

IS THE CARDINAL ANTI-CATHOLIC? A REVIEW ESSAY

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T. M. Devine (ed.) (2000), **Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland**, 281pp, Edinburgh: Mainstream, £9.99, ISBN 1840183306

I

James MacMillan at 40 is Scotland's most eminent Roman Catholic composer. He may indeed be her most eminent composer, bar none - these competitions are odious - but amongst us Catholics his place is unquestionable. Cranky and self-seeking though many Scottish Catholic composers no doubt are, all would seem to accept his pre-eminence, and the outside world respectfully defers to the Catholic lead. Nor is MacMillan's Catholicism to be written off as who should say Scotland's leading Ayrshire-born composer, or Scotland's leading married composer: his birthplace and his marriage no doubt affect his Muse but his Catholicism is the first essential for anyone seeking to come to terms with MacMillan's music. He started professional life conducting a local choir at the Edinburgh University Catholic Chaplaincy at St Albert's, 24 George Square, he has chosen theme after theme from Catholic history and experience, whether medieval or modern, Scottish or Spanish or Hispanic American; he has essayed with outstanding success the simplest and most sublime of musical agenda, the composition of Masses. He opens the mouth of the humblest penitent in song; he finds the tones sacred to the voice of God and the celebration of His consecrated form. No art can be greater in MacMillan's eyes or in mine.

MacMillan's work stretches from opera to oratorio, and Edinburgh International Festival is happy to recruit his compositions and conducting for its somewhat ruthlessly time-tabled visiting orchestras. The Festival itself

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Scottish Affairs

now fights shy of press confrontation, but its eye to marketing could extract pearls from the tightest oyster, and it enhanced its programme's newsworthiness in 1999 by a lecture from its local genius. The Festival may have wanted a lecture so controversial that it would still be reverberating unto the present publication fifteen months later. The Festival needs public attention, and it would prefer to get it on issues where its sponsorship of MacMillan immunises it from his demonisations; he assails targets remote from such topics as Festival-Fringe bickering and the consequent financial damage when schedules lose synchronisation. MacMillan's programme notes, submitted well in advance, had given ample warning as to whose oxen were to be gored.

The Festival may now be niggardly in press conferences, but it is happy to hand out texts. The old taboos against publication before delivery have been cast aside in the folly of modern times. **Scotland on Sunday**, indeed, has become so accustomed to giving pride of place in its news coverage to events to come, that one looks forward to its merger with Old Moore's Almanack. It may well be that Old Moore will have something to teach it in accuracy of prediction. It was to be so in the present case. Press bureaux, including that of the Festival, owe the public the firm prohibition of publication of speech-texts before delivery, but if a premature story in a Sunday paper sells tickets, the Festival, like the Robber Baron Vanderbilt, may reply 'the public be damned'. The result was that reports circulated far and wide that MacMillan proposed to liken Scottish anti-Catholicism to that which disgraced the government of Northern Ireland from its foundation, and Professor Steve Bruce, of Aberdeen, even framed and published a reply to that charge in next day's, 10 August 1999, **Herald**, and in the present volume he renews conflict on that front with more confidence than credit. In the event no such comparison was made in the speech delivered by MacMillan under Festival auspices on August 9.¹ MacMillan later declared that he delivered this text despite warnings from journalists, but he probably eliminated Northern Ireland data for which he possessed neither the scholarship nor the prudence the subject requires in current conditions. Loose and uninformed comment on Northern Ireland costs lives, sometimes those of the commentators.

MacMillan was ready enough to visit other china shops. At one point in his lecture he demanded of his audience: 'What am I to say the next time I'm asked, as I was by some Italian journalists recently, why Scottish football is so corrupt?' He would have been justly served had a hearer shouted back

¹ reproduced in the volume under review.

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

'Refer them to a competent authority on the subject!' Quite apart from what else he was to say in the lecture, egregious self-appointment of this kind simply makes its user look foolish, and does no good to a reputation so well merited in music. MacMillan would still compose as well if he set up as oracle on Poohsticks, but (unless he composed an excellent Poohstick Symphony) we would find him trivialised by our loathsome media with possible diminution of his Arts appeal. Future impresarii might avoid commissioning for fear of giving the media a Poohstick with which to beat the impresario. MacMillan should have followed P.G. Wodehouse's ideal Scottish golfer (and so should Wodehouse):

It is related of the illustrious Sandy McHoots that when on the occasion of his winning the British Open Championship, he was interviewed by reporters from the leading daily papers as to his views on Tariff Reform, Bimetallism, the Trial by Jury System, and the modern Craze for Dancing, all they could extract from him was the single world 'Mphm!'

Sandy McHoots would no doubt have been prepared to have spoken on Golf (in return for a sufficient fee). And MacMillan's lecture began with discussion of a Catholic composer's relationship to an inheritance interrupted by the Scottish Reformation. The topic is not new, but new reflections on it and on other Scottish cultural amnesiai are appropriate, as Professor Robert Crawford testifies in **Scotland's Shame?** in his sparkling response to MacMillan: the Reformation, and still more the passionate popular Presbyterianism of the nineteenth century, sought to obliterate a thousand medieval years of Papal Scotland, much as twentieth-century Scots literati advocated purges of Walter Scott, or R.L. Stevenson, or A. Conan Doyle or anyone else from the national letters taken to have betrayed Scotland if only by being Scots in the wrong way. MacMillan's ignorance on England excited his charity towards it: 'In contrast to England, the received history of our nation seems to be one marked by discontinuities, by breaks with, repudiation, and ultimately denial of the past.'

Yet within MacMillan's adult lifetime, the English ministers of Margaret Thatcher produced such pearls of imbecility as Francis Pym's insistence that devolution would be false to the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the Scots and the English, or the refusal of the Post Office to commemorate Mary Queen of Scots in view of her controversial character, excluding her presence on a stamp alongside the present Queen (Elizabeth II was seemingly taken as descended from Elizabeth I, allowing the Virgin Queen to annex the Virgin Birth). The **Financial Times**, reviewing Robert Silver's **Bruce** at the Festival some years ago, paid a moving tribute to Bruce's brave heart surviving his

Scottish Affairs

defeat at Bannockburn. And, to move from History to Philosophy, England has taught that subject for centuries by proclamation of a desert between Plotinus and Descartes.

