

“Landlouping Students of Divinity”: Scottish Presbyterians in German Theology Faculties, c. 1840 to 1914

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“But here, as in so many other cases, Germany,
learned, indefatigable, deep-thinking Germany
comes to our aid.”
1

- Thomas Carlyle

I. Introduction

“The universities are the pride and glory of Germany [...]. They reflect a picture of the whole world of nature and mind under its ideal form”. So wrote Philip Schaff in *Germany; its Universities, Theologians, and Religion*, a *Reiseführer* published in 1857 to guide American students through the strange new world of German divinity.² During the nineteenth century, the shining light of *Wissen* drew thousands of students from America and the British Empire to Germany’s universities. Almost ten thousand Americans alone studied in Germany in the nineteenth century. This was the age of German footnotes. The theology faculties too attracted large numbers of what one Scottish student called “landlouping students of divinity” [*Von-Land-zu-Land-hoppelnde Theologiestudenten*].³ This is hardly surprising: over the course of the century it had become an axiom that theological science in America, Britain, and elsewhere was either building on or tearing down theology that was ‘made in Germany’. The Swiss-born Schaff (1819–93) was an important mediator of German theology to churches in America over his influential career at the German Reformed Seminary in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, and then Union Seminary in New York

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¹ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: the Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* [1836], Berkeley 2000, 4.

² Philip Schaff, *Germany; its Universities, Theologians, and Religion*, Philadelphia 1857, 27. This was one of a number of introductions to German theology written for English-speaking students. A Scottish example is George Matheson, *Aids to the Study of German Theology*, Edinburgh 1875.

³ John Cairns, *Principal Cairns*, London 1903, 55. Note that the Scottish ‘loup’ means to ‘leap’.

City, but American and British divinity students began visiting German theology faculties long before he recommended it in his 1857 guidebook.⁴ Convinced that only German expertise could satisfy their personal ambitions and the needs of their vocations, international students channelled the ferment of nineteenth-century German theology into the English-speaking world. The effect, in combination with other means of the transmission of ideas like translations, lectures tours, etc., on Anglo-American Protestantism was significant and irreversible.

American Protestantism owed the most to Germany, and not only because of the massive number of German immigrants into America.⁵ In nineteenth-century Germany, the horizon of thought seemed to be expanding as quickly as America's western frontier. The United States' revolutionary origins and its rapid expansion made it receptive to the fresh and the progressive. It was open to the model of the new Prussian universities and sometimes less cautious to take the new paths being cut for Biblical studies, theology, and church history in the German theology faculties. German theology probably had its second biggest effect upon theology in Scotland, specifically, the several Presbyterian churches who claimed the allegiance of the vast majority of the population. Several decades after American Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Unitarians began crossing the Atlantic to seek in the universities of the old world what the colleges of the new world could not yet provide, their Reformed brethren from Scotland began crossing the North Sea to Hamburg or Bremen, bound for Germany's university cities. By century's end, several hundred Scottish Presbyterians had studied theology in Germany; at the same time, the Edinburgh publishing house of T. & T. Clark had translated most of the significant works of nineteenth-century German divinity.

However, an historian who wants to follow these nineteenth-century Presbyterians from Scotland to the German universities, and then pursue further the inroads of German theology into Scottish church life needs to watch out for several *Fallen*. The first is a prejudice held by many Anglo-American theologians and church historians that nineteenth-century *evangelische Theologie* was liberal theology, plain and simple. It presumes that because we already know that the epitome of liberal Christianity can be found in the theological contributions of Schleiermacher or Harnack, Hegel's and Feuerbach's philosophical speculations, and Wellhausen's and Baur's critical treatment of the Bible, we can assume the kind of influence German theology had on English-speaking Protestantism. And this prejudice is far from being *only* a projection of later *Theologiegeschichte*. Victorian religious literature is full of warnings against the many heresies in the German church and the shocking disrespect for the Scriptures or reverend traditions of the church in the university faculties of theology. A German scholar of Sanskrit transplanted to Oxford, Friedrich

⁴ See Gesine von Kloeden, Philip Schaff – Vermittler zwischen den Welten, in: Harm Klueting/Jan Rohls (edd.), *Reformierte Retrospektiven*, Wuppertal 2001, 219–29.

⁵ See for example Thomas A. Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University*, Oxford 2006, 348–378; H. W. Bowden, *Church History in the Age of Science: Historiographical Patterns in the United States, 1876–1918*, Chapel Hill 1971; Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imaging Progressive Theology, 1805–1900*, Louisville 2001.

