

ix. Finally, Bultmann is on record as denying the physical resurrection of the Lord. It seems such a pity that so many scholarly writings about the New Testament apparently consider him as a constructive and helpful authority always to be referred to in the realm of Gospel origins, a subject as truly fascinating as it is important. Take account of his views and those of his school we must, yet at the same time we bear in mind some relevant apostolic advice: "*For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*" [1 Corinthians 11:19].

BOOK REVIEWS

The Evangelical Succession in the Church of

England edited by D.N.Samuel. Published by James Clarke £2.75

'*The Evangelical Succession*' comprises seven addresses given in 1977 at the Lincoln conference of the Protestant Reformation Society. According to the Introduction the purpose of the conference was to go back to the roots of evangelicalism and reformed teaching in the Church of England in order, firstly, to give evangelicals in the C of E a sense of identity at a time when there is an element of uncertainty about the distinctive marks of evangelicalism, and secondly, to give a sense of continuity with those in the past who held the same biblical doctrines and thirdly, to give encouragement by the remembrance of the triumph of God's truth in previous days.

The fundamental argument of the book is stated by Rev D.N.Samuel in the Introduction: "*What we recognize in the Reformers is the teaching of the Church of England.*" The Church may have lost

sight of that teaching many times; in fact it is obviously in eclipse at the present time. But just as in the eighteenth century the Evangelical Awakening brought those same doctrines to clear light again, so today evangelical Anglicans must commit themselves to the "*upholding and promoting of them in the life of the Church*", and pray for God to grant revival to the Church of England today.

In the opening essay, Mr D.A. Scales of Cambridge pinpoints excellently three crucial Reformation doctrines which evangelicals must maintain. The first is the infallibility, inerrancy and supremacy of Scripture in matters of faith. Tradition and reason must submit to Scripture, which is both divine in its origin and perfectly clear in its fundamental doctrines. The second is the doctrine of the Atonement and the Lord's Supper. The Reformers proclaimed a substitutionary atonement and a clear doctrine of justification by faith alone. This was basic to all liturgical statements in the Prayer Book, where the essential emphasis was on God speaking to man. By contrast, in the Series 3 Communion Service any statement of the substitutionary atonement is absent, and the emphasis has moved away from God's Word to man to man's offering to God. Moreover, as the Reformers emphasised, faith in the heart of the recipient is crucial to the whole service, whereas in Series 3 the emphasis falls on the elements themselves and their inherent virtue rather than on the state of the recipient. It is not surprising that the impression is given in Series 3 that the communion service is the main meeting of the week, and that baptised children are allowed to the table. The third emphasis of Mr Scale's paper is on preaching. He suggests that the decline in the Church of England is directly related to the decline of preaching and that even evangelicals may have lost their nerve at this point.

He concludes with some searching and timely comments about the modern reluctance to define 'evangelical' in terms of doctrine; the modern danger of confusing worship with entertainment; and the modern ecumenical tendency to seek involvement with those who deviate from the biblical faith. He urges *"those who have an earnest conviction of the truth of the Biblical Gospel to stand fast and bear witness, not being distracted by half truths and compromise"*.

The Rev B.G.Felce of Preston has written an interesting article summarizing Toplady's *'Historical Proof of the Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England'* (1774). Toplady lamented the fact that the majority of the members of the Church of England in his day had departed from these doctrines; although in theory the Church possessed them, in practice it denied them. *"In the desk we are verbal Calvinists ... but no sooner do we ascend a few steps above the desk we forget ... and tag the performance with a few minutes entertainment from Pelagius and Arminius ... not to say by Arius, Socinus and others ..."*

There is a helpful paper by Rev P.H.Buss of Fulham entitled: *'From Laud to Waterland'*. Mr Buss evaluates the important seventeenth century, arguing that despite the many deviations from the Reformers, the restored Church of the 1660s saw the reinstatement of the Protestant heritage so that *"it is not evangelicals who have been subsequently embarrassed by the Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal, the Homilies and the Articles"*.