This might seem no more than the penalty we pay for trespass on alien territory. MacMillan could play my head off on music (possibly my preferred form of death, come to think of it). His ignorance about English ignorance by itself would be harmless enough. The comparable ignorance of our neighbours does not absolve ourselves. Scots well know that England is their traditional mission-field, for all of the frequency with which the cannibal devours the missionary: so English ignorance is no Scottish alibi. MacMillan's first page of his lecture is nectar and ambrosia (to revert to an earlier faith than his and mine). He quotes the Catholic philosopher of St Andrews, John Haldane, admittedly inaccurately as noted below by brackets around the unmentioned omissions (Haldane's essay in the book gives the full text):

[... entering existing institutions and creating new forums is not an end in itself. The question is what ideals Catholics can offer the new Scotland.] One is the concept of society as a moral community in which responsibilities stand alongside rights, in which material goods are produced with an eye to benefit [as well as to profit, and in which the value of life is respected] as well as its quality being promoted. Intellectually and culturally the Catholic contribution should be to challenge materialism, instrumentalism, hedonism and short-term gratification, and to present in [a] Scottish context the essential ingredients of the Catholic philosophy of culture: abstract reflection, artistic endeavour and joyous good living.

MacMillan himself asserts that

The Catholic and The Artist, at a fundamental level, can understand each other because the origins of their most precious metaphorical concepts are the same.

For example, the idea of transubstantiation can seem remote, mysterious and irrelevant mumbo jumbo until one analyses a symphony by Beethoven or Maxwell Davies. There before your eyes and ears one can see and hear musical material transforming itself into something other than its original apparent substance. A musical theme metamorphoses from one shape into a heightened version of itself through time and

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

development, or can even change its shape and essence into something completely different, while keeping its core recognisable significance.

And lovers of music claim that their lives are changed through music. Being openly receptive to the transforming power of music is analogous to the patient receptivity to the Divine that is necessary for the religious contemplation at the heart of sacramental religion.

A passage such as this helps account for the violence of disagreement in response to MacMillan's lecture. He began on a note so heavenly that Catholic thought seldom can reach, much less surpass, the heights of its beauty and wisdom. It breathes the joy of the Lord.

From it the lecture descended with a violence as horrifying as the fall of Lucifer, as if, indeed, Lucifer had taken over the conductor's baton, fearing MacMillan's light would dispel diabolic darkness. What MacMillan wished to say was that Scottish musical tradition was destroyed by the Reformation, which is true enough. What he actually said was:

... if I have an artistic mission as a Scottish composer ... I think this might involve acts of remembrance, of recollection, of rediscovery of our past, or re-animation of our heritage, of a reawakening of our culture. There has been a forgetting of our past with the result that modern-day Scotland lacks cultural roots. ... The greatest such discontinuity within cultural memory is, of course, the Reformation. 1560 became year zero marking the beginning of a cultural revolution - and one could draw interesting parallels between Mao Tse-tung and John Knox, Pol Pot and Andrew Melville (well, perhaps not).

Gerry Finn's essay in this book asserts MacMillan actually said 'although that may be stretching it a little far'. But one text seems as bad as another. To proclaim the place of Catholicism in relation to Art, to Music, and to the new Scotland, to invoke the Divine in so doing, and to follow with a cruel and ugly libel on the founding saints of the Church of Scotland, is blasphemous and heretical. A Catholic agenda for the future Scotland is meaningless without commitment to ending the scandal of mutual hatred among Christians. Knox, flogged in the galleys of Catholic France for his genuine religious beliefs, and Melville, dying in the Tower of London for courageous and wise reminders to the King that he was but 'God's silly vassal', are objects for Catholic respect and emulation, however much we may deplore their propensity for throwing out babies with bathwater, for opposing the cultural riches of medieval Catholicism along with the corrupt riches also

Scottish Affairs

associated with it from time to time. What multitude did Knox or Melville kill, as Mao's and Pol Pot's followers did? Nemesis overtook MacMillan once he started on this sort of thing, as he fell deeper and deeper into the mire of recrimination against Scottish Protestantism. It becomes painfully evident that this kind of cultural calumny (recalling no composer so much as Richard Wagner's vilest vituperation against the Jews) symbolises the vast deeps of MacMillan's hatred for Scottish non-Catholics whom he takes to have wronged himself and his co-religionists. His catalogue of grievances is as bitter as it is archaic. And his utter inability to practice our Lord's instruction in His prayer - 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us' - simply disqualifies him from speaking as a Catholic. The Catholic composer has become the ex-Catholic decomposer. To call himself a Catholic while so signally violating the precept of the basic Christian prayer is an insult to his fellow-Catholics. Bad as we are, morally speaking, he has no right to tar us with that pitch.

His argument seems to be (a) that the undoubted former anti-Catholicism of Scotland is as alive and well as ever it was (b) that all criticism of Catholic schools is anti-Catholic (c) that Glasgow Rangers supporters include many anti-Catholics (d) that Catholics get on in Scottish society by concealing their religion. The last point might seem to be negated by his own success while radiating his Catholicism; but we are apparently to credit him with altruism in complaining of the discrimination sustained by others, rather than to invite his objectivity on himself. The logic is simple. If Catholics get ahead in present-day Scotland, it is in spite of their Catholicism; if they do not get ahead, it is because of it. Obviously, the next stage is to charge critics with anti-Catholicism if they deny its existence.

But what is Catholicism? Michael Rosie and David McCrone in an admirably lucid sociological essay [here](#) invite us to

Think a little about what we mean by 'Catholic'. It can refer to someone who accepts the doctrinal beliefs in transubstantiation, the immaculate conception, papal infallibility and so on. Alternatively it can be defined in terms of religious practice, what sociologists refer to as 'religiosity' or church attendance. Thirdly, it can be a matter of simple self-definition: 'I think of myself as a Catholic'. Relatedly, it can refer to one's origins and upbringing, possibly being educated at a catholic school, although one is lapsed. Fifthly, being a Catholic may be a matter of cultural practices such as learning Irish dancing, or supporting [Glasgow] Celtic FC. There is nothing inherently 'Catholic' about these, but they are firmly associated in Scotland with the ethnic and social origins of most Catholics. Finally,

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

and possibly even more attenuated, claiming to be a 'Catholic' may be a matter of politics - supporting a united Ireland, and/or republicanism.