Max Müller, complained that his new countrymen smelled “rationalism in the dots over the ü”.⁶ When a church historian assumes nineteenth-century German theology was liberal theology, and when the hot rhetoric of the Victorians against ‘Teutonic infidelity’ is allowed to overwhelm cool analysis, the conclusion is predetermined: German divinity was a major factor in the liberalization of English-speaking Protestantism in the Victorian era. Consequently, a lot of scholarship—much of it high quality—examines the debt owed to German theology by the liberal Oxford Noetics, or the Broad Church movement in the mid-Victorian Church of England, or in the rise of biblical criticism in America and the British Empire.⁷ A second pitfall follows from the first. Scholars like to portray the nineteenth-century meeting of German and Anglo-American divinity as clash and controversy. Perhaps the best example is the violent encounter between the pre-critical, ‘conservative’ interpretation of the Bible typical of English-speaking Protestantism and the ‘liberal’, historical approach to ancient texts found in works like Schleiermacher’s *Über die Schriften des Lukas* or Niebuhr’s *Römische Geschichte*.⁸ This clash caused some of the major church controversies in Victorian Britain, such as that which followed the 1860 publication of *Essays and Reviews* in England, or the William Robertson Smith heresy trial in the Free Church of Scotland in 1876–1881, as well as the Charles A. Briggs heresy trial that rocked American Presbyterians in 1892–93.

It is not as if there is *no* connection between liberal theology in the English-speaking world during the nineteenth-century and certain types of theology which were being promoted in many theology faculties in Germany at the same time. These types of German theology did give a boost to particular Anglo-American Protestant groups who desired greater freedom from the biblical exegesis and dogmas of yesteryear. Such links exist and they are important. But to focus on them as typical, as scholarship has often done, is to mistake a side path for the *Hauptstraße*. First of all, as mentioned earlier, German theology in the nineteenth century found its widest and warmest welcome in Britain not among Anglicans but among Scottish Presby-

⁶ Georgina Max Müller, *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller* I, London 1902, 241. Max Müller made this remark in 1860.

⁷ Examples include: Ieuan Ellis, Schleiermacher in Britain, in: *SJTh* 33 (1981), 417–452; idem, *Seven Against Christ: A Study of ‘Essays and Reviews’*, Leiden 1980; Stephen Sykes (ed.), *England and Germany: Studies in Theological Diplomacy*, Frankfurt 1982; Klaus Dockhorn, *Der deutsche Historismus in England*, Göttingen 1950; Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Biblical Higher Criticism and the Defence of Infallibilism in 19th Century Britain*, Lewiston 1987; John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany*, London 1984; Timothy Larsen, *Bishop Colenso and His Critics: The Strange Emergence of Biblical Criticism in Victorian England*, in: *SJTh* 50 (1997), 433–458; John Andrews, *German Influence on English Religious Life in the Victorian Era*, in: *EvQ* 44 (1972), 218–233; John P. Speller, *Alexander Nicoll and the Study of German Biblical Criticism in Early Nineteenth-Century Oxford*, in: *JEH* 30 (1979), 451–59; Norman Vance, *Niebuhr in England*, in: *Benedikt Stuchtey/Peter Wende* (edd.), *British and German Historiography 1750–1950*, Oxford, 83–99; B. M. G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age*, London 1980; D. G. Hart, *Poems, Propositions and Dogma: The Controversy over Religious Language and the Demise of Theology in American Learning*, in: *CH* 57 (1988), 310–321.

⁸ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *A Critical Essay on the Gospel of St. Luke*, London 1825; B. G. Niebuhr, *History of Rome I*, Cambridge 1828.

