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CAPTURING KESWICK

Baptists and the changing spirituality of the Keswick Convention in the 1920s

On 1 May 1873 about sixteen people met at Curzon Chapel, Mayfair, to explore the possibilities of a new understanding of spiritual experience. One of those present, Evan Hopkins, then Vicar of Holy Trinity, Richmond, Surrey, was powerfully affected as he listened to an American, Robert Pearsall Smith, speak on what was known as 'the higher Christian life'. It became the pattern that services in the parish of Richmond concluded with an 'after-meeting', at which those present were urged to go beyond their previous Christian experience and make full consecration of their lives to Christ.¹ Hopkins found himself part of an expanding circle, especially within Anglicanism, of those forging a spirituality which promised victory over sin, concomitant holiness of life and 'resting faith'. A few Nonconformists were also interested. F. B. Meyer, who was to emerge as the leading Baptist promoter of the new teaching on the steps into the 'blessed life', and a Congregational minister, George Wade Robinson of Union Chapel, Brighton, were among a group of about one hundred people who met at Broadlands, Hampshire, the home of William and Georgina Cowper-Temple, in July 1874 to hear Robert Pearsall Smith and his captivating wife, Hannah.² In this electric atmosphere, much larger conferences to promote 'scriptural holiness' were arranged at Oxford in 1874, when about 1,000 attended, and at Brighton from 29 May to 7 June 1875, when crowds, which filled the Dome, the Pavilion, the Corn Exchange and the Town Hall, were estimated at 8,000.³ Meyer was at Oxford but not at Brighton when Hopkins, T. D. Harford-Battersby, Vicar of St John's, Keswick in the Lake District, and H. W. Webb-Peploe, later Vicar of St Paul's, Onslow Square in West London, announced that a week of meetings to promote practical holiness would be held that summer in a tent at Keswick. There was opposition from evangelical leaders, including Bishop J. C. Ryle of Liverpool, who wished to retain the older emphasis on the part played by personal effort in living the holy life. It may be that this made Meyer cautious.⁴ The Keswick Convention was launched in the summer of 1875 with six hundred people present.

By the early twentieth century, however, Keswick-style conventions, held at Keswick itself and at many other locations in Britain and elsewhere, had become enormously influential within English-speaking evangelicalism. In 1907 it was estimated that 10,000 people were present during the Convention week.⁵ Anglicans predominated. An estimate was made in 1926 that 60% of Keswick participants were Church of England.⁶ One Baptist member of the Keswick platform, W. Y. Fullerton, who was trained at the Pastors' College, was minister of Melbourne Hall in Leicester (founded by Meyer), and was then Home Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, suggested that Keswick had always been two-thirds Anglican.⁷ For Baptists, who became the second largest group at Keswick, there was a social

divide to cross in coming to Keswick since the Convention was - until the inter-war period - largely upper middle class.⁸ In the early years of Keswick relatively few Baptist ministers were wholly comfortable in such an environment. An exception was Meyer, whose cultured background fitted perfectly. Meyer introduced Keswick teaching into the Baptist denomination through a Prayer Union for ministers.⁹ Methodists were wary of Keswick since it denied Wesleyan convictions that sin could be eradicated from the life of the Christian and instead taught that sin was 'perpetually counteracted'.¹⁰ The only Methodist to assume a prominent role at Keswick was Charles Inwood, a forthright preacher who travelled widely on behalf of the convention movement.¹¹ Congregational ministers at Keswick ('rank-and-file' men who wrote to the *Life of Faith*) had to contend with prejudice against the Convention, no doubt because of its conservative evangelicalism.¹² In the twentieth century, however, more Free Church leaders frequented Keswick. The Brethren were significant, their breaking of bread service in the Pavilion at Keswick attracting 700 participants.¹³ George Goodman, a solicitor from Tunbridge Wells (with its strong evangelical community) and a typical lay professional representative of inter-war evangelicalism, was an acceptable Brethren speaker in Keswick circles. This article examines the contribution of Baptists to the challenges which Keswick faced after the First World War, arguing that Baptists had an important influence in key areas of Keswick life and thought in this period.

KESWICK AND CHANGE

A crucial part of Keswick's identity in the early decades of the twentieth century was its sense of continuity with its spiritual origins. Keswick in the 1920s relied heavily on its tradition. Much of its spirituality had been shaped by Hopkins, who placed it firmly in the safety of his evangelical inheritance. As an indication of evangelical continuity, when Hopkins was dying he had a vision of C. H. Spurgeon appearing to him with a message of comfort.¹⁴ From time to time there were worries, however, that the Keswick message might be diluted. Meyer, who initially spoke at Keswick in 1887 and quickly established himself as a highly sought-after devotional specialist, expressed concern in 1902 that Keswick was becoming a platform for the delivery of brilliant addresses rather than a place where people met God.¹⁵ To counter fears, Keswick leaders stressed the identity of Keswick with the past. As a newer speaker, Fullerton (who delivered a Keswick address for the first time in 1913) commented in 1918 how appropriate it was that John Battersby-Harford, 'the son of the sainted founder', was directing the Convention, while a heavyweight Keswick figure, Handley Moule, Bishop of Durham, referred to Harford-Battersby as Keswick's patron.¹⁶ The romantic ethos of Keswick was also kept alive in the 1920s. John MacBeath, a Keswick speaker who was a regular contributor to the *Baptist Times* (and minister of Hillhead Baptist Church in Glasgow from 1929), could revel in the quiet countryside of Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb and Coleridge, and there was reference to the way Derwentwater's clear and placid

surface suggested a bright and even life.¹⁷ Social conservatism was - not surprisingly, given Keswick's Anglican constituency - another feature. 'In the past', W. B. Sloan, the Convention secretary, said in 1919, 'it was possible to present the call and claim of the Gospel with little or no reference to the surrounding conditions of human life . . .'¹⁸ For Keswick, holiness was essentially internal. The everyday world was of lesser importance and, indeed, concentration on it could be a diversion. Raymond Brown has shown that with the exception of Meyer, Keswick speakers in the nineteenth century made no attempt to discuss sanctity in relation to social questions.¹⁹ Despite the presence in the period before the First World War of new Anglican speakers and also of respected Baptist preachers like Fullerton and Graham Scroggie (1872-1958), minister of Scotland's largest Baptist church, Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh, the early theological, cultural and social forces which had moulded Keswick spirituality still retained considerable power.