It is not entirely satisfactory. As a mere historian, I cannot judge the sociological validity of 'firmly associated in Scotland', but I would prefer some test of the firmness, of the association, and of the topography, if I am to take it seriously: whence your data, gentlemen? a survey or a taxi-driver? 'Fifthly' (apart no doubt from showing that all sociologists are closet preachers) has some want of reality. In 1966-68 when I taught at the University of Aberdeen it boasted a group of extremely bright Elgin-born students known as 'the Elgin marvels', usually narrowly Trotskyite, former Wee Free, and fanatical Glasgow Celtic supporters. When Celtic won, they would solemnly inform me as part of their celebration ritual that the Pope was a great man, presumably because of the low esteem in which His Holiness was held among Rangers supporters. Anyone thinking them Catholics would be certifiably insane. As for republicanism, is Tom Nairn seen as a Catholic?

But, to respond to their verdict (as a Catholic), the Rosie-McCrone table constitutes an appalling indictment. If Catholics are perceived in Scotland as anything except the first category, Catholicism has done a wretched job in defining itself. The findings turn the Catholic schools argument on its head by reminding us of its products' numerous defections and reminding defenders of Catholic schools that they may be guarding the shadow at the expense of the substance. Catholic religious observance in a state of religious indifference is something impossible to determine; it is obviously less likely where no social pressures on conformity exist than in societies where economic advance or social acceptance may turn on Mass attendance. (Hence it is more likely in Glasgow than in Edinburgh or Aberdeen.) But it is painfully clear that what MacMillan means by Catholics, for all of the rich affirmation of his opening remarks, would include the entire Rosie-McCrone package. Moreover, its pointed Irish-Scots tribalism is all too relevant. Non-Irish Scots Catholics receive very short shrift from MacMillan and his apologists, for all of his 'rediscovery of our past'. In place of the lost Scots musicians before John Knox - heroes before Agamemnon - his grievances prove markedly limited to Scots of recent Irish origin. MacMillan complains of

an exhibition a couple of years ago at the Scottish Record Office, recounting the history of immigration to Scotland. Large displays set out the history of the immigration of Flemish weavers, Jewish traders, Italian peasants, Asian shopkeepers, Chinese restaurant owners, black bus

Scottish Affairs

conductors, and rightly praised the contribution they had all made to Scottish society. The massive Irish immigration in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was dealt with in something like three sentences, as follows:

In the mid-19th century an increasing number of seasonal Irish farm labourers who worked in the summers in lowland Scotland stayed over due to poor economic conditions in Ireland. Many of them became a burden on the local Parish Poor Laws.

So mention of Italians was irrelevant in the issue of the SRO turning Catholics into invisible men. Is the Pope Catholic?, asks the joke. Not if he is Italian, MacMillan would seem to answer. It is apparently irrelevant whether Poles are mentioned or not. In reality, Irish immigration to the United Kingdom from 1800 to 1922 was of course not discussed by the SRO because there was none: Ireland was part of the UK at the time. As for the migrant labourers becoming a charge on the Scottish parish, the allusion was tactful: Protestant Britain found itself paying for many illegitimate Catholic children of mothers sent from Ireland by local parish priests so that the girl would not be giving scandal in her home neighbourhood (which is not to say the priest was the father: he virtually never was, so far as we know).

Throughout the British Empire Irish Catholic emigrants operated a kind of apartheid, especially if they were in a position to shower patronage: their fellow-Irish co-religionists were almost invariably afforded preferential treatment. One device hardening such procedures was the exploitation of any possible sign of discrimination against the Irish-born Catholics, and if local or non-Irish Catholics could be implicated in such hostility, the more, the merrier. The Scots Catholics had become so grimly aware of this that the Scottish Roman Catholic hierarchy was not restored until 1878, the death-year of Pope Pius IX and of his protégé the influential Archbishop of Dublin, Paul Cardinal Cullen, whose nephews and friends dotted the globe in Catholic bishoprics. In Scotland, Irish-born Catholic priests and people seem to have had Irish political and social concerns as their chief priority, often only acquiring a Scottish identity after the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, and sometimes not even then. Scots Protestants responded harshly to their sense of aliens in their midst, but was it more hostile to allegiance given primarily to Ireland or primarily to the Vatican? MacMillan may not see the distinction between hostility to Roman Catholicism in general, and hostility to an ethnic group suspected of sympathy towards compatriots in arms against the British Government. Supposed anti-Catholic campaigns in Britain today are often orchestrated by friends of the IRA

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

insisting that criticism of the IRA reveals inherent anti-Catholic racialism, and essays in this book innocently cite their 'findings'. MacMillan and his apologists may not agree with their fundamental outlook (though several of them sound as if they do), but the IRA have every reason to thank them for increasing the camouflage of grievance in which the bombers find their best refuge.

There is an ironic charm in the leading apostle of ecumenism in the Scottish Roman Catholic hierarchy being the only Irish-born bishop appointed since 1878. If all the Irish born bishops who ruled the world had been like Archbishop Keith Patrick O'Brien of St Andrews and Edinburgh, there would be far less anti-Catholicism in it. But his towering spiritual integrity, and his unassuming, warm-hearted pastorate, would be hard to equal in any country. Scottish Catholicism has a giant here: characteristically the book never mentions him. He is neither a grievance nor a purveyor of grievances: he chose ecumenism and joy as his watchwords on his episcopal ordination and, since he fulfills his ideal, he is carefully sidelined from the bigotry controversy. His career only sweetens MacMillan's chosen discords, and his example rebukes the Catholic politics of unforgiving. The Irish-Chicagoan who described 'Irish Alzheimer's' as forgetting your enemies' names, may have his counterpart in the Scottish hierarchy: but he is the antithesis of Keith Patrick O'Brien. O'Brien's insistence that Catholics must recognise a human clergy, get away from personality cults and deification, keep priests off pedestals and among the people whence they came, carried with it a mature Catholicism, setting aside episcopal flummery and returning to the spirit of the itinerant Teacher of Galilee.

Occasionally, the world, however plagued by the Irish question, has reason for gratitude to an Irish answer.

