



GEORGE CAIRD

GEORGE BRADFORD CAIRD

1917-1984

GEORGE CAIRD, who was a Fellow of the British Academy from 1973, and who was Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Oxford from 1977 until his death, was born in London on 17 July 1917. By descent he was a Dundee Scot, and both his parents came from long-established Dundee families. They were living temporarily in London, because of war service, when George was born. Afterwards the family lived for only short periods in Dundee, and George grew up in Birmingham, where his father worked as an engineer on the design of power stations. George always regarded himself as a Scotsman, though his education was in Birmingham and his spiritual home was surely Oxford. Incidentally, there was, apparently, no connection with that other distinguished family of Scottish Cairds, known as philosophers and interpreters of Hegel.

Growing up in Birmingham was important in more than one way. George's parents had been Church of Scotland people in Dundee, but in Birmingham the love of good preaching drew them naturally to Carr's Lane Chapel, and thus George's development was to lie within the Congregational rather than the Presbyterian branch of the Reformed tradition. His years at King Edward's School were from 1929 to 1936, and in the latter year he went up to Peterhouse, Cambridge. As was typical of almost all the great biblical scholars of the time, his education lay dominantly in the Greek and Latin classics. He took a First Class in both parts of the Classical Tripos, with distinction in Greek and Latin verse, graduating in 1939. These must have been painful times for him, for, probably through the influence of Leyton Richards, his boyhood minister at Carr's Lane, he was already a determined pacifist, and now Europe was lurching into war.

From 1939 to 1943 he was studying theology at Mansfield College, Oxford, preparing for the Congregational ministry and doing postgraduate research (in this latter respect he was a member of Merton College). Mansfield was to be central in his life and to form the object of his devoted service; in this period were formed some of the deepest friendships and personal associations, for example with Horton Davies, with Robert Paul, with Erik

Routley, and, among his seniors, with Nathaniel Micklem and John Marsh.

His research topic was 'The New Testament Conception of $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ ', and his thesis gained the D.Phil. degree in 1944. The subject suited well his combination of linguistic acumen and theological insight. How is it that $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$, which in non-biblical Greek means something like 'opinion', in biblical Greek means 'glory' and especially the 'glory' of God? Caird explained this through the control of the Greek word by Hebrew meanings, achieved already in the Septuagint but continued and reinforced in the New Testament. $\Delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ had been first used of the honour and majesty of men and then, by analogy, of the honour and majesty of God: the problem of analogy, thus introduced and illustrated, was resolved in the New Testament by the doctrine of the Incarnation. The dissertation itself was never published; but much later, in 1969, Caird published an article, 'The Glory of God in the Fourth Gospel: an Exercise in Biblical Semantics' (*New Testament Studies*, xv. 265-77), which may be taken as a development and restatement of his earlier work. The Hebrew meanings, transmitted through the Septuagint, provided the key to the expression 'God is glorified in him' (John 13: 31). The theme as a whole was dear to Caird's heart and characteristic of his thinking; long afterwards, when a volume was being prepared as a Festschrift in his honour—and, as it sadly turned out, proved to be a Memorial Volume—the title chosen was *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament*.

Caird was never, however, a pure academic, and to him the practical service of the church was the natural outworking of personal faith and theological study. From 1943 to 1946 he was minister of Highgate Congregational Church, London. The instincts and the approaches of the preacher remained with him throughout his life: many noticed that his lectures had a certain likeness to sermons, while he conversely would have felt no sermon to be worthwhile which did not contain some element of the intellectual quality of a lecture.

The next step in Caird's career lay in a quite different direction, for in 1946 he was invited to be Professor of Old Testament in St Stephen's College, Edmonton, Alberta, an institution of the United Church of Canada. He was, of course, more a specialist in the New Testament than in the Old, and his main career was always obviously destined to be in the former; but, like many scholars of his time and tradition, he saw the two testaments as interpenetrating and saw no sense in a scholarship which coped

with one while disregarding the other. His great interest in the Septuagint, already prominent in his graduate research, supported this. His main publication in the strictly Old Testament field, his commentary, with introduction, on the Books of Samuel in the *Interpreter's Bible*, was doubtless prepared during the Edmonton years, although it did not actually appear in print until 1953, after he had moved to Montreal and returned to the concentration on New Testament that most completely revealed, and fulfilled, his talents.

The Samuel commentary was Caird's first commentary and the chief expression of his work as an Old Testament scholar. The format of the *Interpreter's Bible* was not such as to leave room for great originality or for the display of exceptional linguistic or exegetical virtuosity. Caird's treatment was a thoroughly sensible and competent one, which largely followed the lines of scholarly opinion of the time. He fully accepted the 'critical' approach, distinguishing simply between an earlier and a later source; and he freely noted textual errors and misunderstandings in transmission. But he was quite opposed to any scepticism about the general historical value of the book: for instance, he argued that it gave a picture of Samuel himself that was on the whole historically quite convincing.

His first publication, however, his book *The Truth of the Gospel*, had been earlier than this, and appeared in 1950. By the end of his life perhaps few remembered it, but it was highly significant as an indicator of his thinking. For this little book, Part iii of a series called *A Primer of Christianity* (another of the volumes was by T. W. Manson), was no specialized work of biblical scholarship but was a very general theological account of the full range of Christian doctrine, clearly and powerfully written for the general reader. Within its limited size it could not enter into technical argumentation. But in just over 160 pages it gave a considered account of such matters as: the supposed obstacles to Christian faith posed by science and psychology, by the bad record of religion, by the existence of other religions; the distinctive character of the God of the Bible, and the Bible as the Word of this God; the problem of evil and the Christian answer to it; Jesus Christ, in his humanity and his divinity, and the reality of the Gospel miracles ('there is no reasonable doubt that Jesus performed most of the miracles which are attributed to him', p. 98), the Virgin Birth, the Trinity, resurrection and eschatology, and the ethical consequences in terms of law and grace, and in terms of Christian living and witness, individual and communal. It is

often said that biblical specialists never escape from the details of the text and never emerge into the light of a general view of religious truth. But Caird started his academic life with a carefully thought-out and well-expressed total theological position, much of which remained with him throughout his life. In 1951 he co-edited, along with G. W. Briggs and Nathaniel Micklem, *The Shorter Oxford Bible*, a selection of central biblical passages with prefaces added to some of them.

Canada was then very conscious of itself as a new and growing country, with wide horizons and enormous possibilities. This expansion of vision had its manifestations in religion and in academic life, and one sign of these was the foundation of the new Faculty of Divinity at McGill University in Montreal, much the most important English-language and non-Roman Catholic educational institution in the Province of Quebec. Caird was invited to Montreal as first Professor of New Testament in the new Faculty, in which both the United Church of Canada and the Anglicans participated; it was in 1950 that he came, and he was to remain there for a decade.