There was, however, a potential for change. One reason was the war itself. Because of the war the Convention of 1916 had some unusually 'worldly' elements. Scroggie said of the 1916 Convention: 'The war has widened our horizon, and increased our sympathies, and is leading us not to a new message, but to a proper adjustment of the old message to the new condition of things'.²⁰ Another factor which encouraged change was the influx of young people to Keswick in the 1920s. In 1920, when numbers attending were about five thousand and a second tent was in use, it was estimated that at least half of those in one tent were young people.²¹ Keswick played a significant part in stimulating the founding of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, an interdenominational network of conservative evangelical groups of university students. Norman Grubb, who was to lead the undenominational Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, was among those students who felt that 'at Keswick came *fire*'. The experience gave fresh impetus to Inter-Varsity conferences and Christian Unions in the 1920s.²² But new Nonconformist influences were a vital factor. It was noted in 1920 that the Keswick platform, which had at times been almost entirely Anglican, with only a sprinkling of Church of Scotland ministers and English Nonconformists, was weighted towards Free Churchmen, and Baptists in particular.²³ The *Baptist Times*, which normally gave only a brief report of Keswick, was upbeat about the array of Baptist speakers, noting that Charles Brown, the distinguished minister of Ferme Park Baptist Church, Hornsey, Reuben Saillens from Paris, T. I. Stockley, minister of West Croydon Tabernacle, and F. C. Spurr, who followed Meyer as minister of Regent's Park Chapel, London, were all newcomers to the Keswick platform.²⁴ Anglican speakers were actually in a minority in 1920. In line with this process of broadening, Keswick began to move beyond the orbit of the leisured classes. 1920 saw a 'considerable group of young people of artisan rank and standing' at Keswick,²⁵ and the remark probably indicates that this was unusual. By 1938, however, *The Christian* commented that compared to a generation before, when Keswick was largely middle-class, cultured and comfortable, those attending were now mainly wage-earners

using their annual holiday to be at the Convention.²⁶ Keswick seemed set to broaden its traditional constituency, both ecclesiastically and sociologically.

John Stuart Holden (1874-1934), Vicar of St Paul's, Portman Square, London, was one person who responded enthusiastically to the possibility of Keswick's changing role. The strategy adopted by Holden, who was chairman of the Keswick Council from 1923 to 1929, was to press for a spiritual outlook which engaged with society, encompassed younger people and was genuinely interdenominational. Holden seems to have modelled himself upon Meyer and certainly built on Meyer's socially-orientated approach to ministry.²⁷ He offered inspiration to a wide range of evangelicals, lay as well as clergy, underlining Keswick's commitment to the 'priesthood of the laity'.²⁸ Not only was Holden vicar of a thriving congregation in London's West End and a person with considerable gifts in preaching, music and personal relationships, but he could also (as a result of his marriage) afford a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce, which no doubt impressed the business world.²⁹ In 1920 Holden made an impassioned plea at Keswick for a new radicalism, castigating those who commended 'safe' Christian leaders.³⁰ 'The churches', Holden snapped, 'are cursed with safe men', and he asked defiantly, 'Would they call Jesus Christ a Safe Man in Downing Street?' Aware that some would have found the conjunction of Christ and Downing Street rather shocking, Holden argued that the world was God's concern. It was exactly the stance taken by Meyer at the beginning of the century when his (anti-Tory) political activities created, as the *Baptist Times* recalled in 1920, 'a certain aloofness' between the Convention trustees and himself.³¹ Holden accepted that many in the holiness tradition believed the world was going to the devil and they should wait for the coming of Christ, singing, 'Leave the poor old stranded wreck, and pull for the shore'. His prayer for those espousing such a spirituality was: 'From such men good Lord deliver us!'³² In 1925 Holden, with his concern for relevance, inaugurated Young People's Meetings at Keswick. These events, attracting several hundred young people, created a relaxed atmosphere, by contrast with Keswick's traditionally intense spirituality. Above all, however, Holden defied denominational restrictions. In Baptist circles it was even rumoured that he was a closet Nonconformist.³³ Certainly he was a crucial link between Anglican and Nonconformist evangelicals. Charles Brown regarded Holden as his 'father confessor'. Holden's pan-denominational interests also expressed themselves through his work as Home Director of the China Inland Mission.³⁴ A mark of his pioneering interdenominationalism was his call in *The Christian* (of which he was editor from 1915 to 1921) for a united communion service at Keswick, even if this might upset the Church of England. Holden's claim was that 'any Church that can be broken up by the plain observance of the will of God . . . ought to be broken up'.³⁵ It was Holden who challenged the Anglican hegemony which had been such a marked feature of Keswick.