II

The MacMillan lecture duly made its headlines, before and behind it, and ran as a controversy for weeks in the **Herald** and more modestly elsewhere. Few if any commentators noted that its chief contribution had been to invert President John Kennedy's instruction in his Inaugural (1961): 'Ask not what your country can do for you! Ask what you can do for your country!' Haldane, as quoted (however inaccurately) by MacMillan, had asked what Scottish Catholicism could do for the Scottish Parliament. MacMillan's Lament appeared to boil down to the feeling that the Scottish Parliament ought to do something - maybe much - for Scottish Catholicism. What the

Scottish Affairs

something or somethings might be, was more uncertain. Support Scottish Catholic schools and ask no questions (or be branded as anti-Catholic), was clearly one. MacMillan, with some of the fervour of the drowning man for the proverbial straw, retrospectively echoes calls for a Commission on the lines of confession and forgiveness promulgated by Archbishop Tutu, which has the advantage of equating the politic gripes of Scottish Catholics with the appalling record of homicidal suppression suffered by the South African blacks. MacMillan was also pleased (with what immediate relevance to the day-to-day sufferings of Scottish Catholics is unclear) that the Scottish Parliament demanded the repeal of UK legislation prohibiting marriage to a Roman Catholic by the heir to the British throne, or the accession to the throne of a Roman Catholic. He failed to deduce that this exercise clearly showed that since the monarchy was by its constitutional definition anti-Catholic, or that the United Kingdom was, he had, in fact, shot at a pigeon and killed a crow. The Prime Minister explained that it was much too difficult a business for the United Kingdom to rid itself of such archaic prohibitions, that the big boys had too much to do to bother with bigotry, and that a Catholic Prime-Ministerial wife should be sufficient. Should Mr Blair enter the Church of his wife and children (whose Catholic schools are no better than any others in keeping their clientele sober), no constitutional barrier impedes him. A Roman Catholic may nominate Church of England Bishops, but his Church may not supply an empty head for a costly crown.

All of this reinforces the case for dismantling the Union and abolishing the monarchy, but as to that MacMillan remains silent. Others may differentiate between institutionalised British anti-Catholicism, enthroned beyond extrication (goodbye to a Royal marriage for Baby Blair, alas!), and rapidly waning vestiges of popular anti-Catholicism in Scotland. We may grant that anti-Catholics in a former Scotland were ready to assert an anti-Catholic Scottish identity when it suited them, but the original MacMillan diatribe left out of account the role of English anti-Catholicism in underpinning Scottish identity, and legitimising it in the accent of the governing class. It certainly suggests that Scottish populism is more easily won over to religious tolerance than is English rule.

The readiness of so many non-Catholic Scots to take MacMillan seriously was in itself a proof that his issue was much less serious than he implied. There is, indeed, an immense reservoir of non-Catholic goodwill in Scotland towards Catholics. One has only to consider the warmth of welcome shown to Pope John Paul II during his visit to Scotland in 1982, an event carefully excluded from these pages (by MacMillan and Co., because it was damning testimony against their case, by the non-Catholic contributors because of

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

their anxiety to improve their country's performance rather than deny its shortcomings, by the Catholic critics of MacMillan fearful of the charge of silent self-improvement at the expense of their Catholic identity). In fact the leading crusader against the Papal visit, the Rev Pastor Jack Glass, solemnly told a Catholic audience that if it would not follow his instructions to quit the Roman Catholic Church immediately, its members should please obey the Pope faithfully as he was a good man holding no brief for modern liberalism. (The same lecture denounced Mariolatry with an expression of Glass's love and admiration for the Blessed Virgin in terms any Roman Catholic would be proud to own.)

But if MacMillan was vague as to what the Scottish Parliament was to do for Catholicism, others had firm ideas. Their ideas were so firm as to make one wonder about the origins of MacMillan's original outburst: in this book Professor Patrick Reilly regurgitates the MacMillan grievances so congruently that his only justification is that he was their previous possessor. MacMillan's falsetto top-note 'Scotland is guilty of "sleep-walking" bigotry, a writer recently claimed', is a silent allusion to Reilly. The blurb credits the expression to MacMillan and it is now generally assigned to him. It evidently means that however much you deny your anti-Catholicism, you remain an unspoken anti-Catholic. Presumably your sleepwalking anti-Catholicism can only end with your death. This begins to sound dangerously like ethnic cleansing. Is Pol Pot a Catholic after all? Northern Ireland showed that such attitudes easily cross the sectarian lines.

Professor Reilly is a columnist in the Roman Catholic periodical **Flourish**, organ of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, a journal chiefly devoted to the interests and personality cult of its Archbishop, His Eminence Thomas Cardinal Winning. The Cardinal's agenda for a Scottish Parliament is simple enough: do what he says. His most notable recent instruction to it is for Scotland to keep adapting former anti-Catholic legislative tradition to alternative persecutions, homophobic variety preferred. MacMillan did indeed include a rude, if entirely unexplained, allusion to 'Cardinal Winning and his pals', but the good-natured Cardinal can readily forgive this, indeed welcome it as a useful prophylactic against suspicion of complicity. MacMillan may claim that this is not what he intended or wanted: but this is his effect. He may merely have been a pawn, lost for a topic for his Festival lecture and incapable of advancing beyond his initial sublimity (and who can advance beyond the sublime?). But the most noticeable effect of his crusade against bigotry has been a credential for bigots.

Scottish Affairs

The resultant book's sub-title 'Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland' raises expectations which are cruelly dashed. There is nothing on anti-Jewish bigotry, for instance, whether expressed as in the refusal of the Royal and Ancient Golf Course at St Andrews to allow Danny Kaye to play on it as late as 1947, post-holocaust, or denied (as in the generous and appreciative memoirs of David Daiches). The Church of Scotland was increasingly outspoken against anti-Jewish persecution in the late 1930s, and stressed the need for Scotland to admit Jewish refugees. There is less evidence that the Roman Catholics of Scotland showed such fraternal anxiety for Jews or Jewish converts at the same time, nor was the otherwise well-justified enthusiasm in their ranks for the writings of G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc conducive to much pro-Jewish sentiment. These things need to be said for perspective rather than recrimination: but by the principles of our own (Jewish-founded) religion, we Catholics should remind ourselves how small are our own sufferings by comparison with those of the Jews, and how little we did to help the Jews in their agony. John Cormack's mobs stoning buses of small Catholic children in the Edinburgh of 1935 are the nearest Scotland got to Nazism on the European scale, and while horrific, are trifling by comparison with Belsen and Dachau, Auschwitz and Treblinka. Nor are the recent anti-Asian and anti-African outbreaks in Scotland discussed at any length in this volume. These are questions urgently requiring the Parliamentary attention MacMillan demands for us Catholics, although Scots persecution of non-whites is milder than that now surfacing in Dublin where ambulance-drivers have recently told black victims of racial attacks to go back where they came from. One wonders how much more MacMillan, Reilly and Co. could drown the stage with tears and cleave the general ear with horrid speech had they the motive and the cue for passion that such others have.