Since Caird's major works in New Testament had not yet appeared, special significance attaches to his Inaugural Lecture at McGill, entitled 'The New Testament View of Life' and published in 1951, for in it he laid down some of the lines that were to remain central to all his life's work. He made it clear that he entirely accepted the enormous advance in the understanding of the Bible that critical studies had achieved. In particular he cited with approbation the work of Canon B. H. Streeter, who had shown, first, that there is no single theology to be found in the New Testament, but no less than seven different types of theological development, and, secondly, that the early church had no uniform system of church government, so that no one system could claim to have unique dominical authority. Both of these were points that were to receive reinforcement from Caird's later work. But on the other hand he recognized that critical scholarship had at times produced exaggerated contrasts: it had divided sharply between Jesus and Paul, and similarly it had drawn 'too sharp a distinction between the substantial historical accuracy of the three Synoptic Gospels and the theological essay of St John'. Against this he argued, as most contemporaries were beginning to do, that Mark is just as theological as John.

Important as it was, therefore, to recognize the diversity within the New Testament, equally important was the task of restating its unity. A movement in this direction, he declared, was already

in progress, and its prophet was C. H. Dodd, who in his Inaugural Lecture at Cambridge in 1936 had stated that the present task in New Testament studies was synthesis. Dodd in important publications had shown how this was to be done; yet 'nobody has yet ventured to write a Theology of the New Testament on modern lines', although there were some scholars of the first rank who were 'beginning to contemplate the possibility of doing so'—prophetic words, for just such a Theology, from Caird's pen, was to be in progress at the time of his death.

The comparative study of religions had also been a challenge to traditional views of the Bible; but the more extreme suggestions produced in its name could easily be shown to be absurd, and Christian scholars who had honestly faced this challenge had found it in the long run 'to confirm rather than to shake their confidence in the unique quality of their Scriptures'. Thus we can still regard the Bible as the Word of God, 'communicated not by the automatic processes of verbal inspiration but through the fallible powers and kaleidoscopic variety of human thought and speech, yet a word unique in its authority and appeal'.

All these aspects are typical of Caird's approach: the acceptance of the critical approach, but the tempering of it with moderation; the importance of synthesis, yet without uniformity; the acceptance of Paul as a true and valid interpreter of the mind of Christ; the continuing uniqueness of the Bible, and its status as Word of God.

This was the time of the 'Biblical Theology Movement', and these expressions have something in common with it. But there are also points of difference. For one thing, most adherents of biblical theology would have seen its origins mainly on the European continent and would have regarded Dodd as only partly belonging to that trend. Like biblical theology, Caird emphasized the unity of the Bible and the Hebrew roots of Christianity; but he also saw in the Judaism of Jesus' time three aspects which, he thought, had robbed the ancient prophetic faith of much of its effectiveness: Jewish nationalism, Jewish pessimism, and Jewish legalism. The argument against Jewish legalism in particular was to recur: Caird used it as a warning against what he regarded as wrong directions within Christianity. At times the church has fallen into a legalism not much different from that of the Rabbis; but Christ exercised his kingly authority over his church not through the external authority of a hierarchy or of the written word, but through the continued activity of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of his followers.

As for eschatology, there are in principle two possibilities: the other-worldly looking for a salvation that takes the individual out of this world, and the this-worldly type that looks for the preservation of all that is valuable in the social life of man. Greek thought affirmed mainly the former, Hebrew the latter; only the New Testament has succeeded in holding both beliefs within a single frame of thought. What the New Testament offers is not mere survival, but life of such transcendent quality that it is beyond the power of sin to destroy it. Such life must be social and corporate life, and the New Testament assures us that this new society is already in being. The metaphor of a great race to be run, as found in the letter to the Hebrews, is the best expression of the central truths of all this. Here already lay the seeds of much that Caird was later to write.

In the Montreal years Caird's scholarly stature was impressively confirmed. There he had colleagues such as R. B. Y. Scott in Old Testament and Wilfred Cantwell Smith in Islamics and Comparative Religion. His list of publications was growing: the Samuel commentary appeared in 1953, *The Apostolic Age* in the widely used Duckworth series in 1955, *Principalities and Powers* with the Clarendon Press in 1956. In these years the *Canadian Journal of Theology* was founded, another symbol of Canada's determination to do things for itself, and he had two articles in it within these first years, one on 'Judgement and Salvation' and the other on a favourite theme of his, 'The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews'. He was President of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies and Secretary of the Canadian Theological Society.

And here the writer may be permitted to touch a more personal note, for I was Caird's 'opposite number' in Montreal for two of these years. And this leads on at once to a further subject. In many obituaries and memoirs it is customary to mention marriage, wife and children only in a colourless final paragraph; but no account of George Caird could so proceed. In 1945 he had married Viola Mary Newport of Reigate, less than a year before they moved to Canada; and they had three sons and one daughter, all born in Canada. Mollie (for it is not known that anyone ever called her Viola Mary) and George had a deeply loving marriage, to which their children only added a still greater cohesion. Mollie's studies had been in English literature; she was a poet, and later on was twice to win the Sacred Poem Prize at Oxford. Her speech, and their conversation together, bubbled over with joy in the beauty of words and with happiness in felicitous expression. Later on, and

back in Great Britain, as the children grew older, their success and distinction in their various careers reinforced the deep sense of divine blessing interpenetrating the family and the entire world that God had made, in all its aspects. The various careers that the children adopted all echoed facets of their father's own interests and emphases: James, an architect and town planner, concerned in environmental matters; John, a Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company; George, a professional oboist; and Margaret, a scholar in medieval philology. All of them married and all had children. Nothing was more important to their father: when relaxing in company, he would talk untiringly of his children and the grandchildren. All this was part of the view that he, as a theologian, took of the world.

The United Church of Canada and the Anglicans both participated in the McGill Faculty of Divinity, and both also had theological colleges of their own on the campus. The Presbyterian Church in Canada also had its theological college there, but at that time it did not participate in the University's Faculty. The writer taught New Testament in the Presbyterian College. Primarily a Hebraist and Old Testament scholar, I taught New Testament in Canada, just as Caird had taught Old Testament in Edmonton. We saw a lot of one another. In the summer of 1954 I with my wife and children enjoyed the hospitality of the Cairds at their summer cottage at Georgeville, on Lake Memphremagog in the Eastern Provinces of Quebec. There in the lovely scenery we had ample time to talk.

The United Church of Canada was congenial to Caird's spirit, and he was enthusiastic in support of it. Formed from the Methodists and Congregationalists of Canada along with a large portion of the Presbyterians, it combined different but compatible traditions in a creative way, and accepted considerable theological diversity—exactly the features that appealed to Caird. In due course the United Church recognized his contribution to it when it made him Principal of its theological college in Montreal, a position he held from 1955 to 1959.

In spite of the fulfilment which Caird gained from his work in church and university in Canada, however, it was not a surprise when in 1959 he returned to Oxford as tutor in Mansfield College. At about the time of his leaving Canada he was honoured with an honorary Doctorate of Divinity by St Stephen's College, Edmonton, and in the same year he received the same degree from the Diocesan (Anglican) College in Montreal.

