

Conflict and Agreement In The Church

Volume One
Order And Disorder

SAMPLE

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T. F. Torrance

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Order And Disorder



James Clarke & Co.

To
Karl Barth

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Preface

During the last ten years I have found myself involved more and more in ecumenical discussions, through the Scottish Journal of Theology, through participation in the work of the Faith and Order Department of the World Council of Churches, and through engagement, at the request of my own Church, in conversations with the Church of England. The essays, articles, and article-reviews that make up these volumes have all arisen directly or indirectly out of that work, which to a large extent explains their character as well as the kind of questions that are raised and discussed in them. They do not, however, represent my main theological work or interest, which continues to be in the field of Christology and Soteriology. The contributions to this volume represent rather the parerga to that major task in spite of the fact that they have occupied so much of my time.

Some of the material in these volumes has already appeared in various journals in Scotland, England, and Ireland, in Germany, Switzerland, France, Canada, and the United States of America. I am grateful to the editors of the Journals concerned for allowing me to republish that material here. Some of it, however, has never been published before: papers read or lectures delivered to various audiences in churches and universities. For the most part they are now printed in the form in which they were delivered, but some of the addresses were delivered only from notes and now that they are written out in full they have naturally suffered some change or extension (perhaps even curtailment!). Most of them were not intended for publication. Now that they are gathered together into two volumes it is inevitable that there should be some repetition, but because the themes they cover are fairly closely related the repetition is not a little. Instead of abridging them, however, I have felt it better to give them in full as they were originally conceived and written.

I am particularly grateful to the S.C.M. Press for allowing me to publish the essay on *Eschatology and the Eucharist* written

for the volume on *Intercommunion* (edited by D. M. Baillie and John Marsh) in preparation for the Third World Conference on Faith and Order held at Lund;¹ and also to the Working Committee of the Faith and Order Department of the World Council of Churches, under the chairmanship of Dr. Oliver S. Tomkins, which allowed me to reproduce here the longer draft of the “working paper” on *Our oneness in Christ and our disunity as churches* which they asked me to write in the course of their preparation for the Evanston Assembly.

It is one of the great advantages of biblical and theological study in ecumenical encounter that one learns how often one’s own reading of the Bible and understanding of theology have been conditioned by looking at them through the spectacles of one’s own Church tradition. That is always salutary. The tension created between different traditions is also of great advantage in understanding the history of theology and the problems it has left to us. I should like, therefore, to take this opportunity of thanking all those with whom I have engaged in theological discussion and even controversy, for there are few from whom I have not learned. Some of that learning is reflected in these different essays, particularly of course in those of later date. If the reader should find some inconsistencies between earlier and later essays, I would beg of him to think of me as but a scholar in the school of Christ who does not count that he has attained but who still presses on in apprehending that for which he was apprehended by Christ Jesus.

For the benefit of some readers I would like to add that when I speak of “sacramental incorporation” I am using what the Reformers called “the sacramental mode of speaking” and am not suggesting that there is a second incorporation performed in the Sacraments in addition to that wrought by Christ Himself.

In reading through the proofs I have been reminded again of how much I owe to the teaching of Karl Barth, that great doctor of the Church Catholic, and not least to his understanding of the history of theology. The Church’s debt to him is immeasurable.

1. This essay will appear in Volume Two.

The gathering together of these essays has been undertaken at the suggestion of the Rev. Cecil Northcott of the Lutterworth Press. To him and to the Lutterworth Press I wish to express my deep gratitude for the great kindness and patience they have shown to me throughout.

T.F.T.
New College,
Edinburgh.
Christmas, 1958.

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The Presbyterian World, for “Our Witness Through Doctrine”: *The Ecumenical Review* for “What is the Church?": *The Presbyterian Record*, Toronto, and *Biblical Theology*, Belfast, for “A New Approach”: the editor of *The Scotsman* (Mr. A. M. Dunnett), the Rev. James Quinn, S.J., and the Very Rev. Mgr. H. Francis Davis, for correspondence reprinted from that paper: and *Interpretation* and *Judaica* for “Israel and the Incarnation”.