Dear Bairns:—

After thanksgiving to the Giver of all good, for his kindness to mother and child, I congratulate you on your new appellations of pappy and mammy, though it will be some time before the darling wee-ane will be able

— 'in risu cognoscere matrem.'

The event is, however, to me a new 'memento mori,' added to the many warnings given by the removal of so many friends of my early days. But while 'one generation goeth, another generation cometh,' and now for the second time a grandfather, I hum the words of our Scotch poet (Allan Cunningham):

> Oh wha would rot awa, like a tree in the moold.
> An' nae leave a sprout for kind heaven to poo
> [Follows Psalm 127 in Hebrew.]

But this great blessing brings a great responsibility —on that, however, I need not enlarge, although it may be permitted to stir up pure minds by way of remembrance. I think I have heard that it is not usual for American ladies to act as nurses to their children. I am sure my Maria, if able, would on no account dispense with the performance of this endearing maternal office.

I will allow little J. D. E.[26] some time for the development of his features, before asking for his photograph.[27]

The enriching blessing of the Lord rest upon you all.

Grandpapa,

John Duncan.

In May 1869 Maria and eight month old Hans left home in Philadelphia to travel, via New York on the Anchor Line ship 'India', to Europe, which of course, also included time spent in Scotland. Maria records in her diary their arrival at Devana Cottage.

O, how quiet and lovely everything looked, no words to express the feeling of perfect rest and repose after so much mental and bodily excitement. Grandpapa was at a meeting, and baby was thoroughly tired out and went to sleep immediately. Soon the well-known form was seen at the gate, and mama rushed out to throw her arms around the much-loved one. He kissed her, but seemed only half satisfied: 'Where's the laddie?' With difficulty he could be got to wait till the little fellow awoke, and then his delight was great: O, man ye're a strong little fellow, come to grandpa.' Master H. was not however, so sure about the long, grey beard,[28] which he eyed wistfully, and it was some time before he got accustomed to it. He then used to delight in pulling it, and make

grandpa make funny faces, and say 'tut, man.' It is almost impossible to describe the enjoyment of these days; now, they have become doubly dear and sacred. Baby spent most of the day in the garden with his nurse, crawling about and enjoying himself amazingly. Grandpapa often asked: 'Where's the laddie? Bring him here!' and took great pains to teach him to make his first steps. If grandpapa gave him a stick and held it, he would raise himself and try a step or two. Many an hour did the two thus spend together, mamma sitting by smiling, with often a tear in her eye, and yet hoping that grandpapa might be spared to see him grow up to be a blessing.

After a visit to Esslingen, Maria and Hans returned to Edinburgh and Devana cottage, where...

> ...Grandpapa had the satisfaction to see his labours crowned with success, and his little grandson taking his first steps alone.

In correspondence with Adolph, Maria comments on a conversation between her and her father which casts further light on Duncan's delight in his grandson,

'I am glad he's a laddie..'

'Now, papa, don't you like your lassies?'

'Oh, aye, but I've had enough of lassies, I want laddies now. Give me a lump of sugar, may be he'll come to me then.' *At another time* - '...have you any marmalade? I would like to give him some.' *Maria commented that it was lucky she came into the room in time to instruct him on the digestive systems of little boys eight months old!*

'No more doubts...darkness and perplexity'

The death of Duncan[29]

MARIA TO MARGARET SANDEMAN

You must allow me to pour out my heart to you, for you, dearest M., are now my dearest and best friend in my old home. O, M., I have lost much, for I do think papa was a great and venerable man in many ways, and a most tender and loving father to me. I know you loved and valued him, he was particularly fond of you and you had opportunities of knowing him, which few others had, therefore I feel assured that you can sympathise with me. Oh, I did love and revere him, though it sometimes disgusted me, the sort of idolatry descending into

little and most insignificant things and therefore at times absurd, with which some people worshipped him. Yet, M. I made an idol of him myself, I not only loved him, I was proud of him. I thought it an honour to be his daughter, every feeling in me was roused if I thought him the least slighted or under-valued. Now I will hear his voice no more here, no more bring him my difficulties and problems for solution. Yet as you say how selfish is grief! Now he is at rest, perfectly happy, perfectly glorious, no more doubts and fears, no more days and nights, weary, weary seasons of darkness and perplexity, when the Lord's chastening hand lay sore on him, and spirit and flesh failed; Oh, is it not blessed to think that he is now done for ever with such. One cannot but rejoice for him. Our loss is most assuredly his great, unspeakable gain.

I find my thoughts much turned heavenwards. I cannot seek him now at home in the familiar rooms there. These are desolate, but he has only changed his home (a glorious change) and there in the blessed realms above I seek him. What is he now doing? With whom is he holding converse? What is his mansion and what is his work? The eye would fain peer through the darkness, how much we would like to know, how little and yet how much the Scripture tells us. I have just been looking up and pondering over the texts which give us glimpses into that glorious world. Is there not enough to satisfy us? And yet our restive spirits seem not content. And then, there is another painful feeling of doubt creeping over you, 'Are those things in heaven a reality or only a beautiful myth?' Oh, for a strong unwavering faith, a clinging to the word of God, 'for without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is the rewarder of all who diligently seek Him.' The final reward being in heaven it seems remarkable that belief in this stands so closely connected with belief in God Himself.

My home at the Grange is broken up; when my spirit travels there in thought it will be to the little spot of earth in the Grange Cemetery. But Scotland is, and ever will be my home, and Scotch friends my dearest.

Is it not strange that papa should have followed you aunt Mary so soon? Little more than a year they had been separated after being so long together here below. It is certainly now a great satisfaction to me that I was home and saw dear papa so lately, and our visit cheered him; he was so fond of his little grandson; I feel so glad I can tell him, if he is spared to grow up, that he saw his grandpapa and that he taught him to walk. I feel very grateful to Miss Robertson for her kind and loving care of papa. I know he could not have been more tenderly nursed, though of course a daughter's heart would fain have been there to nurse and watch a beloved father's last hours.

References

1. See my article: *John Duncan and the Budapest Jewish Mission.* (RTJ, 1991)
2. Alexander Moody Stuart. *The Life of John Duncan.* Banner of Truth Trust. 1991. p.125
3. Her first marriage was to John Torrance, surgeon, Kilmarnock. Their youngest daughter, Margaret Wallace (stepdaughter of John Duncan) married William Wingate (1808-1899)who was a member of Duncan's Budapest missionary team and a missionary in Jassy, Moldavia (now Iaci, Romania) and other centres. He later served in London and enjoyed cordial fellowship with the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews (now Christian Witness to Israel). He was the grandfather of Orde Wingate, solider, guerrilla leader and Zionist. Cf. Hew Scott, *Fasti Ecclesia Scotticanae,* (Edinburgh, 1920) Vol.3. p.717. Christopher Sykes, Orde Wingate, (London 1959), p.23.
4. IM p.37
5. See my article: P*reparing the Way: Maria Dorothea and Jewish Missions in Budapest.* (Banner of Truth. Feb. 1992)
6. Duncan said of himself that he was 'first a Christian, next a Catholic, then a Calvinist, fourth a Paedobaptist, and fifth a Presbyterian; and I cannot reverse this order'. William Knight. *Colloquia Peripatetica.* (Edinburgh 1878) p.8
7. This letter, as all sent to Devana Cottage, was also addressed to Miss Mary Sandeman, Duncan's housekeeping companion during his latter years.
8. Maria was, at this time, finishing her education in Switzerland at Eclepends, La Sarraz, some twelve miles north of Lausanne, on the lower slopes of the Jura mountains in the Canton de Vaud. Girls from several European countries, including Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal, were present at the school. A former Scottish pupil recalled Duncan's visit for two reasons: the 'Scotch girls' were permitted to accompany him to the nearby village of La Sarraz to which he went every day to get his snuff-box filled, and also for the way he said a few words to each girl in her own language when they filed past him to say good-night. *IM* p.56f.
9. Duncan was on holiday on the island of St. Thomas.
10. Maria developed a close friendship with Emma Spaeth, a German girl from Esslingen, near Stuttgart. In order to improve her knowledge of German, in early October Maria moved from Eclepends to the Spaeth family home in Esslingen, where she was later to meet Emma's brother Adolph her future husband. This letter was posted to Esslingen.
11. Maria evidently stayed at Esslingen until at least 12th August 1862
12. Teplitz is in Mecklenburg - West Pomerania, Germany, approx. 20 miles SW Rostock.
13. In the summer of 1863 she undertook 'a tour of three months with Papa in Germany, Bohemia and Holland'.
14. i.e. Wearisome
15. Phillip Friedrich Adolph Theodor Spaeth. b. Esslingen, six miles south of Stuttgart, Oct. 29, 1839. d. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, 26 June 1910. Spaeth was employed as a tutor by the Duke of Argyle in 1863. Pastor: St. Michael's and Zion's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (1864-67), St. Johann's German Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (1876-1873) Professor: Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia after 1873. President: General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America. Cf. *Shcaff-Hertzog Encyclopaedia.* Vol. XI, p. 23.
16. Adolph was at this time a tutor employed by the Duke of Argyle at Rosneath, Dumbartonshire, a peninsula bounded by the Firth of Clyde on the south, Loch Long on the west, and the Gareloch on the east.

17. Maria informs us that on the evening of the 8th May they 'were quietly married at Dr. Koch's house and on the following morning set out for Niagara. Mary Koch, whom I like very much and who is herself to be married shortly to a Professor, was my only bridesmaid.' I missed... kind dear home friends.
18. Pentecost or Whitsunday.
19. This verse by Duncan is remarkably like one in the hymn, 'I found a friend, O such a friend..' by James Grindley Small (1817-88). Cf. *Christian Hymns,* Evangelical Movement of Wales. #601
20. An allusion to a sketch, which had been sent to Duncan, representing Adolph and Maria in waterproof-overalls at Niagara Falls, looking very much like 'Esquimaux.'
21. A term borrowed from Gaelic, widely used in parts of Ireland and Scotland, to convey the idea of familiar and friendly conversation.
22. This letter clearly demonstrates Duncan's balanced opinions regarding both the importance of evangelical ecclesiastical fellowship and the need to preserve the integrity of his own Church's doctrine and order. He took a negative view of the Church union schemes which from 1863 excited and ultimately divided the Free Church. He was opposed to the jettisoning of the Establishment principle. He prepared a speech on this issue for the General Assembly of 1868; not being a public debater or an Assembly speaker he did not rise to address the Assembly. Cf. *The Life of Rabbi Duncan.* David Brown. (Glasgow 1986) p. 440f.
23. The church was the newly built Lutheran church of St. Johns, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
24. This term approximates to the English 'comfortable' or 'cosy', it carries connotations of homeliness. Maria possibly means that the Queen was unpretentious, not sufficiently grand for some people's taste.
25. See footnote 20.
26. Though the boy was named after his grandfather, John Duncan, Maria and Adolph referred to him as Hans.
27. By 1868 Photographic portraiture had become a popular and fashionable process. Photography had played an important role in the lives and events connected with the Scottish Jewish mission with which Duncan had been connected and to which he remained firmly committed. Dr Keith, a member of the 1839 Mission of Enquiry, revisited Palestine in 1844 with his son Dr. George Keith, a pioneer of photography and the first person to photograph the Holy Land. Some of these Daguerreotype photographs were used by Keith's publishers to illustrate his book, *Evidences of Prophecy;* a book which providentially played a crucial role in paving the way for the Hungarian Jewish mission led by John Duncan. The Free Church of Scotland also made use of this new technology to record the Disruption Assembly. The painting, First Assembly of The Free Church of Scotland Signing the Act of Separation and Deed of Demission, 23 May 1843 by D O Hill RSA (1802-1870), in the Presbytery Hall in the Free Church offices in Edinburgh, was composed from 457 photographically produced portraits. Among a number of curious anachronisms to be seen in the picture are portraits of John Duncan and the young Jewish Christian, Adolph Saphir, both of whom were in Budapest at the time of the Disruption. They are to be located in the bottom right hand corner; Duncan is seen in profile, the young Saphir is seated on his knee perusing a map of Hungary.
28. Maria wrote to her husband about her father's... 'long, venerable beard, which is rather becoming than otherwise'. IM. p.193. A. Taylor Innes depicts Duncan in the following colourful terms: 'his flowing beard, flowing garments, retreating hat, glittering eye, and great guttural tones, instantaneously suggested that this must be the ancient Wanderer himself - *Der Ewige Jude* - on his polyglot way across the world... or escaped into our modern age from the remote and spectral corridors of Talmudic lore'. A. Taylor Innes *Op. cit.*