Oxford theology provided a rich and varied scene upon which

Caird's talents could be fully exercised; and Mansfield was growing in significance as a contributor to the entire field—not unnaturally, for it was an institution which had a very rich tradition of distinguished biblical scholarship behind it. Caird was a devoted tutor, a powerful lecturer, and a man of judgement and experience in academic administration. It was not surprising when in 1970 he succeeded John Marsh in the Principalship of the College. As a person who combined his academic distinction with his loyal service to Congregationalism and (later) to the United Reformed Church, he had exactly the right qualities. During this entire period Mansfield was increasing in importance within the University, expanding in numbers and developing from being the denominational theological college it had once been into a more general educational institution. As Principal, Caird took a leading part in the establishment of the Certificate in Theology, which links the work of the theological colleges with the Faculty of Theology. During this time he served on committees and boards of the Congregational Church; he was an official Observer at the Second Vatican Council (and wrote a book interpreting that momentous gathering); he served on commissions of the World Council of Churches; and in 1975–6 he was Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church.

In New Testament studies at Oxford Caird's comprehensiveness of scope, his command of language and evidence, and his deeply theological emphasis, combined with his excellence as a lecturer, quickly established him as a leading figure. In 1969 his distinction was recognized through his appointment as a Reader, a position that he was able to hold along with the Principalship of Mansfield. Meanwhile his scholarship was receiving notice elsewhere. Aberdeen University made him a Doctor of Divinity in 1966, and in the same year he gained the Oxford Doctorate of Divinity (not honorary, but by examination through the submission of published works). In 1973 he was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. And in 1977 he entered into the last and most entirely fitting stage of his career, when he became Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture in Oxford. This chair, in spite of its rather ambiguous title, was in effect the central professorship of New Testament in the University, and was thus a key position for the entire study of theology in Oxford. The chair carried with it a Professorial Fellowship at The Queen's College; and Caird greatly loved his new college and valued his connection with it. In the same year he became one of the two

joint editors of the main Oxford theological periodical, the *Journal of Theological Studies*; the other editor was Henry Chadwick, one of Caird's closest friends and one with whom he shared many of his deepest interests.

As has already been mentioned, the Septuagint was one of Caird's fields of interest and research, a natural line of work for one who had a classical education and had later professed both Old and New Testaments. Soon after his return to Oxford, in 1961, he was elected to the Grinfield Lecturership on the Septuagint, which position he held, as was normal, for four years, delivering three lectures each year. The first two years were devoted to the methods of the translators, and the other two to the translator of Ecclesiasticus (Ben Sira).

It is probable that much of the material of the first two years' lectures went into a lengthy article entitled 'Towards a Lexicon of the Septuagint' which appeared in the *Journal of Theological Studies* of 1968 and 1969. The great Greek dictionary of Liddell and Scott had a notorious weakness in its treatment of material from the Greek Old Testament. Instead of offering an explanation of the Greek if taken as a rendering of the Hebrew, it had in many words simply printed the English translation of the Hebrew as if that were the meaning of the Greek. Since the Greek rendering often depended on a different text, or on a peculiar technique of translation, or on a sheer mistake or misreading of the Hebrew, the entries of Liddell and Scott were often very misleading. For a large number of words typical of Septuagint Greek, Caird presented corrections of the lexicographical tradition. It is indicative of the respect in which these studies were held that they were later republished in full in a volume of collected papers entitled *Septuagint Lexicography*.

Sections on the Septuagint appear also in some of Caird's longer books; and in addition he later published two specialized studies. In 1973 he read a paper on 'Ben Sira and the Dating of the Septuagint'. This short but significant study was not actually published until 1982. In it he discussed the evidence from the translator's prologue concerning the date of origin of the Greek versions of the various Old Testament books. The phrase in that prologue, 'the Law, the Prophets and the rest of the books', had been widely taken to show that the entire Old Testament already existed in Greek when the prologue to Ecclesiasticus was written. From the translator's habit of borrowing scriptural phrases, Caird was able to argue that he had at his disposal only certain parts of the Old Testament—the Law as a whole, but parts only of the

Prophets and the Writings. This has an effect on questions of the Old Testament canon, which in the following years were to come into much greater prominence. Incidentally, Caird's interest in Ecclesiasticus was probably connected with his work on the Apocrypha of the New English Bible, which will be mentioned again below.

In 1976 he published an article on 'Homoeophony in the Septuagint': by this is meant cases where Greek translators may have used, to render a Hebrew word, a Greek word of similar sound to that Hebrew word. It was no new idea that this might have happened. But Caird's listing and discussion of possible cases was a significant stage in the development of scholarly thought about the matter.

In New Testament and general biblical studies Caird was author of seven main books. Two appeared during the Canadian years and have already been mentioned. *The Apostolic Age* (1955) was a good general survey of its period, which also included certain striking detailed observations: one note, in which he pointed out the impossibility of the distinction then popular between *καίρος* and *χρόνος*, made clear the important point that language patterns and thought patterns do not always coincide. The present writer received this observation with gratitude and built upon it part of the argument of one of his own books. *Principalities and Powers* (1956) was the Chancellor's Lectures delivered at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, in 1954. This book sought to expound, in Caird's own words, 'Paul's view of man's dilemma, that he lives under divinely appointed authorities—the powers of state, the powers of legal religion, the powers of nature—which through sin have become demonic agencies' (p. 101). This theme was important in Caird's total theological world-view.

During his Oxford years three commentaries were published; one on St Luke in the Pelican series (1963), one on Revelation in the Black series (1966), and one on Paul's Letters from Prison in the New Clarendon Bible (1976). In 1980 there appeared his *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, a work of quite different type, in which he sought to bring together the essentials of biblical language from semantic and stylistic points of view. The structure of the book divided the subject into three great sections: 1. General; 2. Metaphor; 3. History, Myth and Eschatology. This structure, with its clear emphasis on metaphor, history, myth and eschatology, itself makes manifest the focus of the author's interests. The work was very well received and in 1982 Caird received the Collins Religious Book Award for this achievement.

To these six works published in his lifetime we add as a seventh his *Theology of the New Testament*, which had been accepted for publication by the Oxford University Press but was still unfinished at the time of his death.

Often we find that the ideas presented in these major works had been preceded by shorter anticipatory indications in the form of articles. Among distinguished lectures given and later published we may mention the Ethel M. Wood Lecture on *Jesus and the Jewish Nation* (1965), the Shaftesbury Lecture on *Christianity and Progress* (1971), and the Manson Memorial Lecture on 'Paul and Women's Liberty' (published in 1972). The Congregational Lectures for 1966, *Our Dialogue with Rome: the Second Vatican Council and After* (published 1967), are an important source for the understanding of Caird's general theological judgement. Rather than offer a summary or estimate of these various works one by one, I will try to give an account of Caird's scholarly thinking as a whole, theme by theme.

There can be no better starting-point than Caird's thinking about Christ. In one of his later articles (Robert Paul volume, p. 40) he identified himself as having been brought up in the 'evangelical' persuasion that the centre of New Testament theology is the cross of Christ: This meant that the convictions of the early church about the person of Christ were inferences from the experience of atonement. This was said in conscious contrast with a different point of view, according to which 'the Incarnation' was the basic datum and starting-point: if one thought in this other way, one began with the eternal Son of God and asked how and why he became incarnate. The 'evangelical' point of view began from atonement: 'granted that the one has done for the many that which they could not do for themselves, what is it that he has done and by what right has he done it?' (*ibid.*). Caird could state this very strongly: 'It is fatal to an orthodox Christology to start with Christology.' In saying this he aligned himself, interestingly, with the thought of James Denney's *The Death of Christ*, usually esteemed a very conservative work, of which he in 1979 published a warmly sympathetic appreciation (although he thought that Denney's insistence on the term *substitution* in atonement theory was only the result of a linguistic misjudgement). These thoughts are an important indication of Caird's approach to the centre of his subject. His view of the nature and person of Christ was fairly orthodox and traditional, but he approached the matter from a distinctive angle which made it different in its connections from those of much traditional Christology. In

particular this direction of approach made room for the importance of the historical Jesus in Caird's thinking.