MacMillan's speech is thus beginning to look more like the launch of a lobby, and a pretty solipsistic, self-centred one at that. The deceptive sub-title may be balanced by the query in the title, MacMillan's original 'Scotland's Shame' being at least opened to some doubt. But the book's origins raise their own problems: is the purpose buzz-group or bully-group, intellectual or ideological, scholarly or stultificatory? The editorship of Professor Thomas M. Devine might seem a guarantee of the former in each case, yet his normally firm heroic hand seems to have abdicated its strength if not its cunning. Seldom if ever has an editor of such eminence allowed so many contributors such latitude in duplication and indoctrination, such longitude in errant error. He thanks two of his contributors, Professors Steve Bruce and Lindsay Paterson, for suggesting he edit it. How many more were not

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

originally his choices, then? Several essays are bitterly critical of the doubts Devine raised on TV after the MacMillan Lament, questioning the contemporaneity of its grievances; and whether or not he wanted to commission them, he seems committed to leave them unchecked.

Bruce dismisses the MacMillan claims with a solipsistic scorn of his own: he had refuted them in 1985 and in 1988, he points out, rather like an elderly Marxist who reiterates the frequency with which he has challenged Capitalism as to its contradictions. Unhappily, Capitalism survives, and so do Professor Bruce's indifferent auditors. Even the most troglodyte Scottish Catholic in this book (and a fine field there is for that distinction) could be pardoned for finding reinforcement for his paranoia in the Bruce method of conversion. Still speaking about Northern Ireland - he has brought his drum to the party and he will bang it whatever the musical agenda - his essay asserts:

A number of very significant structural differences between Scotland and Northern Ireland eroded animosity in the former while institutionalising it and stabilising it in the latter. I do not believe that this outcome is to be explained by the idea, not surprisingly popular with Scots, that Scotland's egalitarian Presbyterian background makes it a particularly tolerant place.

In other words, Scots are not Catholics. Bruce presumably did not mean to say this, but it would be hard to find a clearer example of unconscious racism. The whole crux of the issue as to apartheid, racial and national identity is, does the predominant ethnic group deny the right of the disadvantaged to equal title in citizenship? Up to the Papal visit, Scots Catholics were accustomed to public assumptions that a true Scot must be 'of Presbyterian background'. So, of course, were Scottish Jews. During the wars of Malcolm Rifkind and his junior, Michael Forsyth, in the Thatcher administration, the Prime Minister signalled her preference for Forsyth, whom she termed 'a true Scot'. Since that date Presbyterianism is commonly recognised as a vital Scottish tradition. But without the axioms that non-Presbyterians are not the full Scot, MacMillan's Lament, could it acquire logic, probably derives from the antique Catholic assumption that Catholics are still assumed to be less Scottish than Protestants, although demography has put paid to that: Scottish Catholics are now more numerous than Presbyterians, and Catholics are strong enough in the media to ensure an automatic place for their Scottish status. But Professor Bruce's science is less sensitive. It is his signal achievement in this volume to have produced in his own vocabulary more proof of the survival of sectarian bigotry than

Scottish Affairs

Professors MacMillan, Reilly and Co. in all of their daring dithyrambs. God protect us from our friends!

Professor Devine was more fortunate in his choice of his other chooser. If Professor Bruce's score in his own goal is unrivalled, Professor Lindsay Paterson, gently atheistic, has produced the best defence of Catholic schools imaginable: he shows that they have been more Scots than their competitors, and he does so on the basis of current as well as older research, set out in impressive tables.

The Catholic schools have been consistently more effective than non-denominational schools in enabling their working-class pupils to gain good qualifications. In a classic instance of education's role in fostering social mobility, these formerly working-class young people have been able to use their credentials to compete successfully for good jobs.

In other words Scottish Catholicism has blended with the tradition of the democratic intellect and by so doing has added strength to where it was weak, and given substance to what was in danger of becoming simply slogan. This may also have relevance to the grave problem in Scottish university recruitment which working-class defeatism so heavily slows down. Catholic spiritual arrogance has the advantage of seeing a Catholic superiority to any social taboo. It can be offset by clerical inferiority complex as to university intellectualism. But the waning of clerical power and the growth in lay confidence makes the present time peculiarly advantageous to the Catholic worker ready to pursue secular rights. I was listening only today to a proud atheist mother testifying to the excellence of her son's Catholic education. The Catholic school, rather than being a battleground against supposed anti-Catholic Scots, may deepen the meaning of being Scots. If Bishop Joseph Devine of Motherwell, writing in this book, is listened to, Catholic education will proceed in precisely this organic Scottish role. Consider his conclusion that

... the introduction of comprehensive education by the Labour government of 1964 ... was more beneficial to the Catholic community than anything since the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and the repeal of the penal laws.

Bishop Devine's positive outlook, especially in this sphere, is light-years away from his self-pitying, negative, fellow-Catholics such as MacMillan and Reilly.

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

Professor Tom Devine's allotment, or inheritance, of contributors includes certain other Catholics as positive as his eponymous Bishop. The **Herald** and other post-MacMillan controversies produced many more, and their absence from this book in some cases is deplorable: such informed figures as Ian Bayne and Rennie MacOwan were excellent voices guiding their co-religionists out of their intellectually suicidal ghettos. But why above all is there nothing from the **Herald** music critic Michael Tumelty, whose victimisation in these pages for his critique of MacMillan's Lament is thus made a cowardly business? Tumelty is accustomed to interpret MacMillan's finest form of utterance, and is himself the son of one of the greatest historians Scottish Catholicism has produced, Jim Tumelty. Those who did not see Michael Tumelty's essay on MacMillan's lecture, 'Knowing the Score' (**Herald** 19 August 1999), will be seriously misinformed as to what he said and as to its justification, with only this book on which to go, and the book has a permanence lacking in the newspaper.

