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Graham Scroggie And Evangelical Spirituality

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The life of William Graham Scroggie (1877-1958) has never been the subject of a biography, yet he was someone who exercised a profound influence on evangelical spirituality in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1950 he was referred to as 'indisputably the foremost living Keswick teacher'.¹ This was at a time when for most conservative evangelicals in Britain and in many other parts of the world the teaching offered at the annual Keswick Convention, in the English Lakes, was of a quality not found on any other platform. The Keswick idiom, as David Bebbington argues, shaped the prevailing pattern of evangelical piety for much of the twentieth century.² Scroggie's roots were in Scotland, and his most famous local church ministry was at Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh. William Whyte's book, *Revival in Rose Street*, gives important insights, from the perspective of someone who was greatly indebted to Scroggie, into this highly significant Edinburgh period. But Scroggie's influence spread much more widely than Scotland, through his writing as well as his preaching. A number of aspects of Scroggie's ministry could be examined. This article concentrates on the way in which he contributed to the shaping of evangelical spirituality and in particular looks at his attempts to engage with the currents that affected evangelicalism in the first half of the twentieth century.

The Life of Graham Scroggie

Graham's Scroggie's parents were married in Newburgh, near Aberdeen, in 1868. His mother was a native of Newburgh and his father had moved there in 1866 to undertake evangelistic work. The 1860s and '70s saw the emergence of growing numbers of evangelists who sat rather loosely to denominational structures, with Moody and Sankey providing a model for many from the 1870s. James Scroggie was engaged in evangelistic

¹ *The Keswick Week* (hereafter *KW*), 1950, p. 43.

² D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), p. 151.

endeavour in Newburgh for five years but he was to move within Scotland and England a number of times. In 1871 the Scroggies moved south to Streatham, in London, where James became the resident evangelist at a mission hall run by Arthur (later Sir Arthur) Stevenson Blackwood, the senior executive of the Post Office from 1880 and chairman of the well-known Mildmay devotional conferences. After Streatham the Scroggies had a period in Buckinghamshire, then in the North of England, where James Scroggie worked in connection with another leading evangelical, James Carr, of Carlisle. The next move was back to Scotland, to Annan. Here the family suffered a shattering blow – in 1875 three children, all under the age of five, died of scarlet fever.

This story of joys and sorrows was told by Graham Scroggie's mother in a remarkably honest account. The title of her book, *The Story of a Life in the Love of God*, reflects her faith in divine care, but in the book she also speaks of the extent of her own depression when her children died.³ The family spent a time of recovery in the Isle of Wight and then returned to evangelistic activity, with the familiar territory of the North of Scotland offering them a more secure environment. Graham Scroggie wrote a preface to this account by his mother and clearly the influence of his parents, whose home life was one in which prayer was central, made a deep impression on him. At an early age Graham Scroggie felt an urge to preach and in 1896, in his twentieth year, he began training at the Pastors' College, later Spurgeon's College, London. He spoke of his two years at the Pastors' College as having had a 'creative and inspiring influence' on him,⁴ although he was also, as we will see later, critical of some omissions from his training, especially in the area of spirituality.

In 1900 Scroggie married Florence Hudson and the couple had one son, Marcus, who later became a deacon of Elm Road Baptist Church, Beckenham, Kent. Graham Scroggie's first ministry was in Leytonstone, in Essex. It was a ministry that came to a premature end after two years. Scroggie described a decisive period of inner conflict he had at that point when he felt personally broken. This paved the way for a new experience in which, as he was to say in different ways and on several occasions to hearers at the Keswick Convention, the Bible and Christ came alive to him.⁵ He felt that he had to give up his first pastorate and start afresh since

³ J.J. Scroggie, *The Story of a Life in the Love of God* (London, 1924), p. 71.

⁴ W. Whyte, *Revival in Rose Street: A History of Charlotte Baptist Chapel*, Edinburgh (Edinburgh, n.d.), p. 44.

⁵ *KW*, 1921, p. 168; *KW*, 1927, pp. 144-5; *The Keswick Convention*, 1930, pp. 128-9.

he had been 'a middleman between his books and his people but not of the Book... I was spiritually bankrupt, and I well nigh became a spiritual casualty'.⁶ His next pastorate, in Halifax, which began in 1902, was also short-lived.⁷ In this case it was his strong convictions about what was described as a 'questionable form of entertainment' in the church that led to his resignation.⁸ For the next two years Scroggie was without a pastorate.

