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## FREDERICK FYVIE BRUCE

THE CHRISTIAN BRETHREN RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

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## PREFACE

'HE gave gifts to men . . . and His gifts were that some should be . . . teachers'. This issue of the *Journal* is much more than a tribute to the man whose name appears on the title page: it is also an act of thanksgiving to God that, in F. F. Bruce as in others of His servants, He has shown by His giving that He still cares for and cherishes His Church (and not least, that He has purposes still for the development of that section of the Church with which this Fellowship is particularly concerned). This month's issue of Crusade magazine contains an interesting interview with Jack Dash, that doughty communist militant and one-time disrupter of the peace of London's dockland. Dash's challenge to the Christian Church is pertinent and poignant: 'Produce me God'. For how can God be produced, but in the men and women to whom He has delivered His charge for this planet? Herein lies the failure of ourselves, God's people in the world; but, conversely, when a man appears whom God has plainly gifted for the Church or the world, then as plainly, to those with eyes to see, God 'produces' Himself, and we know that He is with us still.

To commemorate F. F. Bruce's sixtieth birthday in 1970, a volume of essays was published by the Paternoster Press under the title of Apostolic History and the Gospel. Its editors were Professors Ralph P. Martin, a former colleague of Professor Bruce, and W. Ward Gasque, a former pupil. To Dr. Gasque we owe the excellent suggestion that CBRF should devote an issue of its Journal to what is effectively a supplement to that Festschrift: an issue which deals with F. F. Bruce the man. We owe to him also the collection of these essays, as well as a long bibliography which supplements and completes the select bibliography of Dr. Bruce's writings which appeared in that volume. The bibliographies reveal another feature of immense encouragement to those of us who are past the first flush of our youth—that by far the major part of Professor Bruce's vast written output has appeared since his fortieth birthday!

The last article to reach us of those appearing in this issue was received from Mr. G. C. D. Howley, only a few days before he entered hospital for what has proved to be a major operation, necessitating the amputation of a leg at the hip. As we write this foreword, Cecil Howley lies in hospital, only three days past the operation. We can do little more than commit him and his family with all our heart to the God of all mercy and grace: in Whose hands lie all our futures. As we thank God for F. F. Bruce, so we thank him for 'G.C.D.'.

SOSTHENES

### F. F. BRUCE AS A BIBLICAL SCHOLAR

#### I. HOWARD MARSHALL\*

To attempt to assess the value of a scholar's work during his life-time is a vain task; only the passage of time can show what was of lasting merit in his achievements. The venture is even more hazardous when it is undertaken by one who closely shares the outlook of his subject and has derived more scholarly inspiration from him than from anybody else. Objectivity can hardly be expected in the present article. The best that can be expected is a catalogue of works with some indication of their contemporary significance for scholarship.

In the case of F. F. Bruce the most striking superficial feature is the sheer range of the material to be taken into consideration. His immense productivity is demonstrated by the lengthy bibliography which appears in the recently published Festschrift in his honour and its supplement elsewhere in this Journal. Nor should it be forgotten that this rich output nearly all stems from a period of twenty-five years (in his earlier life Bruce was primarily a Classicist), during which he has carried out much other literary activity (the reading and correcting of manuscripts, especially that of G. W. Bromiley's translation of Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament), undertaken the varied tasks of university teaching and departmental administration, and spoken frequently at meetings and conferences of all kinds.

Not only so, but the range of interest revealed in this work is wide and varied. In these days most men find it difficult enough to show competence in one aspect of biblical scholarship. But Bruce's competence ranges over the whole breadth of New Testament studies, and there is scarcely an aspect of the New Testament on which he has not had a worthwhile contribution to make. He is particularly well-acquainted with the background of the New Testament, both its Jewish background including the Dead Sea Scrolls (on which he is an acknowledged expert) and its Gentile background in the Graeco-Roman world. The title of the present essay reminds us that his interest is not confined to the New Testament and what is of immediate relevance to its understanding; in his earlier writings in particular, Bruce has demonstrated his expertise in Old Testament history and archaeology, and it is an indication of his continuing interest in the Old Testament and of the respect in which he is held by other scholars that he was elected President of the Society for Old Testament Study in 1965.

It is beyond the present writer's competence to follow Bruce in all these activities, and in what follows our interest will be largely confined to his New Testament studies.

A couple of formal features of his scholarship may be noted before we look at its contents. First, Bruce is one of the best popularisers of biblical scholarship, expressing himself in simple terms for the benefit of a wide public. There is sometimes a certain scholarly haughtiness towards so-

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called popularisers, and the impression is fomented that what they are doing is not real scholarship. One rather suspects that those who criticise in this fashion are like the fox in Aesop's fable: unable to write well at a popular level themselves, they pour scorn on those who can. But it must be forcefully urged that writing for a popular audience is an important aspect of scholarship. Far too often we hear accusations that the pulpit is fifty years behind the teacher's rostrum, and the pew even further out-ofdate; some of the blame for this situation undoubtedly rests on a scholarship which does not trouble to communicate with both pulpit and pew. It is all to the credit of men like Bruce—and W. Barclay and A. M. Hunter that the findings of New Testament scholarship are easily accessible today. In any case, to write at a popular level is not inconsistent with a truly scholarly approach, and it may be argued that the test of a man's scholarship is whether he is capable of expressing his arguments and conclusions in a manner that is generally intelligible. That the more popular works of Bruce represent the fruit of worthy scholarly labours is proved beyond cavil by the fact that even the advanced scholar will find profitable material in them. Bruce's work is in no danger of being confused with that of the populariser whose work is second-hand and cheap.

