



Editorial

The Fraser Prize Competition was established in 2012 in partnership with the Scottish Church Theology Society. For the Fraser Prize 2014 competition, submissions were invited on the theme of “Is the Referendum a theological question?” We are pleased to be able to publish the paper which came first, by Margaret Whyte. As before, the comments of the Fraser Prize Reading Panel are included as a preface to the essay.

In a paper given to the Scottish Church Theology Society as Honorary President, Professor William Storrar argues for a paradigm shift away from questions of sovereignty to notions of the common good, both in Scotland and the wider UK. In tracing historical aspects of the Scottish democratic tradition he draws on Sir David Lindsay’s play *Ane Satyre of the Three Estaitis* to develop a concept of *the commonweal*. This concept is defined in terms of concrete action such as the clothing of the naked, the feeding of the hungry, the welcoming of the stranger, and the visiting of those in prison. Referring to Robert Harmin’s work, in which Harmin distinguishes four main styles of political discourse – the realist, the courtly, the republican, and the bureaucratic – Professor Storrar concludes by outlining the characteristics of an ecumenical Protestant *style*. This would feature an open-textured ecclesiastical polity based on the equality of power of those contributing to debates. These discussions, in turn, would be grounded in prophetic principles.

The Most Rev Dr Mario Conti traces Scottish identity from its earliest beginnings through to the Reformation, and the Union of the Crowns in 1603. He notes in passing that the effect of the Reformation was the loss of the great unity of the medieval church. Current discussions concerning the Referendum and Scottish independence have significant implications for the role of the church in an independent state. Observing that social, democratic governance at an appropriate level is of profound value, Rev Dr Conti argues for the pressing need for coherent vision. In a concluding reflection on the legacy of the Reformation, Rev Dr Conti turns to his boyhood in Elgin

where, surrounded by reminders of the changes brought about by the Reformation, the Catholic community still continues to worship. Rev Dr Conti concludes with two personal recollections in which he reaffirms the contribution of faith, culture, and social ties to the wider issues of identity.

Dr Jason Radcliff's paper for the Fraser Prize 2013 was highly commended by the Reading Panel and for that reason it is included in this issue. In response to the question "Does the church in Scotland still need theology?", Dr Radcliff argues that the church should be theologically conditioned as the Body and Bride of Christ. Members of the church are theologically conditioned through prayer, and by that transformation of the mind which takes place in Christ. Following Athanasius, Dr Radcliff argues that theology is the work of the Spirit who enables human understanding of God, allowing us, as Calvin maintained, to be ourselves. Dr Radcliff insists that the alternative to this line of thought is mythology. In contrast to such mythological constructs, the thinking of the church must be theologically conditioned. He concludes by emphasizing the necessity of theology in preaching and in discussions regarding the nature of ministry.

In his paper, Rev David W. Torrance offers a brief but comprehensive examination of the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper. He examines the foundations of the sacrament in the five great sacrificial offerings of Israel's worship, as ordained by God. In the New Testament, Holy Communion is a feast of thanksgiving, commemorating God's atonement in Christ for the sins of the world. Christ is present in this sacrament. At the Last Supper, Christ celebrated the Passover with the disciples. On the evening of the first day of the Resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples in the upper room, commissioning them to preach the gospel of salvation to the entire world. The Cross, the Resurrection and the Great Commission therefore belong together. Holy Communion should be celebrated often in prayer and thanksgiving, for here is our essential, spiritual nourishment in Christ.

Professor Thomas F. Torrance has left a profoundly rich theological legacy. As a former student of his, Rev John Miller gives a warm and personal insight into that particular legacy. In a deeply personal tribute from one who, as a student, considered himself 'a disciple', John Miller

testifies to the significance of Professor Torrance's theology both for himself and his own ministry in Castlemilk, on the edge of Glasgow. The pressing demands arising from the many concrete practical issues encountered in parish ministry led to a gradual move from dogmatics and Nicean theology towards the questions raised by liberation theology. Nevertheless, reflecting on the direction and development of his own thinking John Miller remains profoundly grateful for the rich theological grounding provided by Professor Torrance's teaching.

Ian Maxwell
Editor