

In an article earlier this year in the *Guardian* on the commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade in the British empire in 1807 Simon Jenkins wrote that the 'point of history is to find out what happened and why, and thereby gain wisdom'. What is true for all history is true for church history. However, for the evangelical Christian historian the task is even more challenging than for others. The 'what' of history may seem straightforward enough, but what is he or she to select? There is far too much cover within the limits of a book, article or lecture. Not only so, but not all that purports to be Christian is Christian. There is much that traditionally comes under the umbrella of church history that an evangelical would want to disown as contrary to the Bible or an historic understanding of what genuine Christianity is. Even more problematic is the 'why' of church history. Why has what happened in the history of the church happened? There are many factors – personal, social, economic, political, cultural as well as spiritual. Church history can legitimately be told on the level of human explanation, but there is also the level of what God has done. But how can we know what God has done in history? The Bible is our standard, but we have to admit that even those events or movements that we think are most of God are mixed with much that is human. In any case, a biblical doctrine of providence means that we can acknowledge the unseen hand of God in everything that has happened in history however directly or indirectly he has chosen to work.

A stimulating and important book that looks at this whole matter is *God's Judgments – Interpreting History and the Christian Faith*¹ by Steven Keillor. Keillor was perplexed by the failure of evangelical Christians to say anything particularly Christian about the events of 9/11. In former generations Christians would have been unafraid to speak of

God's judgment on the nation. Of course some Christians such as the late Jerry Falwell did, but were roundly criticised and staged a hasty retreat. However Keillor believes that we need to take the Bible's teaching on God's judgment seriously. He is very critical of 'worldview thinking' that tends to mute the concrete teaching of the Bible with abstractions. I think he overstates his case, but he has a point. The Bible speaks of God's concrete judgments in history. Keillor prefers the category of witness or testimony in understanding and relating the Bible's message. After looking at the Bible's teaching he looks at the burning of Washington DC by the British in 1814 and the American Civil War as test cases. In both he discerns God's hand in judging the nation or groups within it. God's judgments are not easy to discern and facile identification is unhelpful, but the Bible demands that God judges nations today, Keillor writes as a serious academic historian and a Christian and what he says is well worth considering.

All this we need to bear in mind as we survey some of the church history books published over the past few years. There is a vast amount in the market and therefore I have been very selective.

General History

The big event in church history literature in the past few years has been the publication of the first volumes in the new *Cambridge History of Christianity*. I would say these are must have books, except that at £105 each (and there are nine volumes in the series), the average minister would have to be starving his family or else have a very generous and thoughtful congregation. I would however recommend that all theological college libraries procure copies. They are excellent and whatever caveats one may have they will be an indispensable resource for years to come. I believe that five

volumes have appeared so far. All the volumes depart from the traditional organisation of church histories. They have narrative sections, but also have sections dealing with regions, practices, theology and so on. There is also a great and welcomed emphasis on the social and communal aspects of church history. So while the great men (and occasionally women) and events are covered, there is much attention paid to how Christianity was practised on the ground and on the margins. The first is *Origins to Constantine*,² edited by Margaret Mitchell and Frances M. Young which personally I found less satisfying than the others. It has a slightly arcane academic feel to it. Also the earlier chapters are the weakest in the series in their handling of the New Testament material and growth of the church. It is very much a 'this is how Christians understood things to have been' approach rather than a 'this is what happened or didn't happen' approach. Volume 5 on *Eastern Christianity*³ is utterly fascinating as it opens up an area of church history with which most of us are unfamiliar. In one volume we have an historical narrative of the history of the Eastern churches, beginning with the Ecumenical Patriarchate based in Constantinople and moving on to the Greek, Russian and other Orthodox churches to the Monophysite churches of the Copts, Melkites, Armenians, Jacobites and Nestorians. The remarkable missionary reach of the latter is recounted. What is particularly instructive is the way the churches under Islam survived and adapted but also how Islam was influenced by the large Christian minorities and often majorities under its rule. There is also much here on art and liturgy in the Eastern church.

The last three volumes to have appeared cover the modern period. *Enlightenment, Reawakenings and Revolution, 1660 – 1815*⁴ edited by Stewart J. Brown

and Timothy Tackett is a very insightful book on this critical period in the western church. The first section deals with church, state and society in Europe. J.C.D. Clark's chapter on Britain and Ireland is especially good. The second section looks at Christian life in Europe with chapters on Protestant and Catholic clergy, sermons, education, popular religion and architecture. In the third section, movements and challenges, the impact of science, the enlightenment, the evangelical awakenings and toleration is dealt with. W.R. Ward's chapter on the awakenings distills much of his learning and wisdom and merits attention, especially in his exploration of the links between what was happening on the continent and Britain. The fourth section takes up the expansion of Christianity into the non-European world. Mark Noll writes on North America and Lamin Sanneh on Africa. This section highlights a key theme in all these volumes and that is the globalisation of Christianity that began in this period. The last section takes up the matter of the revolutions in Britain, America and France. The threefold theme expressed in the title shape the volume and highlights its impact on Christianity in the succeeding two centuries.