Secondly, at whatever level he is writing Bruce expresses himself with superb clarity and ease. His work is a delight to read, so smoothly does it flow. He is never guilty of obscurity, and he is a master of the apt phrase. All this is the mark of a writer who has carefully thought out what he wants to say and is thus able to express it neatly and unequivocally. Here is something worthy of praise in an age when dullness, and even vagueness and obscurity, sometimes seem to be the hallmarks of scholarship. It would be invidious (but not difficult) to cite examples of this regrettable tendency; it suffices to say that Bruce cannot be accused of it.

Finally, it is important to note that it is principally through Bruce's work that conservative evangelical scholarship has won a place for itself in the world of modern biblical scholarship. One is naturally not unmindful of the many important contributions made by other evangelicals, especially those who held faithfully to this position during the lean years before the Second World War but whose stand attracted little attention outside their own constituency; but it may be suggested that the decisive date in the revival of evangelical scholarship and in its recognition by other scholars—at least in Great Britain—was 1951, the year of publication of F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary.

Prior to this date there had been little in the way of first-class evangelical scholarship in this country since the turn of the century. The prevailing theological climate was that of liberalism which looked at the Bible from an essentially human point of view and seemed at times almost to delight in a form of criticism which destroyed the trustworthiness of the Bible, as far as the historical facts in it were concerned, and which consequently found itself spiritually bankrupt through its inability to hear the voice of divine revelation in it. Admittedly, many whose religious experience forbade them from denying the inspiration of the Bible managed to come to terms with biblical criticism by adopting some species of Barthianism in which a fallible book was regarded as capable of becoming the vehicle of a divine

message; but any suggestion that the Bible might be historically and spiritually trustworthy after all was dismissed as 'fundamentalism', an unthinking, uncritical attitude inherited from the past and no longer capable of defence in the twentieth century.

In this situation little was done by the so-called fundamentalists to justify their position against the criticisms of their opponents, and no doubt some of them would have argued that scholarly justification of their position was out of place: 'The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit, and so it is no use arguing with him about the nature of the Bible'. Others were content to appeal to the scholarship of an earlier day, unaware that in important respects the scene of battle had shifted. In any case, there were few with the intellectual equipment to defend their position.

If the situation has now changed, it is due in considerable measure to the work of F. F. Bruce, whose writings have expressed a scholarly and evangelical position which may be rejected by its opponents but which certainly cannot be ignored on the grounds that it is unscientific.

What are the characteristics of this approach? In the first place, Bruce brought to his biblical studies the background of a sound training in the Latin and Greek Classics and several years of experience in research and teaching in a university setting. This meant that he was familiar with the principles and methods utilised in the study of ancient literature, in particular the literature of the Hellenistic world which formed the environment of the New Testament. He was able to approach the New Testament from the standpoint of one who knew how to evaluate Greek literature and what to expect from it. This meant that he could study the New Testament 'like any other book' and was not hindered by theological prejudice (whether conservative or radical) from a dispassionate examination of its contents.

Bruce thus found himself in that group of Classicists who have directed their attention to the New Testament and reached a positive verdict on its historical worth. It is surely no coincidence that Bruce did his early classical training in the University of Aberdeen where Sir William Ramsay had once taught Humanity (as we rightly persist in naming the Chair elsewhere called Latin!) and where in Bruce's own time Alexander Souter was Ramsay's successor. It is true of course that Bruce had no need to undergo a conversion like that of Ramsay from a negative estimate of the historicity of the New Testament to a positive one, but this is no reason to regard his position as any the less objective. It is as fatuous to dismiss Bruce's work on the grounds that in his case scholarship buttressed an already existing faith as it is to criticise Ramsay for showing the over-enthusiasm of the new convert. The work of both men is to be judged by its quality and not by irrelevant psychological considerations. The important fact is that classical scholars do often seem to have a higher estimate of the historical value of the New Testament than the professional theologians—and this is not because they are ignorant of the work of the latter. In a recent work Bruce comments, 'The NT writings were not, of course, designed as historians' source-material, and apart from Luke-Acts are not written in historiographical style; but historians will not be deterred on that account from using them as source-material; nor will they be intimidated by theologians

who assure them that their task is impossible and illegitimate!'1

Second, we may link with Bruce's classical outlook his stress on the importance of archaeology Classical archaeology has an important contribution to make to the understanding of the New Testament, especially in Acts whose detailed background can be substantiated to a remarkable extent from archaeological discoveries. Bruce's earliest book, Are the New Testament Documents Reliable? (first published in 1943) makes ample use of this method within the framework of a general treatment which takes full account of other types of critical study. In it he stated, 'I have written as a teacher of classics, with the purpose of showing that the grounds for accepting the New Testament as reliable compare very favourably with those on which the classical student accepts the authenticity and credibility of many ancient documents'. His use of archaeological evidence forms an important element in the vindication of this conclusion.