BROADER THEOLOGY

In 1920 Holden was able to secure for the Keswick platform three speakers representing a broader evangelicalism. Anglicans with less conservative views on, for example, biblical criticism, had spoken at Keswick before the war.³⁶ These included Cyril Bardsley, chief officer of the Church Missionary Society, and George Buchanan, the driving force behind the liberal evangelical Cromer Convention. What was new was the Baptist presence. F. C. Spurr, Charles Brown and the Anglican, R. T. Howard, Principal of St Aidan's College, Birkenhead, found that their sympathies with more liberal interpretations of evangelical doctrine lit theological fuses. The noise of subsequent explosions reverberated through the 1920s. Howard's first appearance at Keswick was welcomed by *The Christian*, which referred to him as being in the forefront of our younger Anglican evangelical leaders.³⁷ Howard spoke for nearly an hour on the subject of the practice of the presence of God. The *Record*, an evangelical Anglican weekly, was euphoric about Howard's session, finding it 'the most exciting meeting of the whole Convention', and suggesting that 'it will do the decorum of Keswick no harm to have a breath of bright, pure, fresh manhood moving through its ranks'.³⁸ It was not so much style as content that exploded in Keswick's face. Fullerton commented coldly that Howard's address had gone 'to the verge of the pantheistic view of the world, a doctrine which Keswick teachers, in common with all evangelical thinkers, repudiate'.³⁹ At the point where Howard suggested that 'every man was a little bit of God', one person protested and, followed by a number of others, left the meeting. Opposition to Howard, Spurr and Brown was orchestrated by the patriarchal James Mountain, who had been a Countess of Huntingdon minister but had rejected infant baptism, had been baptized by Meyer, and had persuaded some members of his Countess of Huntingdon chapel to join him in founding St John's Free Church, Tunbridge Wells, as a congregation espousing Baptist convictions.⁴⁰ Mountain had been associated with Keswick from its beginnings, compiling the first Keswick hymnbook. He felt it was his duty to attack Howard in print.⁴¹ It seems that some had found Howard's address helpful, but the pressure on Keswick to dissociate itself from his sentiments was overwhelming. Howard's address was not published in the Convention's official record. The caution of Keswick spirituality was reasserted in the face of a daring attempt at innovation.

Adverse reaction to the Baptist speakers, Spurr and Brown, was less immediate. But Mountain, undoubtedly heartened by the downfall of one alleged theological Modernist, soon turned his attention to Brown, whose views of biblical inspiration were regarded by Mountain as questionable (Brown saw verbal inspiration as a serious error), and to Spurr, who had suggested that Keswick should enter a 'broader path'.⁴² The *Life of Faith*, the Convention's mouthpiece, had, prior to the 1920 Convention, hailed Spurr as 'firm in the faith and experience of the New Testament', noting that he had followed Meyer at Regent's Park Chapel and that his church was 'a steady witness to the fidelity and power of his preaching'.⁴³

Fullerton, who was not a rigid conservative, was as happy with Spurr - who had spoken 'winged words which have been used of God' - as he had been unhappy with Howard.⁴⁴ For Spurr himself, Keswick was a significant experience. Writing in the *Christian World*, he said that he had understood Keswick to be obscurantist in its approach to the Bible and unhealthy in its atmosphere. But the presence of those with progressive sympathies was, for him, significant.⁴⁵ In *The Life of Faith*, he explained that he had heard the Convention attracted elderly people of 'the narrowest school of evangelical theology'. Friends of his had thought his visit absurd since Keswick taught 'fanatical nonsense', a comment which indicates how Keswick was viewed in some circles. But Spurr discovered a large body of younger people, who clearly impressed him, including two hundred students from Oxford and Cambridge - 'fine, big, athletic fellows'. More than that, Spurr's testimony was that Keswick had brought him close to God and had been among 'the largest events of my life'.⁴⁶ Mountain was not impressed. His objective was to ensure that none of those whom he saw as part of a 'Capture Keswick' conspiracy by Modernists would speak at Keswick again.⁴⁷ The sustained campaign alienated Brown and his supporters. Many hearers had considered Brown's address to be the finest given at Keswick in 1920.⁴⁸ This must have given initial encouragement to Holden. Alignment to a system of doctrine was not, for Holden, a Keswick requirement.⁴⁹ But Mountain and a vocal fundamentalist coalition, principally Baptists and independents, were dedicated to the imposition of stricter doctrinal limits. Neither they nor the liberals were, however, destined to capture Keswick.

The fundamentalist group with which Mountain was most closely involved, and which he had been the prime mover in creating, was the Bible Baptist Union. When the BBU was launched at the end of the war, it attracted J. W. Thirtle, a deacon at Major Road Baptist Church, Stratford, and later editor of *The Christian*, C. T. Cook, minister of Tollington Park Baptist Church, Holloway, and F. E. Marsh, pastor of Bristol Road Baptist Church, Weston-super-Mare, but each of these later withdrew support.⁵⁰ The fundamentalist conspiracy within English Baptist life in the 1920s lacked a significant leader. A. C. Dixon, minister of the Metropolitan Tabernacle from 1911 to 1919, could have filled that role but he waited until he had returned to the USA before launching a vitriolic attack on 'Some English Baptists and Modernism'. Fullerton was described as someone who had lost his passion for the gospel.⁵¹ Given his lack of heavyweight colleagues, Mountain was obliged to rely on pressure politics. Spurr was warned that if he spoke at Keswick in 1921 (he had been invited), there would be public protest. It seemed that the Keswick Council might stand firm. The *Baptist Times* was anticipating in June that Spurr would be one of five Baptist speakers at Keswick, but in the same month Spurr appealed to Meyer and Holden for a tribunal to investigate the way he had been vilified.⁵² Mountain was quite willing to have a tribunal hearing provided he could agree the tribunal's membership, call witnesses and have verbatim reports published!⁵³ While Meyer and Holden sympathized with Spurr's complaint about