After this rather uncertain start in pastoral ministry Scroggie went on to significant ministries in Sunderland and Edinburgh. In 1907 he accepted a call to the very active Bethesda Free Church in Sunderland, a church that claimed to have a hundred lay preachers, and in 1916 he moved to Charlotte Chapel. One memorable aspect of his call to Charlotte Chapel was that when two of the elders from the Chapel went to hear Scroggie preach in Sunderland – in order to assess his suitability for their vacant pulpit – he preached on the text 'Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?' (Matthew 11:3). Scroggie's ministry at Charlotte Chapel attracted 1,000 people every Sunday and hundreds also came to his mid-week Bible School.⁹ During his ministry he baptised 650 people. He resigned on account of ill health in 1933, spent six months in New Zealand at the Auckland Tabernacle, and then had almost five years of itinerant ministry in the USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa. From 1938 to 1944 he was minister of Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. When he moved to London he was an extra-mural lecturer at Spurgeon's College. His first wife died and in 1941 he married Joan Hooker, whose mother was the first principal of a missionary training college, Ridglands College, Wimbledon. Scroggie died in 1958.

Evangelical Experience

Graham Scroggie approached the question of spirituality as an evangelical. The training he received at the Pastors' College at the turn of the century was firmly in the Spurgeonic tradition of biblical and practical instruction. Archibald McCaig, a Scot, who was the College's principal until 1925, always maintained that the College stood by 'the Old Flag held so nobly and tenaciously to the last by its beloved Founder'.¹⁰ The emphasis was on producing those who could communicate the gospel to the 'masses' of the

⁶ Whyte, *Revival in Rose Street*, p. 44.

⁷ The ministry in Halifax lasted three years.

⁸ C.T. Cook, *The Baptist Times*, 8 January 1959.

⁹ Scroggie expressed his conviction that 'not a little preaching is much more imposition than exposition.' *Christianity Today*, 4 March, 1957, p. 10.

¹⁰ *Annual Paper* (Pastors' College), 1893-94, p. 308.

people. David Bebbington has described the College's training as 'practical rather than literary, a down-to-earth affair rather than an imitation of Oxford or Cambridge'.¹¹ The College saw itself as offering a distinctly evangelical spirituality. Charles Spurgeon, a son of the founder, spoke in 1902 about the 'high tone of spirituality' in the College, contrasting that with the experience of some in which 'gain in mental culture often means loss in soul growth'.¹² McCaig added that the priority as he viewed it was to produce 'Scriptural, Evangelical, Soul-winning preachers'.¹³

The emphasis on teaching which was both biblical and practical, often severely practical, was always to be a feature of Scroggie. His vision was of a ministry, whether in local churches or at large conventions, which offered solid biblical exposition and spiritual application. His ability to deliver this kind of material effectively at Keswick is evidenced by his popularity as a speaker at Keswick's Bible Readings. Scroggie delivered this series of convention addresses on no less than twelve occasions, beginning in 1914, and was determined that they should exemplify the highest standards of exposition. Thus Scroggie was far from satisfied in 1920 when Walter Sloan, as the convention secretary, writing to request that Scroggie undertake the Readings, stated that Keswick's council wanted his studies to have 'direct bearing on some aspect of consecration and faith rather than the analysis of a book'.¹⁴ Scroggie, who could be rather prickly, wrote back immediately to complain that the invitation seemed to reflect badly on his 1914 and 1915 expositions of the books of Philippians and Ephesians, which he claimed had been unusually well received. His conviction was that lack of such systematic biblical instruction was a weakness at Keswick.¹⁵

The same priorities were evident in Scroggie's local ministry at Bethesda, Sunderland, and later when he was called to Charlotte Chapel. While he was at Sunderland he told the office-bearers of the church that they could have either his head or his feet, but not both. Preaching, not visiting, was his priority. An important condition he made before he accepted the call to the Chapel was that he would not do 'social pastoral

¹¹ D.W. Bebbington, 'Spurgeon and British Evangelical Theological Education', in D.G. Hart and R.A. Mohler, Jr, eds., *Theological Education in the Evangelical Tradition* (Grand Rapids, 1996), pp. 219-20.

¹² *Annual Paper*, 1901-02, p. 304.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

¹⁴ Walter Sloan to W.G. Scroggie, 5 November 1920, in the Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey Hall, Mattersey, Near Doncaster.