This becomes clear in *World Christianities, c.1815 – 1914*⁵ edited by Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley. Gilley's introduction is a magisterial survey of Christianity in this period. He highlights the social, cultural and intellectual challenges it faced and how Roman Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism in particular sought to confront them. It is interesting to note how conservative Christianity is recognised as a force resisting modernism and what that means for the future. Section one deals with Christianity and Modernism. Gilley himself writes about the papacy and David

Bebbington has a fascinating chapter on the growth of voluntary religion which in Protestantism became the dominant form in this period. Other chapters deal with patterns of worship, women, architecture, music, literature, social theology, science and the Bible. The second section deals with the theme of the churches and national identities with explorations of the relationship of Christianity to nationalism. John Wolfe's chapter on 'Anglicanism, Presbyterianism and the religious identities of the United Kingdom' is very good on the development of toleration and religious freedom as is Mark Noll again on the development of a Christian America and a Christian Canada. If you thought there was not much difference think again. In the third section there is the best and most useful survey of the worldwide expansion of Christianity since Stephen Neill. The volume ends with a fine chapter by Stanley on the outlook of Christianity in 1914 when everything was about to change beyond recognition.

The ninth and final volume in the series is *World Christianities, c.1914 – 2000*⁶ edited by Hugh Mcleod. In his introduction Mcleod identifies five themes that are later taken up in the book:

1. the development of Christianity from a mainly European to a worldwide religion;
2. the major challenge faced by Christianity in Europe and North America;
3. the diminishing importance of denominations and the increased interaction with other faiths;
4. the huge impact of war in the 20th century; and
5. the relationship of Christianity with oppressed and marginalised groups. To these he adds a possible sixth theme which runs through them all: that is the communications revolution. In the rest of the book these themes are woven through the chapters whether in dealing with Roman Catholicism,

Protestantism, ecumenism, missions, Pentecostalism and the independent churches of Africa. All of this is put in its political, cultural and social context. This volume is less of a classic church history than the previous one, but then it is dealing with a period of even greater change. Perhaps most significant has been the decline of Christianity in Europe and its growth elsewhere.

For anyone teaching church history one of the perennial quests is to find a good one volume church history. Renwick and Harman's *Story of the Church* is still useful, but it is short and lacking in analysis. The old Lion Handbook *History of Christianity* has been an invaluable resource. Its replacement *The New Lion Handbook: The History of Christianity*⁷ by Jonathan Hill is an excellent piece of work that just might fit the bill for a one volume history. Unlike the previous version the new handbook is largely written by one author, but with some short essays by experts such as the Calvinist Carl Trueman and the Catholic Thomas Weinandy. The whole of church history is covered with a generous amount of space given to the east and the developing world. My reservations are in relation to the section on the beginning of Christianity which attempts to be too detached. Can it really be said that "The question of the resurrection is one of the most vexed in the study of the early Christians, if only because the sources seem very hard to interpret"? I often wish that general church histories would simply begin from the end of the apostolic era. Also there is hardly any recognition given to conservative evangelicalism in the 20th century. The growth of fundamentalism in America and Pentecostalism is recognised, but there is no mention of people like John Stott, D.M. Lloyd-Jones, Carl Henry or Francis Schaeffer. Even Gresham Machen only gets a mention at the end of a paragraph on Harry

Emerson Fosdick. I think that the author is missing something as often happens in histories of the modern church. Eternity if not time will reveal how much the worldwide expansion of the church and indeed its survival in Europe has been due under God to classic evangelicalism. Nevertheless even with these caveats I think this is the best one volume church history available.

