



Editorial

Donald Baillie, who was then Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of St Andrews once wrote, ‘I heard a highly intellectual and deeply devout and Christian Anglo-Catholic say: ‘To me Christianity simply *means*—the blessed sacrament’.’ Professor Baillie then asked the question, ‘Could many of us Presbyterians say that kind of thing about this sacrament – which from the very beginning in the New Testament was the central service of the Christian Church?’¹

This issue of *Theology in Scotland* consists chiefly of a selection of some of the excellent papers given at a symposium on *The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper* held in September 2007 at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane.² Not the least striking thing about this symposium was the large number of those who attended. This perhaps indicates a widening interest in further reflection on the theology of the Lord’s Supper and its place in worship. The papers, revised and gathered in this issue are, then, written from a Reformed perspective. The question arises, however, as to the rationale for this – given the rich opportunities there might have been for a broader ecumenical discussion on the sacrament. The justification is perhaps this, that there still remains a pressing need for the Reformed tradition in Scotland to continue to engage with the centrality of the Lord’s Supper in worship, as Professor Baillie insisted over fifty years ago.

If one were to seek an analytical theme for this issue – at its centre would, of course, be the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper itself. It is worth noting, however, that each of the contributors, in a variety of ways, has placed *communion* in the context of *community*. In his paper, Professor Donald Macleod reflects on communion as *Feill* or feast – engaging with the profound significance of communion within the Highland tradition. Dr Alan Falconer’s paper moves from a consideration of the sacrament in worship to a survey of recent Reformed thinking on the Lord’s Supper. Muriel Pearson writes movingly of what the sacrament can mean in everyday congregational life. Roddy Hamilton has written a stimulating essay on the character

of the *epiclesis*, and in so doing has raised some thought-provoking questions about its nature. In addition to these papers, two articles, by Dr Henry Sefton and Rev Gilleasbuig Macmillan, were commissioned for this issue. Dr Sefton unfolds the continuities and discontinuities of the celebration of the sacrament in Scotland through historical change, and Gilleasbuig Macmillan, beginning with personal reflection on ministry, leads us to a wider reflection on the profounder implications of the Lord's Supper.

Theology in Scotland was founded some fifteen years ago, in response to 'the need for some real stimulation and encouragement of theological reflection, not least among the parish ministry'. Under the able editorial direction of Professor Bill Shaw, the first issue of *Theology in Scotland* was published. Dr David Lyall later took over the task of editing the journal until the spring of this year. The need for such a regular publication or journal has not lessened over the years, quite the opposite. Among the varied discourses the Church now employs, theology remains the native language of the Church's reflection on the gospel. To follow in the footsteps of Professor Bill Shaw and Dr David Lyall as editor is an honour – the task is to ensure that the high standards they both set will be maintained.

Ian Maxwell

- ¹ Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments, and Other Papers* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957), 92.
- ² Organized under the auspices of the Working Group on the Place and Practice of Holy Communion of the Mission and Discipleship Council of the Church of Scotland.