29. John Duncan died on 16th March 1870, aged 73. Maria wrote this letter to Miss Margaret Sandeman the niece of the much loved Mary Sandeman, who had died March 1st, 1869.

Abbreviations

IM *In Memoriam: Maria Dorothea Duncan Spaeth.*

RTJ *Reformed Theological Journal*

Acknowledgements

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THE REV. WILLIAM STAVELY 1743 - 1825

by Trevor McCavery

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Two hundred years ago, Rev William Stavely was in prison in Belfast. He had been arrested on 13 June 1798 and spent until the following December confined in various jails, ending up in a prison ship in Belfast Lough. Soldiers returning from the battle of Ballynahinch, the principal engagement in County Down in the 1978 Rebellion, seized him, without any charge. He soon learned that it was because he was supposed to have concealed arms at the Knockbracken Meeting-house of the Reformed Presbyterian Church for use by the rebels of 1798. The rebels were members of the United Irishmen, a secret, oath-bound, non-sectarian revolutionary organisation, who sought to overthrow the government by violent means and French help and establish an independent, fully democratic republic. Following Stavely's arrest, five rooms of his house were burned, along with his turfstack, carriage house and carriage. Over the next few nights, all his furniture and clothes were plundered. His books and papers were destroyed. During these six months in prison, he was threatened and treated harshly. His son, Joseph, whom he never saw, was born and died. The only contact he had with his wife was when she used to come each morning to the shore within sight of the ship and held up a white sheet as a sign to reassure him that all was well with his family at home. In the end, Stavely was released as no charge could be made against him. He never received a penny in compensation.[1] It was Stavely's second term in prison for the same accusation. What had caused Stavely to be the object of suspicion? His life will be treated under three heading

1. Stavely, the person
2. Stavely, the public figure
3. Stavely, the preacher and pastor

1. Stavely, the person

William Stavely was born in 1743 in Ferniskey, near Kells, in County Antrim. In 1638, at the time of the Ulster Plantation, his great-grandfather had left Yorkshire and settled in the area. The family were members of the Church of Ireland until William Stavely's father, Aaron, became a Covenanter by con-

viction. He married in 1741 and, two years later, William was born. The family farm was a reasonable size and William Stavely grew up, by the standards of the day, in comfortable circumstances. He was the only son, with two sisters. Aaron and his wife early dedicated their son to the ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and were determined to give him the best education that they could afford. He was sent to the Classical School in Antrim as soon as he was able to go and stayed in lodgings in Antrim during the week. William went on to study for a time at Glasgow University and finished his training at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Hall in Paisley in Scotland. He was licensed to preach by the Scottish Reformed Presbytery in 1769. After two years as a probationer, assisting William Martin, William James and Matthew Lynn in Antrim, Londonderry and east Donegal, he accepted the call to minister to the Covenanters in north Down.[2]

Stavely was a tall, dignified man with dark, penetrating eyes and a strong, but musical, voice.[3] His physique was outstanding and in a ministry of fifty-three years he never once failed to preach on the Sabbath.[4] He was a strong-willed man and could be spirited and impatient with foolish or evil opposition but at the same time very gentle in all his personal dealings.

In 1776 Stavely married Miss Mary Donald of Marymount, Antrim, and settled at Annsborough House at Newtownbreda, then on the edge of Belfast, on a farm of twenty acres. They had a family of six daughters and two sons (though, as we have seen, one of these boys lived only a few weeks). He would permit nothing to interfere with family worship and was said to be an extremely tender father. His home was a source of peace, comfort and happiness.

He was described by J S Reid, the historian of Irish Presbyterianism, as the 'apostle of the Covenanting church in Ireland.' Certainly he was like the apostle Paul, in at least one respect, in that he sought to have an independent income, for as well as the 20 acres of valuable land at Newtownbreda, he had rents from his own farm at Ferniskey, and from his wife's at Marymount, near Antrim. He was thus able to devote all his time to the work of the ministry.

He kept up his reading and studies and was thoroughly abreast of the literature of the time in all subjects. His text for each Sabbath was chosen early in the week and he elaborated the subject until seven o'clock in the Saturday evening when he closed his books, conducted family worship, shaved and then retired to bed. Early on the Sabbath, he rose and spent the early morning hours in devotional preparation.[5]

2. Stavely the public figure

Stavely had two spells in prison because he was suspected of being involved with the United Irishmen? Why was Stavely suspected of this? It was because of the very public stand which he had taken against the government over a range of issues. For over twenty years, he had engaged in public controversy. He was concerned to apply biblical standards to the issues of his day.

His first confrontation with the government was in 1775 when he published a pamphlet which dealt with the taking of oaths. At that time, people was asked to take oaths by 'kissing the Book'. Many believed that this was unbiblical and when they refused to swear by this method, they were fined. Stavely contended that all that was necessary was the simple biblical method of swearing with an uplifted hand.[6]

The 1780s were also a time of controversy with the Seceders, another section of Presbyterianism. The Seceders, similar in doctrine to the Covenanters, had one crucial difference - after 1783 they accepted a share of the Regium Donum, or the funds made available by the government for Irish Presbyterians. In these years, Stavely led the campaign to expose the inconsistency of the Seceders' new position - how could they claim, as they did, to be the true heirs of the Scottish Covenanters if they were prepared to accept help from a Government that refused to carry out its Covenant obligations and submit to Christ's lordship? It was an attack, of course, on both the Seceders and the government.[7]

At this time, the government had failed to provide adequate defence for Ireland in the face of a threatened French invasion and Protestants had taken matters into their own hands by forming a private army called the Volunteers. When the immediate threat of invasion passed, the Volunteers decided to remain on stand-by to act as a pressure group on the government and press them into granting some much-needed reforms in Ireland. The Historical Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church says, 'In this spontaneous and patriotic movement, Covenanting ministers and people had borne an honourable part.' Few were as active as the Church's leading minister, William Stavely. He became a captain in his local regiment, and many of his congregation in Knockbracken joined his unit, the Drumbracken Volunteers, and as late as 1792 he appeared as a Reviewing General at a Volunteer parade at Drumbo. He asserted that people had the right to expect from government the security for their lives and property, the preservation of peace and impartial administration and decision-making.[8]

The public life of the day was corrupt, inefficient and became repressive and when peaceful methods failed to bring any reforms, many reformers turned to revolution. North Down and the Ards in general, and Newtownards in particular, quickly became a hotbed for the United Irishmen. Indeed, two of Stavely's ministerial colleagues in Newtowards were associated with the United Irishmen - these were Rev William Sinclair of the Non-Subscribing, 'New Light' congregation and Rev James Simpson of First Newtowards Presbyterian Church. In June 1798, Newtownards became a centre for the rebels, the town being taken over for about a week.[9]

Also, it was widely believed that Covenanters were heavily involved in the organisation. One of its leading members, Thomas Addis Emmett, said that 'Covenanters in numbers became United Irishmen and the most active promoters of the system.' He explained:

> The Covenanters were still numerous in those two counties [Down and Antrim] ... They were lovers of liberty and republicans by religion and descent.[10]

But what of Stavely? Was he involved in the United Irishmen? Stavely's active involvement in the former Volunteers and his outspoken condemnation of government, his influence over four or five counties, and his refusal, as a Covenanter, to take an Oath of Allegiance, which the authorities were asking all Presbyterians to do after 1796, naturally left him open to suspicion as an activist in this new organisation. Indeed, he was listed by one of the government's informers as a member of the County Down committee of the United Irishmen.[11] But, we should appreciate that Stavely's reason for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance was not necessarily the result of any involvement with the rebels, but because of his Covenanting principles, which would not permit Covenanters to swear allegiance to a king and a government which had departed so far from the seventeenth century covenants. Stavely's sympathies with the United Irish movement would *seem* to be confirmed when he accompanied William Orr in a carriage to the scaffold at Carrickfergus on 17 October 1797 and prayed for him at the foot of it; William Orr had been found guilty of administering the United Irishman's oath to two soldiers. About the same time, he walked with Daniel English from Ballymena to Connor to his scaffold and sang Psalms and prayed with him. Daniel English was found guilty of leading a party of United Irishmen to a house with intent to rob and murder. But he accompanied William Orr and Daniel English to the foot of the scaffold. Orr was a neighbour of his, and English a fellow Covenanter. In each case it was widely held that they were falsely accused and it was likely that Stavely, in the same position, wished to show solidarity with them.[12]

The authorities were so suspicious that on 13 March 1797 a detachment of cavalry raided the Covenanters' meeting-house, which, after about 1796 was in Ann Street in the town of Newtowards, looking for arms or other incriminating evidence.[13] Acting on information that arms were concealed at the Knockbracken meeting-house, a raid took place there too on Sabbath 25 June 1797. The service was interrupted by Colonel Barber, the Mayor of Belfast, and a troop of cavalry, and Stavely dismissed the congregation and surrendered to the soldiers. He was led away, his horse's bridle being linked in the bridles of two of the soldiers. It was a very warm day and after three or four miles Stavely begged for a drink of water but one of the soldiers took his sword and struck him on the cheek, giving him a cut saying that was sufficient drink for a rebel. He spent until from 25 June to 26 August 1797 in prison when he was released on bail. Nothing was found in the raids on the Newtownards and Knockbracken Meeting-houses and Stavely was absent when the arms at Knockbracken were said to have been concealed.