Bruce's interest, however, has not been confined to classical archaeology. He gave the Tyndale Old Testament Lecture in 1947 on The Hittites and the Old Testament. Recently he was selected to write the chapter on Tell el-Amarna in the authoritative survey of Archaeology and Old Testament Study (1967) produced by the Society for Old Testament Study. He is editor of the Palestine Exploration Quarterly. Above all, he has taken a leading role in the discussion aroused by the Dead Sea Scrolls. This body of material, the most important discovery in Palestine in the last twenty-five years, has been the subject of much (sometimes uninformed) controversy. Some writers have argued that the Scrolls demonstrate that the claims of Christianity are neither original nor true, and that in consequence New Testament scholars have boycotted the Scrolls. Both claims can be summarily dismissed as unfounded.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, New Testament scholars of all outlooks have warmly welcomed the evidence of the Scrolls for the valuable background information which they provide. Bruce has taken an important part in this discussion. Not only is he the author of one of the best surveys of the whole problem, Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls (1956), he has also engaged in research into the way in which the Scrolls take up the Old Testament and reinterpret it in line with the Qumran sect's own conceptions of prophecy and its fulfilment in their era. A study of his monograph Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts (1959) is highly fruitful for New Testament study.

Third, we must mention Bruce's interest in the Old Testament itself. The evangelical would affirm that the best single help to understanding the New Testament is the Old Testament. Although one must not forget the influence of Judaism and its exegetical traditions, nothing is likely to be more fruitful as a guide to New Testament thought than a study of the Old Testament. In several smaller publications Bruce has taken up this theme, and one of his latest books, *This is That* (1968), is a careful delineation of

<sup>1.</sup> F. F. Bruce, New Testament History, (Nelson) 1969, 159 n. 1.

<sup>2.</sup> F. F. Bruce, Are the New Testament Documents Reliable? (I.V.F.) 19462, iii.

We may be sure that the recent attempt of J. Allegro to explain away Christianity in terms of the sacred mushroom will be no more successful than his earlier efforts to achieve the same end by reference to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

some Old Testament themes as they are handled in the New Testament.

The fruits of this approach may be seen in two of the main types of publication produced by Bruce. On the one hand, he has devoted considerable attention to the history of the biblical period. Three main works come into this category. The earliest was the trilogy, The Dawn of Christianity (1950), The Growing Day (1951) and Light in the West (1952), now united in one volume as The Spreading Flame (1953). The original impetus to this work was the aim of showing that the facts concerning The Rise of Christianity differed in very significant respects from the presentation of them in the book of that name by E. W. Barnes, a very liberal Bishop of Birmingham.<sup>4</sup> The result was a brilliant, eminently readable survey of the New Testament period, which Bruce was then persuaded to carry on into the sub-apostolic period and right through to the conversion of Britain. Next there came a history of *Israel and the Nations* (1963), which covered the period from the Exodus to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 with more particular reference to the second half of this period. Finally, there is a definitive New Testament History (1969) in which the New Testament Period itself is treated on a broad scale with concise summaries on a multitude of important matters. One could, however, wish for a more detailed treatment of several controversial issues in this volume. While Bruce is able to present a coherent and persuasive picture of New Testament history which is corroborated by a number of recent, similar investigations. he has not entered sufficiently into debate with advocates of the approach which finds the New Testament evidence conflicting and tendentious.

On the other hand, we have a series of commentaries covering a goodly part of the New Testament. From Bruce's pen we have major treatments of Acts (1951 and 1954), Romans (1963), 1 and 2 Corinthians (1971), Colossians (1957) and Hebrews (1964). On a lesser scale he has dealt with Matthew (1970), Ephesians (1961), Thessalonians (1953), 1-3 John (1970) and Revelation (1969), as well as Judges (1953). He plans to write a major work on Galatians. The treatment of these various books naturally differs greatly according to the purpose for which the commentaries were written. Bruce is probably at his best in the volumes in the New London (=New International) Commentary. Here the format enables him to deal with the text in a manner that combines exegesis and exposition. He presents his material in a continuous exposition, which is intelligible to the Greekless reader, and reserves technical matters for a very full set of footnotes. The commentaries are thus valuable for more than one level of readership.

When Bruce's rather technical commentary on Acts was published, it was criticised by some readers for being too narrowly linguistic and historical and lacking theological content. The point was a fair one, but the explanation of the lack lay in the fact that Bruce was already at work

<sup>4.</sup> E. W. Barnes, *The Rise of Christianity* (Longmans) 1947; for a straight criticism of this work see F. G. Kenyon, *The Bible and Modern Scholarship* (Murray) 1948.

F. V. Filson, A New Testament History (S.C.M. Press) 1965; B. Reicke, The New Testament Era (Black) 1969; L. Goppelt, Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times (Black) 1970.

on his commentary on the same book for the New London series, and in this later work proper attention is paid to theology. The fashion of the present day in New Testament scholarship (an eminently healthy one) is to highlight the theology of the various books. There can be no doubt that Bruce fully accepts this approach and his commentaries are written in the light of it.

Bruce has shown that a positively evangelical approach to the text of the New Testament makes sense of it. After all, the test of any kind of understanding of a text is whether it arises from the text and is demanded by the text or has been forced upon it at the expense of failure to do justice to the text. The text must make sense on its own terms. In Rudolf Bultmann's commentary on the Gospel of John, for example, the exegesis is conducted on the basis of the assumption that the Gospel is to be understood in terms of Existentialism: hence Bultmann continually expresses what John really means in Existentialist language. But this approach simply does not do justice to what John says; while it may be plausible for some parts of the Gospel, there are others which will not yield to this treatment, and so the whole method is rendered questionable.<sup>6</sup>

By contrast, Bruce's commentaries show that a different kind of theology is expressed in the New Testament. The important thing is that he finds it right and proper in his commentaries to express this theological message as being of permanent validity and of direct relevance for his readers. The characteristic mark of an evangelical understanding of the New Testament is that it sees it as a book which masters the exegete and submits him to the claims of its message. Bruce has shown that when the New Testament is treated honestly, with proper attention to context and background and all the other relevant factors, exegesis of it leads straight into exposition.

