

forgiveness'. They come at the end of his chapter on Luke 15 and reach their climax with these words:

*Is the welcome of the waiting father in our story an instance of 'unconditional forgiveness?' Certainly the father's welcome precedes the son's confession. Is the word from the cross and indeed the word of the cross, not the supreme example of unconditional forgiveness, grace abounding and undeserving, which bring resurrection? Meanwhile our lives go on. There is the daily practice of accepting and forgiving one another in the light of a generous love, there is the deeper exercise of turning the other cheek and breaking the cycle of violence, and the continuing challenge in Nouwen's words to become, be, like the waiting, welcoming, prodigal Father.*

I'll be sorry to put this book back on the bookshelf – but I'll know it's there for the future and even if I don't reach for it again next year, I know that I will be returning to it as an old friend when the lectionary cycle comes round again to the treasure which is the Gospel of Luke.

*Dane Sherrard,*  
Luss & Arrochar



*Confidence in a Changing Church*, Finlay A. J. Macdonald,  
Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2003, pp. 224, ISBN  
071520812. £8.99

Not another ex-Moderator saying the Church is in good heart? Well no. Here we have a careful and critical assessment of the Church of Scotland as it is at the start of the new century. Finlay Macdonald brings his experience as a parish minister and an ecclesiastical civil servant to the task of looking at the bigger picture. While we have much to gain from wider influences from the worldwide church, this book reminds us of where we have come from and should be of interest to any who wishes to find out about the history and strengths of the Reformed Church in Scotland.

But the main thrust of the book tackles how we are always in need of reform and how the Church of Scotland is meeting the challenges of the time. Topics range from worship to the debate on human sexuality. There is much to interest readers who know little of the Church of Scotland, although they may wish there had been a glossary. The author, from his position in the administration of the church, has a clear and authoritative view of the changes in the church.

The most exciting aspect of this book is that here is an establishment figure encouraging us to dare. There was a fine tradition of the Highland liberal in church life in Scotland; evangelical, radical, concerned and caring. Finlay Macdonald in this book shows us that he has a concern for the past and an interest in the present combined with the wisdom to challenge us to do more in the future for the Church of Christ.

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*Faith of our Fathers: Reflections on Catholic Tradition,*  
**Eamon Duffy, London, Continuum, 2004, pp. 187, ISBN**  
**0826474799. £9.99**

How does one modernize a religion that has evolved throughout two millennia of history and is steeped in tradition? The answer is 'with great difficulty'. Eamon Duffy is Professor of the History of Christianity in the University of Cambridge. He grew up in the Irish town of Dundalk in the days before the Second Vatican Council and left for England at the age of sixteen. He is a devout Roman Catholic with first hand knowledge of the prevailing theology and piety both before and after the Council. Moreover, as a historian he has learned the lessons of history better than the average man or woman in the pew and indeed better than many a bishop and cardinal. Duffy explores the relationship between the old piety that has been swept away and the new atmosphere of 'aggiornamento'. His conclusions are bleak and his stance is polemical. Insufficient thought has been given to how to make changes while