those with orthodoxy in doctrine forgetting 'orthodoxy of courtesy and goodwill', they felt that, given Mountain's stipulations, there seemed little point in the tribunal.⁵⁴ Spurr felt he had no alternative but to withdraw as a speaker. For Charles Brown the failure of the Council to stand by Spurr was disappointing.⁵⁵ Mountain, unmerciful in victory, justified his attack on Spurr's teaching, and seven years later was still defending the public way in which he had exposed Spurr's 'Modernism'.⁵⁶ Meyer and Holden commended Spurr. 'You have refused,' they said, 'to act on the advice of some who counselled a suit for libel; you have kept silent under strong provocation'.⁵⁷ But actions had not matched words. Spurr, like Brown, was sickened by what he called this 'miserable Keswick controversy'.⁵⁸ Baptists from opposite ends of the evangelical theological spectrum and - in the case of Meyer - from the centre ground were at the heart of one of Keswick's most public controversies.

Controversy was not over. Fears about liberal tendencies in the post-1920 era continued. At a Keswick Council meeting on 30 January 1928 the place of the *Life of Faith* was discussed and it was decided to terminate its relationship with Keswick.⁵⁹ Kennedy Maclean, the editor, a Scottish Presbyterian, was incensed. In subsequent issues of the *Life of Faith* he roundly condemned the decision, proclaiming that its object was 'a departure from the old paths, and a gesture of friendship in the direction of Modernism'. No distinction was being made between 'modernism' and 'liberalism'. Maclean contended that the Council, with Holden as its chairman, was answerable to no-one.⁶⁰ As Maclean pursued his campaign, Holden, with his sympathies for those of broader views, became his chief target. Mountain, now in his eighties, was soon back in the fray. Both Maclean and Mountain referred to Evan Hopkins as representing the true Keswick tradition. Holden was depicted as departing from the old paths. According to Maclean, Hopkins had been anxious about some younger Keswick speakers and Mountain similarly maintained that Hopkins knew of the Modernist plans to capture Keswick. Mountain recalled gloomily that three Modernists (Howard, Brown and Spurr) had been on the Keswick platform before Hopkins was cold in his grave.⁶¹ It was alleged that Holden intended to replace the *Life of Faith* with a magazine which he published, entitled the *Home Messenger*, to which, said Maclean, those with Modernist sympathies contributed.⁶² The climax of the campaign came in the period May to July 1928. Maclean stated that he would not publish Holden's Keswick addresses since 'they can have little value for hungry souls'.⁶³ The *Life of Faith* correspondence columns suggested Maclean had ample backing. He claimed to have been inundated with letters of support. One letter from (ominously) 'GBH' said, 'How the fight grows hotter'.⁶⁴ By 1928 Anglican liberal evangelicals were in fact launching their own Cromer Convention as an alternative to Keswick and the forces which had created theological tensions were spent. C. T. Morriss from Letchworth, who had publicly protested at Keswick in 1920, was still prepared in 1928 to defend his action.⁶⁵ The Council, however, asserted its full adherence

to the evangelical faith.⁶⁶ The attempt to broaden Keswick's spiritual theology was over.

THE HOPE OF REVIVAL

The hope of bringing vitality to Keswick through traditional revivalism seemed more promising. Towards the end of the First World War there was an expectation within evangelicalism that a period of spiritual renewal might be imminent. On 20 July 1921 Hugh Ferguson, minister of London Road Baptist Church, Lowestoft, and John Hayes, Vicar of Christ Church, Lowestoft, made an unscheduled report at Keswick on how revival had come to East Anglia.⁶⁷ The genesis of the movement had been Keswick meetings in Lowestoft two years previously. Ferguson had at that stage been, in the view of Hayes, 'one of the coldest icicles I had dropped across in the whole of my life',⁶⁸ but had been drawn into the spiritual warmth of the Keswick milieu and had, despite being an unemotional Scot, wept with joy.⁶⁹ Enthusiastic prayer meetings with a focus on revival became a feature of his church. In autumn 1920 Ferguson visited Douglas Brown, minister of Ramsden Road Baptist Church, Balham, to ask if he would conduct a mission in Lowestoft. From 7 March 1921, when the mission began, until 2 April, when the first phase ended, Brown had preached to several hundred people each evening (on occasions to well over 1,000), with more than five hundred conversions being recorded.⁷⁰ Brown was seen by J. C. Carlile, then President of the Baptist Union, as a 'hypnotic preacher', but Brown himself was to speak of a 'baptism of the Holy Ghost', experienced in February 1921, as the key to what happened in Lowestoft when, as he put it, 'the clouds burst'.⁷¹ Although this revival had its roots in the Keswick experience of personal consecration, the Convention was cautious. Revivalism had the potential to cause rifts in Keswick's ranks. In the wake of the Welsh Revival of 1904-5, a contingent of three hundred from Wales attended Keswick but, as J. B. Figgis, a speaker from the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, put it, 'the torrent from the Welsh hills meeting the sluggish stream of English propriety threatened tumult'.⁷² The Welsh did not return and the Convention of 1907 was 'quiet and solemn'.⁷³ The character of the revival which was emerging in the early 1920s, however, made it much more acceptable to Keswick. Douglas Brown was an experienced, reliable Baptist minister from a highly respected Baptist family. His emphasis was on quiet moments of dedication. The enquiry room became the 'Quiet Room'.⁷⁴ Moreover, he had denominational approval. At the Baptist Union's spring assembly in 1921 Brown spoke with what was described as 'pure volcanic energy', and brought the meeting to an electrifying climax. His address concluded with the opening words of the hymn, 'All hail the power of Jesus' name'. J. C. Carlile stood to conclude with prayer but instead the audience spontaneously took up the words of the hymn. 'It is safe to say', commented a reporter, 'that never before has such a scene been witnessed at any session of the Baptist Union Assembly'.⁷⁵