Jonathan Hill has also written *The History of Christian Thought*⁸ which is briefer and more of a reference work than the previous volume. Until the modern period all the key figures, doctrines and movements are given short articles. Each theologian has a section each on his life and thought. Again like the previous volume this one falls down in its treatment of the 20th century. While we need to know about Barth, Tillich and Rahner nothing is said about evangelicalism. The 20th century may not have been evangelicalism's strongest period theologically, but it has become a significant force and in recent decades has recovered something of its theological confidence even as liberalism has collapsed. Stephen Tomkins has written *A Short History of Christianity*.⁹ Vividly written, the book is not however judicious in its assessments and genuflects too much to the mainstream. For children *The History Lives* series by Mindy and Brandon Withrow is to be recommended. *Peril and Peace* on the early church and *Monks and Mystics*¹⁰ are very good and reliable introductions to young readers. The Banner of Truth has published a helpful workbook for S.M. Houghton's well-loved Sketches from Church History.¹¹ This would be useful for a small study group, especially young people. Unfortunately it ends with the 19th century when the worldwide advance of the gospel only really gets going.

Early Church

Augustine of Hippo is a fascinating character. There are many excellent biographies, but one of them is definitely not *Augustine, Saint and Sinner*¹² by James J. O'Donnell. O'Donnell is a leading Roman Catholic Augustine scholar, but this book, while interesting, is something of a hatchet job. Augustine comes off as a pre-New Labour master of spin. His famous *Confessions* is simply a brilliant PR job that hides a much less attractive figure. Stick with Peter Brown. Much more reliable and a good and informative read is *Defence of Truth – contending for the faith yesterday and today*¹³ by Michael Haykin. In six short chapters Haykin focuses on different early church fathers and how they defended the faith against its opponents with relevant application for our defence of the faith in an increasingly similar culture. In *Contending for our All*¹⁴ by John Piper introduces us to three great defenders of the faith, Athanasius, John Owen and Gresham Machen. As there is so little readily available on Athanasius I mention the book in this section. Theological controversy is never pleasant, but is sometimes necessary as Athanasius discovered in his battle with Arius. How much we owe to him and can learn from him, not least in thinking theologically for the good of the souls of people. Piper is a master at these cameo portraits.

Reformation

Protestants are accused of jumping over the medieval period to the Reformation. I have to plead guilty for the simple reason that I do not have any books for that period to review. May Nick Needham (see his article) forgive me. There is however a number of good books dealing with the Reformation period. Nick Needham's third volume in his series

2000 Years of Christ's Power dealing with the Renaissance and Reformation¹⁵ is magisterial and will be used for a long time as a text book in this area. As well as a thorough and well-paced narrative there is doctrinal exposition and documents. With the 500th anniversary of John Calvin's birth on the horizon in 2009 there is an increasing flow of books about the Genevan reformer. Christian Focus has republished Williston Walker's 1906 classic biography of *John Calvin*.¹⁶ This remains one of the best biographies. Two short books demand out attention. *Let Christ be Magnified*¹⁷ is the series of lectures that the 19th century church historian Merle d'Aubigne delivered in 1864 on the 300th anniversary of Calvin's death. This is an excellent and heart warming introduction to Calvin's theology and spirituality. Also short and excellent is Steven J. Lawson's *The Expository Genius of John Calvin*.¹⁸ Calvin was first and foremost a preacher and Lawson captures something of what this must mean for those who are his spiritual heirs. The book covers the familiar aspects of preaching, but illustrates them from Calvin's practice. The book is a delight that every preacher should prayerfully read in order to renew his own spiritual life and preaching. Perhaps a British publisher will make it more readily available in the UK. For a taste of Calvin's preaching read his *Sermons on the Book of Micah*¹⁹ newly translated and edited Benjamin Wirt Farley. Farley's translation brings out the freshness and vitality of Calvin's language as he expounded the text of Scripture and applied to his congregation. The book is worth having as a commentary as well as an example of instinctive Christ-centred preaching from the Old Testament. Another Old Testament that book that Calvin famously preached from was Job. In *John Calvin – Suffering – Understanding the Love of God*²⁰ Joseph Hill brings together and annotates passages on suffering from

Calvin's sermons, commentaries and theological writings. The result is an wonderful work on suffering in the Christian life, full of God-centred pastoral reflection and an insight into Calvin as a shepherd of souls. Very different in nature but also revealing of Calvin as a pastor is *Courtship, Engagement and Marriage*²¹ by John Witte Jr. and Robert M. Kingdon, the first volume in Eerdman's series *Sex, Marriage and Family Life in John Calvin's Geneva*. This is an academic book, but nevertheless intriguing in its description of how Calvin and his colleagues tried to apply biblical principles of sexuality, marriage and family in Geneva. Here we discover how the reformation worked itself out in the lives of ordinary people. Here too Calvin's writings on the subject are collected. Contemporaneous with Calvin was Heinrich Bullinger in Zurich. At the time he was as influential, especially in England where he had many correspondents and his writings were widely read. A collection of essays edited by Bruce Gordon and Emilio Campi and entitled *Architect of the Reformation*²² is a very insightful introduction to this overlooked but important reformer. The book acquaints us with the remarkable breadth of Bullinger's interests and influence, pastoral care and theology, preaching, civic and church leadership. Even more than Calvin, Bullinger was at the centre of a network of evangelicals. There is much we can learn from the quiet way he built upon and transformed Zwingli's earlier reforms. One of Bullinger's correspondents was Lady Jane Grey whose life Faith Cook retells in *Nine Day Queen of England*.²³ This is a very readable account not only of a young Protestant woman tragically caught up in the political maelstrom that followed Edward VI's death, but a testimony to her strong faith and an excellent introduction to the this crucial period in English history.

