

Worship language assigning functions to the persons of the Trinity divides the work of the Godhead and removes the inter-personal and inter-dependent nature of the Trinity. Thoughtless and careless use of male imagery about God is both deeply wounding and inappropriate but ultimately the “motherly Father” cannot be removed from a Christian tradition that has continuity at its heart. Keith Riglin revisits the Achilles heel of Reformed and Free Church liturgical order – lay presidency at the Eucharist. The writer argues that the 1998 amendment to the URC *Basis of Union* allowing “a suitable person to preside at the celebration of the sacrament in case of an emergency” (when appointed – there and then – by a church meeting from among the congregation) displays a practice of authority and order different from the inherited traditions of both Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. Such a “church meeting”, he claims, is not a court of the church, as this is classically understood in the United Reformed Church, dishonours the covenant nature of the original Congregational-Presbyterian union of 1972, and runs contrary to the predominant understanding of ordination and ministry within the Reformed tradition.

Fleur Houston uses Barth’s theology of God’s Word in the Bible and Ricoeur’s “hermeneutical theory” to expose and unlock the power of metaphor and meaning in Reformed preaching. Barth’s homiletic weakness was the presumption that his objective doctrine of preaching did not need to be enfolded by the requirements of communication and audience reception. The writer believes this conundrum is rescued by Ricoeur’s belief that preaching is not just talk *about* God but also talk *by* God. The biblical text has to be in touch with “the great romance of culture” and there is no true preaching without “dynamic equivalence”. At the heart of preaching are the “living metaphors” incapable of interpretation because “being the message” they have no message behind them to be interpreted. “The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” is to be experienced and encountered not interpreted. The preacher is to relate the “event” in Scripture so that it becomes “advent” now. Preaching is about the poetic dimension of language. We reach the heart of things by analogy.

David Thompson analyses the enigma surrounding the centrality and frequency of celebrations of the Lord’s Supper among the Reformed Churches. Calvin lamented that it was only “the frailty of the people” that prevented his requirement that “the communion of the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ be held every Sunday at least as a rule”. The Churches of Christ and the Christian Brethren, perhaps because “Elders” could preside, have been exceptions to the rule. But the long-term practice of infrequency among Presbyterians and Congregationalists must never be equated with irreverence. Feeling unworthy to receive the sacrament frequently, or indeed at all, permeated the life of both mediaeval Catholicism and the emerging Reformation. Scottish Presbyterians had “communion seasons” stretching across the weeks before and after Communion Sunday and – both sides of the Atlantic – these were sometimes at the heart of spiritual revival.

Richard Howard ably demonstrates that the ancient and ecumenical notion of *anamnesis* enables both Catholic and Reformed Christians to rediscover the

Eucharist as the “living and effective sign” which makes the once-for-all sacrifice of Calvary truly present to us now and also enables us to take our place in the ongoing nature of Christ’s work – complete but unfinished. Everything the church offers is a participation in the eternal offering that exists within the Trinity. In the light of scripture’s “the one bread” and “the one cup” the relatively modern custom of the Reformed faithful receiving individual cubes of bread and individual glasses while they never move from their places is, he claims, to be questioned.

Barbara Douglas movingly returns to the great settings of the *Genevan Psalter* both words and tunes and recaptures something of the experience of the original users and of those who enjoyed an evening with famous stanzas and melodies at the Westminster College conference where these papers were originally delivered. Colin Thompson also provides extracts from Hunter’s *Devotional Services*, Orchard’s *Divine Service* and two contemporary Reformed liturgies as used at the Conference.

NORMAN WALLWORK

***Hallowed Be Thy Name: The Sanctification of All in the Soteriology of P. T. Forsyth.* By Jason Goroncy. London: T & T Clark, 2013. Pp. 320. £70.00. ISBN 978-0-56706-682-4.**

On his final page Jason Goroncy quotes Sydney Cave who said, “No summary of [Forsyth’s] theology can serve as a substitute for his books”. Goroncy agrees and suggests “the best service that any study on Forsyth can render is to whet readers’ appetites...” (p. 244) hoping they will read Forsyth’s books for themselves.

I read Forsyth’s *Positive Preaching* in my first year of ministry and it had a profound effect on me and, especially, on my preaching. I subsequently read most of Forsyth’s published works, and found them immensely readable and exciting. However, what this study makes me realise is how much I was influenced, and yet how little I absorbed intellectually: not having a great (or even a feeble) theological mind. Yet as Goroncy says, “Even Forsyth’s most systematic work, was not... ‘meant for scholars, but largely for ministers of the Word’” (p. 26). He also says that “Like Dostoyevsky, Forsyth is a poet’s theologian: he believes that theologians like ‘first rate poets, must deal with human life’” (p. 27). That is some comfort to me, aware that poets usually do not quite know where they are going!

