

leisure revolution which created the weekend and weakened Sunday observance, and the decline of paternalism in the rural as well as urban economy. Alongside this was the marginalization of the churches, particularly in politics as secular expertise established its claims to determine the formation of public policy.

Professor McLeod's argument is persuasive, avoiding the simpler extremes of some earlier work. The book will be valuable for students, and all who wish to obtain an overview of the current historiographical trends.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

*N. F. S. Grundtvig. An Introduction to his Life and Work.*

By A. M. ALLCHIN, with an Afterword by NICHOLAS LOSSKY. Pp. 338. London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1997. ISBN 0 232 52260 x. £19.95.

MOST English-speaking readers will know N. F. S. Grundtvig only through the writings of his contemporary Søren Kierkegaard. Grundtvig, however, is a figure worthy of study in his own right and Canon Allchin has provided a valuable service in providing English-speaking readers with a survey of the multi-faceted work of this important churchman.

The book falls into three main parts. After a brief prologue sketching Grundtvig's place in the life of Denmark, Allchin provides in Part I, 'Glimpses of a Life', an outline of the major events of Grundtvig's life and a first indication of his significance as a thinker and churchman. Part II focuses on 'Five Major Theories' and introduces the reader to Grundtvig's understanding of the Church, the ministry, the Trinity, creation, and practical Christian life. Part III is entitled 'The Celebration of Faith' and provides translations and discussion of Grundtvig's sermons on eternity in time, advent, Christmas, the annunciation, Easter, Whitsun, the sign of the cross, and the ministry of angels. It is in this part of the book in particular that Allchin believes the originality of his work to lie, for 'it is the first time that the recently published volumes of sermons have been used to fill out the picture of Grundtvig's understanding of Christian faith as a whole' (p. 177). In the Epilogue Allchin reiterates the claims he has made throughout the book that Grundtvig is a thinker who has much to say to the modern world. 'Grundtvig', Allchin tells us, 'is a man who speaks to the situation of our post-Communist era', for 'his view of society embodies a third way which is neither individualistic nor collectivist'. Furthermore, 'he is a man who speaks to the situation of a world which is deeply perplexed by the

strength and persistence of feelings of national identity' (p. 308). Indeed, for Allchin, Grundtvig is 'one of the major ecumenical prophets of the nineteenth century [whose] ... insights could be of direct use in our problems today' (p. 309) and 'is a man who deserves to be known across the world' (p. 7). The book ends with an 'Afterword' from Nicholas Vladimir Lossky, who reiterates Allchin's emphasis on the parallels between Grundtvig and Eastern Christianity.

While it is questionable whether Grundtvig is the figure of international standing that Allchin claims him to be, it is certainly the case that Grundtvig has had a considerable impact on the Danish Church and on Danish life in general. The achievement for which Grundtvig is perhaps best known outside Denmark is his educational theory and the Folk High Schools he inspired. However, Allchin makes clear that Grundtvig is far more than just an educationalist, for he was in his day also a significant historian. 'Throughout his life', Allchin tells us, 'he was seeking to write a new universal history, which would encompass the whole significant story of the human race' (p. 28). This bore fruit in his *First World Chronicle* of 1812 and his three volume *Universal History* of 1833. This interest in the past seems to have been motivated, at least in part, by Grundtvig's so-called 'unmatched' or 'unparalleled discovery' (*mageløse opdagelse*) of 1825, namely his realization that the Church is founded not only on the Bible but also on the sacraments and the apostolic confession of faith. In Allchin's words, Grundtvig's discovery was that: 'We cannot build the Church on the Bible alone, still less on the interpretation of individual experts. It is in the life of the Church and in the sacraments of the Church, in which God is present and at work, that we hear God's word addressed to us and discover what true Christianity is' (p. 106). Grundtvig's 'unparalleled discovery', then, despite its dramatic and somewhat pretentious name, seems to have been merely a move away from the biblicist Lutheranism in which he had grown up towards a more catholic understanding of the Church.

Grundtvig's unparalleled discovery led him to a deeper consciousness of the historical unity and continuity of the Christian Church and to the insight that Christianity is 'profoundly corporate and relational' (p. 107). It seems to have been this insight into the unity and community of the Church that motivated Grundtvig's diverse activities. Thus Grundtvig's work as a translator was prompted by his concern to recover classic texts from the past in order to allow them to speak to the present. It was this concern to relate the past to the present that led Grundtvig to translate hymns from the early church and Middle Ages and

which motivated his visits to England in the summers of 1829–31 to consult Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.