The most that can be said is that he appears to have been very sympathetic to some of the goals of the United Irishmen in the earliest, non-violent, phase. But, in 1796, when the movement allied itself with the Roman Catholic Defender movement and sought help from an deistical government in France, he distanced himself from it. He was most adamant that he had never actually joined the movement: 'nor did I every say with my lips or write with my hand or signify by any instrument whatever, that I would join with Roman Catholics. And now I declare that I could not join with the United Irishmen because their principles are deistical, their practice very immoral, such I mean as I have any acquaintance with.'[14]

In 1796, after conferring with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, Stavely was instrumental in drawing up a declaration issued by the 'Reformed [Presbyterian] Churches in the counties of Antrim and Down' which said that they 'publicly declare that we hold in highest abhorrence and contempt all tumultuous and disorderly meetings and we bitterly disclaim all connection with such, whether privately or publicly held, when anything is done which is prejudicial to the peace, the safety or property of any civil society or individual' (though admittedly this statement was not issued formally in the name of the Presbytery nor does it condemn the organisation - only disorderly meetings).[15]

In 1796, Stavely published a book called *An Appeal to Light* as a direct reply to the very influential book, *The Age of Reason* by Tom Paine, the philosopher of the French Revolution. Stavely confronted the arguments of Paine.[16]

Finally, in the winter of 1797-8 and spring of 1798, he gave solemn warning to every Society which he inspected to avoid all links with the United Irishmen.[17] His ministry between 1796-1798 therefore shows clearly that Stavely was actually refocusing men's eyes on the eternal and spiritual and not on revolution.

Stavely noted that some of his people did not heed him and 'apostatised from their Covenanted Testimony' which was of 'most serious concern' to him. It is possible that the Reformed Presbyterians of the Newtownards district were not so discerning as their minister and actually joined the movement - though they pulled out just before the battle of Ballynahinch. Mary Anne McCracken, sister of the rebel leader, Henry Joy McCracken, recalled some fifty years later, that on the eve of the battle 'a great number of pious Covenanters left the [rebel] camp in consequence of the irreligious expressions and profanations of the Sabbath day, saying it could not have the blessing of God'.[18]

3. Stavely, the pastor and preacher

It is for Stavely's work as a preacher and pastor that we wish him to be remembered. His first congregation was in Conlig, a village half way between Newtownards and Bangor, Co. Down. In the eighteenth century, Covenanters in Ulster were to be found in areas where Scottish settlers were heavily concentrated. North Down was one such community. There can be little doubt that the Covenanters here had maintained an identity during the previous century.[19] Between 1757-1760 north Down was one of the districts which enjoyed the preaching of William Martin, the first minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church to be ordained in Ireland. He lived at Bangor and ministered regularly to the local Covenanting Societies, especially at Drumhirk and Loughries, townlands within a couple of miles of Newtownards.[20] In 1761 Martin received assistance from John Fairley, a licentiate of the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Church who was sent to supply vacant congregations in Ireland, and Donaghadee, about ten miles from Conlig, was one of seven places mentioned in his itinerary, another indication of the continuing existence of Covenanters in the area.

These Covenanters met in the homes of members and were instructed and encouraged by those members with teaching and exhorting gifts. Professor Adam Loughridge has described the activities of eighteenth century Covenanters. Meetings were held, where possible, weekly, for praise, reading of the Word, prayer and conversation on spiritual matters. Members were regularly catechised; items of news were shared but casual conversation was avoided.

Themes for discussion were arranged and announced at previous meetings so that all members could make a thoughtful and serious contribution to the discussion. In addition, prayer was offered for the sick. The societies were organised into District meetings and special large meetings were often convened and these were held in the open-air. It is likely that the societies in north Down functioned in this way.[21]

In the 1760's the Ulster societies were evolving into a denomination, with the ordination of its own minister in 1757, and - following a second ordination in 1763 - the formation of The Irish Reformed Presbytery. The next decade saw four more ordinations, and the creation of congregations, three with meeting-houses, out of groups of societies.[22] The sixth ordination was in August 1772 - that of William Stavely, at Conlig, strategically located in the centre of north Down. By 1772 the Covenanters in north Down were sufficiently strong to be able to issue this call to William Stavely. It was 'from the Covenanted Electors between the Bridge of Dromore and Donaghadee in the County of Down'. Ninety-two persons, mostly heads of families, signed the call. The new minister was aged twenty-nine when he accepted the call.

The Covenanters of the district were able to acquire a meeting-house at the same time and so became only the third congregation in the Reformed Presbyterian Church to do so. The meeting-house had, since 1753, belonged to a Secession congregation which in 1772 had moved into the town of Newtownards. The Covenanting congregation also transferred to Newtownards about 1796. Those who signed the call to Stavely were not all members of the societies in the immediate vicinity of Conlig. Many were from Societies which later became the congregations of Dromore, Bailiesmills and Knockbracken. It would appear to have been the practice in his early phase in the denomination for ministers to be based in one congregation but to consider other Societies, which had no ministers, and surround the congregation, as their 'parish' and to work towards congregations being established in them. At the same time, larger congregations retained the original societies as an internal structure.

In 1776, Stavely chose to make Knockbracken the centre of his ever-increasing ministry, living in Annsborough House in Newtownbreda. He established a meeting-house at Knockbracken and seemed to be minister to both congregations.

Stavely's workload increased still further when three of the Church's six ministers emigrated to America in these years. They accompanied the 40,000

emigrants who left Ulster's shores between 1771 and 1774 due to harvest failures and a catastrophic slump in the linen trade.[23] When the two other ministers died in 1779, leaving only Stavely, the Presbytery came to an end. Stavely had to shoulder the leadership of the entire church until more ministers were ordained in the 1780s and the Presbytery was re-formed in 1792.[24]

But this was no mere holding operation for Stavely. Indeed this was a period of immense productivity and the Covenanters of North Down must have seen little of their minister! He rode back and forward across southern Ulster through Down, Armagh, Monaghan and Cavan. Wherever he went, he commanded respect and attracted large crowds. In these years he organised five more new congregations - at Rathfriland, Drumillar (which later became the congregations of Loughbrickland and Ballenon), Ballylane, Fairview and Creevagh, near Ballybay.[25] Indeed it has been claimed that he had a hand in the foundation of as many as twelve congregations between 1772 and 1800.[26]

In 1800, two years after Stavely got out of prison, relations between Stavely and his Knockbracken congregation were strained. It is not known what relations between Stavely and the Newtownards congregation were like. Some of the Knockbracken people believed that he had brought trouble to them, and he, for his part, believed that some of them may have brought trouble to him, and so, in 1800, he accepted a call to Cullybackey and Kellswater. In 1811 he was appointed Moderator of Synod. During his time in his second congregation, it divided into two separate congregations and he chose to go to Kellswater in 1813 where he remained until his death in 1825 at the age of eighty two.

He had been a minister for 53 years. He had indeed exercised a type of apostolic ministry. For a time he was the Church's only minister, he had been twice imprisoned and was the founder of perhaps as many as twelve congregations. He had made a mark for God in his generation. A century after his death, his name was still mentioned in many places in Ulster with respect, veneration and love. In his day, and for long afterwards, he was, in the words J.S. Reid, 'the most distinguished minister' of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

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THE ORIGIN AND THE NATURE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AT ELEPHANTINE

by Ian Morrison

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In the fifth century B.C.E. a colony of Jewish soldiers protected the interests of the Persian Empire on the island of Elephantine at the southern border of Egypt. The colony has transmitted to posterity three Aramaic archives of some dozen documents each. Two are family archives and one is a communal archive. The discovery and publication in the first decade of this century of two of these archives caused a sensation in academic circles not unlike that produced half a century later by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Excavations at Qumran tended to eclipse the full significance of the Elephantine texts. They are important because:-

(1) They antedate the scrolls by at least four centuries.

(2) They provide the earliest documentation for the political, economic, social, religious and corporate life of a Jewish community - and a Diaspora one at that.

(3) They display numerous points of contact with the contemporary biblical books of Ezra and Nehemiah and greatly enhance our knowledge of Imperial Aramaic.

Our study will not merely be academic, but we will endeavour to gain spiritual profit from the study.

In an article of this nature it will be impossible to go into minute historical detail concerning the events of the Near East which took place over more than 200 years. We cannot speak in any depth of the coalitions and defections of various nations or peoples that may have given rise to the Elephantine community. In seeking to establish a time for the origin of this community more questions than answers may be raised in the course of the article.

Egypt had always figured prominently in the history of Israel. She was either a source of attraction or repulsion for the patriarchs of Israel. On the one hand, Egypt offered security in a time of famine to Abraham, and Isaac his son

considered going down to Egypt. One Hebrew, Joseph, sold as a slave by his brothers, rose to prominence in Pharaoh's court and succeeded in bringing his family to Egypt to escape the consequences of a severe seven-year famine in Palestine.

On the other hand we find Egypt symbolic of abominable sexual practices which were absolutely proscribed in Leviticus 18. There we read, 'Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; Nor shall you walk in their ordinances."' (Lev. 18:1-3). She made the Israelites her slaves for a considerable time. After the Exodus and settlement in Canaan the Israelites were to reject Egyptian ways, but there was nevertheless a conditional acceptance of the Egyptian.

So it does seem strange that we find at Elephantine in southern Egypt, 500 miles from the Mediterranean, a colony of Jews. On the island of Elephantine, called Yeb on Aramaic papyri found there, we have a Jewish community having houses, families, slaves and most unique of all, a Temple dedicated to the God of their people. Just as 'Dan to Beersheba' indicated the northernmost and southernmost towns of Israel's small country, so from 'Migdol to Syene' described the limits of Egypt, and the prophet Ezekiel could expect his hearers of the 6th century B.C. to be familiar with this phrase. In Ezekiel 29:10 we have the Lord's proclamation of judgment against Egypt in these words; 'Indeed, therefore, I am against you and your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Ethiopia.' In Chapter 30, a chapter which tells us that Egypt and her allies will fall, the Lord says in verse 6, 'Those who uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down. From Migdol to Syene those within her shall fall by the sword.' Syene lay opposite the island of Yeb on the east bank of the Nile. The Israelites would have understood this expression to mean the whole land of Egypt.

Although the actual border was a few miles further south, Elephantine provided the most secure place for a garrison, being an island. It lay just below the first cataract of the Nile. The garrison at Elephantine cannot have been very large. The island itself was only 3 kilometers from N to S, and the garrison would have needed quite an amount of room to train and exercise. The basic unit of organisation at Elephantine was the 'degel'. This word means 'standard' and is found in that sense in the book of Numbers some 11 times.

In the Aramaic papyri the 'men of the degel' and the 'men of the town' are differentiated so that we may suppose that the members of the military garrison stood apart from the ordinary citizens of the town. The Jewish leaders always referred to themselves as the 'men of Yeb' which appears to be equivalent to 'the men of the degel.'