¹⁵ W.G. Scroggie to W. Sloan, 10 November 1920, in the Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey Hall, Mattersey.

visiting'. His pastoral work was directed to those who were sick, bereaved or similarly in special need. Also, his perception was that his call was not to be an evangelist or a pastor but a Bible teacher. Yet this was not the kind of teaching which simply imparted doctrinal information. In his letter of acceptance of the call to the Chapel, Scroggie wrote that he 'felt strongly that God had called him to the teaching of the Bible and calling the people of God to the consecration of life and service'.¹⁶ This represented a clear conviction about biblical spirituality.

Yet Scroggie was not someone who identified with the fundamentalist attitudes to the Bible, including battles over the term 'inerrancy', that marked some sections of evangelicalism in the 1920s. In 1924 *Evangelical Christendom*, for the Evangelical Alliance, carried a statement from Scroggie which stated that subscription to a particular definition of biblical inspiration was not, in his view, a true test of doctrinal orthodoxy. 'If you demand,' Scroggie said, 'that I subscribe to your theory of inspiration, I shall decline, but I am not on that account a Modernist.'¹⁷ Scroggie and other British evangelicals had been unimpressed by what they had seen of bellicose American fundamentalism.¹⁸ Speaking at the Keswick Convention in 1929 on the Apostles' Creed, Scroggie argued that given the conflicts over theological modernism – with fundamentalists calling for evangelicals to leave the existing denominations – it was preferable to have the Apostles' Creed as a widely accepted basis of faith than for small groups to construct their own bases and splinter from the wider church.¹⁹

Scroggie's commitment was, therefore, to evangelical orthodoxy. He believed that spiritual health came from right understanding of scripture and that such an understanding issued in spiritual health. There is no doubt that it was a formula which he could show to be successful. At Charlotte Chapel services were so crowded that the aisles were filled with people

¹⁶ Whyte, *Revival in Rose Street*, p. 44.

¹⁷ *Evangelical Christendom*, November-December 1924, p. 188. For Scroggie's nuanced view of revelation and of biblical inspiration see 'Living 55 years with the Bible', *Christianity Today*, 4 March, 1959, pp. 8-16.

¹⁸ For Fundamentalism in North America see G.M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York, 1980). For British Fundamentalism see D.W. Bebbington, 'Baptists and Fundamentalism in Inter-War Britain', in K. Robbins, ed., *Studies in Church History*, Subsidia 7 (Oxford, 1990); D.W. Bebbington, 'Martyrs for the Truth: Fundamentalists in Britain', in D. Wood, ed., *Studies in Church History*, Vol. 30 (Oxford, 1993).

¹⁹ *The Keswick Convention* (London, 1929), p. 139.

seated on camp stools. More people filled the communion platform, the pulpit steps and even the pulpit itself. The attraction was not, however, Scroggie's personality or even his preaching style. Although he was known for his dry humour, his appearance in the pulpit at Charlotte Chapel was described as 'solemn, almost austere', and he hardly moved while preaching. Certainly his analytical mind offered his hearers a deeply satisfying biblical exposition, but what was more significant was that when he entered the pulpit the congregation seemed to sense, as William Whyte puts it, that Scroggie had 'come straight from the presence of God and bore in his heart and upon his lips the Word of the Living God'.²⁰

The Threat of False Experience

In Scroggie's mind a definite distinction was to be drawn between authentic evangelical experience and false claims to spirituality. For him the threat of spurious experience was posed in a particularly dangerous form in the early twentieth century by the growth of the Pentecostal movement. In 1912, when minister of Bethesda Free Church, Sunderland, Scroggie wrote three articles in his church magazine on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and tongues, in which he attempted a detailed study of the subject. In typical style the first article, on the baptism of the Spirit, looked at seven words associated with the mission and ministry of the Spirit – baptism, indwelling, gift, sealing, earnest, anointing and fullness. Scroggie argued that 'the truth on any given subject may be discovered by a close examination of the words which have fine differing shades of meaning'.²¹ In this period Sunderland was, through Alexander and Mary Boddy at All Saints', Monkwearmouth, a Pentecostal mecca for many evangelicals.²² Scroggie's approach to the subject – he later published a booklet – was applauded by Stuart Holden, the chairman of the Keswick Convention in the 1920s, who wrote: 'In these days when there is so much error produced about these things... yours is a message calculated to do real good.'²³

After considering all the texts relating to the baptism of the Spirit, Scroggie made 1 Corinthians 12:13 his focus. Every person who believed in Christ, he argued, was according to this text baptised into the body of

²⁰ Whyte, *Revival in Rose Street*, p. 45.