It will be of interest to students of nineteenth-century church history to learn that during Grundtvig's visits to England in the 1830s and 1840s he became acquainted with members of the Oxford Movement. Allchin provides an interesting account of these contacts and draws out some of the affinities Grundtvig had with the theology of the Oxford Movement. The relationship between Grundtvig and the Oxford Movement, which, if events had proceeded differently, could have been so significant, eventually foundered, however, on the issue of apostolic succession and the Oxford Movement's denial of the validity of Grundtvig's orders. Allchin provides translations of two draft letters from Grundtvig to Pusey (pp. 121–2), which provide a fascinating insight into the issue that separated these two leading churchmen. For all his respect for many of the aims of the Oxford Movement, Grundtvig could not accept their position on ordination and later on in his life came to speak of the 'arrogant episcopal Church with its black spiritual poverty' (p. 119).

Grundtvig was not only a historian and translator, however, but was also a hymn-writer of considerable stature. Indeed, his hymns seem to occupy a place in the Danish hymn book similar to that of Charles Wesley in Methodism and Anglicanism. Grundtvig's most lasting achievement in this respect was his great *Sang-Værk*, a collection of hymns either translated from earlier periods of Christian history or composed by Grundtvig himself. Allchin provides translations of many of Grundtvig's greatest hymns, thereby giving the reader a flavour of Grundtvig's work and an insight into the impact Grundtvig's hymns have had on the worship of the Danish Church.

Allchin also provides in this book a survey of the main features of Grundtvig's theology and is particularly concerned to bring to the reader's attention the Eastern stamp of Grundtvig's thought. He shows how Grundtvig, despite being a Lutheran by upbringing, was profoundly influenced by the theology of the early church Fathers, especially that of Irenaeus, and by the theology of the Middle Ages. The consequence of these influences is that Grundtvig's theology has many affinities with Eastern Orthodoxy. In a fascinating chapter on Grundtvig's understanding of the Trinity, Allchin shows how Grundtvig's trinitarianism and denial of double procession (p. 131) have close parallels with Eastern Orthodox thought. Also of interest in this context is Grundtvig's veneration of the Apostles' Creed. For Grundtvig, it is this creed, rather than the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which

Grundtvig believed had usurped the place of the Apostles' Creed, that expresses the core of Christian belief. Indeed, Grundtvig held the view that Jesus 'had taught the Apostles' Creed to the apostles word for word during the forty days between Easter and Ascension' (p. 125), and that it is this creed that gives the various branches of Christianity their unity and continuity.

Allchin, then, has provided a useful survey of the work of a major figure in Danish church history. The book, however, is not without its weaknesses. Perhaps its most serious fault is the almost total absence of critical analysis and assessment of Grundtvig's life and thought. In the biographical part of the book, for example, we are told that when Grundtvig was a young man 'the thought that perhaps he was called to be a reformer of the Church kept coming back to him. But the more he thought about it the more he began to wonder whether he had any right to seek to reform the Church when he hardly knew whether he was a Christian himself' (p. 33). Allchin provides us with no explanation of any of these statements. We are told neither why Grundtvig felt the Church to be in need of reform, nor why he believed himself to be the man to carry it out, nor why Grundtvig doubted whether he was indeed a Christian. Similarly, we are told a few pages later that Grundtvig went through some sort of spiritual crisis and that it was through his friends, especially F. C. Sibbern, that Grundtvig was eventually able to overcome this crisis and find his way to God (p. 35). Allchin makes clear neither the cause of this crisis, nor how Sibbern and other friends were able to help Grundtvig through it. What Allchin in fact provides in his biographical sketch of Grundtvig is merely a superficial account of the events and achievements of Grundtvig's life with little attempt to trace the psychological and spiritual development that brought them about.

Another way in which Allchin's uncritical stance towards his subject expresses itself is in his over-use of such terms as 'striking', 'remarkable', and 'astonishing'. The reader is constantly being informed that a sermon or hymn of Grundtvig's is remarkable in some way. When we turn to examine the piece in question, however, we are almost invariably disappointed, for what we find is not remarkable theological insight but an effusive poetic retelling of pre-Enlightenment views of Christian stories and themes.