To be sure, the criticism is commonly raised against evangelicals that they come to terms with the text too easily. They assume without argument that the thought-forms of the past are still meaningful today; worse still, they imagine that the essential message of the New Testament does not need any correction or alteration in the light of succeeding centuries. So far as the former of these objections is concerned, it must be noted that Bruce himself is not afraid to raise questions as to how the New Testament is to be understood today and whether it may not require some 'translation' into modern terms. In a recent article on 'The Kerygma of Hebrews' he raises precisely this question. But one shrewdly suspects that he would firmly claim, in answer to the second objection, that the New Testament is the authoritative revelation of God to us, and that there can be no question of evading its authority. Here the evangelical, who has shown that his interpretation of the New Testament is well-founded, has a right to claim

<sup>6.</sup> See R. Schnackenburg, The Gospel according to St. John (Herder) 1968, Vol. I.

<sup>7.</sup> For example, with reference to the heavenly intercession of Christ, Bruce writes: 'If we translate this emphasis into terms less pictorial than those which the writer to the Hebrews uses, we may say that the death of Christ, and the spirit in which he accepted death, constitute an abiding force in the eternal order, powerfully acting in defense of mankind' ('The Interpretation of Hebrews', *Interpretation* 23, January 1969, 3-19, quotation from 9).

that the message of the New Testament is to be heard and accepted on its own terms.

In these ways Bruce has demonstrated the scholarly character of the evangelical understanding of the New Testament. But we must now consider his work from a different point of view. The point which Bruce has made to the non-evangelical world also needs to be made to the evangelicals themselves. They must grasp the point that their position must be scholarly if it is to be of any value in the modern world, and that this insight may lead to the giving up of some cherished ideas which have come to be falsely associated with evangelicalism down the years.

Some evangelicals seem to be opposed to biblical scholarship per se, on grounds that it has nothing new to teach and, as practised by radicals, it has led to untold harm and even to the corruption of evangelicals. Far better to leave it alone, goes the argument, lest one be unconsciously contaminated by it. But even if some evangelicals have been well and truly scunnered by biblical scholarship—often with good cause—this can be no excuse for being unscholarly. The answer to bad scholarship based on faulty premises is not no scholarship but better scholarship. The Bible must be understood in a scholarly manner, and evangelicals must be pre-

pared to play their part in this task.

Here Professor Bruce has played an important part. For example, one may still find evangelicals who are convinced that the Greek text behind the Authorised Version is the uncorrupted original text, and that the Authorised Version itself is the Word of God for our age, not to be replaced by any modern substitute. Such an attitude is fortunately almost extinct, and part of the reason for its demise lies in the work of Bruce. Like that early leader among the Brethren, S. P. Tregelles, he has played a leading part in commending the use of a reliable, modern text of the Scriptures. The 1947 edition of A. Souter's Novum Testamentum Graece contains a reference to Bruce's work in proof-reading on behalf of the veteran scholar. Two of Bruce's own books have examined the history of the text of the Bible. His early work, The Books and Parchments (1950), surveyed the story of the various ancient versions of the Bible, and his more recent book, The English Bible (1961, rev. 1970) has become the standard survey of the history of its subject up to the year of publication of the New English Bible. Nor is this all: Bruce has also produced An Expanded Paraphrase of the Epistles of Paul (1965), which is intended as a help to study alongside the use of a more literal version. In these ways he has helped to commend to evangelicals the use of modern aids to Bible study, and has done much to make the taunt of obscurantism no longer applicable to them.

Again, Bruce has demonstrated that there must be a readiness to learn from non-evangelical scholars, even if this means giving up traditional positions. Many evangelicals find the idea that the Gospel writers used written sources abhorrent. (For some curious reason oral tradition seems to make less hairs bristle). Bruce, however, finds no difficulty in the possibility. He is increasingly cautious about attributing the Pastoral Epistles directly to the pen of Paul himself, since he is aware of the very real difficulties in the way of this theory. He would certainly disagree with the

view once expressed that anybody who cannot accept them as coming straight from Paul ought not to write a commentary on them until he has come to a better frame of mind. In Bruce's view the evangelical doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible is not tied down to particular traditional interpretations of the Bible. This may be hard for some to accept, and naturally there is considerable room for difference of opinion as to what are and are not the implications of the evangelical doctrine of the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible.

On a more personal level, Bruce has done much for the scholarly study of the Bible by evangelicals. No account of his work as a biblical scholar can afford to leave out the personal influence which he has had in encouraging other scholars and especially in helping younger men to make their way in scholarship. He has been ready to help older scholars such as G. H. Lang and E. K. Simpson with the technicalities of publication, and he has done much to commend the work of younger men also. One thinks too of his work as chairman of the New Testament study group of the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research, where he has played a notable part over many years in encouraging others to undertake scholarly research.