And of all MacMillan's apologists here, the attack on Tumelty is from a source normally identified not with Irish-Scots Catholic defensive tribalism, but with judicious scholarly analysis of the history of anti-Catholicism in Scotland: Professor Tom Gallagher, author of **Glasgow: Uneasy Peace** and **Edinburgh Divided**, the foremost works on Scottish urban sectarian hostility in the last two centuries, unrivalled since both appeared in 1987. While among the MacMillanialists, Gallagher is certainly more judicious than MacMillan, Reilly, the novelist Andrew O'Hagan (whose essay's presence in the collection is intellectually incomprehensible), or the educationist Gerry Finn. Gallagher (for instance) finds the tribalism of Winning 'likely to hinder rather than promote progress in Christian understanding', such as when opening Christian Unity week in Glasgow city Hall on 15 January 1999: 'According to the front-page report in the following day's **Scotsman**, the Cardinal argued that Catholicism would be Scotland's sole faith in the twenty-first century'. Gallagher conceded in the light of this:

It might have been preferable if MacMillan had found space in his 9 August talk to acknowledge that no branch of Christianity in Scotland has a monopoly on bigoted or intolerant attitudes. At different times in their history, those monotheistic religions which claim to be the only true road to salvation have often behaved in appallingly similar ways in order for their righteousness to prevail.

But as to Tumelty's reply to MacMillan in the **Herald**, Gallagher mourned:

Scottish Affairs

Tumelty claimed to 'have lost count of the number of folk - from commonplace to important - who have stated categorically ... that ... when they hear MacMillan's name, they know they will no longer think of the composer but of the controversialist and the bigot'. ['And I'm horrified to say' continued Tumelty unquoted by Gallagher 'that many people have used the latter description.'] This sentence suggests two things: that controversy is beyond the pale in douce Scotland, and just what a divided society it must really be for a mere speech to elicit such a strong reaction from members of what I had always hitherto regarded as a rather open-minded profession. Perhaps it is too flimsy evidence from which to deduce that Scotland remains a deeply conformist society hardly at ease with itself or capable of self-examination when one of its brighter talents holds up a mirror to its face. But Tumelty's article, the views of the author himself and the ones he claimed were widespread in the profession he knows best, was one of the most dispiriting things I had read about Scotland in many a month.

Yet Gallagher, somewhat heavy-handedly, admitted that MacMillan 'may not have advanced his case for recognising injustice against Catholics past and present' by Pol-Potting John Knox, and points out that the Pol Pots were evident in Catholic as well as Protestant Europe, and not very noticeable in the Scottish revolt against Catholicism. Why then be surprised when MacMillan is called a bigot? Had Gallagher been in Germany when Wagner was penning his anti-Jewish filth, would he have complained against Wagner's critics that 'Germany remains a deeply conformist society hardly ... capable of self-examination when one of its brighter talents holds up a mirror to its face'? No, of course, he wouldn't. Yet alleged mirror-holding by brighter talents such as Wagner produced Nazism: Gallagher's inability to see the similarity in ethno-religious calumny suggests that he himself cannot well confront the Irish-Scots mirror. Add Winning's victimisation of homosexuals, and one has roots analogous to those of the Nazi culture: the grievance-mongering, the ethnic chauvinism, the hymns of hate, the conspiracy-paranoia, the selection of a vulnerable minority, the lies. Gallagher himself would be nauseated by homophobia, and his article salutes the 'tact and restraint' of the Church of Scotland in reply to MacMillan (David Sinclair's essay here is a model to Catholics in its perceptive generosity no less than to his fellow-Presbyterians). So why be depressed because Tumelty has noted that a piece of atrocious bigotry makes its user liable to be called a bigot?

Tumelty's **Herald** critique was not simply a claim that MacMillan (in Gallagher's phrase) 'had forfeited a lot of his reputation by switching roles'.

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

Tumelty pointed to a false statement in the Festival lecture, and noted that, when confronted with his inaccuracy, MacMillan had ignored the correction (and continues to ignore it in his concluding essay in this book). MacMillan in his Lament had stated of the **Herald**:

The present editor makes a ... claim that there is no anti-Catholic bias in the paper. However, the official editorial line of the **Herald** against Catholic schools must be scrutinised in the wider perspective of that journal's pervading culture.

When the **Herald** printed this among other extracts in its report on MacMillan's lecture, it added on its own account (almost certainly written by the editor, Harry Reid):

This is simply not true. The **Herald** has consistently argued that there should be Catholic schools in Scotland as long as Catholic parents and their church want them.

Arnold Kemp, **Observer** columnist and former **Herald** editor, wrote a letter for **Herald** publication (most unusually for a journalist - journalists do not write for newspapers without payment): appearing on 11 August, it noted **Herald** anti-Catholicism twenty years earlier but supported the editor's denial of MacMillan's charge. MacMillan never seems to have withdrawn, or apologised for, his false statement and does not do so in his retrospective essay here. Gallagher quotes Kemp's letter, but purely on its evidence of **Herald** former anti-Catholicism and with no word on its indictment of MacMillan's veracity. Yet Gallagher's own attack on Tumelty ignored his explicit statement that it was MacMillan's lying about the **Herald** which would injure his reputation. Gallagher deliberately fostered the impression of a Tumelty attack on freedom of speech and attempted dumbing-down of necessary controversy. In fact, by omitting Tumelty's major reason for criticising MacMillan's lecture, Gallagher misled - whether deliberately or not - in his turn. And in his case the matter is far more serious for his reputation than MacMillan's antics for his. As Wodehouse would remind us, artists can go off the rails. ('Look at Shakespeare, for instance,' pointed out Bertie Wooster in **Joy in the Morning**, 'Very unbalanced. Used to go about stealing ducks.') Gerry Finn finds such an argument belittling to MacMillan but in fact it alibis him. Gallagher is a specialist in the academic field, from whom we are accustomed to integrity; and he has betrayed us.

Admittedly the pre-emption of the plea for Scots Catholics of Irish origin does little for other groups in danger of discrimination. This book has little to

Scottish Affairs

say of oppression of Catholic women, and only half a (very technical and specialist) essay is by a woman, although Catholic writers could make quite valuable contributions to that subject, beginning with Catholic oppression of women. Dr Alistair Gardiner of Fort William wrote to the **Herald** (12 August 1999) acknowledging

that sectarianism is far more prevalent in our society than is desirable, although I would suggest that James MacMillan would have found a much harder path to success had he been a woman, a member of an ethnic minority, or a homosexual. This is equally to 'Scotland's shame'.