A valuable chapter on the nineteenth century is written by Rev D.S.Allister of Hyde. It highlights the significant fact that there were a large number of evangelicals within the Church of England during the last century, from evangelical bishops to prominent laymen. Conditions seemed as favourable as they could be for

evangelicalism to dominate. But in fact it went into serious decline for several reasons, including an absence of deep theological initiative, a tendency towards pragmatism, and, of course, the rise of Tractarianism. This is a salutary historical corrective to the somewhat naive contemporary assumption that the Church of England is becoming increasingly evangelical.

David Samuel's stimulating chapter, *'The Challenge of the Twentieth Century'* argues that the real problem confronting evangelicals within the Church of England today has its roots in the Oxford Movement, when doctrinal contradictions were allowed to remain in the Church. By now, they co-exist within the Church. External unity has been bought at the expense of truth. Tractarianism introduced a new form of comprehensiveness - no longer that of a basic Reformation doctrinal position allowing generosity of interpretation and charity over things indifferent, but that of the juxtaposition of contradictory views. The struggle was now between popery and Protestantism - a struggle which made real union impossible.

The Church of England, therefore, refused to exercise discipline over Tractarianism. Similarly, it has refused to discipline liberalism. It was "*drawn into doctrinal compromise and confusion*". The policy was that of appeasement and expediency. Before Tractarianism there had been a consensus of doctrine for 300 years - with differing schools of interpretation. But now diametrically opposite views were held together in tension, and given the euphemistic label "*differing insights*".

Moreover, whereas a previous generation of evangelicals affirmed their firm opposition to doctrinal deviations from the norm, many modern evangelicals have abandoned the old historical moorings in the Articles and Prayer Book. They assent to them in theory, but deny them in practice. Mr Samuel quotes from the Nottingham

Statement: "we are concerned lest any revision should give greater weight to the concepts of petition for the departed, eucharistic sacrifice or permanent reservation of the elements", and comments "but no concern is expressed for their removal!" Neo-evangelicals have adopted a new policy, that of co-operation with all traditions.

He concludes by arguing for the primacy of doctrine, for a true understanding of comprehensiveness, and for a firm commitment to the Protestant character which, he argues, the Church of England still possesses.

The final article is by Rev Roger Beckwith of Oxford and is called '*Keele, Nottingham and the future*'. He suggests that many evangelicals no longer believe that theirs is the true theology of the Church of England, but merely a permitted insight. A generation of "young activists of unconventional views" has tended to dominate Keele and Nottingham, and some of "them have ceased to be conservative even on the Bible". At Nottingham evangelical essentials were largely taken for granted when it had become urgent for them to be reaffirmed. Nottingham concentrated almost wholly on other matters, and the Nottingham Statement must rank as an appendix to the Keele Statement, and "an appendix of doubtful value at many points".

Mr Beckwith's lucid article concludes with three grounds for reassurance. (1) The 39 Articles remain, with a subscription requirement "not significantly different in meaning from the old declaration". (2) The Prayer Book of 1662 holds precedence over subsequent revised services. And (3) since the failure of the Anglican-Methodist scheme of union and the admitting of Free Churchmen to the Lord's Table in the Church of England, union with other Churches is unlikely. Therefore the Church of England will continue to remain a distinct body characterised by its Reformation

marks of being a) reformed and biblical, b) liturgical, c) national and established, d) paedobaptist, e) parochially organized, and f) episcopal.

There is a great deal in these articles to admire and applaud. Not least is David Samuel's magnificent sermon on the reformation under Asa, recorded in 2 Chronicles 15. That reformation began with a sermon. There follows a stirring plea for the primacy of preaching. That reformation was carried on with courage. We need to be men of principle and not expediency. That reformation restored true worship. True religion is marked by inwardness, God-centredness, and spiritual vitality. That reformation led to others being converted when they heard what was happening in Judah. *"Let us seek a genuine work of God in the Church, and the outreach will take care of itself."* Finally, in that reformation the people began to seek God with all their heart. They wanted to know God as a living reality, and sought Him until they found Him. The book is worth buying for this sermon alone.

Equally heartening is the strong emphasis given to the great doctrines of the Reformation and the need to apply them throughout the life of the Church. *"We deplore those who speak of the Reformation as a tragedy."* *"The oneness we value is oneness in the truth."* It is encouraging to know that there are men in the Church of England who think biblically and theologically, and who are unashamed to argue and act on doctrines such as the inerrancy of Scripture and the substitutionary atonement, and who stand out for preaching, seriousness of attitude and revival. Here are men who are prepared not only to affirm the great positives of the faith but who are also prepared to oppose denials of that faith.