Perhaps not altogether new to me, and yet enlightening, was the realisation of all the influences on him of philosophers and theologians, not always acknowledged in his writings. This was not due to any sort of slackness on Forsyth’s part, but because he was not writing systematic theology, dotting every *I* and crossing every *T*, but lecturing or preaching for preachers of the word, like me: and how one could wish that more preachers in our own times would be influenced by his work.

What I did retain from my own reading was the centrality of the Cross in Forsyth's theology, and the concept of *holy* love, as opposed to soft, undemanding, love for the sake of love. In a sense, therefore, in spite of the vast range covered by this study, its title and subtitle sum up what Forsyth's theology has always meant to me. The crucified Christ, honouring God's holiness, opened the way to the complete and eternal hallowing of God's name. And God's name can only be ultimately hallowed when every soul acknowledges God's holiness.

I used to think that Anne Brontë was the most evangelical and, perhaps, the narrowest of the three sisters. But then I found, on the internet, her 12 stanza poem: *A Word to the Elect*. The last three verses read,

That even the wicked shall at last
Be fitted for the skies;
And when their dreadful doom is past,
To life and light arise.

I ask not, how remote the day,
Nor what the sinner's woe,
Before the dross is purged away;
Enough for me to know

That when the cup of wrath is drained,
The metal purified,
They'll cling to what they once disdained,
And live by Him that died.

Although Goroncy suggests that Forsyth may not have definitely affirmed the notion of universal salvation, and refers to Alan Sell who "judiciously stops short of concluding whether Forsyth does or does not embrace universalism" (p. 211), it has always seemed to me that universal salvation is the logical conclusion of Forsyth's doctrine of the solidarity of the whole of humanity: which is the only way in which the name of God can be ultimately hallowed. Perhaps the first three lines of Anne's penultimate verse sum up Forsyth's position: "I ask not how remote the day,/Nor what the sinner's woe,/Before the dross is purged away ..." But if Forsyth cannot quite bring himself to insist on the truth of the final five lines of the poem, I think he did believe them.

Out of all that might be said about this book, I am struck by the significance of one aspect of Forsyth's theology for the twenty-first century. As Goroncy says, his (Forsyth's) "concern spanned the whole of society ... In the face of the exploitation that attend local and global communities and economics, Forsyth contends that a holy Church has a duty to challenge injustice wherever it exists": living wages for workers, proper housing for families, the modification of Capitalism, "if it is dogged by masses of unemployed" (p. 178). Such social justice is all part of the hallowing of God's name. But I also believe that the whole of Forsyth's theology is still worthy of study by ministers of the Word today.

I found this study immense, and I have not done justice to the magnitude of it here. But it has, as the author suggests, whetted, or re-whetted, my appetite and has already sent me back to read Forsyth's books for myself again. And what could be better than that?

ALAN GAUNT

John Flavel: Puritan Life and Thought in Stuart England. By Brian H. Cosby. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2014. Pp. 172. £49.95. ISBN 978-0-73917-952-9.

Tourists visiting the town of Dartmouth in South Devon, if they were lucky enough to find a parking space in the town centre, may well have noticed that they were parking next to the Flavel Memorial Church. They may also have noticed they were near the Flavel Arts Centre, in Flavel Place, housing the Flavel Cinema and the Flavel Theatre. In many towns, the name of the Puritan minister ejected after the Restoration is known only to the keepers of cherished memories within our churches, but in Dartmouth John Flavel's name lives on in the whole town, although one wonders what Flavel would have made of his name being applied to a theatre and a cinema, the more so, given that they open on Sundays.

Perhaps John Flavel is more remembered than some of his contemporaries because he simply carried on his ministry after the Restoration, until his death in 1691, and left behind six volumes of *Works*. However, interest faded by the end of the nineteenth century, and it is only recently that interest in Flavel has re-emerged. Brian Cosby's book is one such contribution. What Cosby presents is a short and readable introduction to Flavel's life and thought. Clearly Cosby believes Flavel to be an especially important thinker, but since he makes no comparisons of Flavel's thought with others, it is difficult for the reader to see whether or not this claim stands up. The book – very expensive for what it is – is nevertheless a useful introduction to Flavel's life and thought.

MICHAEL HOPKINS

Elsie Chamberlain: The Independent Life of a Woman Minister. By Alan Argent. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing, 2013. Pp. 288. £60.00. ISBN 978-1845539313.

Alan Argent has clearly performed a great service in providing a comprehensive and objective biography of Elsie Chamberlain, which has already become definitive. Elsie Chamberlain was not the first woman minister in Congregationalism by a long way, but she was the first woman forces chaplain, the first woman producer in religious broadcasting at the BBC, the first woman to chair the Congregational Union, and the first Nonconformist minister to