terians, followed by ‘Dissenters’ (i. e. non-established churches like Congregationalists, English Presbyterians, and Methodists). Second, it was not foremost liberal Protestants who engaged German theology but evangelicals.⁹ This might be surprising to those who presume that nineteenth-century German theology was simply liberal theology. But, in fact, two strongly evangelical Presbyterian denominations in Victorian Scotland were the chief British receptacle of German theology.¹⁰ The first of these, the United Presbyterian Church, was made up of several groups who had been pushed out of the Church of Scotland at various times during the eighteenth century. These dissidents had become too loud in criticising the state church for absorbing the spirit of the Enlightenment—a fact that seemed obvious to them from the Church of Scotland’s use of political manipulation to stamp out movements of revival and renewal. The small churches that eventually united in 1847 as the United Presbyterian Church endorsed evangelical Calvinism, heavily promoted missions, and urged the separation of church and state in Scotland. The second denomination was created in 1843 when approximately one third of the clergy and membership of the Church of Scotland, led by the great Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847), formed the Church of Scotland, Free. This ‘Disruption’ (as it came to be known) the Swiss theologian Karl Hagenbach declared to be “the most remarkable religious event of the century”.¹¹ Around four hundred and fifty evangelical ministers abandoned the Church of Scotland because they believed its tolerance of patronage compromised both its spiritual freedom and evangelical witness to an urbanizing, industrializing Scotland. When the United Presbyterians and the Free Church merged in 1900 as the United Free Church of Scotland, they accounted for almost half of the Protestant population in Scotland. The union of these two evangelical Presbyterian denominations occurred at the very end of the nineteenth century, but the preceding sixty years saw both churches of one mind in many things, including close attention to German theology. It should be noted that the Disruption did not empty the Church of Scotland of evangelical ministers and members. Many “evangelical Erastians” remained in the established church.¹² Alongside liberal and moderate currents of faith, evangelical belief and piety continued and, in fact, grew in the established church

⁹ Of course, ‘evangelical’ will be used in its English—not German—sense! For clarification and definition see Erich Geldbach, ‘Evangelisch’, ‘Evangelikal’ and Pietism: Some Remarks on Early Evangelicalism and Globalization from a German Perspective, in: Mark Hutchison/Ogbu Kalu (edd.), *Global Faith: Essays on Evangelicalism and Globalization*, Sydney 1998, 156–180; David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, London 1989, 2–17.

¹⁰ The best single volume covering this period is A. C. Cheyne, *The Transformation of the Kirk: Victorian Scotland’s Religious Revolution*, Edinburgh 1983. Also see A. L. Drummond/James Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843–1874*, Edinburgh 1975; idem, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland 1874–1900*, Edinburgh 1978; Stewart D. Gill, *United Presbyterian Church, 1847–1900*, in: Nigel M. de S. Cameron (ed.), *Dictionary of Scottish Theology and Church History*, Edinburgh 1993, 839–40; K. R. Ross, *Free Church of Scotland, 1843–1900*, in: *Dictionary of Scottish Theology and Church History*, 337–338; David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Scotland*, in: *SBET* 9 (1991), 4–12.

¹¹ Karl Hagenbach, *A Text-Book of the History of Doctrines*, New York 1862, § 285.

¹² John MacLeod, *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History Since the Reformation*, Edinburgh 1943, 266.

throughout the Victorian era, a fact confirmed by the participation of many Church of Scotland ministers and laity in the famous Moody revival of 1873–74 and the Keswick holiness movement.¹³ If only half as many students from the Church of Scotland studied in Germany as from the predominantly evangelical Free Church and United Presbyterians—approximately ninety—that they studied in almost the exact same places suggests a stock evangelical piety and theology shared between the breakaway churches and at least a section of the established church.¹⁴ Third, if the common assumption that liberal theology was the sole export of Germany's university faculties of theology is true, then what are we to make of the claim made by Schaff in 1891 that it was not liberal theology but the orthodox mediating theology [*Vermittlungstheologie*] which “has exerted more influence upon modern English and American thought than any other German school”?¹⁵

This study draws a rough map of evangelical Scottish Presbyterians' *Studienjahre* in the German faculties of theology, c. 1840 to 1914. Mapping the traffic of Presbyterian students from Scotland to Germany, which ran alongside church and para-church cooperation between Christians on the continent and those in the English-speaking world during the nineteenth century, provides key insights into the development of theology and religion in Britain and, more broadly, international evangelicalism.¹⁶ The map drawn from tracing the routes of the land-leaping students of divinity does not always connect to the progressive parties in the Victorian church many scholars have considered as the typical reflectors of German theology. Nor does it give the ‘last word’ to the violent imagery found in much Victorian-era literature of a confrontation between reckless Teutonic theology and Britons' good religion and good sense. For it will become apparent that Scottish Presbyterians, like their evangelical brethren elsewhere, generally sought out German faculties of theology or persons within those faculties who were of orthodox reputation, such as proponents of *Neuluthertum* or the *Vermittlungstheologie*. And they did so to strengthen their evangelical beliefs. How else can we make sense of the knot which nineteenth-

¹³ On evangelicalism in the established Church of Scotland see Norman Walker, *Religious Life in Scotland: from the Reformation to the Present Day*, London 1888, 189–311; William Garden Blaikie, *An Autobiography*, London 1901, 114; Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707*, Edinburgh 1997, 14–41.