17th and 18th centuries

For an excellent introduction to the Puritans and their kin consult Joel Beeke's *Puritan Reformed Spirituality*.²⁴ Not dissimilar to J.I. Packer's *Among God's Giants*, this book brings together a wide range of studies of British, Dutch and American Reformed theologians and pastors in the 17th and 18th centuries. Particularly useful is the material on Dutch Puritanism. The connecting theme is the concern of these writers to nurture godliness among Christians through the application of the gospel. Beeke could be a little more critical of some of the Puritans and the introspective piety that sometimes has characterised the tradition. More attention could also be given to the public dimension of their spirituality. But that said the priority of nurturing godliness is one that we need to reaffirm and the Puritans critically read have much to teach us. David Calhoun's study of John Bunyan in *Grace Abounding*²⁵ is a fresh and accessible introduction to the life and theology of this remarkable man who towers over our culture long after he died. The Banner of Truth has also published recently some works from and about this period. *The Letters of John Newton*²⁶ are always a dose of good spiritual sense. This volume, edited by Josiah Bull, is largely different than the previous Banner paperback and contains some letters not found elsewhere. Edward Morgan's *John Elias – Life, Letters and Essays*²⁷ is a reprint of an earlier republication that exposes us to the passionate Calvinistic evangelicalism that transformed not only 18th and 19th century Wales, but much of Britain and America. Elias's letters and essays are an example of clear gospel-centred thinking that we so desperately need to recover. A better known figure is the subject of *The Life and Times of George Whitefield*,²⁸ by Robert Philip. Here in one volume we have a sympathetic

biography of the great 18th century evangelist that makes considerable use of Whitefield's own writing.

The 19th century

In recent years 19th century architecture has been freshly appreciated, especially as our centre cities have been regenerated and the achievements of Victorian municipal fathers reassessed. Perhaps something similar will happen with 19th century Christianity. That it was the evangelical century is without doubt as the three volumes in IVP's *A History of Evangelicalism* series bears witness. The first volume, Mark Noll's *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, deals with the 18th century and has been reviewed in a previous issue. The early 19th century is dealt with in John Wolfe's excellent *The Expansion of Evangelicalism*.²⁹ This is a crucially important period as evangelical Christianity expanded phenomenally on both sides of the Atlantic. Weaving together a coherent narrative as well as delving into the way ordinary evangelicals lived, believed and worshipped, Wolfe is very good on the whole matter of revivals and understanding them on different levels. I think, however, he could have included more on the critique of Finney and the new measures from conservative Congregationalists and Presbyterians.

David Bebbington's *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*³⁰ is also excellent and very insightful. What he says about the impact of Romanticism is very helpful for understanding much of present-day evangelicalism. However I am always uncomfortable with the emphasis in Bebbington that evangelicalism is largely a product of the 18th century and that various developments in the 19th moved more conservative evangelicals to harden their doctrinal position. I prefer to see greater continuity with the Puritans and Reformers, although there was

development and change. This raises the issue that D.G. Hart and others have raised about evangelicalism. Is there such a thing in the way these historians think there is? Some of the people that Bebbington mentions, such as John Clifford, may have come from an historically evangelical denomination, but would hardly today be considered evangelicals. Or perhaps they would. That is the problem. I prefer to define evangelicalism as living orthodox Protestantism. It is classic Protestant Christianity (credally orthodox, catholic in the true sense of the word, the *solus* of the Reformation) that is experientially alive. The Protestantism of the Reformers was alive, but Protestantism can easily fossilise into lifeless moralism and needs to be constantly spiritually renewed. In this sense evangelicalism has deep roots, although it adapts to its context which can be either a bane or a blessing. Something of this adaptability can be seen in *What a Friend we have in Jesus*³¹ by Ian Randall. This volume is part of a series on Christian spirituality and Randall shows how evangelicalism has a rich and deep understanding of spiritual life. His canvas is broader than the 19th century and he includes everything from Calvinism to the charismatic movement. Again there is a problem of definition, but in these pages there is enough of a family likeness to give it coherence.

