



Reviews

THE CULTURE OF CONTROVERSY: RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTS IN SCOTLAND, 1660–1714 by Alasdair Raffae (Studies in Modern British Religious History)
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2012, pp. xi + 289, £55.00, hbk

In Scotland, perhaps surprisingly, the Reformation was nothing like as protracted and as bloody as in England: about twenty Protestants were burned at the stake for heresy, including two former Dominicans, whereas the only unquestionable Catholic martyr, the Jesuit St John Ogilvie, was hanged in 1615, for alleged treason. But then there was no regal monster in Scotland like King Henry VIII, nothing like the Dominican Pope Pius V's unwise excommunication of Queen Elizabeth in 1570 nor anything like the carnage envisaged by the Gunpowder Plot in 1605.

Some decades later, however, the Scots were indeed bitterly divided over religion, as Dr Raffae shows in this excellent book (the product of a doctoral thesis at the University of Edinburgh). But the martyrs commemorated in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh were Covenanters, Presbyterians hunted down and killed (1661–68) because of their opposition to royal control of the Kirk as they perceived it (the monument was created in 1937). They were regarded by their fellow Protestants as disloyal subjects. Later still, since many Episcopalians remained loyal to the exiled Stuart dynasty, and were disproportionately well represented in the Jacobite rebellions, the repressive measures taken against them by the Hanoverian state remained in force into the last decades of the 18th century.

This intermittent and certainly violent conflict was between Presbyterians and Episcopalians in the reformed Church of Scotland but each party was also divided internally. Alasdair Raffae, recently returned to Edinburgh as a Chancellor's Fellow in history, documents the controversies that raged from the restoration of King Charles II in 1660 to the death of Queen Anne in 1714. These relate principally to church government, allegiance to the throne, especially after the Dutch invasion (the 'Glorious Revolution'), progressive or anyway unavoidable toleration of nonconformity, and so on, all with significant doctrinal implications, deeply held, if never properly spelled out. In its own way, the Covenanters' struggle to free the Kirk from Episcopalian submission to the throne anticipated the Disruption in 1843 when a third of the clergy and people seceded out of hostility to lay control to form the Free Church of Scotland. The struggle against erastianism in the Church of England, which gave rise to the Tractarians and the Oxford Movement, was over the same issue — not to forget another version of the same struggle, even more momentous, against Josephinism, Gallicanism, etc., in the Catholic Church, which necessitated the Vatican Council in 1869–70.

In the course of his exposition Dr Raffae highlights hitherto unexamined debates about religious enthusiasm, worship and clerical hypocrisy, as well as the then new idea of religious toleration and the advent of articulate irreligion. As regards enthusiasm it would have added colour to his narrative but unfortunately he had no reason to discuss Madame Bourignon (1616–80), the Flemish mystic, whose quietist resignation to the divine will, condemned as heresy by her own Roman Catholic authorities, was greatly appreciated by Episcopalians among the landed gentry in rural Aberdeenshire. For decades Bourignonism was repeatedly condemned by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: listed in 1711

among the heresies to be abjured by ordinands, it was 1889 before this prescription was cancelled.

Less exotically, the Church of Scotland minister in Banff in the mid 1670s was directed by the General Assembly to 'endeavour to prevent the spreading of errors, and in particular of popery and quakerisme, among his flock' (Cramond, *Annals* ii, 43). These may seem unlikely errors, a hundred years after the former Catholic priest John Knox liberated the Scots into Presbyterianism (as the story goes); the tiny minorities of surviving Catholics and committed Quakers, as Raffé rightly says, were, amazingly enough, 'figures of fear and hatred for Presbyterians and Episcopalian alike' (p. 3). Dr Raffé does not overlook the execution in 1697 of the 20-year-old Edinburgh student Thomas Aikenhead for blasphemy, rightly putting it down to fears on the part of the local Presbyterian ministers that the ecclesiastical arrangements settled in 1690 might not be quite secure.

People in all social ranks and all over Scotland (apart from the then extensive Gaelic-speaking region) delighted in religious controversy. Dr Raffé analyses the arguments about religious dissent and persecution (chapter 4). He traces and documents the ways in which opponents stereotyped one another as 'fanatics' and 'enthusiasts' (chapter 5). He examines disputes about the morals of the clergy, customarily intent on discrediting individuals (chapter 6). By seceding, temporarily or permanently, dissenters displayed their dissatisfaction with the established order (chapter 7). There is quite a history of rioting and rabble rousing (chapter 8). Bringing all this to a head, Dr Raffé establishes a new conceptual framework for discussing and understanding the dynamics of public debates, with the religious controversies in Scotland as a paradigm. While the book makes fascinating reading for students of Scottish history, Dr Raffé prepares the way successfully to open up wider and more general questions about the possibilities and practicalities of whatever forms of pluralism and dissent in any given public arena.

FERGUS KERR OP

THOMAS AQUINAS'S SUMMA THEOLOGIAE: A BIOGRAPHY by Bernard McGinn, *Princeton University Press*, Princeton and Oxford, 2014, pp. xi + 260, \$24.95, hbk

This excellent and beautifully written book is a fine introduction to the *Summa Theologiae* and to how it has been regarded over the years. It invites comparison with Jean-Pierre Torrell's *Aquinas's 'Summa': Background, Structure, and Reception* (2005) since McGinn and Torrell appear to be trying to do exactly the same thing in their different works. McGinn's volume, however, is, I think, better than that of Torrell since, while not being much longer, its scope and theological interest is wider, and since it is more comprehensive when it comes to the ways in which the *Summa Theologiae* has been evaluated since Aquinas died. It is also written in a more engaging style for people approaching the *Summa Theologiae* for the first time and with wide-ranging interests in the history of theology. McGinn is now Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago and has published a number of distinguished studies on Christian thought. His new book is well up to the standard of his much acclaimed previous ones. In his preface to it he says that he found it 'scary' to turn to the *Summa Theologiae* since he is not 'a card carrying member of any Thomist party' and since he has written little on Aquinas during his career (p.ix). My view is that McGinn is being unduly modest here. I think that his new book is one of the best introductory