The Keswick grapevine started working. L. C. Parkinson, minister of

Burlington Baptist Church, Ipswich, a warm supporter of Keswick and a friend of Ferguson's, found that there was an unexpected gap in Douglas Brown's engagements and secured his services for revival meetings in Ipswich. Again, Brown attracted over a thousand people each night and saw hundreds respond.⁷⁶ During the early summer Brown spoke at interdenominational meetings in Anglican and Baptist churches in Great Yarmouth, Norwich and Cambridge. Keswick heard with excitement the powerful report brought by Ferguson and Hayes in 1921. Perhaps, through revival, evangelicalism could put behind it the conservative/liberal tensions so painfully exposed at Keswick in the previous twelve months. The 'Keswick' Convention at Lowestoft in September 1921, at which Brown spoke, was described as unprecedented in its freedom from human organization.⁷⁷ At the Manchester Convention in the following month Hayes gave another account of the East Anglian Revival. The principal Convention addresses, by Russell Howden, an influential Keswick figure and vicar in Southborough, Kent, and Graham Scroggie (jointly described as 'among the most capable and trusted men of the Keswick platform' and 'far removed from the realm of . . . long-haired visionaries'), were given in what was felt to be an atmosphere of revival.⁷⁸ Interest in Douglas Brown was now intense. By the autumn of 1921 the Keswick network was absorbed by the theme of revival. During the period 1921-2 Baptists committed to Keswick found themselves at the heart of much of Brown's activity. The revival also brought Keswick figures into touch with other sectors of Baptist life. In 1922 Holden and Hayes, as well as J. R. Edwards, a colleague of Douglas Brown's, spoke at the Pastors' College Conference.⁷⁹ It was reported by the summer of 1922 that Brown had, since the beginning of the Lowestoft mission, addressed 1,700 meetings in East Anglia and beyond. Convention and revival had, as Brown saw it, been brought together.⁸⁰

Against this background, Brown was booked to take the 1922 Keswick morning Bible Readings. The hope no doubt was that the spirit of revival which marked his activities would characterize his contribution to the Convention. It was a hope which was amply fulfilled. Brown made little attempt at scholarly exposition. His messages were described as bombshells rather than Bible readings.⁸¹ *The Christian* reported that people flocked to hear Brown, feeling that 'something' was going to happen. They were not disappointed. Early on the Thursday morning Brown met with W. B. Sloan, the Convention secretary, and Fullerton, telling them that he expected 'a great breaking down that day', and asked that special arrangements be made to deal with those wishing to respond to his address.⁸² Brown preached on 'Defective Consecration'. Emotion soared as he called out to the Holy Spirit: 'Oh Holy Dove, you understand, you know, brood over these people! You moved 3,000 people on the Day of Pentecost, move this 2,500.'⁸³ Brown's message pointed out how King Saul (in I Samuel 15) failed to dedicate to God all that he gained in a conquest. His inadequate obedience was highlighted by the sound of a sheep, which should have been sacrificed, still bleating. It was necessary, Brown told his hearers,

to bring 'that sheep' and to 'let Jesus kill it'.⁸⁴ At the conclusion of his address, Brown invited those who wished to signify their consecration by shaking hands with him to make their way to the nearby Drill Hall. Observers felt that at this point a flood burst. Only two to three hundred could be accommodated in the Hall and consecration meetings were conducted for virtually the whole audience in the main tent and the Pavilion.⁸⁵ Reactions to this explosion of spiritual energy were varied. Meyer was entirely at ease, conducting the after meeting in the tent. Brown was, for some, a 'spiritual tornado', sent by God to bring Keswick 'out of its rut', while for others, such as Taylor Smith and Scroggie, the pressure had been too intense.⁸⁶ If, as the reporter for *The Christian* saw it, 'Pentecostal fire had fallen upon Keswick',⁸⁷ how would the Convention react?

Reaction from Scroggie was swift. At the evening Convention meeting he was determined to apply a corrective. Scroggie was convinced that temperament had a part to play in religious response and was wary of anything which seemed to by-pass the intelligence. There might be more emotion in Wales, since this was natural to the Welsh, than in Scotland, where self-control was prized.⁸⁸ This, however, said nothing about spiritual reality. 'Faith', the hard-headed Scroggie warned the Keswick audience, 'is not credulity; faith is not ignorance; faith is intelligent; faith is open-eyed; faith has a reason as well as emotion, and the man is in grave peril who is resting on emotion rather than upon intelligent understanding'.⁸⁹ A definitive word had been spoken. The Pentecostal fire had to be dampened. Keswick did attempt, in co-operation with others, to have a hand in supervising Brown's continuing activities. Holden became chairman of a small group, which included J. H. Shakespeare and Fullerton, charged with the task of handling Brown's engagements.⁹⁰ But Brown moved steadily out of the Keswick constituency. At a service in Bloomsbury Baptist Church on 9 September 1924, Brown was officially commissioned for evangelism within the Baptist Union.⁹¹ In 1929-30 he was Baptist Union President. Evangelism and overseas mission continued to be matters of great concern to Keswick, but revivalist enthusiasms did not flourish in Keswick's more sober atmosphere. In 1926 MacBeath warned that nothing of historic significance was going to be accomplished at Keswick without some element of enthusiasm.⁹² In 1931, however, Scroggie suggested, to the annoyance of some evangelists, that the next revival would take a different form from previous revivals and that mass evangelistic campaigns had not helped the churches.⁹³ Baptists at Keswick were divided about revival, with Brown bringing the Convention to the brink of climactic experience and Scroggie steering it away from what he regarded as a dangerous precipice. Revivalism had not captured Keswick.