The centrality of the historical Jesus was characteristic of his approach and made it different from the thinking of many of his contemporaries. On this again he could express himself very strongly: 'Anyone who believes in the Incarnation, whether he be Catholic or Protestant, and whether he likes it or not, is committed to the quest of the historical Jesus' (*Dialogue with Rome*, p. 51). Anyone? Whether he likes it or not? It would be tragic, Caird is here arguing, if the Roman Church were to continue to maintain those beliefs which rest upon tradition but have no scriptural backing, for if they did so they would have to negate or to bypass the methods by which *all* meaning within scripture is known. But his way of saying this is to claim that the quest of the historical Jesus is so important that any approach to scripture that blunted the tools of that quest would be a disservice to the Gospel itself. Here Caird came close to C. H. Dodd, of whom he himself wrote: 'Precisely because he believed in a God who was Lord of history and who had revealed himself in a human life, he was committed to the quest of the historical Jesus by all the rigours of academic discipline.' This, if true of Dodd as Caird saw him, was even more true of Caird himself. But, in order to understand this, one has to consider what Caird meant by 'the historical Jesus'.

By this term he meant something very different from what had been produced by the older quest of the historical Jesus during the nineteenth century. That quest, he thought, far from being guided by objective historical research, had been informed by an undue and often dogmatic scepticism; it had also been marked by a large degree of scholarly incompetence. From the failure of the older quest he did not conclude, as many scholars and theologians had concluded, that no historical quest was possible or desirable. On the contrary, he thought that it was both desirable and necessary, and that proper historical and linguistic investigation, if not disturbed by dogmatic scepticism, would certainly be able to reveal the contours of the historical Jesus and of his actual theology. The historical Jesus as thus revealed would not be—as the older quest had sometimes suggested—something different from the theological Christ; rather, he would be the theological Christ in his primal, valid, and authoritative form. This was not just an academic desire for historical knowledge; it was a central tenet of Christian faith itself: 'A gospel means news about historical events, attested by reliable witnesses, and having

at their centre an historical person' (*Dialogue with Rome*, p. 49). A faith not thus grounded in history would be a Gnosticism. But if it was thus grounded in history, there must be something positive that could be said about it by historical approaches. If it was a quest, that meant a real quest: Caird did not mean that everything said about Christ must simply be accepted and declared to be 'historical'. Only by critical discrimination could the character and meaning of the historical Jesus be discerned.

Like most contemporaries, Caird held that there were no early untheological sources: St Mark was just as theological as St John. But this did not mean that there was no material for an approach to the historical Jesus. If Mark, like other early sources, was theological, this fitted well, for the historical Jesus was a theological Jesus. But not all theological things said about Jesus were equally historical. It might have been argued that, even if all scepticism was avoided, historical approaches simply did not have the means to detect and identify divine action and divine presence. Caird may not have discussed the problem when put in this way, but there would be two likely answers: either (*a*) that historical study disclosed a pattern from which divinity was the easy and natural inference, or (*b*) that it disclosed a pattern so distinctive as to constitute itself a disclosure of divinity. Caird probably agreed with both of these views. The contours of the historical Jesus revealed what God was, and also what man was; these contours were embedded within the New Testament material and were identifiable by critical study; to them further layers of theological interpretation had been added in the church's meditation. All layers were theological and all were authoritative, but it was the historical Jesus that had been the basic locus of revelation. Some detailed examples of Caird's handling of historical questions will be given shortly.

Historical study of the Bible, in this sense, did not *primarily* mean going behind the text to discover what had actually happened or what had been the most original form of the text. Not that Caird despised operations of these kinds: he considered that they had an essential place and function. Some portions of his writings are fairly technical historical description, for example his study of New Testament chronology for the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* or his article on 'Paul, the Apostle' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and also portions of his *The Apostolic Age*. Such matters furnished the temporal framework within which revelatory events had occurred. But for him historical study of the Bible meant primarily something else: it meant above all the

exegesis of the writings as they are. The language of the books, when used with fine linguistic discrimination and coupled with a good knowledge of the ancient world, led directly into the theology of the books, into the minds and intentions of the speakers and writers.

Thus Caird was simply not troubled by some of the problems that exercised many of his contemporaries. The working out of a 'biblical theology' which would have an approach entirely different from critical exegesis was scarcely a necessity, for critical exegesis was already in itself theological. The different New Testament sources had indeed to be brought together, and this was a main task of a theology of the New Testament; but this was not a violent shift away from the work of critical study, for critical study, as Caird saw it, itself saw them as a unity. The various New Testament strata differed, but they differed like voices in a great choir which was rendering the same piece. Critical scholarship in itself led straight into the mind of Christ, into the rightness of Paul's understanding of that mind, into the ultimately unitary mind of the entire New Testament which was normative for Christian faith and life.

From a certain point of view, therefore, Caird was appreciated by some students as one who somewhat relativized the historical and critical approach to scripture, in that he applied it with moderation, using it in a basically conservative mode and interpreting the text theologically throughout. Seen from another point of view, however, his approach could be described as a very consciously *total* application of the critical principle. He did not accept that there were any forces that could balance or outweigh the basic critical question: what did the writers say, and what did they, in their situation, mean? In this sense there was for him no real limit set to critical appreciation, no point at which it ceased to be valid and at which some other sort of interpretation had to take over. New Testament theology itself was a strictly descriptive discipline and thus clearly distinct from dogmatics.

No doubt, as many urged, everyone approached the text with presuppositions of one kind or another. But Caird belonged, not to the school which saw interpretation as an interplay between presuppositions ancient and modern, but to the (less vocal and less modish) company of those for whom it is an interplay between evidence and the construction placed upon that evidence. Language was a mode of communication. Linguistic evidence, properly handled, told you the meaning. It was outrageous that presuppositions, of whatever origin or status, should be allowed to override

the evidence of the text. This applied to traditional Christian presuppositions as to any other. The danger that Christianity would degenerate into Gnosticism is at its greatest 'when dogma or philosophical presuppositions are allowed to take control of exegesis' (*Dialogue with Rome*, p. 49).

In this respect, as many contemporaries rightly discerned, George Caird represented in its finest modern form the Reformational insistence upon the clarity, the perspicuity, of scripture. This was one of the central issues in his long-continuing disagreement with Bultmann and that whole tradition of German scholarship. He blamed Bultmann for scepticism, but, as Caird well knew, this scepticism had its roots in faith, in the Lutheran conviction of the centrality of justification by faith alone, carried to the point where it seemed wrong to prop up that faith on any historical knowledge of Jesus himself or of his intentions. Caird blamed Bultmann for allowing these preconceived or inherited convictions to override the facts of the New Testament text: why, after all, had the Gospels, full of the story of Jesus and his teaching, been written at all?