²¹ *Bethesda Record*, July 1912, p. 113.

²² I.M. Randall, 'Old Time Power: Relationships between Pentecostalism and Evangelical Spirituality in England', *Pneuma*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1997), pp. 53-80.

²³ J.S. Holden to W.G. Scroggie, 15 February 1913, in the Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey Hall, Mattersey.

Christ. 'Incorporation into the Body of Christ,' he insisted, 'is by the Baptism of the Spirit, so that, if one has not received this Baptism he is not of the Body, that is he is not a Christian at all.' What, then, he asked, about the 'now widely current doctrine' that many Christians had never received the baptism of the Spirit and that they should therefore seek it? For Scroggie this was foreign to the New Testament and was 'bringing large numbers into bondage and darkness'.²⁴ Scroggie considered that errors over the baptism of the Spirit were partly due to confusion between 'Spirit-baptism' and the continuous 'filling' of the Spirit, but were especially due to the desire to associate the blessing of the Spirit with the gift of tongues. He quoted from the Fifth International Pentecostal Convention held at Sunderland in May 1912. A Consultative International Council had been formed which issued a Pentecostal statement of belief containing an affirmation that 'the Baptism of the Spirit... is always borne witness to be the fruit of the Spirit and the outward manifestation, so that we may receive the same gift as the disciples on the Day of Pentecost'.²⁵

In his critique of what he described as this 'thoroughly unscriptural' statement, Scroggie accepted that in a few cases in the book of Acts the Holy Spirit fell on believers and they immediately spoke in tongues. His response to this apparent support for the Pentecostal position was that such examples belonged to a transitional period in the life of the church. As he saw it, 'the spiritual happenings of the first ten or twelve years of the Church's history were irregular'. It is not clear why the irregularity was for that period alone, but Scroggie's logical and sometimes slightly rigid mind could not countenance a situation in which the Spirit might often work in irregular ways. The fact that in Pentecostalism there were also experiences of 'holy laughter', 'shakings', 'visions' and 'transportations' caused Scroggie even more concern. He saw these manifestations as having much more in common with the effects of hypnotism and spiritism than the Holy Spirit. There was also in such meetings a 'surrender of common sense'. The careful Scot was of the opinion that the church had no need for a message that played up the Spirit and played down the intelligence. Scroggie was to insist at Keswick that 'the man is in grave peril who is resting on emotion rather than upon intelligent understanding'.²⁶ It did not seem to him that the church was suffering from 'a superfluity of intelligence'.²⁷

²⁴ *Bethesda Record*, July 1912, pp. 117-18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²⁶ *KW*, 1922, p. 107.

²⁷ *Bethesda Record*, July 1912, p. 115.

It was not, however, that Scroggie denied the possibility of speaking in tongues in the contemporary church. He saw the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 as standing or falling together and he had no doubt that they remained.²⁸ What he opposed was a tendency, as he viewed it, for speaking in tongues to promote spiritual pride and to be associated with fanatical displays. His objections to the over-emphasis on tongues which he believed he saw in Pentecostalism led him to raise so many questions about this particular gift that, although he accepted it was not limited to the Apostolic age, in reality he did not expect to see it in operation. This view was to prevail in much evangelical thinking about pneumatology for several decades. Moreover, Scroggie's strong attacks on Pentecostalism – which he alleged was 'doing incalculable and irreparable damage in scores of lives'²⁹ – were to colour evangelical attitudes to those within Pentecostalism who (as they themselves often pointed out) shared many of the same core doctrinal convictions as other evangelicals.

The Keswick Message

In 1918 Handley Moule, who as Bishop of Durham was the leading ecclesiastical supporter of Keswick, described its essential message as 'holiness by faith'.³⁰ Evangelical conceptions of holy living achieved through sustained struggle had been replaced, in the spirituality purveyed at Keswick from 1875 onwards, by the idea that sanctification, like justification, was attained through faith, not works. D. S. Sceats suggests that the original Keswick emphasis upon immediate sanctification had given way, by the early twentieth century, to views which were more acceptable to other evangelicals.³¹ The degree of change should not be over-emphasised. For much of the first half of the twentieth century Keswick teachers still stressed the way of consecration and challenged their hearers to deeper experience. What was emerging, however, was a conception of the consecrated life as one that was entered into after careful consideration and was expressed in active obedience. The stress on a spiritual crisis followed by a process of sanctification was still present, but more emphasis was being given to the process. Speaking in 1922, Scroggie insisted that he and his hearers 'must think clearly if we are to act

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

²⁹ *Bethesda Record*, September 1912, pp. 140-41.