¹⁴ Likewise, that considerably more students from the Church of Scotland than from the other two churches visited Oxford in the latter part of the nineteenth century may suggest links between the broad church segments of the two established churches.

¹⁵ Philip Schaff, *Theological Propædæutic I*, New York 1892, 352.

¹⁶ This is not to suggest that theological traffic ran on an *Einbahnstraße* from the Continent to Britain. See for example, Nicholas Railton, *No North Sea: The Anglo-German Evangelical Network in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*, Leiden 2000; Stephan Holthaus, *Fundamentalismus in Deutschland*, Bonn 1993; John Roxborough, *Thomas Chalmers: Enthusiast for Mission. The Christian Good of Scotland and the Rise of the Missionary Movement*, Carlisle 1999; Kenneth J. Stewart, *Restoring the Reformation: British Evangelicals and the Francophone ‘Reveil’ 1816–1846*, Milton Keynes 1996. Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, *Johannes Christian Konrad von Hofmann – Theologe in der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, in: *Programme der Theologie: Denker, Schulen, Wirkungen von Schleiermacher bis Moltmann*, München 1978, 90–103, here 93, notes that Hofmann was fascinated with Thomas Chalmers's writings on the ‘godly commonwealth’ and efforts for parish reform.

century Anglo-American theological literature leaves to the historian to untie? Charles Hodge (1797–1878) of the Presbyterian Princeton Seminary, the most influential American theologian of his generation, could make a damning statement: "The taste for German writers on theology is factitious, alien to the genius of the Anglo-American mind, and productive, wherever it exists, of debilitating and rhapsodical musing".¹⁷ Yet Hodge happily admitted a deep intellectual and spiritual debt to his friend, August Tholuck, with whom he studied at Halle in the late 1820s!¹⁸ This study finds common ground, then, with the work of some other scholars who have uncovered surprising conclusions about the openness of evangelicals in America and the British Empire to German theology, evolution, and biblical criticism, because they refuse to impose a tidy liberal-conservative grid onto nineteenth-century English-speaking Protestantism.¹⁹ An effect of this study might also be to challenge the presumption that nineteenth-century German theology was liberal theology, which many American, British, and Canadian historians of theology hold, having learned it from neo-orthodoxy's harsh judgement of the theological century that preceded it. A failure to respect the complexity of nineteenth-century German theology results in a failure to properly estimate its effect upon evangelicalism and, more broadly, English-speaking Protestantism.

II. Why evangelical Presbyterians?

There are a number of reasons why many of the international students who visited German faculties of theology in the nineteenth century were evangelical Presbyterians from Scotland. Some of these reasons lie deep in Scotland's political and ecclesiastical context or in the very *Wesen* of Presbyterianism. Some of these reasons are specific to Victorian-era evangelical Presbyterianism in Scotland. First, simply put, even into the nineteenth century Presbyterian Scotland trusted Lutheran Germany more than it did Episcopal England. Scottish Protestantism has not had a harmonious relationship with its greater southern neighbour and its Episcopal church. As a result, Scottish theology has habitually looked to the Continent rather than England for inspiration and stimulation.²⁰ Reformation and post-Reformation

¹⁷ Charles Hodge, Review Article I: History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church by the Apostles, By Augustus Neander, in: *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 15 (1844), 182.

¹⁸ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology II*, New York 1871, 451, note 52; A. A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge*, New York 1880, 115–124, 133–142, 208–210, 216–219.

¹⁹ A. P. F. Sell, *The Rise and Reception of Biblical Criticism*, in: *EvQ* 53 (1980), 132–148; Mark Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship and the Bible*, New York 1986; Richard Riesen, *Criticism and Faith in Late Victorian Scotland*, Lanham 1988; David Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter Between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought*, Grand Rapids 1987; Mark Hopkins, *Nonconformity's Romantic Generation: Evangelical and Liberal Theologies in Victorian England*, Carlisle 2004.

²⁰ At the time of the Reformation, Scotland looked primarily to Geneva, England to Zürich. See Andrew Pettegree, *The Spread of Calvin's Thought*, in: Donald McKim (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, Cambridge, 207–224; W. J. Torrance Kirby, *The Zurich Connection and Tudor Political Theory*, Leiden 2007.