THE PATH OF CONSECRATION

The influence of Meyer and, crucially, of Scroggie can be seen in the development of Keswick's understanding of consecration and the reception of the Holy Spirit. Keswick teaching often linked consecration and a new experience of the Spirit. The

work of the Spirit was to make the Christian like Christ, to bring about victory over sin and to enable effective witness and service.⁹⁴ Meyer's emphasis was on power for serving God. 'You may,' he said in 1921, 'be born of the Holy Spirit but have no power for service'. His own experience had led him to pray: 'My God, I cannot go on like this. I am powerless. I preach and people listen, but they are not saved and I have lost my grip.'⁹⁵ The truth was that in the 1880s, when Meyer had two significant spiritual experiences - consecration in 1884 and filling of the Spirit in 1887, he was pastor of the highly successful Melbourne Hall.⁹⁶ Testimonies were, however, painted in stark terms. On the issue of the necessity for a further experience of the Spirit, Keswick was united. The terminology - whether 'baptism' or 'filling' - used to describe this experience had been a matter of concern around the turn of the century. Keswick came to prefer the term 'filling'. More radical holiness groups preferred 'baptism'. 'Some people', said Howden in 1928, '... speak of the first experience as the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the second and subsequent experiences as the filling of the Holy Ghost'. He did not consider that the terms mattered. 'Just as there is a second blessing, so there is a two-thousandth blessing ...'⁹⁷ Meyer did, however, urge the necessity of the 'baptism of the Holy Ghost' upon his Keswick listeners in the 1920s.⁹⁸ 'The Baptism of the Holy Ghost,' he declared in 1924, 'means the revelation of Jesus; it is not feeling your pulse, or listening to your heart throb; it is trusting Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.'⁹⁹ Meyer's teaching on the steps to power made an impression. A Church of Scotland minister from Edinburgh, Donald Davidson, reminded Keswick in 1929 of the way in which Meyer - 'our saintly friend' - described how he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. For Davidson, Meyer embodied a spiritual power that was 'literally Pentecostal'.¹⁰⁰ Meyer, a speaker at twenty-six Keswick Conventions, stressed the experience of Pentecost. In the 1890s he assured his Keswick audience that they could receive 'a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost' like 'another Pentecost'.¹⁰¹ It was an outlook in tune with other holiness and revivalist movements of the time and, with other influences, it helped to create twentieth-century Pentecostalism.¹⁰²

A very different approach was mapped out by Graham Scroggie. In 1921 he explicitly set out at Keswick his position on the experience of the Spirit. For the most part, he stated, we confuse the terms 'baptism' and 'filling'.¹⁰³ His view, reiterated in 1923, was that in the moment of accepting Christ a person received the baptism of the Spirit.¹⁰⁴ Fullerton in 1924 said that to talk about 'rooting sin out', as in Wesleyan doctrine, was 'false theology'.¹⁰⁵ This would have been generally accepted at Keswick. The theological agenda of Scroggie went further. Through Scroggie, Keswick was to distance itself not only from Wesleyanism but from its own more moderate holiness origins. Scroggie's worries over the concept of a Spirit-baptism subsequent to conversion can be traced to his own background and commitments. As a largely self-taught but widely recognized biblical expositor (he was awarded a DD in recognition of his contribution to preaching by Edinburgh

University in 1927), Scroggie could not escape the fact that there was no command in Scripture to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, while there was an unambiguous statement: 'be filled with the Spirit'.¹⁰⁶ Scroggie was confident to the point of dogmatism, therefore, that he was right. 'I am only keeping by Scripture', he stated, 'although I may be cutting across somebody's pet theory with regard to this subject. That does not matter. We are bound by the truth.'¹⁰⁷ Scroggie was also deeply concerned about Pentecostal teaching that speaking in tongues was the sign of Spirit-baptism. In 1912, when minister of Bethesda Free Church, Sunderland, where he was from 1907 to 1916, Scroggie wrote articles for his church magazine on the baptism of the Spirit and speaking with tongues, associating the 'Pentecost-with-signs' movement, as he called it, with fanaticism.¹⁰⁸ Spirit movements, he believed, went wrong precisely because they magnified the Spirit. It is clear that Scroggie wanted to move Keswick teaching on the Christian life in a more Christological direction. Writing in *The Christian* in 1925, he made a case for the distinctive message of Keswick being 'the Lordship of Christ'. Keswick may have spoken of 'Scriptural Holiness', or 'Victorious' or 'Spirit-filled' life, but these ideas, he claimed, led back to Christ's Lordship.¹⁰⁹ While this may have been a theologically satisfying position, it was by no means an accurate representation of the Keswick tradition.