³⁰ *KW*, 1918, p. 20.

³¹ D.S. Sceats, 'Perfectionism and the Keswick Convention, 1875-1900', University of Bristol M.A. thesis (1970), p. 72.

soundly', and urged consecration which was undertaken 'intelligently, deliberately, definitely, thoughtfully, joyfully, immediately'.³²

A second change in emphasis was that instead of the experience of sanctification being associated with the filling of the Holy Spirit it was seen increasingly as submission to Christ as Lord. Here again the influence of Scroggie was crucial. There was, for Scroggie, as he made clear at Keswick in 1922, an insistent call to make Christ Lord of one's life.³³ Scroggie's aim was to replace an emphasis on the Holy Spirit with a focus on Christology. Writing in 1925 in *The Christian*, a widely-read evangelical weekly, on the theme of 'the Lordship of Christ', Scroggie argued that although Keswick spoke of the 'Spirit-filled' life this idea led back to Christ's Lordship, which in his view was Keswick's distinctive message.³⁴ Scroggie's thinking gained ground. 'The Lordship of Christ in Christian experience is the fullness of the Spirit,' Scroggie stated in 1927, 'and the fullness of the Spirit is the Lordship of Christ.'³⁵ In a message at Keswick in 1929 Scroggie stressed that although Christ had redeemed the world, only those were saved who accepted Christ as Saviour, and of these not all had accepted his Lordship. Such a step would bring what Frances Ridley Havergal termed, in a famous Keswick hymn, 'God's perfect peace'.³⁶ By 1931 Scroggie saw Keswick as engaged in a great mission to present this Christological theme to Christian people.³⁷ It is clear that Scroggie's determined teaching meant that Keswick thinking had, by the 1930s, undergone a paradigm shift.

A minority of Keswick leaders opposed this trend, most notably an Irishman, Charles Inwood, who travelled extensively across the world on behalf of Keswick. Charles Inwood was aware that calls to receive the baptism of the Spirit were falling out of favour among evangelicals and in 1927 he admitted to his Keswick audience that he would 'say things you do not much care to hear' in maintaining that Keswick needed a 'fresh touch of Pentecost'.³⁸ Later in the 1927 convention week, in the face of anxieties being expressed about his continued use of the term 'baptism' in relation to the work of the Spirit in believers, Inwood argued that Jesus employed the word and that Luke, writing in Acts, saw baptism and filling as

³² KW, 1922, pp. 107, 110.

³³ KW, 1922, p. 109.

³⁴ *The Christian*, 23 July 1925, p. 6.

³⁵ KW, 1927, p. 139.

³⁶ *The Keswick Convention*, 1929, pp. 29-31.

³⁷ *The Keswick Convention*, 1931, p. 155.

³⁸ KW, 1927, p. 2.

equivalent.³⁹ Scroggie, the speaker at the 1927 Bible Readings, repudiated Inwood's position. 'On the Day of Pentecost,' Scroggie stated, 'all believers were, by the baptism of the Spirit, constituted the body of Christ; and since then every separate believer, every soul accepting Christ in simple faith, has, in that moment, and by that act, been made partaker of the blessing of the baptism. It is not, therefore, a blessing which the believer is to seek.'⁴⁰

Yet Scroggie, despite his caution, did not want Keswick to lose the dimension of the Spirit's work. In 1933, when Scroggie was invited to give the first radio broadcast address from Keswick, he commented: 'The trouble and tragedy is that the Church has been content to live between Easter and Pentecost, on the right side of justification, but on the wrong side of sanctification; on the right side of pardon but on the wrong side of power.'⁴¹ A two-stage experience, justification followed by sanctification, was still being taught, although Scroggie's deliberate reference to 'the Church' rather than to the experience of Pentecost for individual believers, and his careful use of the framework of the Christian year, were calculated to militate against the kind of narrowness which he felt confronted him in Pentecostalism and other 'Holy Spirit movements'. At the same time, Scroggie had no sympathy with broader ideas about spirituality such as those expressed by Vernon Storr, a leading Anglican liberal evangelical, who spoke of the Spirit as 'a Spirit of Fellowship, of Progress and of Sharing'.⁴² During the First World War Scroggie had spoken of the war as widening Keswick's horizons;⁴³ in the 1930s, however, he rejected the broadening of Keswick's message to address popular social questions. For him the Holy Spirit's work was intended to transform individuals. Keswick, he averred, 'holds that spirituality is the key to every situation'.⁴⁴

³⁹ *KW*, 1927, p. 91.