F. F. Bruce may not go down in history as a creative, original thinker. His name will probably not be associated with any brilliant new thesis in biblical scholarship, in the way in which, for example, the name of C. H. Dodd has been associated with 'realised eschatology' or 'historical tradition in the Fourth Gospel'. His gifts are of a different order. They lie more in the ability to sift the work of others, to weed out what is ephemeral, and to present in solid and convincing form a picture of the real state of affairs. New Testament history and theology alike are thus placed on a firm basis; the reader knows that he will learn much from the presentation, and that he will not be exposed to daring and unlikely hypotheses. It should be unnecessary to plead that this is the proper task of the scholar, and that, while one is grateful for the stimulus of new hypotheses, it is of supreme value to be presented with sound learning and sober conclusions.

The quality of F. F. Bruce as a biblical scholar is universally recognised. Few British scholars receive the honour of a *Festschrift*, a gift (as the name implies) more German than English; and there is no doubt that Bruce well deserves his, as he has deserved his earlier honours. May he continue to put the world of scholarship in his debt for many years to come!

## F. F. BRUCE: HIS INFLUENCE ON BRETHREN IN THE BRITISH ISLES

#### F. ROY COAD\*

ATTEMPTS to dogmatise about 'Open' Brethren assemblies are not uncommon: but few of them are not liable to be confounded by the realities of the next congregation which one visits. In the British Isles at least, a jealously guarded independency (which can sometimes degenerate into a simple stubborness) is apt to make nonsense of any generalisation. To try to trace the influence of any one man on such an idiosyncratic group of churches seems therefore to be an enterprise which is by definition futile.

Yet when a man who is deeply gifted also has the ability to win the confidence and respect of men of most schools of thought—in short, when he is of the stature of F. F. Bruce—it becomes possible to speak more meaningfully of his influence. Even so, it is probably best to make the attempt by the less ambitious method of personal testimony: a testimony based on the experience of a succession of not unrepresentative churches since childhood.

The years before and during the Second World War were no easier for the dawning faith of a teenager growing into intellectual awareness than are the present times. It is probable indeed that Christianity (at least evangelical Christianity) was less intellectually respectable then than it is today. Today, an evangelical Christian can, if he so wishes, enter into profitable and two sided dialogue with a wide range of challenging views: with science and philosophy, with the arts and with radical politics. If he has troubled to ground himself sufficiently and to understand what really matters in his faith, he will not find himself without guidance; and he can come out of his experiences with the strengthened conviction that he is indeed in possession of a pearl without price. Yet, in those not so distant days—certainly in the circles of which many Brethren churches were typical—one could feel beleaguered and on the defensive. The fellowship of happy and warm-hearted older Christians, and one's personal experience of true communion with God, might anchor one's faith—but the world of thought seemed to lurk outside, hostile and perilous.

It was a situation of potential retreat into oneself and of intellectual compromise: over it hung the threat of an eventual break with one's background—a break made by so many of one's contemporaries. One treasured thankfully the writings and example of the few guides of an older generation—of men like the late Rendle Short. It was in such a context that after the War, as one began to face the practical consequences of assuming adult church responsibilities with intellectual honesty, that one began to become aware of the rising name—and in the critical field of Bible studies—of F. F. Bruce.

It was the quality of Bruce's mind that influenced one most. One sensed

<sup>\*</sup>Mr. F. R. Coad is author of A History of the Brethren Movement (Paternoster Press, 1968) and an editor of this Journal.

a mind that, while faithful to one's own deepest convictions, was yet prepared to face the implications of truth honestly, without fear of the consequences. Yet it was essentially a humble mind, with the true humility of the scholar: no iconoclast he, the brilliance of his reputation resting on the novelty of his views, but rather a dependable guide who inspired confidence the more by the very quietness and reliability of his judgments. So Bruce quietly showed us that the way of truth was no less exciting than we had thought—but that it led not into a hostile and strange country, but into the very homeland of the Christian spirit. His sober common sense showed that one could still be true to one's God and to one's intellect. Moreover-and it was to breathe pure air again after so much of the polemic to which one had grown accustomed—he was a guide who respected all men: who counted it a dishonour to God to try to discredit an opponent's views (however extreme) by abuse, and an insult to his readers to resort to the weapon of prejudice in controversy. O si sic omnes! So Principal Charles Duthie of New College, London, could write concerning him in a review of the recent Festschrift: "You will search his work in vain for anything like contempt for some liberal or radical thinkers with whom he finds himself in disagreement".

Influential though his writings have been (and their corpus is comparable in scope and weight with any of the greatest of writers among Brethren who have preceded him), his influence among Brethren has depended quite as much upon the man himself. One might meet him at some Young People's Conference—modest (one almost wrote shy), yet how accessible to any person present: always approachable and never assertive—and always with that ready sense of humour. Ready with the word of appreciation to the young speaker—it was not Bruce's attention which had wandered during the address, though he had heard it all a hundred times before! And if, when he spoke, some complained of dryness, they did not include those who thirsted for that which would expand the mind and sometimes send it racing into exciting new fields of Biblical understanding. To the ordinary thoughtful man, Bruce gives freely from a mind richly stocked with Biblical and theological treasures.

His influence has been seen in other ways also. Younger scholars are appearing who have studied under him at Sheffield and Manchester—not to speak of those who have not been his immediate pupils, but whose methods and thinking shows strong signs of his influence. They bring with them the same respect for solid, careful scholarship, the same open-ness of mind that has modesty too to respect the traditions of the Faith. They are too few still—but as we meet men of this calibre, from assemblies and evangelical churches in Australia and New Zealand, from U.S.A. and Canada and South America, we begin to realise that the influence of this quiet man is wider than we had thought—and who knows what it holds for the future?