Central to this insight in Caird's mind was the essential nearness of the men of the New Testament. One had, of course, to know the ancient world and the Greek language, both of which Caird knew extremely well. Given this knowledge, the apostles were not remote beings from another planet; they were people quite close to us, with analogous approaches to the problems they had to solve. Provided that one bore in mind the church situation, then and now, and provided that one could listen sympathetically, one could be very close to them. They were not apocalyptic fanatics or minds formed by a totally different culture. What they said was, given the situation, inherently good sense, and if rightly understood would be seen as good advice, taken analogically, in the church of today. Hermeneutics, if understood as a process which would disentangle texts from a remote and ancient culture and restate them in a radically different mental framework for today, was thus largely unnecessary.

A good example of this was to be found in their eschatological views. It had commonly been supposed that the church in its earlier days expected the swift return of the Lord and the end of the world, and that it was a shock when this expectation was not fulfilled, a shock which necessitated the radical reinterpretation of many elements in faith. To Caird, and especially so in his later work, this was simply not the case: they knew all along that their language about an immediate end to the world was not to be

taken literally. There was therefore no agonizing reappraisal of the hope of the end. A similar case lay in St Paul's view of the place of women in church and home. Paul was by no means the patriarchal misogynist he has been supposed to be: on the contrary, he was dedicated to the cause of women's liberty. Even today few reformers are so progressive as to have exhausted his general principles or the insight with which he applied them. Again, in their use of the Old Testament, the New Testament writers, Caird thought (following Dodd), did not use texts in a way that ignored context and original meaning but used them in a way that took these very largely into account. This was particularly so in the letter to the Hebrews, which, he thought, contained a good deal of perfectly sound critical and historical exegesis. Thus the modern scholar in working in a critical and historical manner is actually in line with an important element within the New Testament itself.

These thoughts were intimately connected with Caird's emphasis on imagery, metaphor and myth within language, to which he paid ever-increasing attention. All language was filled with imagery and metaphor, and nowhere in literature was this more important than in the Bible. 'All language that we ever use about God is of necessity metaphorical—picture language. There is no other language, and without it we should be merely condemned to silence' (from a sermon in *Jesus and God*, p. 69; he later qualified this, saying that the word 'holy' is the one possible exception to the rule that language about God is metaphor). It was catastrophic for religion when interpreters took literally or prosaically that which of itself had the character of imagery or of metaphor. Many scholarly misunderstandings had arisen because people had taken literally the language of biblical texts, and this literalism forced them to depict the speakers or writers as persons of fantastic strangeness. This was particularly true of eschatological language. Images, such as that of the Lord 'coming like a thief in the night', are used both of the end of the world and also of immediately present situations within this world. The writers knew perfectly well that these terms were figurative. This insight made a great difference when applied to the Book of Revelation. That which according to that book 'must swiftly come to pass' is not the end of the world. True, the imagery of that end is used, and it is believed that the end will certainly come, sooner or later. But the crisis which looms immediately over the church is the crisis of persecution. The multiple symbols of the book, the dragon, the opening of the seven seals, and the like, are multiple images of

this trial. The end of the world comes only later. 'The author of Revelation was no more expecting the end of the world than any of the other prophets before him.' The biblical writer, however apocalyptic in style, and the modern reader or scholar were thus not so far apart as might at first seem to be the case.

As has been said, Caird regarded St Paul as a completely reliable interpreter of the mind of Jesus, and opposed all those who saw a deep division between the two. Indeed he seems to have stressed this even more as time went on. In *Principalities and Powers* he could say with some exasperation that 'This is Paul at his worst' and refer to his 'spurious arguments' for the veiling of women (pp. 19-21): in his later lecture on the subject he seems to have seen an explanation that puts Paul more in the right. Paul was 'above all . . . a man of God'; his theology 'is an exposition of the hidden wisdom of God, which had lain behind all history but was now disclosed in Christ.' Yet Caird viewed Paul on a very human level and in a very human way. Paul, he wrote, 'dominates the apostolic age not as a saint or superman but as a normative Christian in whom ordinary human nature was raised to its highest powers. This same contrast characterizes his writing. From humdrum details of conduct he can elicit universal principles and can move in a moment from the prose of argument to the poetry of worship.' This seems a rather low-key appreciation: Paul was not so much the communicator of supernatural information as humanity at its very best.

This illustrates one of the aspects of Caird's style of interpretation: bringing the modern interpreter very close to the biblical writer, it also means that the biblical writer comes to be rather like the modern interpreter. One of his students said of Caird: 'If he had ever seen St Paul approaching in the High Street, he wouldn't have treated him with exaggerated deference, nor would he have crossed the street to avoid him. He would probably have invited him to read a paper to his Postgraduate Seminar, and would have felt no embarrassment at taking him into the Senior Common Room for tea beforehand.'

Justification by faith, so often isolated and emphasized as the dominant Pauline insight, seems rather muted in Caird's approach: his article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* scarcely mentions it, that in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* scarcely emphasizes it. Justification was for him one among a number of central metaphors, and as such was not to be looked upon as a precise dogmatic definition; the same applied, on the Catholic side, to the expression 'the Body of Christ' (*Dialogue with Rome*, p. 43). The

main point behind justification lay in the free gift of God, for human merit could not bring salvation. But great weight lay upon Paul's emphasis on Christian freedom: his enemies in Galatia were people who were essentially trying to force something upon the community. Caird hated coercion and the use of force, and saw Paul as the champion of freedom. Law was the enemy of the Gospel. Phenomena like fundamentalism on the Protestant side and ecclesiastical power on the Catholic side he saw as modes of coercion, where only spontaneous response in faith could please God.

Criticism of Pharisaism was frequent in Caird's earlier writings: 'The "safest" of all religions was Pharisaism, and for this very reason Jesus attacked it . . . They were afraid of losing something unspeakably precious, something given to them as a sacred trust. That kind of fear is the essence of Pharisaism, which Jesus stigmatized as sheer unbelief.' But his later work, without abandoning this tone of opposition to legal religion, seems to emphasize more strongly the positive importance of the Jewish heritage in Christianity. Jesus could be one with humanity only in that he was one with his own people: 'The belief in the solidarity of Jesus with all humanity is historically grounded in his solidarity with the Jewish people' (from an essay published in 1982). The severity with which St John depicts the Jewish personages in his Gospel 'has in it no anti-semitism, since they are to him only the local embodiment of that dark world which could not be saved except by the death of God's Son.' Caird followed Dodd in perceiving traces of a more political tone in the earliest Gospel traditions, more political than anything that can be found in the existing Synoptics. His own scholarship was rather strictly focused on the New Testament, however, and he did little original work on rabbinic sources or the like, apart from his studies of the Septuagint.

Biblical authority was a centre of interest in his work from beginning to end. His happy blend of criticism with an affirmative spirit kept him free from much of the controversy attendant upon this subject and meant that his teaching was particularly acceptable to students coming from a conservative background, although he himself found the rising tide of near-fundamentalism depressing, most of all in the latter years. He had some incisive things to say about this: writing about Afrikaners in particular, but applied to fundamentalists in general, he wrote: 'Their belief in the plenary inspiration of Scripture has set them free to be unscrupulously selective, and therefore in effect has set them free

from any real authority of Scripture' (*South Africa: Reflections on a Visit*, p. 5). Similarly he pronounced it wrong to make inerrancy into a support for the Word of God: this would be a case of 'servile submission' to external authority, when God is interested only in 'the spontaneous love and loyalty which, through all the possibilities of error, can recognize and respond to his truth' (*Dialogue with Rome*, p. 73). God has hedged his revelation about with the possibility of error, because it is in moral qualifications, in loyalty, that the discernment of his will is to be found.