⁴⁰ *KW*, 1927, p. 139.

⁴¹ *The Keswick Convention*, 1933, p. 80.

⁴² *The Record*, 1 July 1932, p. 421. See I. M. Randall, 'The Truth shall Make you Free: The Growth of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, Vol. LXV, No.3 (1996).

⁴³ Quoted in W. B. Sloan, *These Sixty Years: The Story of the Keswick Convention* (London, 1935), p. 74.

⁴⁴ *The Keswick Convention*, 1935, pp. 62-3.

The Experience of Revival

This kind of outlook might have meant that Scroggie would have been eager to explore movements of revival such as that in Wales in 1904-05. His ministry at Charlotte Chapel followed that of Joseph Kemp, who had visited Wales in January 1905 and following his reports to the Chapel nightly and often lengthy prayer meetings took place during the whole of 1905. The membership of the church had already been growing, but following this new impetus it was reckoned that one thousand people were converted in one year alone. There were whole nights of prayer which included spontaneous outbursts of song. On the occasion of Kemp's departure – to Calvary Baptist Church, New York – in 1915 his period of ministry in Edinburgh was described as 12 years of miracles. He left behind a church which undoubtedly attracted Scroggie – he told the Chapel congregation that he was looking to them for 'spiritual inspiration' – and yet one which Scroggie would substantially remould. In particular Scroggie found the shouts of 'Hallelujah! Amen! Glory! Praise the Lord!', which were a feature of the Chapel's worship and had been welcomed by Kemp, to be disturbing and unhelpful.⁴⁵

Scroggie's method of dealing with what he did not favour within congregational life was characteristically forthright. The most prominent participant from the body of the church during worship was Edmund Trickett, who had been a soldier and who had a voice made for the parade ground. He had a cobbler's shop in Edinburgh where he displayed Bible verses in the window and he was also known for his effective leading of small prayer groups. This kind of witness and encouragement was much appreciated by Scroggie, who looked for active co-operation from church members. One Sunday morning in the Chapel, however, there was an especially enthusiastic outburst, which Trickett led, during a sermon, and Scroggie decided that enough was enough. He responded by stopping preaching and saying directly to Trickett: 'My dear brother, if you are going to speak I'll be silent but when I'm speaking you'll be silent.' The rebuke was apparently accepted – Scroggie's genuine concern for all the church members was well known – and the 'Hallelujah Chorus' was muted from then on.⁴⁶

In 1922, at Keswick, Scroggie encountered what he felt was a similar display of over-exuberance, and one which he saw as rather dangerous because it was on such a large scale. On 20 July 1921 Hugh Ferguson, minister of London Road Baptist Church, Lowestoft, and John Hayes,

⁴⁵ Whyte, *Revival in Rose Street*, p. 44.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-6.

Vicar of Christ Church, Lowestoft, reported at Keswick that an unexpected revival had come to East Anglia, starting in their town.⁴⁷ Hayes and Ferguson spoke by invitation to the Keswick council in October 1921, asking that the council 'take up the work of organisation connected with the revival Movement'. The council did not feel that this was possible, but it did appoint some leading Keswick figures – F.B. Meyer, E.L. Langston, Helen Bradshaw and Walter Sloan – to 'confer with the brethren... with the view of formulating such plans as may be desired'.⁴⁸ There was some concern at Keswick, based on experiences during the Welsh revival, that revivalism had the potential to cause rifts in the convention's ranks. But Douglas Brown, pastor of Ramsden Road Baptist Church, Balham, the East Anglian revival leader, was a sober Baptist minister whose after-meetings were characterised by quietness rather than noisy singing or praying. It was likely that Keswick would find such spirituality much more congenial.