Nevertheless, Scroggie's views gained ground. In 1927 he reinterpreted the fullness of the Spirit as the Lordship of Christ and suggested that to make Christ Lord was not so much a drastic experience as a practical one. It would, for example, make a domestic assistant clean under the mats and in the corners in a way which she might not have done before.¹¹⁰ In the same year a report on Keswick in the *Baptist Times* made reference to an address by MacBeath as being 'the gem of the Convention'.¹¹¹ But it was Scroggie who was achieving a paradigm shift. Scroggie's objective was to play down the climactic. He warned against anyone going back (from Keswick) to his church to parade his superior spirituality and even to become schismatic.¹¹² Yet Scroggie did not hesitate to speak of a moment in his own life, thirteen years after his conversion, in which he experienced brokenness but in which the Bible and Christ came alive for him. He seemed to connect this with the premature end of his first ministry at Leytonstone Road Baptist Church, Leytonstone, two years after leaving the Pastors' College. His decisive spiritual step brought both joy and trouble.¹¹³ In a message in 1929 Scroggie explained that Christ had redeemed the whole world, but that only those were saved who had accepted him as their Saviour, and that not all those who were saved had made Christ Lord. When that final step was taken, said Scroggie, there would be a restoration of what Havergal, in the Keswick Anthem, termed 'God's perfect peace'.¹¹⁴ The stature of Scroggie at Keswick is indicated by the fact that he was invited to give the first broadcast address from Keswick in 1933. Two years later, in an address devoted to an explanation of Keswick, Scroggie was able to state that surrender to Christ's Lordship was 'Keswick's distinctive message'.¹¹⁵ Keswick

was accepting a new understanding of the way of consecration. In so doing, it was set to capture the middle ground of evangelical spirituality, though at some cost of continuity with the movement's earlier traditions.

CONSERVATIVE EVANGELICAL SPIRITUALITY

In the decade after the First World War, Keswick was able to work through internal tensions and changes in order to strengthen its position as the promoter of a spirituality which appealed to a high proportion of conservative evangelicals. Keswick insisted that its spiritual teaching was biblical. Indeed Scroggie gave the Keswick Bible Readings an even higher profile. In 1920 when Sloan, the Convention secretary, wrote to Scroggie asking him to take the Bible Readings in the following year, he passed on a message from the Keswick Council that the Readings should have 'direct bearing on some aspect of consecration and faith rather than the analysis of a book'.¹¹⁶ Scroggie bristled. He wrote back immediately to Sloan complaining that the invitation seemed to reflect badly on Scroggie's 1914 and 1915 Readings at Keswick - which he claimed had been unusually well received - on Philippians and Ephesians and that to question the place of a biblical series did not do justice either to Keswick or to Scroggie. This letter makes evident Scroggie's absolute determination to move Keswick towards a Bible teaching convention. His conviction was that lack of biblical teaching at Keswick meant that the spiritual uplift which came through the traditional call to consecration did not last.¹¹⁷ Sloan complied with Scroggie's wishes. As well as being biblical, Keswick sought to promulgate a moderate and central, not a fundamentalist or liberal version of evangelicalism. Scroggie's verdict that the commentary on the Bible by the Primitive Methodist scholar, A. S. Peake, was 'sodden with infidelity' was much quoted by fundamentalists, but it was typical neither of Scroggie nor of Keswick.¹¹⁸ At the 1929 Keswick Scroggie delivered a series of studies (previously given at Charlotte Chapel) on the Apostles' Creed. He was taken to task for infringing Keswick's rule of non-denominationalism but retorted that, given the conflict between fundamentalism and modernism, it was preferable to have the Creed as a basis of fellowship than for small groups to construct their own bases of belief and to splinter from the wider church.¹¹⁹ Fundamentalists thrived on antagonism, but Scroggie insisted in 1931 that, while his sympathies were with fundamentalism, he belonged to what he termed an 'unnamed' party within evangelicalism which was committed to a spiritual and practical witness.¹²⁰ The shaping of a biblical and moderate Keswick spirituality in the 1930s owed much to Scroggie.

Keswick also offered a view of the life of holiness as it was lived in practical terms. Conceptions of spirituality were affected by the democratization of holiness, which began in the nineteenth century and came to full flowering in the 1920s and 1930s. While Keswick leaders gradually dropped the rather élitist concept of the 'higher Christian life', holiness often appeared to be for a privileged segment of

society which had the money and leisure time to attend conventions in beautiful settings such as the Lake District or Bridge of Allan in Scotland. But in 1925 Meyer wanted to define - not uncontroversially - Keswick teaching as 'practical mysticism'.¹²¹ In the same year, when Holden talked about consecration having to do with 'shops, offices, workrooms, laboratories and consulting rooms', and could describe typewriters, cash registers and engines as 'holy things', he was speaking of a world with which many in his audience were now familiar.¹²² The constituency was changing. Another force producing practicality was a reappraisal of Keswick sentimentality. Scroggie was concerned about 'sloppy thinking' on the part of Christians. Faith based on truth, not emotion, produced genuine spiritual experience.¹²³ Keswick had been too subjective.¹²⁴ Thus in the revised Keswick hymnbook published in 1938 it was noted that many hymns of a highly subjective nature or with ecstatic language had been eliminated.¹²⁵ A significant factor was the diminution of the role of women at Keswick. Ideas of Christ as 'dear Master', combining sentiment with submission, had been fostered by female spirituality.¹²⁶ But in the inter-war years the only outstanding female leader at Keswick was an unsentimental American YWCA worker, Ruth Paxson, who drew capacity crowds to her women's meetings.¹²⁷ The change of approach was summed up by Fullerton when he referred to the popular Keswick hymn 'Channels Only', and told his listeners that rather than simply being channels, which had overtones of narrowness, submission and inactivity, they should be God's living agents.¹²⁸ Holiness was still at the core of Keswick spirituality but its practical application was becoming more pronounced.