The easiest and most enjoyable way to understand history is through the lives of some of the key players. Here are some recent offerings in roughly chronological order. Daniel Webber's *William Carey and the Missionary Vision*³² is a fine and applied introduction to Carey's pioneering missionary theology with a reprint of his famous Enquiry and Andrew Fuller's sermon *On delays in Religious Concerns*. Thomas Chalmers was inspired by Carey and was a great encourager of mission at home and

abroad. His *Letters*³³ convey something of the spirit of his large-hearted Christianity. Whether he is dealing with the personal matters of his correspondents or the large issues of church and state there is always the spirit of Christ-exalting, God-centred Christianity. Chalmers as well as other 19th century worthies such as Horatius Bonar, John Macdonald and Robert Moffatt are the subjects of chapters in Ian Murray's *A Scottish Christian Heritage*.³⁴ John Knox and Robert Bruce as well as 'Scottish' themes such as eldership, preaching the theological decline of the old Free Church are dealt with. Murray has a rare gift of bringing out the spiritual essence of a man or movement. Whether you have any connection with Scotland read this book for its historical exposition of the evangelical Calvinism that can transform nations. My only criticism is that Murray could have said more about Chalmers' public engagement and concern for society. This was an important aspect of his Christianity. A man of similar spirit to Chalmers was Andrew Reed whose life Ian Shaw recounts in *The Greatest is Charity*.³⁵ Reed is a sadly neglected figure, but whose achievement is remarkable by any standard. As well as being a Congregational minister in the East End of London he founded several schools, orphanages and hospitals. In Reed we find the same characteristics that we find in other early 19th century men – a Calvinistic evangelicalism that was doctrinally orthodox, experientially alive and practically compassionate. Shaw retells Reed's story well in a way that will inspire us to follow his example. In the same line of faith was the later 19th century leader J.C. Ryle who is freshly appreciated by J.I. Packer in *Faithfulness and Holiness*.³⁶ The first half of the book is an excellent biography of Ryle in Packer's inimitable style. The second half is a reprint of the 1877

version of Ryle's classic *Holiness*. This version is shorter and was written for his family. This is good, sane, biblical Christianity. A younger contemporary of Ryle's was *F.B. Meyer*³⁷ whose biography has been written by Bob Holman. While well-researched, this book is a celebration of Meyer's remarkable ministry that embraced pastoring, preaching, missionary work, denominational leadership and social activism. It is the latter aspect that Holman emphasises in order to recover this aspect of evangelicalism's heritage. Meyer, like Reed and Spurgeon, had a great love for the lost people of London, especially the poor, and is a model for us today as we seek to reach our cities for Christ.

The United States

Though published five years ago I want to mention Mark Noll's *America's God*.³⁸ This is magnum opus of one of the most distinguished historians of evangelicalism. Covering the period from Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln, Noll gives us what is in effect is a theological history of the 18th and early 20th centuries. His range is wide and scholarship deep as he shows how theology was adapted to the context of late colonial and early republican America. As a study in theological contextualisation this book cannot be surpassed. For contextualisation or lack of it on the mission field *North American Foreign Missions*,³⁹ a collection of essays on various aspects of missionary engagement by North American Protestants. The contributors are not all evangelicals, but the historical analysis is first rate. A much neglected field is that of the experience of Black Christians in America. In *Black Church Beginnings*⁴⁰ Henry H. Mitchell explores the roots of the Black American Christian experience beginning in the 17th century and continuing to the mid-19th century. He particularly focuses on the various secessions from Methodism and the

emergence of large Black Methodist Episcopal denominations.

Most readers are more familiar with Reformed Christianity in America. Presbyterian & Reformed are publishing a series of *American Reformed Biographies*. Well worth reading is D.G. Hart's biography of *John Williamson Nevin*.⁴¹ Nevin is a fascinating figure in that he moved away from the new school Presbyterianism of his upbringing and old school Presbyterianism of his training at Princeton to a form of high church Calvinism in his adopted home in the German Reformed Church. With the historian Philip Schaff he developed what became known as the Mercersburg theology that Charles Hodge so opposed. At one stage Nevin seemed to seriously consider converting to Rome, but didn't and maintained what he understood as catholic Calvinism to the end. There are many issues relating to his theology that space forbids dealing with, but the problem that concerned him throughout his life was the effect of the radical individualism in Reformed Protestantism and the consequent downplaying of the church in the Christian life. This continues to be a problem that Nevin continues to challenge us on. A more mainstream character was *Robert Lewis Dabney*⁴² whose biography by Sean Lucas is also very interesting. Many of us value Dabney's theological writings, but there is something about him that I find unappealing. Perhaps it was his aggressive defence of slavery and the bitterness that seemed to characterise him towards the end of his life. He was certainly a man of great stature, but as so often with such men there are great flaws. Lucas offers a nuanced life of Dabney in the context of the Southern culture he so loved and sought to defend. Was he an example of overly contextualised theology that in end was compromised by its defence of an