But he is unlikely to find Thomas Cardinal Winning, for one, showing the same concern for these other groups whose deprivations exceed those from which the white male heterosexual Catholic suffers.

Another explanation is also presented by our data, viz. that identification with an infallible faith makes it somehow sinful in the mind of its self-appointed apologists to admit they could possibly have been mistaken, and that wrongs committed by themselves against others must always be trivial and hardly deserving of mention in comparison to wrongs suffered by them and theirs. As we have indicated, a decent examination of conscience should have told the lot of them, Winning included, that their first duty was to forgive others - genuinely, not simply perfunctorily or histrionically. But Gerry Finn's logic in his essay shows us the moral accountancy at the heart of the MacMillanist theology in the following passage, alluding to a Glasgow Rangers official singing sectarian songs, e.g. 'The Sash My Father Wore':

[MacMillan's] joking allusion to Pol Pot or Mao Tse-tung was bound to detract from an important observation among the neglect of the history of pre-Reformation Scotland.

MacMillan is correct in his refusal to accept Donald Findlay's performance as unique. That is not how societal prejudice operates. Findlay's repertoire needs to be located as an element in that part of the spectrum of anti-Catholic prejudice that too many have accepted as relatively harmless fun, just like 'private prejudicial talk'.

So when a distinguished Catholic composer employs an invitation for self-expression at Scotland's leading cultural Festival to insult the culture of fellow-Christians' religion with the most odious, and as he now admits, the most baseless of mass homicidal charges, it is merely a joke, regrettable (chiefly?/only?) as distracting from his graver matter; but when an apparently intoxicated hooligan bellows to his fellow intoxicated hooligans that he

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

enjoys his own transvestite exhibitionism in parental orangerie, it is cause for public outrage. The mote and the beam, of which Christ warned us so ominously, have seldom been so clearly displayed.

The wearisome obsessions of MacMillan and his apologists with the misbehaviour of Glasgow Rangers supporters are never sullied by admission of the most venial sins from Glasgow Celticists. They do the reputation of Catholics no good either for truthfulness or fairness by this wanton indifference to academic standards of justice, nor that of such Glasgow Catholic schools as may be credited with their own education. Celtic supporters' songs, visited on the unoffending public in trains and other points of common resort, include celebrations of the Brighton Hotel bombing by the IRA. Even Mr Donald Findlay's vocal alcoholic enthusiasm for longago wading through Fenian blood seems less reprehensible than Celtic musical rejoicings in human deaths and crippling for life perpetrated the other day by cold-blooded, machine-managed murder. No excuses may be made for the Rangers thugs: I have never felt so much like a Jew in Nazi Germany as when travelling among drunken Rangers fans on a train. But the way to eradicate their sort of evil provocation is for Catholics to repudiate the IRA and its celebrants as one would shun any other spawn of Satan. If Mr Findlay is to desist from his nasty songs, let his opponents show some shame for theirs. In fairness to MacMillan and Co., while their work assists the self-serving paranoia pumped up by the IRA, their status is secondary to it. The **Herald** controversy which this book should have reviewed (instead of merely abusing one or two of its participants) included a reader's denunciation of the **Herald** for hiring Professor Patrick Reilly as a columnist on the ground that 'I know for a fact that he does not have the ear of the Sinn Fein leadership and he appears to have little or no sympathy for their membership'. It is a tragedy that the Reilly essay in the present volume seems more in atonement for this shortcoming than in pride for it. It is to Bishop Joseph Devine we must run for even-handed justice on the sectarian field, which he conquers with delicious irony:

Finally of course James MacMillan is correct in his allegation that there is a lot of bigotry and sectarianism alive and well in Scottish society. This can easily be seen by the fact that Glasgow's two giant football clubs have a policy against bigotry and sectarianism. Why should they have adopted such a policy in recent years if no such problem existed? But a great deal of the social exclusion practised against Catholics in former times has waned, if not totally disappeared. Hopefully, this trend will continue in the years to come.

III

The permanent status of this book will be the bibliographical listing under the name 'Devine, T.M.', but none of his many other book-titles, whether monograph or multi-author, should displease its illustrious bearer more. As far as one may deduce, Professor Tom Devine felt inhibited from the first. One greatly doubts if, left to himself, he would have chosen certain of the essayists, and if, having received the essays of these and/or others, he would have dreamed of passing them for print. The problem was that the cunning Catholic tribalists took out insurance on their own winning (or, if you prefer, Winning). Tom Devine might seem natural evidence against the thesis of discrimination against Catholics. He is accepted as Scotland's foremost modern historian since the publication of his **The Scottish Nation 1700-2000**. He is likened to Ireland's Roy Foster (inaccurately: he is stronger on economic questions, weaker on cultural - the late F.S.L. Lyons is the correct analogy, and no greater compliment could be paid Devine, as Foster would be the first to agree). He is held in reverence by countless teachers and students, and by many (including myself) in deep affection. Historians can be as jealous as persons in any other profession, yet it is impossible to mistake the joy Devine's successes have given so many of us, whether Catholics, non-Catholic Christians, or non-Christians. In the present year at least three of the eight senior Scottish Universities hunger for him for their Principalships. Granted that Devine is a good and a great historian, and an administrator of quality and humanity, he could not have reached such heights in an anti-Catholic country, or even in a country where an anti-Catholic lobby was strong enough to merit notice by public relations consultants.