It is known that the Jewish garrison existed at Elephantine before Persian rule which began in 525 B.C. because the inhabitants of Elephantine indicate that their Temple existed under the Kings of Egypt. The inhabitants did not come here for agricultural reasons as there is relatively little land in the area suitable for cultivation irrigated by the Nile.

The most likely reason for this remote garrison existing in such an inhospitable area is that of a trading post, guarding the border and collecting taxes. Just above Elephantine is the First Cataract of the Nile which was impassable to sailing vessels so goods would have to be transported overland past the cataract. Elephantine was the meeting point of produce from central Africa with that from the coast. We know also that stone quarrying was carried on south east of Elephantine.

The Jews at Elephantine must have received some royal favour for the unusual privilege of having a Temple to their own God so close to the sanctuary of the Egyptian god Khnum, who was the official deity of the region.

When was this colony founded?

There can be no clear cut and precise answer to this question. There are a number of suggestions and we will look at these in turn. Bezalel Porten in his book 'Archives from Elephantine' gives several suggestions.

8th century

Porten suggests an early date for the settlement of Jews in Egypt. He says that Jews, whether Israelites or Judahites might have fled to Egypt during the thirty five period of strife from the Syro-Ephramitish War of 735 until the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701. King Hezekiah, of Judah (715 - 687/6) was an ardent nationalist and was under pressure from other peoples and his own patriotic nobles to rebel against Assyria. In spite of the earnest warning of Isaiah, who branded the whole thing as folly and rebellion against the LORD, Hezekiah joined in and sent envoys to Egypt to negotiate a treaty (Isa. 30:1-7;

31:1-3) In fact, he became a ring-leader in the revolt. As Sennacherib tells us, Padi, King of Ekron, who had remained loyal to Assyria, was handed over by his subjects to Hezekiah and held prisoner in Jerusalem. If II Kings 18:8, "He subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, from watchtower to fortified city," belongs in this context, Hezekiah also used force against reluctant Philistine cities in an effort to whip them into line. Hezekiah was of course aware that Sennacherib would not overlook all this. He therefore busied himself in the brief time at his disposal seeing to his defenses of Jerusalem, making weapons and shields in abundance (II Chron. 32:3-5), and his water supply, the famous Siloam tunnel, in preparation for siege.

Sennacherib quickly quelled the rebellion. He turned against Judah. He tells us that he reduced 46 of Judah's fortified cities and deported their population, while shutting Hezekiah and the rest of his troops up in Jerusalem 'like a bird in a cage.' The slaughter must have been fearful. Excavations at Lachish, which Sennacherib stormed, reveal along with evidences of destruction, a huge pit into which the remains of some 1,500 bodies had been dumped and covered with pig bones and other debris - presumably the rubbish of the Assyrian army.

It is quite natural for the population of Judah to fear for their lives. Many may have fled their homes. If this is so then a colony of Jews could have been at Elephantine towards the end of the eighth century.

7th century possibilities

One possible period for the establishment may be during the reign of Psammetichus I (664 - 609 B.C.). He was an Assyrian protégé forced to flee from Egypt when the Ethiopians conquered the country. With Assyrian help he was able to regain his position. Later when Assyria became involved in Asia Minor and in the North, he broke free from Assyrian control and sought to unify Egypt with the help of foreign mercenaries. At about the same time we know that the garrison at Elephantine rebelled because they had had no furlough for three years. Though Psammetichus pleaded with them to return to their fortress with the promise of better conditions, they refused. This left an empty fortress which Psammetichus may have filled with Asiatic mercenaries including a Jewish contingent. B. Porten in his book 'Archives from Elephantine' places a date of circa 650 B.C. for the establishment of this community.

Information from Palestine appears to support this view. It seems that some of the Jewish kings, had sent Israelite men to Egypt as mercenaries in return for

horses for their chariots. King Josiah in his reforms removed horses that had been dedicated to the sun. II Kings 22 & 23: 11 reads, 'Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated (given) to the sun, at the entrance of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan Melech, the officer who was in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.' When we take this in conjunction with Deuteronomy 17:16, "But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, "You shall not return that way again,"' it would seem to imply the trading of men for Egyptian horses. Josiah wanted to curb this activity and actually did so. Some King prior to Josiah, perhaps Manasseh, may have sent men to Psammetichus in return for horses. Josiah, in his reforms, forbade this practice in the future.

He also suggests a period in the middle of the seventh century when Manasseh (who reigned from 687/6 - 642) joined Egypt in an attempt to throw off Assyrian rule at a time when Jews might have fled to Egypt. Perhaps this is the reason why Manasseh on one occasion was hauled in chains before the Assyrian king, presumably for suspected disloyalty. This we find in II Chronicles 33:11-13. If Manasseh did have some thoughts of rebellion, his troops and subjects, fearing their overlord, may have fled the country. This does seem plausible because allies of Egypt, i.e. Jewish soldiers, would want to be as far as possible from Assyria. In some way this does link up with the reign of Psammetichus I (664 - 609 B.C.) There would have been an overlap of about 22 years in the reigns of Manasseh and Psammetichus.

A fourth suggestion put forward by Porten for the establishment of this community is during the thirty years between the ascension of Jehoiakim, a vassal of Egypt, in 609 (-598) B.C. and the flight to Egypt led by Johanan bar Kareah after the assassination of the governor Gedeliah bar Ahikam (Jeremiah 41-43). Gedeliah's friends, though innocent, quite naturally feared Nebuchadnezzar's vengeance and, against the earnest pleas of Jeremiah, resolved to flee to Egypt - which they did, taking Jeremiah with them. However, the Lord's warning to them had been to remain in Judah and he would keep them safe (Jer. 42:10), but should they disobey he adds, 'Now therefore, know certainly that you shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell.' (Jer. 42:22) With this warning and its consequences in mind it seems unlikely that Jews would have survived in Egypt. Jeremiah chapter 44 continues the threat of the Lord's punishment on the Israelites in Egypt. Verse 1 says, "The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt, who dwell at Migdol, at Tahpanhes, at Noph, and in the country of

Pathros", and he continues with the threat of punishment. The land of Pathros was southern Egypt including the area around Elephantine. Verse 12 continues, "And I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to dwell there, and they shall be consumed and fall in the land of Egypt. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine. They shall die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine; and they shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse and a reproach." In the light of this it seems unlikely that Jews from this period survived to found the colony at Elephantine. Verse 28 of the same chapter reads, "Yet a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah..."

There are, however, several other views suggested by E.G.H. Kraeling in 'The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri.'

7th century suggestion

He suggests that the godly reforms of King Josiah (640-609 B.C., II Kings 22-23) may have evoked great dissatisfaction in the older generation of Jews who were fond of the 'popular religious ways'. These may have fled to Egypt. Many priests would have been 'jobless' and as Egypt had always figured quite prominently in Israel's history, she was the natural haven to which to turn and create a religious community with its own Temple. However, if a group of religious refugees sought religious freedom in Egypt why did they go so far south as Elephantine?

6th century suggestions

Another suggestion has a later origin for the establishment of the colony. Dr. C. Edward Sachau suggests a date in the reign of Psammetichus II (593-589 B.C.) In the letter of Aristeas of Hellenistic-Jewish origin (the letter is dated about 120 B.C.) it speaks of Jews being sent to help Psammetichus. We know that the Psammetichus referred to can hardly be Psammetichus I since he had peaceful relations with Ethiopia. It is also known that in 589 B.C. Psammetichus II carried out a campaign against Ethiopia and in the previous year (590 B.C.) had a campaign in Palestine. Then he could have possibly have collected a large mercenary force. We do know that different mercenary groups helped Psammetichus II against Ethiopia. They may have been left to guard the southern border of Egypt.

Still yet another theory that attracts considerable attention is one which places the origin of the colony in the time after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

A new Pharaoh who had come to the throne had encouraged various Palestinian groups, including the Jews to rebel against Babylonian rule but this ended in disaster. It was only natural that Egypt should provide a safe haven for any group of people who had first of all listened to the Pharaoh's foolish advice and now found themselves in the grips of a foreign power. These groups, along with disaffected Jewish soldiers, who now found themselves in Egypt, might also think it quite reasonable to build a Temple as the one at Jerusalem had been destroyed. It is quite possible that after the Babylonian invasion many Jews, finding life too severe in the devastated and impoverished land of Israel, went down to Egypt to seek better living conditions. Such a group, like that which took Jeremiah against his will, was settled at Elephantine, though it seems that from the narrative there were a good many Jews already in Egypt when he arrived.

There is an Egyptian inscription found at Elephantine on a statue of Nesuhor, a man of princely rank under Pharaoh Apries, which may have a bearing on the date for the origin of the Jewish colony. The inscription suggests that there was quite an international colony there at the time and that the mercenaries planned to rebel, but were led by Nesuhor to Pharaoh Apries who punished them. Unfortunately Nesuhor's statue does not give a date for this revolt which could have taken place anytime in the reign of Pharaoh Apries (589-569 B.C.). However, if we were to take this latest date (569) it hardly allows enough time for a revival of the Yahweh religion among the Jewish exiles such as seems necessary to justify the founding of a Yahweh Temple.

It is quite possible that Jews went to Egypt from all the periods and reasons that are mentioned. It is my opinion, that the period and events of the reign of Psammetichus I (664-609) is probably the best for the foundation of this Jewish colony.

The Nature of the Jewish Community at Elephantine

The Jews of Elephantine were considered Arameans because they spoke Aramaic. They did not speak Hebrew and write in Aramaic, but rather spoke in the language of which the papyri were written. At the same time it should be stressed that the Jews who came here, either in the seventh century as mercenaries, or as refugees in the sixth century spoke Hebrew but soon began to speak Aramaic. They soon abandoned their native tongue. The Aramaic language was the official language of the Persians. It is untenable to assume that only legal documents were written in Aramaic because a language only lives through the population that speaks it. It is reasonable to assume that the Arameans came to

Egypt long before the Jews, (possibly after the fall of Damascus in 732 B.C.) and the Jews who came were received into an Aramaic speaking environment and absorbed by it.

This colony was basically a military colony. From early times Arameans had enrolled as mercenaries, and of Jews who came to Egypt many undoubtedly did the same. The garrison contained the soldiers and their families, and the 'degel' was the basic unit of organisation at Elephantine. Each degel may have held and cultivated land (cf. cleruchy - Cleruchs received plots of land varying in size according to the rank and branch of service. In exchange they performed various military duties. Herodotus recorded that Egyptian soldiers received small grants of land and it is assumed that foreign mercenaries also received such grants.). They may not have had any great amount since agricultural land was scarce. The degel was the focal point of various activities within Elephantine. No-one married outside the degel and all the business transactions were as far as possible carried on within the degel itself. Some raised goats and sheep and these gave meat, curds and cheese. There was an abundance of fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. The members of the colony also had wheat and wine.