Scottish divines were often schooled on the Continent or took up teaching posts there.²¹ During the times in the seventeenth century when the Stuart monarchs forced bishops on the Scottish church, many Presbyterian ministers waited out their exile in continental centres of Reformed Protestantism. Political ties between France and Scotland dated from the Middle Ages: Huguenot academies in Sedan and Saumur were thus natural choices for Scottish students. Relative ease of transportation to and from the Calvinist Netherlands, plus the international reputation of Leiden, Groningen, and Utrecht drew many Scots. Scottish students frequented the University of Heidelberg in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as Reformed academies in Herborn and Geneva. Added to this was the fact that Presbyterians were barred from taking degrees at Oxford and Cambridge until subscription to the Anglican articles of faith was lifted in 1871. When the turmoil of the Napoleonic era ended, and the British Isles were no longer so isolated from the rest of Europe, Scottish divinity was ready to renew its old habit of going to the Continent for theological stimulation and to sidestep Anglican intolerance.

This tendency was encouraged by the fact that the traditions at the centre of this study, the Free Church and the United Presbyterians, were evangelical. They were part, therefore, of the dominant form of English-speaking Protestantism in the nineteenth century—a movement that crossed with ease international, confessional, and denominational borders.²² Trans-national mission organizations, Bible societies, prayer groups, and revivals, as well shared doctrinal beliefs, made evangelicalism a truly international movement, a fact strengthened by the founding of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846.²³ During the same period a growing sense of theological brotherhood among Reformed denominations led to the formation in 1875 of the Presbyterian and Reformed Alliance, the forerunner of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, in which all Scottish Presbyterian churches participated from the onset.²⁴ True, the reasons listed above do not yet suggest why Germany was the destination of so many Scottish divinity students in the nineteenth century. They do, however, show that paths connected Scottish divinity to the Continent. If some of those paths had been little used in the later eighteenth and very early nineteenth century, they were not so faded that new feet would not find them.

A second reason why Victorian-era Scottish Presbyterians studied in Germany owes to the fact of Presbyterianism as a highly cerebral and doctrinally muscular Protestant body. Presbyterianism has always been radically oriented to the Bible as

²¹ A. L. Drummond, *The Kirk and the Continent*, Edinburgh 1956, 26–136.

²² Ulrich Gäbler, *„Auferstehungszeit“: Erweckungsprediger des 19. Jahrhunderts*, München 1991; Mark Noll/David Bebbington/George Rawlyk (edd.), *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700–1990*, New York 1994; John Wolfe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: the Age of Wilberforce, More, Finney, and Chalmers*, Leicester 2007; David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: the Age of Spurgeon and Moody*, Leicester 2005; idem, *Evangelical Theology in the English-Speaking World during the Nineteenth Century*, in: *SBET* 22 (2004), 133–150.

²³ Ian Randall/David Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance*, Carlisle 2001.

²⁴ Marcel Pradervand, *A Century of Service: A History of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1875–1975*, Edinburgh 1975.

the sole rule of the church's faith and practice; historically, that rule has been expressed systematically through various confessions of faith, most famously the Westminster Confession of 1647. Presbyterian churches have insisted upon *notitia* of God's truth and *assensus* to it as marks of the true church. As a result, they have typically demanded an educated ministry capable of the clear, intelligent presentation of the biblical message, and encouraged a theologically literate laity, keen to learn those doctrines of faith. Upon visiting Scotland in 1845, the Swiss church historian J. H. Merle D'Aubigne marvelled at the penetrating grasp of Christian doctrine by the average Presbyterian layperson.²⁵ Presbyterians share with Lutherans a rich confessional heritage. The contrast with Anglicanism, centred as it has been on the *Book of Common Prayer*, is equally obvious. William Cunningham, theologian and principal of the Free Church's New College, Edinburgh, from 1847 to 1861, despised the 'Anglican mind' as simply incapable of *thinking* the Christian faith—in contrast, he felt, to Scotland, Germany, and even Rome.²⁶ Thus, a major reason why Scots concerned themselves with German theology in the nineteenth century was that there and then biblical criticism, systematic theology, and *Dogmengeschichte* were being most avidly pursued. A Reformed church in “a country of the Book” could not ignore the new, often threatening, questions being asked in the German universities of the Bible, the church's dogmas, and its historical self-awareness.²⁷ If it did, it broke faith with its past and forfeited its present witness. Indeed, leaders like Chalmers and Cunningham felt it a reproach that Germany rather than Calvinist Scotland was leading the way in the study of the biblical text and history.²⁸