This leads us on to another problem with the book. Throughout the work Allchin constantly stresses Grundtvig's importance for today, but fails to tell us in anything other than the vaguest terms how Grundtvig's thought can address the troubling issues facing human beings in the late twentieth century. Thus, commenting

on Grundtvig's view that revelation and nature should not be set in opposition to each other but be held together, Allchin claims that, 'Psychological and economic consequences very evidently flow from these insights' (p. 149). He fails to tell us what these consequences are, however, or how Grundtvig's views on revelation and nature could be concretely applied to modern problems. Similarly, commenting on a hymn from the first volume of Grundtvig's *Sang-Værk*, Allchin writes: 'In it Grundtvig brings together sacramental themes with thoughts about the work of agriculture and the distribution of human resources, in ways which seem strangely relevant to the world we are living in, with its anxieties about the environment and its sense of baffled impotence before the problems involved in a just sharing of the material resources of our planet' (p. 153). Once again, however, Allchin fails to provide any support for this claim and makes no attempt to show the relevance of Grundtvig's ideas to the problems facing us today. Indeed, far from showing that Grundtvig can speak to the modern world, the impression Allchin creates is that Grundtvig is a pre-Enlightenment thinker who, though of great historical interest, is of little significance for creative theological work today. This is particularly apparent in Grundtvig's attitude towards contemporary German theology. On several occasions Allchin alludes to Grundtvig's rejection of German theology in general and Hegel in particular, but provides us with no indication of how well read Grundtvig was in German theology, nor are we given an insight into why Grundtvig rejected the theological developments taking place in Germany. We are told merely that Grundtvig felt German theology to be 'speculative and insubstantial, for which the doctrines both of the Trinity and of creation in God's image and likeness were of little or no significance ...' (p. 144), but Allchin does not indicate Grundtvig's reasons for holding this view, nor does he show that Grundtvig took seriously the problems with which nineteenth-century German theology was grappling. Allchin is not wholly unaware of this problem, for in his discussion of Grundtvig's belief in angels, he writes that the impression might arise that Grundtvig adopts 'an almost naive affirmation of a literal and uncritical acceptance of traditional points of view'. 'But', Allchin goes on to claim, 'we know that Grundtvig, as a scholar and a thinker, was by no means naive, and even though he was highly critical of the typical critical attitudes of his time, he was not at all unaware of them or of their force' (p. 304). Unfortunately, Allchin has provided no evidence to support this claim. On the contrary, the impression one gains from Allchin's book is not that Grundtvig is aware of the force

of the critical theology of the nineteenth century and is searching for a creative way of responding to the challenge it poses, but that he is reverting to a pre-critical stance which simply ignores the problems raised by nineteenth-century German theology. If we are to accept Allchin's claim that Grundtvig can provide us with the theological resources for dealing with the pressing problems facing us today, then he needs to do much more than he has done in this book. The impression the reader is left with, having read the book, is not that Grundtvig provides us with the resources for doing theology in a post-Enlightenment age, but that he offers only an uncritical rejection of nineteenth-century theology and a return to a pre-critical understanding of Christianity.

In summary, Allchin has provided students of nineteenth-century church history and theology with a useful survey of a significant figure in the life of the Danish Church. Unfortunately, however, Allchin's admiration for Grundtvig is so great that he has lost the critical distance necessary for a truly insightful assessment of this important nineteenth-century theologian, churchman, and hymn-writer.

DAVID R. LAW

*Wilhelm Herrmanns Stellung in der Ritschlschen Schule.* By JOACHIM WEINHARDT. Pp. viii + 331. (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie, 97.) Tübingen: Mohr, 1996. ISBN 3 16 146596 2. DM 178.

THIS book is an important contribution to a relatively neglected period in the history of theology: it is the first recent systematic treatment of the relationships between Albrecht Ritschl and the members of the so-called Ritschlian school. It also surveys the relationships between theologians representing the different strands of that school. By refusing to accept the usual polemic inherited from Barth's discussion of his theological educators which has coloured and distorted so much theological history in the twentieth century, Weinhardt has succeeded in reading the theology of the turn of the present century on its own terms, and not through the distorting lens of 'culture protestantism' or other similar pejorative concepts. Even the term 'liberalism' is used cautiously and accurately, referring solely to the inheritors of Hegel and the Tübingen tradition like Otto Pfeiderer, who frequently showed great animosity towards Ritschl and the Ritschlians. Weinhardt's thorough analysis of the debates reveals that the feeling was usually mutual. Although the thesis is never