Like many or most of the great scholars of the 'critical' period, George Caird was above all a churchman—something that has been ignored in so many polemics against the modern scholarly tradition. For him, and surely rightly, there was no sense of tension between his academic studies and his life of faith, for each of these naturally supported the other. If people felt that religious belief and critical academic study caused inner tension and strain, he would have said that this showed that there was something wrong in their faith—and again rightly. Scholarly work, as he understood it, brings us closer to the deep sources and origins of faith. Faith does not exist in isolation but dovetails into the world of literature, culture, science and music. It is not an individual world but part of a corporate life. His service to Congregationalism, and through it to the world church, was a primary expression of this.

'Congregational principles mattered much to him as a young man, but in his maturity much less so' (Henry Chadwick). He was very much at home in the atmosphere of Oxford theology, ecumenical but predominantly Anglican. Episcopacy, he had argued in *The Apostolic Age*, was first introduced for purely practical reasons. St. Ignatius himself never used the one decisive argument which would have made all the rest superfluous, namely that Jesus himself had commanded the episcopal organization of his church. In later years Caird's dissent from episcopacy, if dissent it was, was mild. He found the arguments in its favour to be 'impressive'. He noted, as many non-episcopalians have done, that there seemed to be paradoxes in the matter: 'The spectator of the Church of England may observe that those who are most vocal in their insistence on episcopacy are also those who most consistently disregard the leadership of their bishops'—but the remark was made in a kindly way and he admitted that this apparent contradiction might seem different to those within. The way he put his own doubts about episcopacy was different and characteristic: should any man be put into a position of such

appalling exposure, and could any man survive it unscathed?—a question particularly relevant to the Bishop of Rome, and related of course to Caird's thinking about principalities and powers (*Dialogue with Rome*, p. 71).

But, returning to Caird's thought in general, his debt to his Congregational heritage remained visible throughout his life in certain aspects: his stress on freedom, on spontaneity, on the wrong of external coercion, on the complete authority of the Bible untrammelled by subsidiary documents such as creeds and confessions, on the centrality of preaching. In other respects it would be fair to say that he was an unusually fine non-Anglican representative of the *via media* usually supposed to be represented by the Church of England. His statements as a church leader and about church affairs display this quality continually. In theology, he could see some right on both sides of many questions, while against the extremists he was at war. Writing about predestination (*Expository Times*, lxxviii, 1956–7, p. 326), he maintained that all three traditional solutions, double predestination, man's free response to grace, and universal salvation, were in a way true to Paul's mind; it was the 'worship of consistency' that had led older theologians, such as Calvin and Arminius, astray.

As observer at Vatican II he balanced carefully and judiciously the merits and the demerits of positions Catholic and Protestant, with no bias or special pleading in favour of the latter. If he thought that the Catholic use of scripture had still something of importance to learn, he fully admitted that on the Protestant side the principle of scriptural authority had not worked historically very well, its failures being seen in fundamentalism on the one side and in sceptical criticism on the other.

Allied with this emphasis on the *via media* was Caird's insistence on the corporate nature of the Christian life and, with it, his enthusiastic assurance that all realms of life were enclosed in the purview of the Gospel. Caird was not interested in a narrow sect of the saved but in a message that expressed itself in loving care for all realms of human life. His earnest pacifism was one aspect of this. Another came to expression in his visit to South Africa and the account of it which he afterwards wrote. Again, invited to join a British Association Study Group on Science and the Quality of Life, he wrote the section of the report on 'Health'. One or two of his remarks were to be almost uncannily prophetic. 'One of our inescapable needs is to be able to accept death as natural and to cope with the emotions aroused by bereavement'; and, again, 'Death is universal, and we all need to come to terms

with it, and with the problems of bereavement, both for ourselves and for those we love.' This was published in 1979; his own death was to come, very suddenly, five years later.

Caird combined judiciousness, fairness, and moderation with a quite strongly combative spirit in controversy. His concern for the social, political, and ecumenical dimensions of the Gospel did not mean that he was a radical or partisan person: nothing could be further from the truth. What he wrote on such notoriously controversial subjects as pacifism, or religion and politics in South Africa, or the theological scene as viewed from the Second Vatican Council, would be accepted by almost any reader as eminently moderate, irenic, and full of good sense. Nevertheless he delighted in controversy. Usually he was very sure of himself: he knew his mind, he had studied the evidence, he had made his classification of the issues, and only a few minutes of clear, concise, and concentrated argument would be necessary to demolish some prestigious viewpoint. He was famous for the snort with which he then left the scene of the argument. He did not spend much time on analysing the views of others; he worked straight from the biblical text itself, with a classification of the factors and issues that could sometimes be criticized as a trifle hasty or dogmatic.

In scholarship Caird was valiantly independent and prided himself on the fact. He despised anything that was modish and temporarily fashionable. This formed a large element in his hostility to the Bultmannian tradition—not without reason for anyone who witnessed the almost-hysteria of the 'post-Bultmannian' hermeneutical craze in the United States of the early sixties. But Bultmann's thinking, whether fashionable or not, was not the only trend to which Caird responded with rejection or indifference. Structuralism, for instance, he regarded as little better than a pompous form of lunacy. Much of the shift of fashion in the twentieth century came not from Bultmann but from the other end of the spectrum of the dialectical theology, from Brunner and Barth and others. Curiously Caird, in spite of his many disagreements with Bultmann, seldom mentioned in the same way this other end of the range of continental Protestantism. There were all sorts of theological modes of thought and expression which had become unfashionable, especially after the influence of the dialectical theology on the English-speaking world increased after 1945 or so; Caird continued to use these modes as if nothing had happened.

For example, it became unfashionable to build anything upon

personal qualities, for these, it was now said, were irrelevant to theological truth. Not so for Caird. In his commentaries he could refer to 'another attractive facet in the personality of Jesus' or say that 'Jesus had all the qualities of grace, friendliness and compassion which were lacking' in the make-up of John the Baptist (Commentary on Luke, pp. 111, 126). People found in Jesus 'something transcendent, numinous, utterly compelling' (ibid., p. 44). St Paul, he averred, 'must have been a man of remarkable charm' (*Apostolic Age*, p. 127). To the now prevalent theological sensibility all such expressions were shocking. Caird did not care. He did not even bother to justify his making of such comments. But, if he had done so, he might well have said: 'Well, these are the impressions that the biblical texts make, and if they make them that must be because they meant to make them.'