'The Evangelical Succession' is also a very honest book. It faces squarely the present trends among

neo-evangelicals, and is anxious to call them back to foundations. It freely admits the lack of discipline within the Church of England, a Church which despite its clear doctrinal basis nevertheless allows men to remain within it although they openly profess views which contradict that basis.

In fact this is the crucial issue: discipline. Roger Beckwith states that the Church of England is "*a reformed, biblical Church (but suffering, like other churches, from a lack of discipline)*". In other words there is a serious disparity between what the Church says and what it does. It says it believes in the substitutionary atoning death of our Lord, in His absolute deity, in justification by faith alone, but it refuses to do anything about those who deny these truths. It is not surprising then, that people ask whether the Church really does believe these doctrines. The way a Church applies its beliefs will demonstrate whether or not it is really committed to them. Toplady said that a man can be Calvinistic at his desk but Pelagian in his practice. If the Church of England, or any other Church for that matter, allows views which are diametrically opposed to its doctrinal position, we are surely justified in wondering whether its commitment to that position is anything more than a paper commitment.

One has every sympathy with the authors of '*The Evangelical Succession*' in their courageous efforts to make the Church in practice what it claims to be in theory. But we also wonder, in the light of history and present developments, how long Anglo-Catholicism, Liberalism, and Evangelicalism can continue to co-exist, and the Church still call itself "*a Protestant Church*".

Mr Buss in his paper on the seventeenth century makes the observation that "*the numbers of true evangelicals in spirit, active evangelicals with*

an apostolic enthusiasm, the true heirs of Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Bilney, and their ilk, were to be found increasingly outside the Church of England." That was because they wanted a thorough reformation of the Church in practice as well as in doctrine, believing that the Bible was infallible not only in matters of faith, but also in matters of Church order. When it became clear to them that such a thorough reformation was not going to occur they sadly withdrew from the Church. Mr Scales writes: *"We find true unity and fellowship more with those who share with us the great doctrines of the Scriptures and the Reformation, whatever their denomination, than with members of our own Church who reject these doctrines."* Yet he also says: *"we are fully committed to the Church of England - as she is by her formularies delineated and as she ought to be, not to the de facto deviations of the day."* Here is a clear statement of the dilemma confronting many of our evangelical brethren within the Church of England. They need our prayers and our encouragement. May God continue to give them courage and conviction, enabling them to follow through the implications of their biblical stand.

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A History of Christian Doctrine edited by

Herbert Cunliffe Jones, assisted by
Benjamin Drewery. T & T Clark Ltd
Edinburgh 1978 601 pages £11.80

This book, published in the International Theological Library Series, aims to replace G.P. Fisher's '*History of Christian Doctrine*' and follows the broad lines of Fisher's work. The subject is treated in close relationship to General History as well as the faith and life of the Church. The general tone of the book may be gathered from the introduction which discusses

the possibility and the formulation of theological doctrine, its developments and upheavals and particularly its relation to sociology and philosophy for *"there seems no escape from the fact that the philosopher has the right to judge whether or not the terms that the theologian is asking is meaningful."* [p.19]

Apart from the editorial introduction there are ten contributors. Thus, it is held, Fisher's comprehensiveness is avoided and students encouraged to consult the texts. Further, a multiple approach is designed to *"do justice to all standpoints of Christian tradition"*, besides, *"history is essentially fact plus interpretation and where interpretations differ widely there may well be different opinions about what the facts actually are."*

G.W.H.Lampe gives a clear and competent discussion of the Patristic Period in about 160 pages. His statements are well documented and while much of the material is, necessarily, not new, some of the Fathers - at least for your Reviewer - have fresh light cast on them. Origen's Logos doctrine and his view of salvation receive close attention. In the Post Nicean period Athanasius and his working out of Trinitarian theology is dealt with in some detail. Difficulty in reconciling the Logos with the weakness and suffering of the flesh brings the Christology of Athanasius to where it *"clearly verges on the dectic."*

Augustine's theology is discussed and compared with the views of Pelagius and others. Following a chapter on the Christological Controversies we have a chapter on salvation, sin and grace which goes into a long historical background of the contending views of Augustine and Pelagius. Some discussion of Augustine's own presuppositions might have been helpful here: that faith precedes knowledge and is the key to knowledge; also where he placed authority, *"to the canonical*

scriptures alone I owe agreement without any dissent."

