

## A PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP

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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

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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.

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