The same was the case with apologetic questions. It had become unfashionable to try to work out whether events mentioned in scripture had really happened or not: one had to accept the witness of scripture, not go back behind it to discover what was 'really' there. Caird's approach by contrast contained a strong interest in apologetic questions of this kind. To him it was obvious that this was needed. It could work both negatively and positively. To him it was clear that 'allegorical' explanations such as those attached to the parable of the Sower had not been spoken by Jesus: 'An explained parable is as flat as an explained joke' (Commentary on Luke, p. 8). Similarly 'we cannot imagine on the lips of Jesus' the saying of Luke 16: 17 to the effect that the whole Law, word for word and letter for letter, remains valid in perpetuity. On the other hand much could be affirmed as definitely historical. The passage Luke 10: 21-2, often regarded as a meteoric intrusion from the Johannine world, could well have been spoken by Jesus, although it would not imply any metaphysical unity of essence between Father and Son. Likewise, the miracles attributed to Jesus really happened. Not every one, indeed, took place exactly as described, and some have gained in miraculous character in the later tradition: for instance, the feeding of the multitude was originally a symbolic act rather than a miracle, and Jesus is not described as actually multiplying the bread. But basically miracles must be accepted as a factual reality.

Again, even in a brief and semi-popular commentary, Caird would take up a full couple of pages with an intricate argument that it was possible for Quirinius to have been governor of Syria at the time of the census when Jesus was born. He had no sym-

pathy with the argument that questions of this kind were theologically improper or useless. This was not because he was governed by ideas of historical method: rather, the authority was theological. This was what Christianity was about, namely events that had happened and people that had lived, and it was elementary and obvious that we must do everything to find out what these events and these people had been like. It was through them that God was known. To deny that this knowledge was theologically significant was an absurd quirk of fashionable theory and a denial of common sense. Credulity and scepticism could be equally well guarded against. Caird had no doubt that one had the power and the ability to make the necessary discriminations, given common sense on the one hand and empathy with the men of the Bible on the other.

His approach to the writing of a *Theology of the New Testament* discussed several possible options in method and opted for the approach through an 'apostolic conference'. One could ask in turn for the approach of St Luke, St Paul, St John. Through the theologies of the different apostolic traditions it was possible to penetrate to the theology of Jesus himself, which had an ultimate and decisive role in the whole matter. This was significant, for some other works in the same field had ascribed only a limited role to the theology of Jesus, regarding it (as with Bultmann) as a presupposition of the theology of the New Testament rather than as part of that theology. For Caird there was, clearly discernible, a coherent pattern amid the various voices of the New Testament, a coherent pattern visible, for example, in its mode of handling the Old Testament, and this coherent pattern bore the stamp of a single powerful mind. This was not St Paul: Paul made it clear that he had received his Gospel by tradition, he had not thought it out himself. Where could this so very creative mind be located, other than in Jesus himself?

One of the striking and noticeable features of Caird's thought was his antipathy to German scholarship, which found expression again and again in his lectures and writings. His dislike of German work was, indeed, not universal, and at times he made handsome admissions of his debt to it: the most striking I have noticed is in the Foreword to the commentary on Revelation, where among several acknowledgements he wrote 'from E. Stauffer I have learnt the true significance of myth'—a rather surprising statement, since it was in his emphasis on metaphor and myth that Caird felt himself furthest apart from the Germans. He tended to see them as prosaic and pedantic in their thought

and barbaric in their expression. He retold in print the story of the German professor (it had to be a German) who, reading the lines about 'books in the running brooks, sermons in stones', opined that the original must have been 'stones in the running brooks, sermons in books'. In New Testament matters he felt that German tendencies were much too much the fashion of the day, and he rather delighted in taking them down a peg. This was all the more noticeable because his works on the whole did not spend much time in arguing with other scholars or in analysing their reasonings. Thus Lohmeyer's view that an earlier, pre-Pauline, hymn had been taken over and reused in Philippians by Paul had been widely accepted in British scholarship, but Caird advanced a series of strong arguments against it. Like many English scholars, he saw Germans as fitting excessively into the pattern of 'schools' and lacking his own fine independence.

In all these respects his deepest differences were with Bultmann, and his disagreement with the Bultmannian approach was expressed both frequently and strongly. For instance, Bultmann's view of the Transfiguration story as really a Resurrection story moved to another place, he declared not merely to be mistaken but to be 'nonsense'. Caird repeatedly cited the Bultmannian positions as evidence of how far biblical scholarship could go wrong and had gone wrong.

In part these judgements were cultural. Many English theologians and biblical scholars felt similarly about German work. Caird's spiritual home was very much Oxford; his connections with the Continent were not very rich or profound. In this respect he represented very well the English, rather than the Scottish, strand of the Reformed tradition: a Scottish theological background would have had much greater dependence on continental work.

The fact is that Bultmann thought and spoke from the opposite end of the Protestant spectrum from Caird. For him the historical Jesus could not give access to faith, while the cultural distance between New Testament times and our own is so great that a major hermeneutic effort is necessary in order to bridge it. Bultmann spoke out of the Lutheran tradition with its strong emphasis on justification by faith, and with behind it the implied weight of confessional documents, while Caird's viewpoint was more pan-biblical and much less focused by traditional confessional definition. Bultmann was thus much more sceptical of the historical value of biblical narratives, and of the theological value of their being historical even if they were so; Caird was

much more accepting of the historical value of narratives, and thought that their historical value led straight on to their theological value.

Nevertheless there remains a certain affinity between the two, in that both emphasized very strongly the place of myth within the New Testament. In this respect Caird's quarrel with Bultmann seems to have lain not so much in the fact that he, Bultmann, saw much of the New Testament as mythical, as in the fact that he thought that this myth could be eliminated by a process of demythologization. Caird repeatedly attacked this on the ground that myth like metaphor was central to all theological thinking and thus was indispensable. Bultmann, he thought, wanted to replace this myth with philosophical abstractions; but the myth element was both necessary and irremovable. 'It may well be argued that all genuine convictions require a mythology for their adequate expression and cannot influence the conduct of men until they have bodied forth in powerful imaginative symbols' (Revelation commentary, p. 148).

But is this in principle so far distant from Bultmann's thinking? It seems to depend on what one thinks to be the most essential question. If the most essential question was the removability of myth and its replaceability by something else, Caird was against Bultmann; but if the most essential question was whether the New Testament materials were mythical in the first place, then they seem to be more agreed. Or are they? Caird's approach seems to have taken the central narrative material of the New Testament as basically historically reliable. But if powerful convictions require to be expressed in a mythology, might this not suggest that the Incarnation was a myth, or that the immense personal and cosmic redemptive significance of the Cross was the mythology in which the early Christians bodied forth their convictions?

Caird drew back from characterizing these as mythological. His strong emphasis on metaphor and mythology struck more against literality in human speech, less against historicity in narratives. The terminology in which the men of the New Testament thought and spoke about many subjects was metaphorical and even mythological; the margins of the Gospel story, e.g. the Lucan birth narrative, were also symbolic, and their degree of historical precision is indeterminable; but the main narrative portions are good historical material, and theological structures may be built with confidence directly upon their historicity. Thus the Transfiguration—rather surprisingly—could be taken literally. Caird

seems not to have felt any tension between his two great emphases, that on the metaphorical and mythological character of language and that on the historical reliability of narratives: it was, probably, his total theological vision, rather than the ideals of historical research, that controlled his distribution of stress between the two.