A short chapter on the '*Church and Sacraments*' leans heavily on the views of Cyprian and Augustine.

The second section pp 183-225 entitled '*Christian Theology in the East. 6000 to 1453 by Kallistos Ware*' makes most interesting reading. Byzantine Theology, with its marked reverence for tradition, seemed set in a "*theology of repetition*" developing into formalism. Our author claims that mysticism is necessary to dogma, or it becomes a mere mental exercise, and mysticism must become theological or be heretical. The iconoclast controversy should not be seen as a question of Christian art but as raising questions about God's creation and man's place in it. Separation from Rome is considered from the viewpoint of the Eastern Church and 1204 rather than 1054 should date the schism. The exclusion of the filioque is, of course, defended with an interesting addendum: "*From the Orthodox point of view, the Reformers went wrong in this as in a number of other matters, not because they were too radical, but because they were not radical enough.*"

The Middle Ages (604-1350) passes in 60 pages from the death of Pope Gregory I to the death of William of Ockham. After writing on the Monothelite, the Spanish Adoptionist and the Filioque controversies, the doctrine of Penance and Indulgences Anselm, Abelard and Bernard are studied as representatives of "*the age of revival and reform*". For "*the golden age of scholasticism*" the teachings of Bonaventure and, in greater detail, Aquinas are reviewed. Thomas' views of God, the Incarnation, sin and grace are severally treated in the light of his philosophic background which we are told needed "*a complete and ordered system of rational thought as a foundation and instrument for subsequent theological construction*"

p.271. Aquinas' emphasis on the contemplative and active side of individual life, with its far-reaching influence on the Christian Church merits special notice by the student of history.

E.Gordon Rupp has a section on '*Christian Doctrine from 1350 to the eve of the Reformation*'. He gleans from the history of men like Wyclif, Hus, Biel and particularly Erasmus, "*the greatest figure of the northern Renaissance.*"

Benjamin Drewery introduces us to the Reformers with a clear and sympathetically written statement of Luther's theology; first his theology in the making and then in its matured form. Students will be interested in following a discussion of Luther's Sola Fide that says, "*The decisive point is that here, par excellence, Luther is thinking coram Deo. Sola Fide is not an item in a doctrinal series ... it is rather the setting of the whole enquiry in a divine context.*"

Luther's thought on God, man, law, the knowledge of God and human reason are examined. The pages on the '*Two Kingdoms*' merit careful reading; while a more extended discussion of Church and Sacraments and the use of references would have been helpful.

Basil Hall gives 17 pages on Zwingli where he traces differences from Luther as stemming from distinct patristic traditions plus "*a more thorough-going Erasmianism.*" The Reformer's doctrine of scripture and of the sacraments are stated and their influence noted. E.Gordon Rupp adds a short chapter on Melancthon and Bucer with attention drawn to Bucer's apologetical work.

T.H.L.Parker in 12 pages on Calvin sets out to "*expound briefly the 1559 'Institutio'.*"

H.F.Woodhouse has a chapter on '*Sixteenth-Century Anglican Theology*' that indicates the

thought then given to the doctrine of the church.

R. Buick Knox follows with the '*History of Doctrine in the seventeenth century*' where he reviews developments from Trent, Dort, Arminius, the Caroline Divines, the Westminster Confession and the Savoy Declaration to 'Rational Theology' and the Latitudinarians. The chapter is well referenced.