Inevitably, the construction of a biblical, moderate and practical spirituality raised new questions for Keswick-goers. In 1926 Fullerton, who was a well-loved personality in Keswick and Baptist circles, and the equally popular Bishop Taylor Smith, famed as Chaplain-General to the Forces, launched a question and answer session. This late evening 'extra' proved so popular that it had to move into the main tent.¹²⁹ There were questions about Christian doctrine and behaviour, covering such topics as predestination, sinless perfection, speaking in tongues and faith healing. Smoking, said Fullerton, was the chief issue raised by questioners. Fullerton's position was that to make rules for Christian living was alien to the spirit of Keswick and the Convention could not be committed to the view that smoking was unchristian.¹³⁰ Other issues were contraception, attendance at theatres or cinemas, women wearing hats in church and sporting short skirts or coloured stockings, joining trade unions, and investing in joint stock companies whose directors were not Christians. The absence of questions on alcohol or spiritualism surprised Fullerton. The picture is of an evangelical community looking for guidance. It does not seem that the rank and file were pressing for spiritual freedoms which were opposed by the Keswick leadership. Langston, in 1921, lamented that, 'out of a large number of young women at a missionary training college, only six avoided the theatre, but when Fullerton was asked to comment on

a minister who did not condemn the theatre or the cinema he replied that it was foolish to tell a congregation what was allowable.¹³¹ A correspondent in the *Life of Faith* was not satisfied with this answer, but in turn Fullerton challenged the reader to condemn oratorios. Young people, said Holden, were free regarding amusements but should eliminate anything that made spiritual matters less real.¹³² On questions of holiness and worldliness, Keswick was careful to take a path which it perceived as one of balance. It had claimed the centre ground.

CONCLUSION

The 1920s was a crucial period for Keswick. A changing social background, together with the leadership of Stuart Holden, an Anglican prepared to use Free Church speakers in a way which had not happened before at Keswick, opened up new possibilities for the Convention. Baptists representing both broader and narrower evangelicalism, Baptists committed to revival and Baptists who promoted practical spirituality all made a contribution to the re-shaping of the movement. Baptist links with Keswick, whether through Meyer, Fullerton, Brown or MacBeath, who all held high office in Baptist life, or through Scroggie and, through Mountain, others who did not, have not been sufficiently recognized and explored. Traditional Anglican strength at Keswick is a major reason for this lack of attention. Even the *Baptist Times*, however, did not grasp fully the significance of Baptist influence. It highlighted Fullerton and MacBeath as those who had made a significant contribution to Keswick's life and thought.¹³³ In fact it was Scroggie who was the creative mind. In the years before and after the Second World War, when Keswick gatherings represented by far the largest pan-denominational events in conservative evangelicalism, the Keswick distinctives were largely those of Scroggie. Keswick, as shaped by Scroggie's approach, was central and moderate in its evangelical theology, cautious about extreme experiences and committed to the call to make Jesus Lord.

During the 1930s young Baptists, such as Geoffrey King and Theo Bamber, spoke at Keswick. King was only twenty-six when, in 1934, he began his ministry at the East London Tabernacle. Bamber, of Rye Lane Tabernacle, whose congregation of nearly a thousand included many young people, was described as reminiscent of older voices at Keswick.¹³⁴ Like Scroggie, whose last ministry was at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, most Baptist ministers who spoke at Keswick in the 1930s and in the post-war decades concentrated on local church ministry rather than wider denominational affairs. Raymond Brown, as Principal of Spurgeon's College, was an exception. Most recently, David Coffey, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, has strengthened the link between Keswick and Baptist life by his membership of the Keswick Council. In the 1920s liberals, fundamentalists and revivalists failed to capture Keswick. Older holiness teaching became less evident. It was the emphasis on Christ's Lordship that was to become normative in post-war British evangelicalism. By the 1960s the Keswick platform was no longer

committed to any single strand of spiritual theology. Some speakers, commented *Crusade* in 1965, were Calvinists and some were Arminians, while some favoured and some opposed the second blessing.¹³⁵ Keswick's dominant position in evangelicalism was subsequently assumed by Spring Harvest and Keswick has needed to find a new relevance. Coffey suggested in 1991 that Keswick would continue down the road of change.¹³⁶ A return to the early emphases on the steps to power and blessing seems unlikely. But the vision of Scroggie for balanced biblical teaching and practical holiness remains strong. Baptists, with others, may have a contribution to make as this vision is worked out in the Keswick of the twenty-first century.

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REVIEW: Russell Aldwinckle *The Logic of the Believing Mind, Toronto Studies in Theology* Volume 60, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, 638pp, US \$110.

This is probably the most substantial work in the field of philosophical theology that has been produced by a Baptist in this century. In comprehensiveness it surpasses the significant contributions which Wheeler Robinson made to the Library of Constructive Theology. Russell Aldwinckle was working on this massive distillation of his thinking right up to the time of his death in 1992, and we are indebted to John Thomas, his pupil and literary executor, for seeing the manuscript through the press. John Thomas is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at McMaster University in Canada, and, with Russell, is another British Baptist expatriate whose work is scarcely known in the land of their birth. In his later years Russell produced three important books, *Death in the Secular City*, *Jesus: A Savior or the Savior*; *Religious Pluralism in Perspective*, and *More than Man: A Study in Christology*, but this attempt to work out a rational theology is in a class of its own. The bibliography alone indicates the wide range of the canvas and there is scarcely any significant thinker whose work is not brought under critical review. The reader may sometimes feel he is losing his way in the wood for the number of trees, but the book is a rich resource for the serious student. The first part is a judicious review of natural theology which Aldwinckle concludes has something to contribute to a rational theism even if it does not take us very far, but in the second part he gives it content from the basic conviction that the Incarnation is the foundation for the 'Logic of a Christian Believing Mind'. The book suffers from being posthumously produced and would have benefited from much more thorough revision. Besides lacking an index, it contains a number of typographical errors and peculiar indented paragraphs. There is also a great deal of repetition which Russell, if he had lived, could have avoided by restructuring the argument. But this does not seriously detract from the value of the work as a whole. The price puts the book outside the range of most readers, but it is hoped that colleges and libraries will acquire it as an invaluable tool for research.

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