The example of F. F. Bruce has opened up again for many of us the treasures of real Biblical thinking, and has thus exposed us again to those free movements of the Spirit of God through the Scriptures which were being stultified by ideas and interpretations learned only at third or fourth hand. Traditionally Brethren were 'men of the Book'—but, too proud of

our traditions, we tended to speak to the Bible, so that it failed to speak to us. It is not for nothing that Bruce so often quotes in his addresses his father's advice to accept no interpretation on trust, until we have seen it in Scripture for ourselves. Then he has opened our minds to the richness of Biblical insight available today—a contribution of immense importance if we are to avoid the intellectual inbreeding which has brought disaster to so many movements. Then—and by no means least—he has shown us how, in matters theological, we may disagree and yet behave like gentlemen!

F. F. B. would certainly disclaim any suggestion that the recently published A New Testament Commentary reflected his influence in Brethren churches—he himself transcends it, and there must be many things in it with which he would disagree. Yet, to compare that Commentary, in its freshness and open-ness of approach, and its inter-action with general scholarship, with so much that was representative of Brethren writing of a generation ago, is to understand just what has been accomplished by the influence and example of, pre-eminently, Bruce himself. Discussing the commentary recently in relation to common misconceptions of Brethren, an eminent Anglican evangelical, who had himself published a highly commendatory review of it, remarked to me: "It has opened the eyes of a great many people". When my reply referred to the influence of F. F. Bruce, it received a hearty agreement.

Bruce's work extends far beyond Brethren: the *Tabula Congratuloria* of the *Festschrift* bears witness to that. Yet, among all those who have signed it, none could have added their names with more genuine feeling and sincerity than those of his friends from among Brethren who appear in that list. F.F.B., we thank God for you.

## F. F. BRUCE AS A TEACHER

#### DAVID F. PAYNE\*

As a young undergraduate, one's first impressions of F. F. Bruce as a teacher were his clarity and lucidity. If comparisons are odious, undergraduates certainly make them—and F.F.B. came out well from any comparison with one's other lecturers and teachers. The content was nicely judged; each of his lectures was 'meaty', but yet did not demand the talents of a stenographer from the student taking notes.

The erudition was recognisable from the start, but somewhat disguised by his ease of delivery, and his remarkable avoidance of abstruse (and German!) terminology. I think one therefore came to appreciate the depth of the erudition better in retrospect. The 'footnotes' were not uttered, of course, but any question from a student immediately elicited one, without the least hesitation or playing for time. There is no doubt that every lecture had been prepared in depth.

The courses at Sheffield University, it was laid down, were to be strictly 'non-doctrinal'—an impossible goal. But Mr. Bruce (as he was till

<sup>\*</sup>Mr. D. F. Payne is Lecturer in Semitic Studies in The Queen's University of Belfast.

1955) observed the spirit of this law scrupulously, and no student could have claimed that he had been in any way indoctrinated. A breadth and a choice of viewpoint were always offered, and offered in the most objective way; at the same time, shrewd and sensible criteria were presented, so that the student was not left befogged by a vast and conflicting mass of undigested opinions. This technique had the effect of forcing one to think for oneself, to reach one's own conclusions, and to learn facility in applying criteria. At the same time, it gave one opportunity to adjust one's thinking to unpalatable facts or theories, without losing one's spiritual balance. The attempt to shock was never one of F.F.B.'s teaching methods; one was never bullied into making an immediate decision, pro or con. Hence one was schooled, almost unconsciously, to avoid snap judgments, to weigh up problems carefully and objectively, and above all to resist the temptation to oversimplify all questions into black-and-white terms ('sound' or 'unsound', 'evangelical' or 'liberal', etc.).

In his individual relationships with students, Professor Bruce was a true Barnabas. He was no taskmaster, but his pupils received every encouragement. Work done for him was assessed shrewdly—but kindly. Any burgeoning aptitudes or interests were noted and fostered. And any ideas or suggestions, however ill-conceived, one might proffer to him, consistently received courteous and sympathetic—though, wisely, not uncritical—attention.

F.F.B.'s literary output speaks for itself. The wonder is that he has never put research before students, and that he has always been prepared to give unstintingly of his valuable time to the needs and demands of his pupils.

Years have passed since I could speak from first-hand experience—hence the past tenses of the above paragraphs. But I do not doubt that the same—and more—could be said of the present Rylands Professor in the University of Manchester (to which Chair he succeeded in 1959).

## F. F. BRUCE AS A FELLOW-ELDER

#### ARNOLD PICKERING\*

In April 1960 when we had the joy of welcoming the Bruce family into the fellowship of the church which meets in Crescent Road Hall, Stockport, F.F.B. appeared to have found a congenial spiritual home. He diligently entered into the activities of the church and evidently enjoyed the spontaneity of its worship and service. His particular ministry was immediately apparent and gratefully acknowledged. Here was a man with a unique insight into the Word of God and a facility in giving the sense and causing the reading to be understood.

By common consent his service in the church soon required formal recognition. Precisely two years from his first visit to the Hall to conduct a Broadcast Service he, and others, were presented to the church as additional elders. Very probably the manner in which this recognition was effected differed little from common practice, but for us there was one

<sup>\*</sup>Mr. A. Pickering, a Certified Accountant, is an elder of Prof. Bruce's home church.

quite unusual feature. For the first time in its history the church was formally recognising a teaching elder. Not that F.F.B. exercises amongst us an exclusive ministry of the Word. He gladly shares our arranged ministry on alternate Sunday mornings with several of his brethren, encouraging them to stir up latent gift. He carries his learning lightly and never parades his knowledge.

