

(e.g. 2a 2ae 2,4 and 1a 1,1). One's Christian beliefs are held with greater certainty than one's acceptance of the conclusion of natural theology—it would be odd to suppose that the former rest on the latter as their secure foundation. The virtue of faith and the Gifts of wisdom and knowledge enable the believer to assent to the articles of faith immediately.

As regards the Five Ways: well, if the story about second-level studies is correct, then of course the arguments cannot be there to show us that God exists as though there could be any doubt about this. These arguments cannot be intended to establish a conclusion which is in doubt but must rather be ways to help us to understand something about God—and here Jenkins takes us back to David Burrell, *Exercises on Religious Understanding* (1974) and *Aquinas; God and Action* (1979). Readings of Aquinas diverge considerably: on some issues Jenkins is startlingly innovative; in others he aligns himself with other recent studies; all in all, however, this is a very distinguished contribution to the renaissance of Thomist scholarship in North America.

FERGUS KERR OP

THE SAINTS OF SCOTLAND: ESSAYS IN SCOTTISH CHURCH HISTORY, AD 450–1093, by Alan Macquarrie, John Donald, Edinburgh, 1997.

Scotland can be a frustrating place to work as an early medievalist. Far less documentary evidence has survived here than in England or Ireland, respectively our closest neighbour and our next of kin in this period. Such documents as we have are largely ecclesiastical, of course, which makes a history such as this one easier to write than a history of politics or farming. But hagiography is tendentious, highly politically charged material, and the historian must adopt a hermeneutic of extreme suspicion when dealing with it. Macquarrie manages this well for the most part, adding evidence from annals, liturgical works (including the *Aberdeen Breviary*, which is crying out for further scholarly attention), archaeology and folk traditions, to paint a picture of Scotland's church from the fifth to the eleventh century in refreshingly bright colours.

This is a work of history, not hagiography—except for a curious last paragraph in which the author hopes that we will be inspired by the example of these holy men (and a woman), even though our *Vitae* suggest that their subjects were important for their *virtus* rather than their virtue, to be prayed to rather than imitated. It is not only a history of saints, but a collection of historical essays using the lives of a handful of saints as a lens to examine a wide range of topics.

Scotland is certainly in need of such historical writing. Last year we saw the strange spectacle of the Diocese of Dumfries and Galloway celebrating 1600 years of Christianity, based on the mistaken claim that Ninian died in 397—Macquarrie makes a convincing claim for the sixth century.

While there is no denying the overall quality of the writing, the meticulous care with which Macquarrie has sifted the evidence and introduced new material into old debates, I would take issue with him at several points. The third chapter, for example, leans heavily on Bede's claim that Ninian brought Christianity to the 'southern Picts', but Macquarrie has here abandoned a proper suspicion of his sources. There are good reasons why the Northumbrian Bede, whose church had recently lost Abercorn and its episcopal jurisdiction over the southern Picts, might want to suggest that Ninian's church at Whithorn, which was still under Northumbrian control, was the mother church of southern Pictish christianity.

The account of Pelagianism (pp. 16-20) is also flawed, not least in its description of Pelagius' condemned position, making no mention of the central issue: the denial of man's need of grace. Macquarrie mentions Pelagius' survival at the Council of Diospolis, but ignores evidence that the bishops accepted him because he was 'economical with the truth' regarding his teaching. In spite of the letter of Pope-elect John IV in 640, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín has shown that the allegation of Pelagianism was unfounded, and Gaelic literature offers no evidence of any Pelagian denial of our need for grace in the Irish and Scottish churches.

With regard to the date of Kentigern's death, Macquarrie cites Mgr MacRoberts' complicated suggestion that he fell ill on the Epiphany but died on the 13th January—his feast-day now. Many saints in these islands have more than one feast-day (and sometimes as a result more than one identity) because the octave became identified as their principal feast, and if Kentigern did die on the feast of the Epiphany it would not be surprising if the Octave day became his major celebration.

Adomnan's *De Locis Sanctis* is far more than 'a guide to pilgrims and work of reference for scholars' (p. 162), as Thomas O'Loughlin has shown, but Macquarrie is surely right that it should be better known and more closely studied. It may well be the oldest extant piece of prose to be written in Scotland, and in the middle ages it was seen as far more important than the *Vita Columbae* which is now so well known.

Columba's celebrated 'love of animals' (p. 164) is not in evidence in the *Vita Columbae*. When Columba cares for a wind-blown crane which flops onto his island, he gives his reasons for doing so: "I commend it to you so carefully for this reason: that it comes from our own fatherland." This bird is a political animal, representing the saint's continuing links with his own kin. His attitude to animals *per se* might be better represented by the miraculous sharp stake he made on which wild animals impaled themselves every few hours.

Apart from such quibbles, and a more substantial complaint that Macquarrie still seems to believe in the existence of a 'Celtic Church'—a concept which most historians have sensibly abandoned—this collection of essays is a fine demonstration of how much can be done by skilful handling of limited and widely scattered evidence.

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