Religious Life at Elephantine

An apparently unique feature of the Elephantine Jewish community was the existence of a Temple to YHW, perhaps pronounced Yahu (the Israelite YHWH). It is not known precisely for what reason the tetragrammaton was not written YHWH, which itself is mentioned over six thousand times in the O.T. YHWH never occurs at Elephantine, rather on the papyri the form YHW appears and on ostracon YHH. An abbreviated form of the name YH appears some 20 times in poetic passages of the Bible. The Elephantine Jews, instead of speaking of 'YHWH of Hosts' always wrote 'YHH of hosts'. We do not know from what authority these Jews received permission to build a Temple, but one papyri document dated c. 419 B.C., surprisingly instructs the Elephantine Jews, by the authority of the Persian government, to keep their own Passover Feast according to the practice of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Though the Jews lived in a foreign country, and in a foreign environment within that foreign country, yet the names of the people remained Hebrew and their deity, Israelite. Porten argues that the religious influence of the Arameans was nominal and that of the Egyptians negligible. John Bright in his book "A history of Israel" disagrees with Porten on this point. He argues that although

the community had settled and was flourishing, and had sunk its social and economic roots in its new homeland, yet its religion was of a highly syncretistic sort. Quite contrary to Deuteronomic Law, the Jews had a Temple with an altar on which burnt offerings and sacrifices were offered to God. He indicates other gods were worshipped, and perhaps blessings invoked from them. Leon Wood in his book, 'A survey of Israel's History', adds, 'A matter of major significance is that these Jews had a temple to Yahweh (Yahu). This means that, though far from Jerusalem, they had not forgotten the one true God. The worship of Yahweh was not pure, however; for the names of at least three other deities, who were worshipped by some of the residents, have been found.'[1] However, against Bright and Wood it must be argued that these Jews strictly observed the Sabbath and the other Jewish festivals each year, festivals such as the Passover. Their names were either secular or theophoric and of 160 names found only 15 were non-theophoric. This community was not recognised by mainstream priestly authorities in Jerusalem. They preferred to ignore its existence altogether.

The Israelite and Elephantine deity was transcendent (surpassing in degree and excellence) and immanent (present throughout the universe). He is frequently named 'the God of heaven', the 'Lord of hosts,' and the 'One who indwells', by the Elephantine Jews. The title 'the God of heaven' is a title which occurs frequently in post-exilic times.

As already stated the Temple at Elephantine was built before 525 B.C. It was destroyed around 410 B.C. by the priests of Khnum who felt very jealous of the privileges afforded to the Jews at Elephantine. The Temple was orientated towards Jerusalem, and was on the same pattern as the Temple built by Solomon. "Although the Jerusalem Temple was defiled by the abominations of Manasseh, it remained the Lord's chosen site. The Elephantine Jews were apparently inspired by Solomon's prayer delivered on the occasion of the dedication of the Jerusalem Temple. If the Israelites abroad "pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You..." (1 Kings 8:48ff.) YHWH dwelt in the heavens but he manifested his presence in His Temple in Jerusalem (Psalm 20:3,7) If his attention could be called by a momentary need by prayer directed to the site of his temple in Jerusalem, then his presence could be permanently assured by the erection of a shrine orientated towards Jerusalem." [2]

These Jews built their temple to measure 60 cubits by 20 cubits. These are the measurements given of the original Temple in I Kings 6:2 and II Chronicles 3:3, the building which we have come to know as Solomon's Temple. After the destruction of their Temple at Elephantine the Jews donned sackcloth, fasted, did not anoint themselves or drink wine. They appealed to Johanan the High Priest in Jerusalem asking that help be given to rebuild it, but no answer was forthcoming. Then, in 407 B.C., a further letter was sent to Bagoas, the governor at this time of Judah, and one also to Delaiah and Shelemaiah, sons of Sanballat governor of Samaria. This led to the matter being brought to the attention of the satrap, Arsames, who apparently gave assistance. They were successful and the Temple was rebuilt, remaining in existence until at least 402 B.C. Though they were Jews and felt kinship with their brethren in Palestine, they by no means stood in the mainstream of Israel's history and faith. Entrenched as they were, they certainly felt no urge to return to Judah and become a part of the community there.

"All of the evidence for the religion of the Elephantine Jews examined so far indicates a devotion to their ancestral deity YHW. His Temple indicated His presence. The strict observance of the Sabbath and the celebration of the Passover marked attachment to His covenant community. The theophoric names borne by most of the Jews demonstrated their personal faith in YHW's saving power".[3]

Historical Significance of this Community

Certain matters of historical significance also call for attention. One is that regular communication existed between this Egyptian group and Jews in Judah. Another is that this group expected, and at times received financial help from the motherland. A third is that correlating information is given regarding certain persons mentioned also in the biblical record. One such person is Sanballat, governor of Samaria, spoken of as father to Delaiah and Shelemaiah, and no doubt the same as the opponent of Nehemiah. Another is Johanan, mentioned as high priest in Jerusalem, said in Nehemiah 12:10-11, 22-23 to be a grandson of Eliashib who was high priest in Nehemiah's time. (Neh. 3:1) A third is Hananiah, writer of the so-called Passover Papyrus of 419 B.C. who may be the same as the man Nehemiah made superintendent over Jerusalem along with Nehemiah's brother Hanani (Neh. 7:2).

Spiritual Lessons

1. We have at Elephantine a community of Jews who thought that they could manipulate God into being present with them simply because they had built a temple. This was in direct contradiction to his holy Word. Whatever their reasons for their construction of a temple, they should have desisted and remained loyal to God. Although they had all the outward forms of religion they had 'left their first love' and decided to do what was right in their own eyes. This is never justifiable in any situation. That this community of Jews 'vanished' in a short space of time is eloquent testimony to the fact that God's word should be obeyed.

2. The Jews had been repeatedly told that they should not go to Egypt to seek safe haven there, but should trust in the Lord God of their fathers. They may have felt that they could escape the all searching eye of Almighty God, but Psalm 139 reveals the futility of those ideas. God promised blessing for obedience. However, his threats of punishment for disobedience held true for these Jews who had migrated to the land that their ancestors had been delivered from by Almighty God many generations earlier.

Conclusion

This colony of Jews at Elephantine was probably established in the middle to end of the 7th century, although no precise date can be given. It was a garrison town, guarding the southern frontier of Egypt and because of its location may have been a trading post. This would account for the many possessions of some of its inhabitants. Though there were many other Jewish communities outside Palestine this one is of most importance because of the Temple that was situated there.

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HELP FROM THE PURITANS

by Erroll Hulse

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What kind of help in particular do we need from the Puritans today? I will preface that question with a brief review of recent history.

Forty years ago J I Packer suggested that the writings of the Puritans offer more real help than those of any other body of Christian teachers, past or present, since the days of the apostles.[1] Since that time, 1958, there has followed in England the greatest renewal in theology since the time of the Puritans.[2] Instrumental in this renewal was the publication of literature in the Puritan tradition.

We can say without fear of contradiction that the number of Puritan and Reformed titles at present in print exceeds anything known in previous periods with the exception of the apex of the Puritan epoch 1640 - 1662 and up until about 1680 when the ejected Puritans edited and published their sermons. During the nineteenth century sets of complete works were published: the writings of John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Richard Sibbes, George Swinnock, Thomas Brooks and others. But this did not result in an upgrade in theology nor stir the churches to rethink and re-assess doctrine. It was an academic exercise, a provision of reference books for libraries. In any case the number of books published does not in itself prove much.

When Thomas Watson's *A Body of Divinity* was republished by the Banner of Truth in 1958, a sample was taken to the largest Christian bookshop in the West End of London. The response of the manager was negative. He was dogmatic. That kind of Puritan book would not sell! Nevertheless he risked taking six copies. Three days later he telephoned for 12 and a few days later ordered 24 more. Such was the lack of doctrinal books at that time that a vacuum had resulted. Suddenly the value of Puritan books was discovered by a new generation. That edition of Watson's *A Body of Divinity* sold well. The book was popular enough to require it to be reset in a more attractive print and published again in 1965 with subsequent editions thereafter. The decision by the Banner of Truth to publish the Puritan writings in popular paperback form was vital. These have contributed significantly to the theological renewal.

The change of mind concerning what we call the doctrines of grace has been slow but steady. It has come about mostly through commentaries on Scripture. Week by week pastors have to prepare exposition and if they are faithful preachers they must exegete the text. The commentaries by William Hendriksen in particular have been widely distributed and extremely influential. The front cover of *Grace* magazine for January 1998 carried a random picture of a section of a pastor's library. It is indeed typical, not only of innumerable pastors' libraries in England, but of many in other countries as well. In the picture 54 volumes can be seen. I will comment on some of these as they illustrate my theme. There are eight New Testament commentaries by William Hendriksen and seven by John Calvin plus two volumes of his systematic theology *(The Institutes)*. There is a complete set of six volumes of the *Works* of the Puritan Thomas Brooks, six volumes of biography and books on revival, Spurgeon's *Lectures to my Students,* Robert Haldane on *Romans* (the book which had the most effect on me personally to convince me of the Reformed faith), and Watson's *Complete Body of Divinity* in three volumes and A A Hodge's *Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith*. This is a random sample. Nearly all the above titles are from the Banner of Truth which led the way in England in republishing the Puritan writings and books in the Puritan tradition. Especially effective were *The Life of George Whitefield* in two volumes by Arnold Dallimore, the republication of Spurgeon's sermons, and the brilliantly edited autobiography of Spurgeon in two volumes.

The demand for the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith popularly known as *The 1689 Confession* confirms the increasing interest in Puritan doctrine among Baptists. Different editions have been published but none so popular as the one titled *A Faith to Confess* which is a transposition of the 1689 Confession into contemporary English. The eighth edition was published in 1997. These have been editions of between 7,000 and 10,000 copies each.

In retrospect we can look back and review the strengths and weaknesses involved in the renewal. In the 1970s many hoped that a theological renewal would lead to a spiritual awakening. This did not take place. Instead there was distraction, division and conflict over the claims of the charismatic movement. The theological renewal strengthened many ministers and churches to withstand these pressures. In spite of distractions many Reformed churches have emerged and grown steadily.