This teaching ministry is far from representing the whole of his contribution to the well-being of the church. To watch him dedicate a babe (wisely allowing the child to repose in the security of mother's arms!): to hear him dedicate an offering and to listen to his counsel to young folk leaving the church and home to go up to University, is to be reminded that the true elder must be a man of many parts. His experience and heavenly wisdom are equally apparent in the necessarily wide variety of matters considered at the monthly meeting of elders. The efficiency and expedition with which business is despatched when he occupies the Chair cannot be wholly explained by the time of his homeward train! Notwithstanding that the world is his parish he maintains a great loyalty to our fellowship and among the other sterling qualities which have endeared him to us all are his dependability, unaffected humility and consistent thoughtfulness for others.

In his useful booklet entitled Who are the Brethren? F.F.B. wrote concerning the elders who administer local churches—'they try to guide by example rather than rule by decree'. Not easily could better words be found to describe the gracious and faithful manner of his services to our church in which the Holy Ghost has made him an overseer.

## F. F. BRUCE AS A FRIEND

### G. C. D. HOWLEY\*

THERE are many excursions into the pleasures of a friendship. Each fresh experience deepens the friendship and reveals its potentialities for enrichment of mind and spirit. Some friendships develop gradually; others seem to blossom quickly. But there can be no true friendship without a mingling of affection and respect. Where such exists, it is something to be greatly prized.

I write merely as one of a wide circle of friends and well-wishers of F.F.B., but it is a privilege to be able to represent them by this tribute to what this friendship has meant to me. I know sufficient of his friendships with others to realise that exactly the same qualities that have marked our friendship mark his with other people. Ours began gradually: first contacts with him in his Cambridge days were few, yet they left their mark on my mind; and later meetings with him drove home to me the depths behind the quiet exterior. Correspondence between us was occasional, yet led to the ripening of the link. My wife and I were always struck with his essential simplicity of heart. This was shown in his interest in the most ordinary matters in the home. He was never one with a great element of small talk,

<sup>\*</sup>Mr. G. C. D. Howley is editor of *The Witness* and a well known teacher among Brethren.

yet at home this ranged to mundane and domestic matters, the detail of living, which makes him an easy guest. We recall an occasion when he stayed with us while food rationing was still in force after the war. He refused a second helping of meat, saying, 'That'll do nicely for shepherds pie tomorrow'!

The growing extent of his work never dulled life's intimacies. This interest has been seen in our family affairs. When our elder son was born, F.F.B. made the remark that, were we in different ecclesiastical circles, he would probably be Peter's god-father. When our younger son was baptised, he wrote: 'Thank you for sharing your joy with us; we are delighted to know of Robert's forthcoming baptism, and pray that it will be a blessing to him and to you all'.

We have known the strength of a prayer-bond between us, and this has been expressed at different turning-points in our lives, as when we went to Australia as a family in 1952, for a two-year period of ministry; and my first visit to U.S.A. brought this letter: 'This is a short note to wish you Godspeed on the eve of your departure for U.S.A. I shall be remembering you from time to time during your visit there, and I hope that you yourself will have a refreshing time, as well as being a blessing to others'. We were charmed when a letter in September, 1954 said: 'An early copy of this volume must go to you, for reasons which an examination of page 5 will disclose'. We then found his thoughtful dedication of his volume on the English Text of The Book of Acts, 'To Cecil and Robina Howley'.

We have shared in some of his plans, as when he sent us an early intimation of his invitation to his present Chair in Manchester University. Even that letter showed, however, his ready contentment with the task he then pursued at Sheffield. 'I found some difficulty in making up my mind, as I am thoroughly content here; but at last I decided to say Yes. The invitation was completely unsought, and indeed unexpected, on my part'. References to his own activities (however important they might be in themselves) are referred to quite naturally in sharing them with us.

His comments on men and matters are pithy, and without malice or rancour. I recall him sending his greetings to a certain gentleman who was at the time making a sharp (and totally unjustified) attack on him. His balance has been shown in his sense of perspective. He can see how others may be 'off', yet without allowing this to get him out of sorts; he remains unruffled . . . and this has been an example to many, including the writer. His helpfulness is an outstanding element in his make-up. Ready always with replies to queries, and responding with sage counsel when it has been sought, he is meticulous in attending to dead-lines. He remembers the commitments of other people, and is always on time so that they will not be held up in the fulfilment of their responsibilities. And in this I write as one who has had much assistance from him over the sixteen years of my editorship of *The Witness*.

The friendship of which I write has been to my wife and myself a source of great pleasure and encouragement in our Christian life. And today, each fresh 'excursion' into the joys of such friendship brings its return, not merely on the earth plane, but with an increased desire for the glory of God in all of our lives.

## A PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP

#### **B. HOWARD MUDDITT\***

THE late Ernest William Barnes, sometime Bishop of Birmingham, had, in the opinion of some evangelicals, much to answer for of an unpleasant nature. Let it at least be counted to his credit that, albeit unwittingly, he brought Professor Bruce and me together in author/publisher relationship, a good deed which, thank God, was not 'interred with his bones'.