abomination? A voice from a region of the United States of which both Nevin and Dabney were wary is Ebenezer Porter whose *Letters on Revival*⁴³ offer wise advice on revival from his experience of them in the early 19th century. There is good material here, although there is much like it on the market, not least from Banner itself. But this is in short compass good Edwardsean stuff that Nevin would have seen as in part the problem. But it is a false choice between a churchly and an experiential Christianity. We need both.

Baptists

I don't try to be too denominationally biased in my reviews, but two authors have recently published books on Baptist history that merit out attention. Robert Oliver's *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1771–1892*⁴⁴ is a very fine account of English Baptist life between John Gill and C.H. Spurgeon. While with narrative sections this is really a theological history as Oliver takes up men, controversies and movements and gives us a picture of how the Particular Baptists developed. Compared to other works more attention is paid to Strict Baptists. In many ways Tom Nettles takes the same approach except on a much larger scale in his three volume *The Baptists*.⁴⁵ Nettles' concern is to explore the matter of Baptist identity through various people and movements. In the introduction to the volume he outlines what he calls the coherent truth approach as opposed to the soul liberty approach. The latter identify the freedom of the Christian conscience as the true mark of Baptist identity whereas the latter sees Baptist identity as cohering with classic Protestant Christianity but with its own distinctive ecclesiology. Volume 1 deals with English Baptists from the 17th century to Andrew Fuller and William Carey at the beginning of the 19th century. His studies of Spilsbury, Kiffin,

Knollys, Keach, Gill, Fuller and Carey are excellent. Volume 2 takes up American Baptists from the beginning to the 19th century theologians of the Southern Baptist Seminary and the remarkable missionary Lottie Moon. The treatment of the early New England Baptists – Roger Williams, Isaac Backus and John Leland – is very illuminating. At the end of the volume are two chapters on the Haldane brothers and Gerhard Oncken respectively. Volume 3 brings us to the 20th century. There is a very fine chapter on A.H. Strong and another on E.Y. Mullins. The latter is very instructive on the problem of being a moderate evangelical in a time of theological decline. It would have been helpful (but is really too much to ask when there is so much) to have had more on what happened in the Northern Baptist churches and what happened in the UK. There is a chapter each on Spurgeon and his antagonist John Clifford, but nothing after that. These volumes are invaluable in establishing the historical basis of contemporary Baptist identity. I am convinced that this is something that not only Baptists, but baptistic independents in the UK need to give serious consideration to. Are we in danger of having no ecclesiology?

20th century

Someone who wrestled with these questions in the context of the 20th century was E.J. Poole-Connor, the founder of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches. Poole-Connor sought to maintain the tradition of Spurgeon in the context of a non-denominational movement that would be distinctively evangelical in a way the older denominational bodies were not. Wakeman Trust has republished David Fountain's 1966 biography of Poole-Connor, *Contending for the Faith*⁴⁶ which gives us a good picture of the man. Poole-Connor saw more clearly than most other evangelicals of his time

what was happening in the churches and what needed to be done. The problem with this book is the rather tendentious postscripts at the back by Fountain and Peter Masters.

The latter attacks the FIEC and other things he doesn't like. This is not the place to refute this abuse of history, but suffice it to say that Masters' comments lacks the magnanimity that Poole-Connor and Spurgeon before him showed. But that is often the case with those who claim the mantles of the prophets. Poole-Connor lived to see the beginning of the Reformed resurgence in the 1950s and '60s. *The Banner of Truth*⁴⁷ played a key role in this. To mark the 50th anniversary of the magazine's founding issues 1 to 16 have been reprinted. The volume is well worth perusing to get a feel for the doctrines, people and events that helped to shape the thinking of men and women rediscovering the doctrines of grace. We can never get away from these basics and need to be constantly reminded of them. A key figure in this resurgence was *John Murray*, whose *Life* by Iain Murray Banner has also reissued with an appendix containing letters from John Murray. If not one of the most exciting lives, this biography offers us insight into one of the greatest Reformed theologians of the 20th century whose witness still bears fruit today. Murray participated in some of the early conferences of Tyndale House. In reading T.A. Noble's history of *Tyndale House and Fellowship*⁴⁸ it is interesting to note the Reformed emphasis in the early years, even to the extent of having a conference on the Synod of Dort. I can't imagine that happening today, which illustrates something of the changes in post-war evangelicalism in the UK. Dr Lloyd-Jones and others helped to inject Reformed theology into the blood-stream of the theological renewal of evangelicalism, but it didn't last as the movement expanded and as the focus turned more towards