But MacMillan and Co. have their answer pat (or, if you prefer, Pat). To them Devine is where he is by keeping his head down and his Catholicism invisible: a votary of the principle denounced by MacMillan 'Try not to attract attention to the fact that you are a Catholic - it will only annoy them'. It would be difficult to find a clearer way of asserting one's Catholicism than to edit, and seek the widest publicity for, a history of one's own Catholic parish: Devine did it. But a variant of the MacMillan anathema on unabrasive Catholicism was at hand: insistence that Devine after the MacMillan Festival lecture was presented on TV with a 'mythological MacMillan' (why? The Pol-Potter of John Knox had surely discredited himself sufficiently to dispense with media help). 'To have agreed with the mythological MacMillan', writes Gerry P.T. Finn here 'would not simply have lost Devine his academic respectability, it would have identified him as another irrational Catholic'. This comes close to calling Devine a coward. It is a nauseating illustration of holier-than-thou, or possibly Paddyer-than-thou tactics. But it

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

insured against editorial interference with Finn's text. Tom Devine stoically let every slur against himself stand. Admittedly, if the goose was thus allowed to be saucy, then the gander might step into the sauce, equally without editorial intervention. Patrick Reilly mixed up Dean Acheson and Dean Rusk with no whisper of editorial correction (or maybe there was one which Professor Reilly had too much integrity to accept?). Even when at the end Devine, in editorial retrospect, quotes Reilly, the Emeritus Professor of English at Glasgow reappears with his bad grammar intact:

Patrick Reilly, for instance, eloquently asserts that 'there is a Himalayas of anecdotal evidence from almost every Catholic family in the west of Scotland as to alleged injustices suffered'. Quite so, but is he talking of the past (where the point is incontrovertible) or the present and whether there has been a perception of change over time?

The comment is sound. But it is difficult to see this transcription of 'a Himalayas' (as grammatically ludicrous as 'an Alps' or 'a Rockies') without a grim flicker of an editorial smile. If the traditionalist grievance-mongers valorise fundamentalist ghetto Catholicism, they serve it raw.

Devine's clutch of five Cromagnon Catholic essays to commence - MacMillan, O'Hagan, Reilly, Gallagher (alas!) and Finn - may be intellectually beneath contempt, but they certainly provide devastating evidence of the sickness of modern Scottish Catholic culture. These are no parish-pumpers. Even O'Hagan, mindless rant though his effort is, merits respect for a remarkable novel, **Our Fathers** (was his inclusion the publicity-conscious publishers' idea?). Reilly is a fine critic and commentator on literature, Gallagher an outstanding historian and social scientist, Finn (as he makes very clear in many of his footnotes) an extensive author of academic work of far higher calibre than his present performance, MacMillan an artist whose musical work deserves to survive us all and probably most of our works. So to find them herewith in such wretched presentation is to recognise that if anti-Catholicism is no longer a serious problem, it has cruelly blighted the lives and minds of some of Scotland's finest artists and scholars. We may be thankful that Professor Devine has found happy proof of the richness of Scottish Catholic scholarship also: the philosopher John Haldane's beautiful meditation 'Growing Up', Bishop Joseph Devine's superb sociological miniature, the distinguished historian Bernard Aspinwall's seminal litany to the response 'Reality is complex', Scott C. Styles's little gem on the non-sectarian culture of Aberdeen and environs.

Scottish Affairs

If the ugly constraints around Professor Tom Devine's editorship inhibit his own contributions, they are still worthy of him, apart, perhaps, from an understandable descent into schoolboy sarcasm:

Who also would have guessed that the leader of Scotland's Catholics, Cardinal Thomas J. Winning, would have become the darling of the media and by far the most high-profile churchman in the land?

Devine knows well that Winning is not, of course, the leader of Scotland's Catholics, but is simply amusing himself repeating the absurd label stuck on His Eminence by an ignorant press. Jesus Christ is our leader, the Pope is His Vicar on Earth, Archbishop Keith Patrick O'Brien is bishop in the senior Scottish see. 'Leader', 'Duce', 'Führer', 'Lider' and such terms as applied to earthly individuals have no place in Catholic life. Any danger that may exist of Catholic neo-Fascism (and some of the MacMillanialists offer disturbing symptoms) can only be assisted by foolish Catholic adoption of this reprehensible term, for Cardinal Winning or anyone else. I doubt if more than one Scottish Catholic Bishop would disagree with me.

As for 'the darling of the media', it is a most unnatural relationship. The unfortunate Cardinal has been trapped into absurd statements time and again, at an age now beyond the canonical time of his retirement. The high profile can seriously diminish the effectiveness of the quiet work of so many pastors and laymen because an unscrupulous journalist sees a way of causing conflict. The lesson for Catholics is to practise the gospel of forgiveness (and in forgiving Winning let us above all be grateful for his genial warmth and want of pomposity which has done so much good work, for all that it has weakened his common sense before the blandishments of newshounds whose fawning is only a preliminary to savaging).

After the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, Elijah heard a still, small voice. A full year after MacMillan's Lament, two still, small voices inaugurated Edinburgh Festival 2000 in St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral (both also participating in the opening ceremony at St Giles's [formerly Roman Catholic] Cathedral): the Rt Rev Andrew McLellan, moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Most Rev Keith Patrick O'Brien, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh. McLellan, the first Moderator to preach in St Mary's, was applauded (an honour almost unknown after a Catholic sermon) for an address which asserted:

It is a lie that Protestants are against Catholics. Those who say Protestants are against Catholics are liars. But no lie can live forever and this one is long past its die-by date. ... Catholics and Protestants are

Is The Cardinal Anti-Catholic?

together in their faith in God as Father, son and Holy Spirit in their struggle for justice, for the poor and peace in the world. ... How could it be true that Christianity is against the arts when both are seeking to explore the meaning of life? Both are attempting to give shape and understanding to the glory and the pain which is what it means to be human.

When much of church life is trivial and common-place and self-centred, thank God for Shakespeare and Van Gogh and James MacMillan.

In an interview with the **Scottish Catholic Observer** O'Brien 'gave his full support to the speech':

We have shared the word of God and now look forward to the day we can share the Eucharist. ... (Our) ecumenical pilgrimage together ... is ongoing and as I travel with the youth pilgrimage to Rome this week, I am proud that a number of them are from the Church of Scotland. The Moderator will also be in Rome with me later this year to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Scots College there.

The **Scottish Catholic Observer** has no claims to the intellectualism of other sections of the Catholic press, even of **Flourish**. But it was sufficiently infected by O'Brien to clinch the argument very clearly in its editorial (18 August 2000):

The Rev. McLellan is a straight talker ... He explained that 15 years ago the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland changed the law of the Church to make it clear that the anti-Catholic statements of the Westminster Confession were not part of the substance of the faith of the Church of Scotland. ... He also pointed out the fundamental principle of Christianity. Those who 'love God must love their brothers and sisters also'.

Put simply there is no room for sectarianism in either church and we should thank the Right Reverend Andrew McLellan for reminding us of this simple fact.

And so (if the editorial principles of **Scottish Affairs** will permit the use of the term), Amen.

August 2000