It happened this way. In 1947, Bishop Barnes published a book entitled *The Rise of Christianity*. In this book, which went through four impressions in two years, he virtually discarded the supernatural in the Christian story and reduced it to a collection of myths of doubtful authenticity. So great was the outcry from those who respected the integrity of the New Testament that I felt that a book should be published telling the true story. Accordingly, I wrote to Professor Bruce and asked if he would write for me a book entitled *The Dawn of Christianity*. I evidently felt that it was necessary to let a little light into a very dark place!

To my surprise and pleasure the reply came back, 'Yes, I will write the book you ask for, and the typescript will reach you on the 30th June'.

I had received letters like that before from different authors, but on this occasion, mirabile dictu, the manuscript did arrive, not on the date when the author said, but the day before! Which was so unusual that I recognised at once that here was an author worth having, and this first impression was more than confirmed when I read the manuscript. First, it was meticulously prepared—I could have sent it to the printer without reading a comma in it. Second, it was written with scholarship, a warm humanity, humour and spiritual purpose. I realized that my original approach to Professor Bruce had been guided by a greater wisdom than my own. That was the beginning of a co-operative effort in the affairs of the Kingdom of God that has increased in spiritual capital gains and worldwide spiritual dividends ever since. As I write, I have before me the proofs of yet another reprint the twelfth in English, with a translation in Japanese and another in Hindi. This little book was followed in the two succeeding years by two others, The Growing Day and Light in the West, now combined with The Dawn of Christianity as The Spreading Flame, which became the first and most frequently reprinted volume in The Paternoster Church History. We now have seven substantial volumes by Professor Bruce, all very much alive, in our current catalogue, and others in preparation; all this, apart from books that have been published under other imprints, notably that of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, who have done and are doing such splendid work.

To publish for Professor Bruce is to have the privilege of sharing in a joint ministry of Christian literature in which the author-partner not only prepares his MSS with the knowledge and skill of a professional writer, not only always keeps his promise as to time, but also never lets his partner down by introducing some quirk of exegesis or opinion which will at best detract from the value of the book, and at worst will arouse a storm of

<sup>\*</sup>Mr. B. H. Mudditt is Chairman and Proprietor of the Paternoster Press.

controversy. Professor Bruce knows exactly how to make available his knowledge and insights so that they will be most readily received and assimilated by his readers. More than this, his own sense of responsibility to God informs and directs all his work.

Many years after the first publication of *The Dawn of Christianity* I asked Professor Bruce why he so readily accepted my invitation to write it. 'I had the expense of sending two children to school that Autumn, and your offer of an advance of royalties was a godsend in helping me to do that'. 'I also had two children to send to school that same Autumn', I replied, 'and your MS was a godsend in helping me to do the same!'

The intervening years have made us both glad that it was God, after all, and not just Bishop Barnes, who joined us together in the work of Christian

literature.

## F. F. BRUCE AND THE INTER-VARSITY FELLOWSHIP

#### OLIVER R. BARCLAY\*

Professor Bruce has had a real contribution to make to the Inter-Varsity Fellowship at all stages of his career. He was President of the Christian Union in Aberdeen as a student; then he was a major help to struggling C.U.'s in Leeds and Sheffield as a local member of staff in days when the support of staff for I.V.F. groups was rare. Gradually he emerged as a sought-after speaker on subjects where evangelical scholars were few, and his speaking and personal counselling has helped many to remain true to their evangelical faith when the theological pressures were all the other way.

Over the years he has helped many to keep fighting and not to react into anti-intellectualism, and it is here that his books have been a powerful influence for good. His Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?, for instance (now under a slightly more positive title), was a major source of help to Christians and non-Christians alike. Though his gifts are not primarily evangelistic, his talks and writings in the field of apologetics have carried a good deal of weight. One wonders who can have been a more prolific writer of everything from highly technical works to popular paper-backs: his industry has been enormous!

At one stage (perhaps still) he had a reputation for answering requests by return of post, usually with a completed MS which he had sat up half the night to finish. He must have saved the day for many magazine and symposium editors who, when let down by other authors, turned to F.F.B. and did not ask in vain. One wonders if the Inter-Varsity Press's New Bible Commentary and New Bible Dictionary could have appeared in anything like the time and shape that they did without his herculean back room efforts.

The I.V.F. and its associate movements would not be what they are apart from F.F.B. And we trust that our experience of fellowship in days gone by is merely a token of many years of fruitful co-operation during years to come.

<sup>\*</sup>Dr. O. R. Barclay is General Secretary of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship.

# A SUPPLEMENTARY BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WRITINGS OF F. F. BRUCE

#### COMPILED BY W. WARD GASQUE\*

Note: This list of some of the writings of Professor F. F. Bruce is intended to supplement those included in "A Select Bibliography of the Writings of F. F. Bruce", in Apostolic History and the Gospel, ed. W. W. Gasque and R. P. Martin (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1970; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 21-34. For abbreviations, see end of bibliography.

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<sup>\*</sup>Dr. W. W. Gasque is Assistant Professor in New Testament, Regent College, Vancouver.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.J.R.L.	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
C.Q.	The Church Quarterly
E.Q.	The Evangelical Quarterly.
Exp.T.	The Expository Times
J.S.S.	Journal of Semitic Studies.
J.T.S.	Journal of Theological Studies
M.C.	The Modern Churchman
N.T.S.	New Testament Studies
S.J.T.	Scottish Journal of Theology
T.S.F.	The Theological Students' Fellowship
W.T.J.	The Westminster Theological Journal

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