biblical scholarship. There is no doubt that Tyndale House and Fellowship have had a significant influence on evangelicalism as now several generations of scholars have used its facilities and meetings and moved to academic positions. But while there have been many whose scholarship has been a great blessing to the church, there are others who have succumbed to the academic respectability that Dr Lloyd-Jones feared. The purpose of Christian scholarship must not be to gain influence and respectability in the world, but to serve the church in its mission of proclaiming the gospel.

Global Christianity

The remarkable growth in recent decades of evangelical Christianity in the developing world means that church history must take account of what has happened and is happening in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In a past issue I mentioned Philip Jenkins', *The Next Christendom – The coming of Global Christianity*. This book has put the growth of Christianity on the radar of the secular academy. Apparently the New York Times got in a panic about it, not having realised what was going on outside the secure walls of the secular East Coast of the United States. Jenkins has followed up his first volume with two more in what is now a trilogy on global Christianity. *The New Faces of Christianity – Believing the Bible in the Global South*⁴⁹ is a fascinating study of how the Bible is read and used in Africa. Jenkins' point is that the Bible is largely taken at face value which has implications for many areas of life – sexual ethics, attitudes to wealth and poverty, awareness of the supernatural and so on. The global implications are that as the church grows in the south that African and Asians will have a theologically conservative influence on the direction of the world church. This is already being seen in the struggle over homosexuality in the Anglican

Communion. In *God's Continent*, Jenkins takes up the theme of *Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis*.⁵⁰ Here Jenkins is somewhat counter intuitive. He dissents from many who see religion in general and Christianity in particular in terminal decline. While in many cases not healthy if not dead, in many other places Christianity is very much alive. He sees the church in a period of transition as it loses its privileged status and rethinks its mission. In the meantime immigrants are bringing more vigorous forms of Christianity with them and seeing Europe as a mission field. As for Islam it is not as strong as some think and here he dissents from those who see the future of Europe as Eurabia with growing Muslim minorities that threaten to become majorities in some places. Jenkins thinks that Muslims will become more secular as time goes on and a European form of Islam develops. Whether or not one agrees with everything in Jenkins' analysis he offers a stimulating overview of global Christianity in the early 21st century. We live in exciting times for God's kingdom and these books help us to understand a world in which he is at work advancing his kingdom. What that means theologically is the subject of *Globalizing Theology – belief and practice in an era of world Christianity*.⁵¹ This is a collection of essays in honour of the respected missiologist Paul Hiebert of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. This is not an historical book, although Andrew Walls contributes a fine chapter on globalisation and the study of church history. Church history, while dealing with the very important events that happened in Europe such as the Reformation, must become increasingly global in scope and missiological in nature. Europe is no longer the heartland of Christianity. The book is well worth reading and reflecting upon as every church becomes global as Charles Van Engen puts it, both local and catholic.

Reference works

Good biographical reference works are handy if you are doing research or want a bit of background on someone you are reading. IVP's *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*⁵² has articles on a wide range of leading evangelical by an impressive array of scholars. If you are a history buff this book is addictive. As is the two-volume *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730 – 1860*.⁵³ The size and period mean that this is a much more detailed work with short articles on evangelicals you never knew existed. The importance of this dictionary is that it focuses on the crucial period of evangelical growth from the mid-18th to mid-19th centuries. IVP's *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*⁵⁴ is not a specifically historical work but it contains much historical material. There are a number of articles on the history of Christian apologetics as well as biographies of key apologists such as James Orr, Abraham Kuyper, and Cornelius van Til to name a few. But the main reason to buy this book is that it is an extremely helpful tool for doing apologetics. Many themes and topics are covered on various movements, religions and philosophies as well as six excellent introductory articles on apologetics as a theological discipline.