Seen as a whole, Caird's life and thought had a striking unity. Most of the principles that governed his later work were there from the beginning; only a few features altered. His later work seems to have laid more stress on the continuity between Jesus and the Jewish people of his time, where his earlier work had rather stressed the opposition between Jesus and contemporary religion; this was a move that was being taken at the same time by many scholars. Again, his later work, again in line with the general tendencies of scholarship, emphasized the fact of the canon as central to biblical interpretation: the canon was no accident but a deliberate and authoritative decision. This was doubtless implied in Caird's thought throughout, for the boundaries of the Bible had always been to him the effective boundaries of authority, but it was now and not earlier that he made it explicit. Ideas of tradition and explanations through development come into conflict with the fact of the canon. But canonicity never meant for Caird the right to read into any passage a sense other than that which the writer had himself intended: 'It cannot be too often or too emphatically said that, if we read into the text of scripture something that the writer himself did not intend, we have no right to claim that we are putting ourselves under the authority of the word of God.' In general, Caird's course of scholarly and theological thought was steady and consistent within itself.

One particular area in which Caird thought deeply and held strong convictions was the matter of biblical translation. His work on the Septuagint has been mentioned above; but the translation of the Bible into English was to become an even more central question during his working lifetime and to engage his thoughts and energies even more. At the end of the Second World War the Authorized or King James Version was still the overwhelmingly accepted version of the Bible in English. The proposals that led to the production of the New English Bible were first made in 1946, the same year in which Caird moved to Canada. Two or three years later work on the new version began. Although the New Testament section would have most interested him, his being in Canada doubtless explains why he was not on the New

Testament panel; from 1961, soon after his return from Canada, he was on the Apocrypha panel.

Caird's views of Bible translation were conditioned by some of his deepest convictions and experiences: his classical education, his detailed attention to linguistic evidence, and his emphasis on imagery and metaphor. For a man of his literary taste, the authority and value of the Authorized Version remained unquestionable (though he once remarked privately to the writer that he thought its excellence to be sometimes exaggerated). Nevertheless the majesty of the traditional version set a lofty standard and an insoluble problem for the modern translator to emulate. But Caird was not convinced that the Authorized Version had found a right answer to the problem of biblical translation, even for its own time, and still less for today. Its language, he maintained, was not the current English even of 1611. 'What the translators produced was a biblical English in which, particularly in the Old Testament, Hebrew idiom came through; and by this method they allowed the poetry and above all the rhythm of the Hebrew to come through for an English audience to receive the benefit of it.' All this Caird accepted; but there was another side. The Authorized Version had worked, he argued, by a 'word-substitution method'; for a word of the original you put a word in English. But this was against the entire tradition of good translation in literature. Especially in the Greek and Latin classics this was so. To translate by a word-substitution method was crude literalism, which in the old days would have been punished as ignorant and barbaric. On the contrary, the translator has to ask himself: 'If I were saying this in English, how would I put it? What is it that the author is trying to say?' One has to reproduce, not the form of the words of the original, but the meaning intended by the original as a whole. The New English Bible, according to Caird, was not only the first officially sponsored translation of this kind, but also 'incomparably the best'.

This was surely a sophisticated statement of the basic philosophy that underlay the New English Bible. Caird was an enthusiast for the new version. Though he admired the Authorized Version in many ways, he had little sympathy for the various versions which tried to bring it up to date or to continue in its tradition but with a more modern English style. For some such versions he had little but contempt. Of the Revised Standard Version, for instance, he had a low opinion. When it was proposed that it might be used as a standard text for students in examinations, Caird was heard to remark that, if this were done,

candidates would have no room to write anything in their papers other than to point out the errors and absurdities of the text prescribed.

Caird's exasperation with the RSV may have been exacerbated by his experience as author of the commentary on the Letters from Prison. This was within a series that was based on the RSV and normally printed that version as the text under comment. Caird's exegetical notes, however, repeatedly point to defects in the renderings offered by that version. In the event the publishers 'modified the design' of this volume, and omitted the English text of the letters altogether, 'partly in order to tie the notes less closely to RSV and facilitate reference to other versions'. In the commentary on Revelation, by contrast, Caird had been free to make his own translation, and this can be studied by those interested in seeing how he would have handled such a task on his own.

Caird was well aware that the newer style of translation might create difficulties. In St John's Gospel one of the key themes is set by the Greek verb *μένω*; in King James's version this is regularly 'abide'. But 'abide' is no longer current English usage in the senses it then had, and modern translators do not use it to render this Greek word. As Caird saw, this is 'all right if you are aiming simply at clarity'; but words in John often have two or more meanings, and the connections and nuances thus implied can be made visible in English only if the same word is used in every place. But in modern English this cannot be done. So, Caird concluded, 'the translator has his problems'. And there he left the matter.

In the event the reception of the New English Bible was a mixed one. Many criticized its mode of expression in English. In Oxford—though for other reasons—the Revised Standard Version was adopted as the prescribed English Bible text. It was ironic that the New English Bible came to be criticized on the ground that its translation technique destroyed the poetic imagery of the Bible. If Caird was any example, this was certainly not an intention of the translators, and surely he articulated the philosophy of the version very well. There was no biblical scholar in whose mind literary values, imagery, and metaphor counted for more than in his.

In spite of his independence, Caird belonged to and typified a marked tradition within British biblical scholarship. Points of similarity with C. H. Dodd, less often with T. W. Manson, are frequent. What Caird displays in a highly illuminating way is

the manner in which theological conviction, literary values, and historical reasoning worked together in that current of learning. Many of the assessments of modern biblical scholarship, whether critical or appreciative, have failed to discern rightly the nature of that balance and interplay. In this respect the rethinking of Caird's thoughts can be, and is, a contribution to the whole intellectual history of an era.

Caird was deeply appreciated by students, sometimes practically adored; his power as a lecturer, his clarity, his theological conviction, his sincerity, his insistence on the evidence, his love for the right use of words—all these remained in the memory of those who heard him or studied with him. But the greatest gift he left with most of them, and the one he would himself have most been proud to bequeath, was an assurance of the positive centrality, authority, and relevance of the New Testament.

Academic administration is another field which Caird took seriously: he had, of course, experience from Canada and from Mansfield, and from 1977 he did four years on the General Board of Faculties in Oxford, and various other tasks of the same kind. In administrative matters he spoke very seriously and expressed himself very precisely. Personally he was in fact full of fun and humour, and relaxed in joy with family and friends. Music was important to him, and he wrote several hymns, some of which were included within standard hymnals such as *Congregational Praise* and *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

After they left Mansfield the Cairds lived in a lovely cottage at Letcombe Regis, close to the Downs. George would have retired in September 1984. He was still at the height of his powers and was working hard on his *Theology of the New Testament*. He had lately been in New Zealand, as West-Watson Lecturer at Christchurch (1982). In 1981 his scholarship had received the major recognition of the Burkitt Medal for Biblical Studies of the British Academy. But on 21 April 1984, quite suddenly, he died.

JAMES BARR

Note. See the addresses given by Dr D. A. Sykes, Principal of Mansfield, at the funeral, and by Professor Henry Chadwick, FBA, at the Memorial Service, both published in the *Mansfield College Magazine*, No. 186, pp. 48–9 and 50–4 respectively. The Memorial Volume will contain a full bibliography, and this will furnish bibliographical details of the items mentioned in the present memoir.