At the Manchester 'Keswick' convention in October 1921, held in the same week as the Keswick council, John Hayes gave a further account of the East Anglian Revival. The principal speakers at that convention, Russell Howden, an Anglican clergyman, and Scroggie, vividly described by *The Life of Faith* as 'among the most capable and trusted men of the Keswick platform' and 'far removed from the realm of religious cranks or long-haired visionaries',⁴⁹ spoke in what was felt to be a revival atmosphere. Against this background Douglas Brown was booked to take the 1922 Keswick Bible Readings. It was soon clear at the Readings that he was going to make little attempt at the kind of scholarly addresses for which these Bible expositions, under Scroggie, were becoming known. *The Christian* reported that people flocked to the Keswick tent feeling that 'something' was going to happen. On the Thursday morning of the convention Brown preached on 'Defective Consecration' and at the conclusion of his address he invited those wishing to signify their consecration to meet him in the nearby Drill Hall. Observers felt that a flood burst. Only two–three hundred people could be accommodated in the

⁴⁷ For the East Anglian revival see S.C. Griffin, *A Forgotten Revival* (Bromley, Kent, 1992). See also I.M. Randall, 'Capturing Keswick: Baptists and the Changing Spirituality of the Keswick Convention in the 1920's', *The Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 7 (1996), and Donald E. Meek, 'Fishers of Men: The 1921 Religious Revival – It's Cause, Context and Transmission', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 17 (1999), pp. 40-54.

⁴⁸ Minutes of the Keswick Council, 26 October 1921.

⁴⁹ *The Life of Faith* (hereafter *LF*), 19 October 1921, p. 1191.

hall and consecration meetings were conducted, by F. B. Meyer and others, for virtually the whole audience.⁵⁰ As the reporter for *The Christian* saw it, 'Pentecostal fire had fallen upon Keswick'.⁵¹

Reactions from the convention's opinion-makers to this explosion of spiritual energy were diverse. For some, Brown was exactly what Keswick required. Scroggie, however, was thoroughly unconvinced, and at the main evening meeting applied a corrective which could have resulted in a public polarisation of opinion over Brown's morning session. 'Faith', Scroggie warned Keswick-goers, 'is not credulity; faith is not ignorance; faith is intelligent; faith is open-eyed; faith has a reason as well as emotion'.⁵² At the end of this address Scroggie gave what one evangelical leader present, Herbert Lockyer, later recalled as an 'intelligent and deliberate appeal to crown Christ as King' and the audience rose.⁵³ The convention was clearly prepared to follow Scroggie. Brown was to become more involved in mission within the Baptist Union and had an impact on many Baptist churches. The East Anglian revival failed to spread, in the way many hoped it would, to other parts of England, although the movement among fishermen had considerable influence in parts of the North of Scotland. Keswick did not invite Brown to return as a speaker. Scroggie had steered Keswick away from what he regarded as a dangerous path.

The Continuing Significance of Scroggie

There are several areas in which Graham Scroggie has continuing significance for evangelical spirituality. The first is his pan-denominational outlook. In his mission statement to the Charlotte Chapel leaders in 1916 he wrote: 'This is a day of Catholic sympathies and widespread interfellowship among Christians of all Protestant Churches, and it has been my privilege for many years to have a not inconsiderable share in this.' When he left the Chapel in 1933 he touched again on the question of denominationalism in a farewell address at a meeting held in the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall on the Mound in Edinburgh. 'It has been said that my ministry has not been a denominational or sectarian ministry,' Scroggie observed, 'I hope that is true, but I also want to say... that I have never toyed with my convictions as a Baptist. We should all come to think... in terms of the Holy Catholic Church instead of a denomination,

⁵⁰ *LF*, 26 July 1922, p. 908.

⁵¹ *The Christian*, 27 July 1922, p. 11.

⁵² *KW*, 1922, p. 107.

⁵³ H. Lockyer, *Keswick: The Place and the Power* (London, 1937), p. 43.

and we can do so without being disloyal to our denomination and our convictions.'⁵⁴ In the second half of the twentieth century this pan-denominational outlook has become much more evident. Evangelical spirituality, as Scroggie saw clearly after his first visit to Keswick in 1900, to a significant extent transcends denominationalism.

A second contribution made by Scroggie was to the debate about Pentecostalism and about experiences of the Holy Spirit. Although the comments of Scroggie may now seem unduly negative, his questioning of the validity of a theology which insisted on a second experience of baptism of the Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues continues to have relevance. At the same time, Scroggie shows the importance of a spirituality that is open to new experiences and encounters with God. In 1942 Scroggie told the Keswick Convention audience: 'I shall never forget days of despair in my first ministry in East London.' He had indicated to his wife during this period of spiritual anguish that he would pull out of ministry. 'I have no message,' he agonised, 'I have no power; I have no joy, and it will kill me.' But when he was out walking in the nearby Epping Forest, Scroggie 'met with God' and became convinced that God was telling him to make a fresh resolve to put the Bible at the centre of his ministry. He was grateful, he said on another occasion, that he had learned many things at Spurgeon's Pastors' College in London, but he stated that he had not learned at that time how to live the Christian life victoriously.⁵⁵