References

1. Steven J. Keillor, *God's Judgments* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic 2007).
2. Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young, eds., *Origins to Constantine*, volume 1 in the Cambridge History of Christianity [CHC] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006).
3. Michael Argold, ed., *Eastern Christianity*, volume 5 in CHC, (2006).
4. Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett, eds., *Enlightenment, Reawakenings and Revolution, 1660–1815*, volume 7 in CHC (2006).
5. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley, eds., *World Christianities, c. 1815–1914*, volume 8 in CHC (2006).
6. Hugh Mcleod, ed., *World Christianities, c. 1914–2000*, volume 9 in CHC (2006).
7. Jonathan Hill, *The New Lion Handbook: The History of Christianity* (Oxford: Lion 2007)
8. Jonathan Hill, *The History of Christian Thought* (Oxford: Lion 2003)
9. Stephen Tomkins, *A Short History of Christianity* (Oxford: Lion 2005).
10. Mindy and Brandon Withrow, *Peril and Peace and Monks and Mystics* (Christian Focus: Fearn, Rosshire 2005).
11. Rebecca Frawley, *Sketches from Church History Student Workbook* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2007).
12. James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Saint and Sinner* (London: Profile Books 2005).
13. Michael Haykin, *Defence of the Truth* (Darlington: Evangelical Press 2004).
14. John Piper, *Contending for our All* (Leicester: IVP 2006).
15. N.R. Needham, *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 3 in *2000 Years of Christ's Power* (Darlington: Evangelical Press 2004).
16. Williston Walker, *John Calvin* (Fearn: Christian Focus 2005).
17. Merle d'Aubigne, *Let Christ be Magnified* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2007).
18. Steven J. Lawson, *The Expository Genius of John Calvin* (Orlando: Reformation Trust 2007).
19. John Calvin, *Sermons on the Book of Micah* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed 2003).
20. Joseph Hill, ed., *John Calvin – Suffering – Understanding the Love of God* (Darlington: Evangelical Press 2005).
21. John Witte Jr. and Robert M. Kingdon, *Courtship, Engagement and Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2005).
22. Bruce Gordon and Emilio Campi, *Architect of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2004).
23. Faith Cook, *Nine Day Queen of England* (Darlington: Evangelical Press 2004).
24. Joel Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Spirituality* (Darlington: Evangelical Press 2006).
25. David B. Calhoun, *Grace Abounding* (Fearn: Christian Focus 2005).
26. John Newton, *The Letters of John Newton* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2007).
27. Edward Morgan, *John Elias* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 1973, reprinted 2004).
28. Robert Philip, *The Life and Times of George Whitefield* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2007).
29. John Wolfe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism – The Age of Wilberforce, Chalmers and Finney* (Leicester: IVP 2006).
30. David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism – The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester: IVP 2005).
31. Ian Randall, *What a Friend we have in Jesus* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd 2005).
32. Daniel Webber, *William Carey and the Missionary Vision* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2005).
33. Thomas Chalmers, *The Letters of Thomas Chalmers* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2007)
34. Iain H. Murray, *A Scottish Christian Heritage* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust 2006).
35. Ian Shaw, *The Greatest is Charity* (Darlington: Evangelical Press 2005).
36. J.I. Packer, *Faithfulness and Holiness – the witness of J.C. Ryle* (Wheaton 2002)
37. Bob Holman, *F.B. Meyer* (Fearn: Christian Focus 2007).
38. Mark Noll, *America's God* (New York City: Oxford University Press 2002)
39. Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *North American Foreign Missions, 1810–1914* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2004).
40. Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Church Beginnings* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans 2004).
41. D.G. Hart, *John Williamson Nevin* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed 2005).
42. Sean Michael Lucas, *Robert Lewis Dabney* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed 2005).
43. Ebenezer Porter, *Letters on Revival* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2004).
44. Robert Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1771-1892* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2006)
45. Tom Nettles, *The Baptists*, 3 volumes (Fearn: Christian Focus/Mentor 2005, 2007)
46. David Fountain, *Contending for the Faith* (London: Wakeman Trust 2005)
47. *The Banner of Truth Magazine Issues 1–16* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth 2005)
48. T.A. Noble, *Tyndale House and Fellowship – the first sixty years* (Leicester: IVP 2006).
49. Philip Jenkins, *The New faces of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press 2006)
50. Philip Jenkins, *God's Continent* (New York: Oxford University Press 2007)
51. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, eds., *Globalizing Theology* (Leicester: IVP 2007)
52. Timothy Larsen, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (Leicester: IVP 2003)
53. Donald M. Lewis, ed., *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*, two volumes (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrikson 2004)
54. Campbell Campbell-Jack and Gavin J. McGrath, eds. *The New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (Leicester: IVP 2006)