Available Puritan literature covers a vast range of subjects. For instance every form of heart experience is covered including a sense of desertion (see

chapter on counselling). As with every generation or group of writers there is variation in quality. Writing for the quarterly American journal *Reformation and Revival* on the dangers or perils of Puritan theology, Thomas N Smith correctly points to weak places such as a lack of relating the two Testaments together. He also draws attention to Puritan theology which can induce unnecessary introspection. These are valid warnings but such is the breadth of literature involved that it would take a mammoth effort to document a major criticism. Constrained by the need to be fair, Pastor Smith qualifies his criticisms by pointing to theologians like Thomas Goodwin and John Owen who were exemplary in exposition. Spurgeon who loved the Puritans did not hesitate to criticise or correct even his favourite Puritan authors. An example is the sermon called 'The Warrant of Faith'. This he preached on Lord's Day morning September 20 1863 and is sermon number 531 in the series that eventually reached 3492. Spurgeon was young, only 29 years old. In it he criticised some of the Puritans. This is what he said:

'The warrant of our faith in Christ reasons thus: "You are not saved by what you do but by what Christ did; but then you have no right to trust in Christ unless there is something good in you which shall entitle you to trust in him." Now, this legal reasoning I oppose. I believe such teaching to contain in it the essence of Popish self-righteousness. The warrant for a sinner to believe in Christ is not in himself in any sense or in any manner, but in the fact that he is commanded there and then to believe on Jesus Christ. Some preachers in the Puritanic times, whose shoe latchets I am not worthy to unloose, erred much in this matter. I refer not only to Alleine and Baxter, who ar far better preachers of the law than of the gospel, but I include men far sounder in the faith than they, such as Rogers of Dedham, Shepherd, the author of *The Sound Believer,* and especially the American, Thomas Hooker, who has written a book upon qualifications for coming to Christ. These excellent men had a fear of preaching the gospel to any except those whom they styled "sensible sinners", and consequently kept hundred of their hearers sitting in darkness when they might have rejoiced in the light. They preached repentence and hatred of sin as the warrant of the sinner's trusting to Christ. According to them, a sinner might reason thus - "I possess such-and-such a degree of sensibility on account of sin, therefore I have a right to trust in Christ." Now, I venture to affirm that such reasoning is seasoned with fatal error.'

Spurgeon's observations are helpful but he himself failed to distinguish clearly between the way to faith in which we exhort to Bible reading etceteras, and the warrant of faith which is the ever present obligation to close with Christ.

The ground upon which Christian truth is contested changes constantly. I will suggest several areas in which help from the Puritans is still needed.

1. The love of God for all men

Two articles in the Banner of Truth magazine pointed the way for the recovery of the Reformed faith in England. In June 1958 (issue 11) the free offer of the gospel was clearly expounded. In February 1959 an exposition was republished by John Bonar with the title *Universal Gospel Invitations Consistent with Total Depravity and Particular Redemption.* In this way Puritanism was placed in the driving seat as far as gospel preaching is concerned. The Banner of Truth from inception to the present has never compromised with hyper-Calvinism. In 1995 the Banner of Truth published Iain Murray's book *Spurgeon versus Hyper-Calvinism* - which asserts the free invitations of the gospel, the responsibility of all everywhere to repent and believe, and the love of God for all mankind (often referred to as common grace).

The love of God for all mankind has been expounded in a number of articles especially so by Bob Sheehan writing in *Reformation Today.*[3] The subject is developed further in *Reformation Today* (issue 135) in an article titled 'John 3:16 and Hyper-Calvinism' in which reference is made to James Packer's book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God,* a decisive little book which was used to turn the Reformed movement away from hyper-Calvinism to Puritanism. Dr Packer uses the analogy of light. As light consists of rays and particles in a way which is inexplicable to human reason so divine sovereignty and human responsibility exist together in a way which can only be held by faith (Isa 55:8,9). To the human rationality of the hyper-Calvinist that is intolerable.

As long as Puritanism is in the driving seat we can be assured of the full, free and uninhibited offers of the gospel to all. This is one area in which we cannot afford to do without the Puritan way of interpreting key Bible passages.

2. Hope for the future of the Church

As we approach the third millennium the foremost issue facing the Church is the completion of the great mandate to take the gospel to all nations. In China, Africa and Central and South America there has been rapid growth. Will the whole world be filled with the truth of Scripture? The Puritans were optimistic. The Puritan hope was taken up by Jonathan Edwards in his book *The History of Redemption.* Edwards earned the title 'The Theologian of Revival'. Several modern expositions which develop 'the Puritan hope' are available.[4]

The Larger Westminster Catechism question 191 sums up the Puritan view. *What do we pray for in the second petition of the Lord's Prayer?* Answer: We pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, and the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in.

I predict that immensely powerful forces of motivation and determination will be unleashed once the Church grasps hold of the fact that it is truly our Father's intention and purpose to subdue and overcome all those systems of false religion arrayed against his Son (Ps 110:1). He urges in the second Psalm, 'Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.' And through Malachi he declares, 'My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD Almighty' (Mal 1:11).

3. A confessional or comprehensive view of the faith

The Puritans were 'confessional' in the sense that they believed in the unity and inter-relationship of all revealed truth which is reflected in the Westminster Confession. First the foundations of Christian doctrine are laid (the Scriptures, God's nature and attributes, his decrees and sovereignty, creation and providence, and the covenants) followed by application in the form of experimental religion. There are chapters on the divine institutions and finally on the last things. Confessionalism declares the historic continuity of the Church and her faith. This is particularly reflected in the chapter on the person and work of Christ which is based on the credal statements of the early Church Councils. We do not belong to a modern sect like the Mormons. We belong to God's one Church through all ages. The Church of the old Covenant continued and developed even through the inter-testament times between Malachi and the coming of our Lord. The story continues through every century up to the present day.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth;
Her charter of salvation -
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food;
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

Brief constricted statements of faith have their place and usefulness but only a full Confession adequately expresses the historic continuity of the Church.

4. The recovery of the Lord's Day

The battle for the Lord's Day was initiated toward the end of Elizabeth I's reign and was won decisively during the first half of the 17th century. The Puritans gave England the English Sunday. The advantage of a whole day for worship and fellowship was immense. Expositions setting out the Puritan view of the Lord's Day can be found in J.I. Packer's book *Among God's Giants* and in the Westminster Conference Papers.[5]

D.L. Moody was not in the Puritan tradition but I quote him as a pointer to illustrate the practical importance of this issue today. Said Moody, 'You show me a nation that has given up the Sabbath and I will show you a nation that has got the seeds of decay.' And to quote an enemy of the gospel, Voltaire declared, 'If you want to kill Christianity you must abolish Sunday.'[6] The restoration of a Christianity in decline will go hand in hand with the restoration of the Lord's Day.

5. The Christian family

The statistics for the break-down of family life in Britain and America are startling. In America 31 per cent of American children have parents who were never married. Over 50 per cent of couples live together before marriage. 60 per cent of marriages fail, 50 per cent ending in divorce, 10 per cent in separation. Those who have sex before marriage have a 60 per cent higher divorce rate than those who do not.[7]

Against this dark background we have much to learn from the Puritans. Again I cite Dr Packer. 'It is hardly too much to say that the Puritans created the Christian family in the English-speaking world. The Puritan ethic of marriage was to look not for a partner whom you do love passionately at this moment, but rather for one whom you can love steadily as your best friend for life, and then to proceed with God's help to do just that. The Puritan ethic of nurture was to train up children in the way they should go, to care for their bodies and souls together, and to educate them for sober, godly, socially useful adult living. The Puritan ethic of home life was based on maintaining order, courtesy, and family worship. Goodwill, patience, consistency, and an encouraging attitude were seen as the essential domestic virtues.'[8]

Inspirational and directional Puritan literature on the family includes a compilation of material entitled, *The Godly Family - duties of parents and children,* published by Soli Deo Gloria. Also highly commended is the paper 'The Puritan Family' given by Phil Arthur at the Westminster Conference in 1977.

6. The centrality of prayer and the devotional life

The Puritans laid great stress on private prayer and family prayers. They endeavoured to steer their lives along a course governed by the Scriptures and directed by prayer, devotions and meditation. United to this way of life was care in regard to detail and hard work. We will see this reflected in the chapters which follow, carefulness and hard work in preparation for preaching, prayerful analysis in counselling, and a thorough approach to the doctrine of sin.

We see also the centrality of prayer and the devotional life in preparation for death. The last words of the martyrs as they died were noted and cherished. This interest in the last words of the godly is expressed beautifully in the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress.* Bunyan in his vivid way describes death as crossing the river. When Pilgrim's wife Christiana came to that point, her last words were:

'I come, Lord, to be with thee, and bless thee.'

When Mr Despondency came to the river the last words heard from his lips were:

'Farewell night, welcome day!'

'The going through the river of Mr Valiant-for-truth was glorious. When his time was come many accompanied him down to the river into which as he went, he said, 'Death, where is thy sting?' and as he went down deeper, he said, 'Grave, where is thy victory?' So he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.'

As I have shown we see this legacy of devotion in the antecedents, the Reformers, who gave their lives for Christ. Luther did not die a martyr although on his way to the city of Worms he fully expected to become one. Twenty-five years later when he came to die his companions realised how important it was to witness his passing and drew around him to observe his testimony. They knew that many evil stories had been fabricated about Luther repenting of his reforms and regretting having been cut off from the Roman Catholic Church.

'Reverend father, will you die steadfast in Christ and the doctrines you have preached?' asked his long time companion and confidant, Justus Jonas. 'Yes,' replied Luther in a clear voice, his last clearly articulated word as he lay dying, away from his home in Eisleben. His testimony, witnessed and recorded by his friends, was vital because slanderous reports were to circulate that Luther had died a God-forsaken death, miserable and despairing.[9]

7. Christian unity and compromise with Rome

During the time of Queen Elizabeth I three excellent ministers were put to death. Henry Barrow, John Greenwood and John Penry were hanged in 1593 for propagating and maintaining separatist views. For the whole period from 1558 to 1662 the Puritans were ministering within the Established Church of England. Their unity was constrained. We might well ask what then they can teach us about Christian unity.

The answer is given by way of an object lesson. They were united in the central truths of the Bible. We live in a time of extremes. On the one side we have disunity over issues in which we need to exercise tolerance. I will not seek to address the issues here. On the other hand there is the Ecumenical movement in which essential truth is sacrificed for the sake of unity. The most glaring example is ECT (Evangelicals and Catholics Together) which is strong in the USA. It is precisely here that the testimony of the Puritans is urgently needed. They saw clearly that the Roman Catholic Church had not changed. The sermons at Cripplegate which address this theme have been gathered into a single volume of 620 pages.[10] The Roman Catholic Church has more unbiblical doctrine which destroys the saving gospel now than it did in the 17th century. If the Puritans were with us today, they would urge us to hold together without compromise on the essential truth of justification by faith alone. They would plead with us not to compromise Galatians chapter one and not to compromise with a system which has never rescinded the bitter opposition to the doctrine of justificaton by faith published by the Council of Trent. Even now the magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church is under pressure to proclaim a dogma that Mary is a Co-Redeemer in time for the millennium.[11] We should recall the lucid teaching of the Reformers and the Puritans and be faithful not only in soteriology but also in our ecclesiology.

The sternest warning in the New Testament concerns not a local or even national apostasy but one which is world-wide. This is the warning of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, which represents the purpose and heart of this epistle.

which is evident from the context. This passage should be compared with the general warnings given by Paul to Timothy (1 Tim 4:1-5; 2 Tim 3:1-5 and 4:3).