In the third place, Scroggie is an example of a scholarly spirituality. As we have seen, emotion-ridden forms of revivalism had no appeal for Scroggie. Nor was he obscurantist in his thinking. He had received an honorary degree from an American University, which he never used, but when he was awarded an honorary D.D. from Edinburgh University in 1927 he and the Charlotte Chapel congregation entered fully into the event. The Dean of the Faculty of Divinity of Edinburgh University, W. P. Paterson, spoke of Scroggie's 'unusual influence in the City as a preacher and missionary', his place as a 'prominent representative of the Keswick Movement, which has done so much to deepen the life and refine the ideals of Evangelicalism', and the work to which Scroggie had especially devoted himself, which was 'the study and teaching of the Bible in its twofold character of a Divine revelation and a great literature'.⁵⁶ In 1943, when London Bible College was formed and a principal was required, the LBC council issued an invitation to Scroggie. Although Scroggie accepted, the

⁵⁴ Whyte, *Revival in Rose Street*, pp. 44, 52.

⁵⁵ *The Keswick Week*, 1942, pp. 70-71; 1950, p. 192; 1954, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁶ White, *Revival in Rose Street*, pp. 48-9.

post required too much administrative work and he relinquished it after a few months.⁵⁷ As a mark of his long-term commitment to training, however, Scroggie guided thousands of students through his own four-year correspondence course.

Finally, Scroggie asked some hard questions about the question of revival, a subject that has remained of great interest to many evangelicals. It is not that Scroggie denied the historical existence of revivals, but his view was that the church needed to commit itself to the work of mission rather than waiting for revival to appear in some dramatic form. At Charlotte Chapel, Scroggie, together with his wife, who organised parcels of clothing to be sent overseas, advocated and supported both world mission and local evangelism. The Chapel's work in Edinburgh included outreach to homeless men who came together for a service on a Sunday afternoon and who were also helped with accommodation. Evangelistic teams from the Chapel, led by William Whyte, went to areas around Edinburgh. At Keswick there was a strong stress on overseas mission, particularly at the missionary meeting which came at the end of the convention week, but the anticipation was that only young people would volunteer themselves. On one occasion Scroggie asked fathers and mothers who were willing to release their young people for overseas mission to stand, and about two hundred, led by Mrs Scroggie, did so.⁵⁸ It was consistent with Scroggie's vision of a thinking Christian faith that he should challenge mature adults to be involved in mission.

Conclusion

Graham Scroggie was one of the best known evangelical figures of the first half of the twentieth century. His books, which numbered over thirty, were widely read by evangelicals. Although he was known as a biblical expositor, he had a deep concern for spirituality and was the most influential shaper, from the 1920s to the 1950s, of Keswick's thinking about spiritual experience. His local church ministries also affected the experience of many thousands of people. In 1938, when he commenced ministry at Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London, a church not previously associated with Keswick spirituality, he paved the way with a series of

⁵⁷ H.H. Rowdon, *London Bible College: The First Twenty-Five Years* (Worthing, 1968), pp. 22-3. See also I.M. Randall, *Educating Evangelicalism* (forthcoming).

⁵⁸ *KW*, 1922, p. 228.

messages on the deepening of the spiritual life.⁵⁹ For Scroggie spirituality had to be based on the Bible. Keswick's Bible Readings offered him an ideal platform. His approach to devotion was always practical, and sometimes a little legalistic, rather than subjective. He once suggested at Keswick that making Christ Lord would, for example, motivate domestic servants to clean under mats more thoroughly.⁶⁰ Yet he was also well aware of the inner struggles of the Christian life, struggles he had experienced himself. In 1951 Jean Rees, a popular evangelical writer, noted in *The Life of Faith* how at Keswick in that year Scroggie had opposed the idea of 'Let go - and let God' and had said that victory came through 'fighting and striving to make true in experience what is true for us positionally'.⁶¹ All of this affected Scroggie's attitude to prevalent evangelical movements and ideas of his time which, in some cases, continue to be influential. As a result of the thinking of Scroggie, perhaps more than anyone else, spirituality came to be seen by many mid-century evangelicals in Britain as obedience to the Lordship of Christ in everyday life.

⁵⁹ *LF*, 29 September 1937, p. 1020; *The Sword and the Trowel*, November 1937, p. 333.

⁶⁰ *KW*, 1927, p. 141.

⁶¹ *LF*, 11 July 1951, p. 479.