The concluding chapter, '*Christian Theology in the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*' by John H. S. Kent (130 pages) begins with the statement that the period was one in which the church was on the defensive "*against wave after wave of criticism from both inside and outside organised Christianity.*" Special attention is given to the doctrine of the church and social theology in the whole period. "*Religion had to be recast and the first step toward that was an understanding that the language of the gospels was fluid, passing and literary.*" Revelation gives place to reason. In a section on the doctrine of the church in the whole period a variety of conflicting ideas appear: Newman's authoritarian supernatural society, Kirkegaard's individualism, Bultmann's notion of the church as an eschatological phenomenon which might possess time visibility and the "*growing feeling ... that new forms of the ecclesia must be allowed to manifest themselves as society transformed itself.*"

An interesting and informative section on social theology in the period notes the distinct motivations of Christian Socialism and Communism, the place of the family, violence in society and the general outworking of the Christian ethic. In bringing the history of doctrine up to the present day it appears that Troeltsch's view of what is tolerable to "*the educated mind*" seems to be the structuring principle. Tennent's efforts to bring religion and science are considered. Tillich's existentialism, Barth's reaction against liberal Protestantism, Bultmann's demythologizing approach

to the New Testament together with the general secularization of the West leads to the unhappy conclusion that "*pure theology had only an ecclesiastical environment, it had no other social roots by the 1970s.*"

This is a serious academic work and the student will find it valuable, particularly for the study of the Patristic and Pre-Reformation history of doctrine. Of the Reformers Luther comes off best. Your reviewer found the chapter on Calvin disappointing. In a book that is at pains to set theological statement in a cultural nexus Calvin's distinctives in social teaching, so long influential in the west, would appear worthy of notice. While agreeing that individual points of view cannot all be considered one could expect reference to the work of more conservative writers, particularly on the doctrine of Scripture which is possibly more a symbol of division in our times than social considerations. In spite of what the editor says in his preface concerning the value of the multiple approach the book is uneven. The indices appear short and a new edition should correct about a dozen misprints in the second half. It is a good book for classwork along with Fisher.

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Wrestling with Romans by J.A.T. Robinson.
Published by S.C.M. Press
pp.147 £1.95 p/b

This book is not a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans but the written-up lectures on the Epistle which were given by Dr Robinson in Cambridge in the 50's and early 70's. As such it provides an extremely useful critical introduction together with a summary of the message, 'wrestling' at greater length with the crucial areas of interpretation. The major textual

problems are helpfully discussed in some detail (see e.g. Romans 8:28 on p.104-5; 8:33 on p.107-8 and 9:5 on p.111). The reviewer found the format adopted very helpful since it prevented one from getting bogged down and unable to see the wood from the trees - we could do with more such books. In view of this the book could be useful to the student who has to specialise in the study of Romans (especially within a critical context) since it provides both a basic orientation to Romans and, probably, a useful pre-examination refresher course.

While, however, there are some extremely helpful discussions of particular subjects e.g. the relationship between Revelation and natural theology (p.22) and the problem of Romans 7; and, while Dr Robinson would appear to go no further than John Murray in his rejection of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin in chapter 5, yet the whole book follows, broadly, those lines mapped out by modern liberal orthodoxy and assumes most of the 'assured results' of modern criticism.

On Scripture the documentary hypothesis of the pentateuch, together with the tripartite division of Isaiah is assumed. This is, apparently supported by a mythical view of the early chapters of Genesis. The 'Book of Wisdom', often and usefully cited for parallels in thought, is, however, seen as 'Biblical'.

Of the virgin birth, Dr Robinson says, "*At one level Jesus was genuinely the product of the process of heredity and environment (which he takes to equal 'physical generation')*" (p.14)

The Gospel message seems to be "*accept that you are accepted*" within a universalistic framework and wrath is the experience of love while in a position of alienation. Consequently, propitiation, penal substitution and satisfaction are dismissed as the doctrines of "*distortion and polarisation*" (p.48) of Scripture "*now happily healed*"! Moreover "*Without*

60.

baptism nothing that has been done for us would have any effect in our lives, for it is only here that it is done in us" (p.70)

While some might agree that Paul's use of Scripture is often "*by our standards misuse*" (p.15) and share Robinson's antipathy toward double predestination (p.120), his subsequent denial of irresistible grace and his assertion that Jesus was identified with a fallen human nature would appear unacceptable (see p.128 and 94).

Conclusion

This volume is an irritating combination of good and bad. As such its usefulness is probably limited to the student situation mentioned above and to those who wish for a readable introduction to the conclusions of liberal criticism on this Epistle.

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