The Reformers and Puritans interpreted 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 as the great apostasy in the Christian Church dating from about 500 A.D. to the time of the Reformation and subsequently in an unrepentant Roman Catholic Church. In his commentary, John Calvin interprets the passage as apocalyptic in style and not literal. Concerning the man of sin, he says, 'Paul is not speaking of one individual, but of a kingdom that was to be seized by Satan for the purpose of setting up a seat of abomination in the midst of God's temple. This we see accomplished in popery,' and concerning the antichrist Calvin asserts, 'For quite certainly Paul meant that Antichrist would seize the things which belong to God alone, his purpose being to exalt himself above every divine power, so that all religion and all worship of God should lie beneath his feet.' Calvin points out that the Pope claims complete authority. A threefold universal claim of authority is symbolised in his tiara.

This interpretation is also taken by John Owen and is the view stated in *The Westminster Confession of Faith* chapter 25 paragraph 6 (cf. *The 1689 London Baptist Confession* chapter 26 paragraph 4). No apostasy from apostolic Christianity can be compared to the Papacy. For over a thousand years the gospel became more and more subverted and covered over with error. The Church became the monolithic, sacral persecutor of the faithful, driving them to death or into the wilderness as described in Revelation chapter 12.

If the Reformers and Puritans were correct in their interpretation of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 then we have seen the worst of the apostasy and should focus our attention on the open doors to fulfil the Great Commission. The future is as bright as the promises of God. Promises such as Psalm 110:1; Daniel 2:35; Micah 4:1-5 and Habakkuk 2:14 are bright indeed and await fulfilment. Surely great progress and encouragement lie ahead for many countries coming into gospel truth for the first time. We must plead for a mighty harvest for the Prince of Peace.

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BOOK REVIEWS

An Ecclesiastical Republic: Church Government in the Writings of George Gillespie, W.D.J. McKay, Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology, Paternoster Press, 1997; 327pp; £24.99.

George Gillespie (1613-48) was an outstanding theologian (who made significant contributions to the Westminister Assembly's deliberations), pastor and preacher in a day when such men were not rare in Scotland. Much of his writing deals with the structure, officers and discipline of the Church as an Institution, the main subjects then disputed by men otherwise generally agreed in theology, worship and Christian experience. The book's title indicates that it surveys Gillespie's writings on these themes. Discussions on Church Government do not interest many today and the title may not convey to the general reader the variety of subjects dealth with or their current relevance to the health of the Church. In a work demonstrating scholarly competence Dr. McKay brings a light and popular touch to potentially heavy material. He shows that seventeenth century Scottish theologians stressed the right ordering of the Church's government because of their view of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture for the whole of the Church's life and the Biblical way in which they related the Church to the Person and Office of Christ. The Church is not a voluntary association free to determine its constitution and government but a Divine institution subject to Christ. Christ's glory is involved in the Church's administration.

After brief historical and biographical introductions Dr. McKay discusses Gillespie's use of Church Government amongst the Jews in arguing for Presbyterianism. Here and throughout the volume Dr. McKay is critical of some of Gillespie's exegetical practices, alleging tendencies to read too much into texts, make unwarranted connections between them, interpret them in advance in the light of presuppositions they were then used to prove and in the light of contemporary circumstances. Gillespie does not completely escape the influence of contemporary debates and circumstances and the attention drawn to this is salutary even if overdue. It is recognised that Gillespie's concern is to deduce his ecclesiology from Scripture, where Christ as King has outlined the pattern to which the Church must conform, and that generally his exegesis is accurate and the case he presents sound.

It is then shown that, unlike later Covenanters, Gillespie maintained that Christ as Mediator is head of the Church only although as Son of God He hads

sovereignty over all. There is a wide-ranging discussion of how Gillespie's 'two kingdoms' doctrine is affected by his theology (particularly the unity of the threefold Office of Christ, so that He is king only of those of whom He is prophet and priest) and by his opposition to the Erastians who gave magistrates a place in the government of the Church on the basis that magistracy was derived from Christ as Mediator rather than as God. Dr. McKay takes issue with Gillespie, but even those who favour Gillespie's position can appreciate discussion of the practical implications for the Headship of Christ of a Biblical understanding of the relation between the two natures in His Person and between His functions as the Eternal Son of God and as Mediator.

The major part of the book deals with practical implications of Christ's Headship for the Church's life. Attention is given to Gillespie's arguments for Presbyterian Church Government by a gradation of courts or increasingly wider elderships. Then his teaching concerning the officers of the Church, ministers and elders, is considered. Finally his exposition of the Biblical position on Church Discipline is surveyed.

Gillespie's basic principle is that the Scriptures provide a sufficient rule for the Church's worship and government so that the Church must conform to the Biblical pattern in these matters. Even if he does endeavour overmuch to show Biblical reasons for the details of Scottish Presbyterianism as it had developed by his time his chief concern is to demonstrate Biblical authority for the broad outline of Presbyterianism - government by ministers and elders in a series of increasingly authoritative Church courts.

Gillespie argues for preaching elders or pastors, teaching elders or doctors, and ruling elders. In the chapter on ministers several important subjects are raised. The preaching ministry is seen as a divine ordinance and the ordinary means for the conversion of sinners. It is not inconsistent with the priesthood of all believers. It alone has responsibility for the administration of the sacraments. Ruling elders are regarded as part of the presbyterate and not merely as lay representatives of the people. They share with the ministers in the exercise of discipline. Contrary to the common uninformed estimate of seventeenth century Scottish church discipline Dr. McKay shows that for Gillespie the goal of discipline is positive, his discussions manifesting 'a blend of warm pastoral interest and also zealous concern for holiness which makes for a balanced approach to discipline'. Consideration is given to Gillespie's teaching on the Biblical basis of discipline and the form which it is to take. In the course of discussing the right of the eldership to exclude the scandalous from the sacraments the significance of the Lord's Supper as a confirming and nourishing, and not converting, ordinance is highlighted.

In conclusion Dr. McKay considers Gillespie's significance in the seventeenth century context and how he illustrates the need for an interpreter of Scripture to guard against the influence of extraneous matter. In relation to his significance for more modern discussions of Church and ministry Dr. McKay suggests that Gillespie's emphasis on the institutional aspect of the Church 'is a necessary element in developing a comprehensive biblical ecclesiology and much can still be learned from interaction with his writings'. Such development of this theme as Dr. McKay with his knowledge and insight could most competently produce would be welcome. The manner in which more modern views of the Church are introduced brings the book to a rather negative conclusion as regards Gillespie.

This well researched and readable work should provoke thought on often neglected matters important to the wellbeing of the Church.

H.M. Cartwright

The Shape of Pneumatology. Studies in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, John McIntyre, T & T Clark, 1997, 296 pages, £23.95.

At the outset of his latest book, John McIntyre, Professor Emeritus of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh, poses the question as to whether the modern Church has betrayed the New Testament Church with reference to its understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. As he points out, development of doctrinal formulations over the centuries need not amount to betrayal: only a careful evaluation can show the truth of the matter.

In order to conduct such an evaluation McIntyre provides in his second chapter ('The Shape: A Sketch') a means of classifying the position of different theologians regarding the Holy Spirit. In doing so he makes use of the terms 'model' (familiar from two of his earlier works) and 'pattern'. The model is the generic concept, idea or image, and the pattern is the way in which a particular theologian or group develops a model. To sketch the history of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, McIntyre then isolates a series of models and patterns which, whilst rather cumbersome, nevertheless identify what is characteristic (in his view) of each position. Thus in the Bible he finds the 'Definitional/Biblical Pluralistic Model: Multiple Mutually Compatible Patterns'. In a similar way he

designates the position of the Cappadocian Fathers as 'Trinitarian Hypostatic Model: Traditional Pattern'. A series of such designations is produced which includes the views of the Reformers, Karl Barth and contemporary Charismatics.

The third chapter McIntyre devotes to the biblical material, providing a fairly comprehensive summary of Old and New Testament evidence. In contrast to much modern scholarship, his view of the Bible is generally conservative, although falling short of the full confidence required by the Bible itself. His treatment of the role of the Spirit in the Book of Acts is particularly helpful, although there is a lack of clarity regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The question of a 'betrayal' of these biblical insights into the ministry of the Spirit is taken up in chapter 4, 'The Trinity and the Classical Trinitarian Mould'. McIntyre notes that from the third century two points emerged in descriptions of the identity of the Spirit, namely the involvement of the Spirit in the doctrine of the Trinity and the attempts to distinguish the Spirit from the other Persons of the Trinity. He then provides a thorough examination of the pneumatology of the Greek Fathers, exemplified by the Cappadocians, considering in some detail the methodological principle, which guided their thinking.

Chapter 5 'Jean Calvin and the Trinitarian Mould' examines the great Reformer's position, described by McIntyre as 'Trinitarian Hypostatic Model: Christological Pattern'. In the main this is a useful chapter, looking particularly at Calvin's view of 'person' and defending him from charges of subordinationism. It is disappointing to find McIntyre arguing that Calvin thought of Scripture as accredited to individuals only by the personal working of the Spirit (Barthian sympathies on McIntyre's part becoming rather obvious) and ascribing to 'Calvinists' rather than to Calvin the doctrine of verbal infallibility. McIntyre fails to distinguish adequately the objective status of Scripture from man's subjective understanding and acceptance of that status (by the working of the Spirit).

The sixth chapter is devoted to Karl Barth, often accused by Reformed scholars of Modalism (the heresy that the 'Persons' of the Trinity are *successive* modes of God's self-revelation). McIntyre argues that for Barth the Holy Spirit is integrally involved in the work of salvation, bringing about in the hearts of people the subjective completion of what was objectively initiated by God before creation, i.e. the plan of salvation. McIntyre, however, is not able to provide a satisfactory defence of Barth's view that 'there is a Holy Spirit only after

the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ' (p 139). Inevitably in a discussion of Barth, the relationship between the 'immanent Trinity' and the 'economic Trinity' must be considered, and in the process McIntyre provides a useful discussion of the views of Augustus (pp 145-55). A range of other issues is considered, including the Holy Spirit and the Church, and baptism with the Holy Spirit (a repeatable experience, according to Barth, in contrast with the once-for-all nature of water baptism).

'Relational Pneumatology' is the subject of chapter 7, in which McIntyre considers the 'Definitional Dynamic Model: Relational Patterns'. Here McIntyre deals with the 'opera ad extra' of the Trinity and considers the variety of relational modes by which God the Holy Spirit relates to man and the created order. Much in the chapter is thought provoking and stimulating, even at points where the reader will have to dissent from McIntyre's position. At the end of the chapter he considers the problems associated with the terms 'hypostasis' and 'persona', and attempts to show that it is acceptable to recognise a degree of autonomous substantiality in each Person of the Trinity. Such a radical departure from orthodox Trinitarianism, allowing talk of several 'personalities' within the Trinity, will not command general assent and could not be defended in such a limited space.

