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### I. M. RANDALL *Tutor, Spurgeon's College*

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**REVIEW:** Russell Aldwinckle *The Logic of the Believing Mind, Toronto Studies in Theology* Volume 60, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, 638pp, US \$110.

This is probably the most substantial work in the field of philosophical theology that has been produced by a Baptist in this century. In comprehensiveness it surpasses the significant contributions which Wheeler Robinson made to the Library of Constructive Theology. Russell Aldwinckle was working on this massive distillation of his thinking right up to the time of his death in 1992, and we are indebted to John Thomas, his pupil and literary executor, for seeing the manuscript through the press. John Thomas is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at McMaster University in Canada, and, with Russell, is another British Baptist expatriate whose work is scarcely known in the land of their birth. In his later years Russell produced three important books, *Death in the Secular City*, *Jesus: A Savior or the Savior; Religious Pluralism in Perspective*, and *More than Man: A Study in Christology*, but this attempt to work out a rational theology is in a class of its own. The bibliography alone indicates the wide range of the canvas and there is scarcely any significant thinker whose work is not brought under critical review. The reader may sometimes feel he is losing his way in the wood for the number of trees, but the book is a rich resource for the serious student. The first part is a judicious review of natural theology which Aldwinckle concludes has something to contribute to a rational theism even if it does not take us very far, but in the second part he gives it content from the basic conviction that the Incarnation is the foundation for the 'Logic of a Christian Believing Mind'. The book suffers from being posthumously produced and would have benefited from much more thorough revision. Besides lacking an index, it contains a number of typographical errors and peculiar indented paragraphs. There is also a great deal of repetition which Russell, if he had lived, could have avoided by restructuring the argument. But this does not seriously detract from the value of the work as a whole. The price puts the book outside the range of most readers, but it is hoped that colleges and libraries will acquire it as an invaluable tool for research.

**PAUL ROWNTREE CLIFFORD**

**Douglas C. Sparkes**, *The Home Mission Story*, Baptist Historical Society on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, 1995, 137 + xiii, pb £8-00, from the Revd T. S. H. Elwyn, 28 Dowthorpe Hill, Earls Barton, Northampton NN6 0PB.

Douglas Sparkes has put us much in his debt by this closely researched account of the Baptist Home Mission story. It is difficult to think of anyone better qualified for the task. He has brought to it his experience in historical research, as a minister in Baptist pastorates, as a one-time General Superintendent, and as Deputy General Secretary of the Baptist Union. From this broad perspective he has worked his way through mountains of BU Council minutes, the files of the *Baptist Times* and its predecessors, and other source materials. Along with Ernest Payne's standard history of the Union for the broader background, this presentation of the story will stand for a long time.

Allowing for some pre-history, the story goes back two hundred years to an evangelistic initiative in Cornwall in which the BMS was involved. By ripple effect this led to the formation in London of a Society for the Encouragement and Support of Itinerant Preaching. In its turn this evangelistic outreach led to church planting and this, along with the needs of existing churches, threw up questions of ministerial oversight - its recruitment, maintenance, settlement and standards of ministry. Such questions, posed by mission and deeply relevant to its furtherance, were demanding urgent attention as the nineteenth century proceeded. The story Sparkes has to tell under the heading of 'Home Mission' is not the *overall* task of Mission, its progress and setbacks, but rather of how, responding to the questions mentioned above, Baptists sought to develop structures and resources to support the mission of their churches and also, much more recently, of certain specialized ministries.

In the nineteenth century they were feeling their way forward by means of *ad hoc* Societies, Funds, Committees, as, for example, the Pastors' Income Augmentation Society (1869). By the turn of the century, with a good deal of hard experience gained, they were rationalizing some of this earlier structural work, honing it, developing it. In 1905 three funds were amalgamated to form the Baptist Home Work Fund. 1912 saw the adoption of the important Settlement and Sustentation Scheme and in 1916 the first General Superintendents were appointed. 1948 brought the new Home Work Fund (much of it being thought through during World War II) and this in 1970 became the Home Mission Fund. There has been a continuing process of adaptation and development.

A number of intriguing items emerge as the story unfolds, one of them being the almost silent arrival of the Superintendents. One minute they were not, the next they were! Like Topsy, they just happened. Or did they? Anyway, well done, Shakespeare - you seem to have saved countless man-hours of committee work and working-group discussions! There are reminders of what a force the Baptist Women's League used to be, capable of taking on major projects and getting them done in quick time. It is interesting that in a period when the Downgrade

Controversy was still a recent and sensitive memory, Spurgeon's men like Gange and Greenwood were to the fore in promoting Home Mission proposals of the Union, while Richard Glover was championing 'unbending Independency'. It seemed to some that people who took that stance could have no real conception of the miseries suffered by the ministerial victims of Independency.

The fact is that the development of Home Mission structures did not only arise from the *positive* demands of Mission but also because there was a scandal to be removed. As people began to explore the challenge of the mission field in this country, clear as they were that the local church was the spearhead, fully aware of the significance of the local minister in heading up its work, they discovered that in many a manse Independency resulted in soul-destroying privations. A man as esteemed as Andrew Fuller had been caught in the poverty trap and wellnigh broken by it; people less gifted and less well-known were of course no less vulnerable. As the facts of life came home to them a new generation of leaders realized that Independency did not sustain existing work, let alone any vision of a strategic kind. Against tradition, therefore, they set about establishing the means whereby Interdependency could function. Decade after decade, in the face of slow progress and inadequate response, Home Mission has called for resilience and commitment of high order. It still does. This is not a glamorous story but it is a humbling one and we need to take it to heart.

Of course, Independency remains deeply ingrained within the underlying assumptions of many of our people. They believe that it is laid down in the New Testament. Therefore, along with all other Home Mission promotion, we need in our colleges and elsewhere to keep on making the point that there is in the New Testament no polity blueprint for the Church of God (there is embryonic evidence, capable of being selectively cited, in support of each of the classic structures but neither congregationalism nor presbyterianism nor episcopacy are laid down in a blueprint for the Church down the ages). What does emerge, as a fundamental principle to qualify and sustain any polity, is interdependency. If we Baptists reject the idea that denominationally we constitute a Church, all the more then must we grasp that we *are* involved in a churchmanship which goes beyond the local church. In that wider churchmanship, as in the local, we are members one of another. That *is* laid down in the New Testament and it is the theological basis of Home Mission.

## G. W. RUSLING

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 The Society's next Summer School is to be held 16-19 July 1998 at Westminster College, Cambridge. Further details to follow, but reserve the dates now!

Members who knew George Rawlyk, Professor of History at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, who attended the Oxford BHS Summer School, will be sorry to hear that he died recently as a result of a road accident.