Further account of the diversity of views of the working of the Spirit is taken in chapter 8 'The Church, the Spirit and the Polarities'. The polarities include differing views as to whether the Spirit is expressed through a community or as an institution, and particular attention is given to the Pentecostal movement. McIntyre is concerned to be balanced in his presentation and even-handed in his treatment of different views, but at some points this leads to his giving equal weight to opposing views only one of which may, when measured by the yardstick of Scripture, be acceptable. Thus, for example, too much credibility is given to some Pentecostal claims regarding the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church today.

A lengthy final chapter (55 pages) provides the author's conclusions on a wide range of pneumatological issues. Even when these do not command agreement, they make stimulating reading and provide a fitting end to a very useful study of a subject which must always be of vital concern to the Church.

W.D.J. McKay

Jesus and The Word, C.K. Barrett, T & T Clark, 1996, 276 pp., £12.95.

This is a collection of 17 essays by the Emeritus Professor of Divinity in the University of Durham. Although the earliest was given as a lecture in 1958, most date from the 1980s and eary 1990s, with two unpublished until their appearance in this volume. The subject matter is divided into four sections: six portraits of New Testament scholars; three essays on the Johannine writings; four on Paul; and four concluding reflections on the nature and task of New Testament theology.

Professor Barrett writes in a clear and attractive style and there are some valuable insights in these pages. He presents illuminating vignettes on Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort and a penetrating analysis of Albert Schweitzer's influential views on the kingdom of God. Some of his comments on the 4th gospel (in chapter 7) are interesting, as is his brief mention of the place of Romans 9-11 in the outworking of the Gentile mission (p.155).

As a whole, however, the book is a disappointment. The main reason for this is the author's inadequate view of Scripture. His approach is that of modified liberalism. His defence of the integrity of the record is faint, as best: 'Acts, in particular, contains a quantity of material of real historical value' (p.204). If such comments can be considered positive, they are swamped by critical negativity: 'Some of the statements made in the Gospel are of dubious correctness... The Johannine passion story thus contains little material that can be considered to be of great historical value... These passages are not of importance because of their historical value, which is in fact nil...' (pp. 103,104). For Barrett, indeed, 'Johannine' is an elastic term, as 'I shall presuppose that we are dealing with at least four authors, who wrote, respectively, John 1-20, John 21, 1 John and 2 and 3 John' (p.96).

In analysing Bultmann's teaching regarding the relation between the word of Jesus and the word about Jesus (from which the volume derives its title), the author asserts that: '...such genuine tradition about Jesus of Nazareth as may once have existed has been permeated at every, or nearly every, point by the theological ideas of the primitive church. This means that any reconstruction of the life, characteristics, and teaching of Jesus must be fraught with uncertainty, and can never be more than tentative... All we can really know about Jesus is that he existed... We cannot, for example, know how Jesus understood his death because critical study shows that all the predictions of the passion are vaticinia ex eventu' (pp.214, 215, 216). These are typical views of slightly old-fashioned

twentieth century New Testament scholarship. They are far removed from Reformed orthodoxy.

Most of the content is exceedingly thin. Some opinions, such as the supposed Gnostic influence in Revelation (in chapter 9) verge on the absurd. Other points are so obvious as to be scarcely worth making. An overwhelming impression is of a member of a closed, academic coterie, accustomed to dialoguing with itself and unaware of the views of a wider world. Take, for example, this assertion: 'There are few students of the New Testament who would not recognize some or all of the following, which all bear Paul's name, as not having been written by the apostle himself: Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus' (p.227). In this arrogance or narrow-mindedness? Is Professor Barrett simply unaware of modern Reformed and evangelical scholarship?

A dispiriting book, then. Intelligence, learning, diligence - all employed to so little purpose. There are few exegetical insights, practically nothing of spiritual benefit, little to enlighten the mind or move the heart to worship. The author begins and ends one of his essays with apologies: 'I hoped that a fresh approach might produce interesting results. I am not at all sure that it has done... we may end this not very productive examination' (pp. 119, 132). Sadly, his words apply to more of his writing than he fears.

Edward Donnelly

A Family Tree: 1 Chronicles simply explained, Andrew Stewart, Welwyn Commentaries, Evangelical Press, 1997, 222pp., £6.95.

The Welwyn Commentary Series should be warmly welcomed by all believers since it is based on the premise that study of the Old Testament as part of God's Word should be for the purpose of moulding the heart and mind and transforming the behaviour, to the end that we manifest a more perfect discipleship to our Lord, or in short, be holy as he is holy. The great problem with so much modern biblical scholarship is that so often we find it devoid of the devotional element - that is concrete, contemporary application of the teaching of God's Word to our lives. The life-changing power of the Word is relegated to the realm of the non-scholarly. This series seeks to fill that vacuum. In the words of one of the commentators it aims to, 'warm your soul and stir you to refreshed

discipleship to Christ.' The commentaries are written by pastors and their work grows out of the experience of week-to-week exposition to their congregations.

This welcome addition to the series is no exception. It is written by a pastor with a true pastor's heart. Fourteen of his twenty chapters focus on the life of King David and on the final page, quoting 1 Corinthians 10:11, he concludes, 'His life still is able to rebuke, teach, encourage and inspire us. We are blessed by him. May God make us willing people who have been blessed and challenged by the example of one of his truly great servants.' This work's great strength is that while it is essentially biblical-theological it also constantly and pointedly draws out and applies spiritual lessons in the manner of Matthew Henry, (a writer who is often quoted with approval here!). As the Introduction states, '... the Chronicler had a distinctive message, with a ready application to our own day... He seeks to impress on the people (returned from exile) their immediate duty to live godly lives, for blessing after obedience and punishment after disobedience are daily realities.'

This work is however particularly welcome since the Chronicles have long been among the most neglected books in the Hebrew Bible. Many readers for example find it difficult to get past the first nine chapters of genealogies (what one writer disparagingly calls 'Scriptural Sominex'!). These chapters are particularly well handled in this commentary. The writer gets to the heart of things in his opening chapter when he reminds us that, 'When we read the list of names in this chapter we read our own family tree - whatever our racial origin.' (Thus the title chosen for the book). As we are reminded the Holy Spirit is speaking firstly to God's people in the Second Commonwealth, reminding them of their true spiritual foundations as his covenant people, reminding them that their true glory as found in their covenant relationship with him, expressed not only in the prescribed forms of worship in the temple administered by the divinely ordained priesthood and under the protection of the divinely ordained Davidic dynasty, but in faithfulness to the covenant law. The Holy Spirit is also speaking to us as the spiritual children of Abraham for this is also our own family tree. Thus the opening five chapters of the commentary that deftly handle the 'problematic' opening nine chapters of 1 Chronicles are used to show us not only what the commentator calls 'lessons in God's grace' as we are pointed to Christ, but practical, encouraging and challenging lessons from the people in the seemingly daunting lists.

Then, after a salutory chapter on Saul we come to the main body of the work, the focus on David. This is well divided, each chapter dealing with manageable

units of material. Elements particularly worthy of praise are the care taken with important Hebrew words in the exegesis, the use of illustrations, the concern for constant application and the biblical-theological linkage with the New Testament as we are pointed on to Christ. The chapter on David's census, as the writer says, 'a dark and mysterious incident in the history of David's life', is particularly recommended.

This reviewer has only a couple of slight criticisms of an otherwise excellent work. Many readers will be aware of the way that critical commentators challenge the historical reliability of the books of Chronicles. This is due not only to the historical omissions, but to the sketchiness and incompleteness of the genealogies, as well as apparant indications of careless transmission of the text as seen in the differences in the spelling of names and the numerical discrepancies in statistical statements. These apparant difficulties can all be answered, so perhaps a brief mention of these matters could have been made in the introduction, though it is readily conceded that such technical matters perhaps lie outside of the scope of such a popular commentary. This leads the reviewer on to the other point which is that it might have been helpful in the introduction to have mentioned particular commentaries, introductions and helps the writer found useful and worthy of commendation.

These are but very minor points and the reviewer is happy to wholeheartedly commend this commentary to all his readers, while expressing the hope that soon we will see in print a commentary from the pen of the same author on Second Chronicles!

W.N.S. Wilson

BOOK NOTICES

The Way Forward? Christian Voices on Homosexuality and the Church. Edited by Timothy Bradshaw. Hodder and Stoughton, 1997. 229 pages. Pbk. £8.99.

In November 1995 a Working Group, meeting in response to a request by the Church of England Evangelical Council, produced the St Andrew's Day Statement, an examination of the theological principles affecting the homosexuality debate. Particularly in view are the Church of England's present difficulties with the issues of homosexual 'marriage' and the ordination of

practising homosexuals. This book brings together a wide spectrum of responses to the statement, ranging from a solid defence by Gerald Bray of biblical prohibitions on homosexual conduct ('Call to Biblical Values'), to a call by Michael Vasey for a radical reappraisal of traditional teaching on homosexual relationships ('Travelling Together?'). Although this is not the place to begin if the reader is seeking a straightforward presentation of the biblical view of homosexuality, the book does give valuable insight into the contemporary debate and defences of the main positions adopted by the various protagonists.

God and Rationality. Thomas F. Torrance. T. and T. Clark, 1997. 216 pages. Pbk. £13.95.

During the past thirty years T. F. Torrance has been swimming against the tide of much academic theology in arguing that theological statements are both objective and rational. The articles collected in this volume, originally published in 1971, seek from different vantage points to reinforce the view that 'theology is a science in its own right, operating with a basic form of rationality governed by its proper object', namely Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God. As Christian theology develops its modes of thought, Torrance argues, it must resist the subjective trends of contemporary culture. Although intensely personal, theology is not subjective. Torrance's perennial interest in the relationship between theology and science also has a prominent place in the book. Torrance's general theological approach is evident from his dedication of the book to the memory of Karl Barth, but critical interaction with this significant figure is important for understanding the task of theology in an often hostile academic environment.

Theological ethics and Holy Scripture: the use of Scripture in the works of James M. Gustafson, R. Paul Ramsey, and Allen D. Verhey. Laurens W. Bilkes. J J Groen en Zoon, 1997. 274 pages. Pbk. Price unknown.

The understanding of a Christian ethicist's use of Scripture is a vital element in evaluating his whole ethical system. This work, which is the author's doctoral thesis presented to the Theological University of the Christian Reformed Churches in Apeldoorn in the Netherlands, examines three thinkers who have been extremely influential in Christian ethics in the twentieth century. After an introductory chapter sketching the history of American Protestant ethics from Puritanism onwards, the author examines in detail the use made of Scripture by

each of his chosen ethicists and traces some of the practical outworking of each position. The treatment of each writer is thorough and fair, and Dr. Bilkes' own commitment to the absolute authority of Scripture is clearly in evidence. The final chapter, entitled "Reason, Community, and Practice: A Reformed Critique and Proposal", is both helpful and thought-provoking. Dr. Bilkes, who is a minister of the Free Reformed Churches of North America, pastoring in British Columbia, writes clearly and attractively (in his second language) and has produced a most valuable study of three of the main forces in contemporary Protestant ethics.

W. D. J. McKay