In his account of the origin and development of academic theology in the nineteenth-century German universities, Thomas Howard wrote: “No small number of foreign theologians and religious leaders came to the conclusion that contemporary Protestant theology led by Germany represented something of a watershed in the history of Christianity [...]. It was either pioneering brave new possibilities for the progress of Christian thought or else it was leading the faithful down a destructive path of restless innovation and hubristic erudition”.²⁹ Evangelical Scottish Presbyterians were well aware that German theology was pursuing *both* paths, a fact which August Tholuck detected as early as 1835 when visiting Britain.³⁰ As such, it wanted to meet head-on the challenge coming from Germany. This would defuse its dangers

²⁵ J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, *Germany, England, and Scotland; or, Recollections of a Swiss Minister*, New York 1848, 119f., 122.

²⁶ Robert Rainy and James Mackenzie, *The Life of William Cunningham*, D.D., London 1871, 437, 495–97.

²⁷ The phrase is from A. C. Cheyne, *The Bible and Change in the Nineteenth Century*, in: *Studies in Scottish Church History*, Edinburgh 1999, 123–138, here 124.

²⁸ Rainy and Mackenzie, *The Life of William Cunningham* (cf. fn. 23), 511.

²⁹ Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (cf. fn. 5), 271.

³⁰ Leopold Witte, *Das Leben Tholuck's II*, Bielefeld–Leipzig 1886, 250. Tholuck explained: “die einen schließen sich mehr an die christliche neue deutsche Theologie an, die anderen an die laue vermittelnde von Morus, Joppe, Kuinvel”. At the same time, Scottish students in Germany were often shocked at the low level of church attendance there, and the practical unbelief of many of the people they encountered.

and, at the same time, reap its benefits. In fact, this dual goal would appear to be an important background factor behind the founding of the Free Church's New College, Edinburgh, as a premier theological college in Britain, and the fact that the Free Church was the first denomination in Britain to erect chairs in critical exegesis at New College and its other colleges in Glasgow and Aberdeen.³¹ It also explains why evangelical Presbyterian students and scholars were encouraged to read the best German divinity and to study in Germany.³²

Finally, a number of factors peculiar to the breakaway Presbyterian churches in Victorian Scotland helped cause the waves of Free Church and United Presbyterian students to Germany. From its very beginning, the Free Church was remarkably ambitious. It saw itself as the true Church of Scotland, the guardian and inheritor of the rich Reformed tradition in Britain, and the vanguard of international evangelicalism—a bold opinion shared by some outside observers.³³ The high calling of its ministers and professors to the work of Christ's church demanded the best resources at hand: for many, this included studies in Germany. While Scottish divinity studies were superior to that in the English universities—a Leipzig professor warned British students interested in a semester in Germany that their universities were places of real learning, not “finishing schools” for gentlemen as at Oxford and Cambridge!—there was no doubt that German divinity was leading the way in technical expertise.³⁴ Already in the 1830s, evangelicals in the Church of Scotland were interested in Germany's theology and its models of theological education, although students of this tradition did not begin arriving in German faculties until the 1850s.³⁵ This twenty-year lag is understandable. The decade leading up to the 1843 Disruption fully absorbed evangelicals in theological debate and ecclesiastical politicking; the decade after saw the infant Free Church concentrating on building a church infrastructure *ex nihilo*.

The United Presbyterians also valued an educated ministry. Nor was the Secession tradition bothered by the ecclesiastical conflict that gripped the Church of Scotland. And yet a very mundane reason helps explain why secessionist students were the first Scots to study in Germany. By seceding from the state church in the eighteenth century, secessionist churches lost all the benefits of the church establishment,

³¹ On New College's founding see Stewart Brown, *The Disruption and the Dream: the Making of the New College 1843–1861*, in: David F. Wright/Gary D. Badcock (edd.), *Disruption to Diversity: Edinburgh Divinity 1846–1996*, Edinburgh 1996, 29–50. British Nonconformity was close behind the Presbyterians in engaging German Biblical criticism: see Willis B. Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century*, London 1954.

³² Alexander R. MacEwen, *The Life and Letters of John Cairns*, London 1895, 149–154. Note the German books recommended in: *Proposal for the Foundation and Formation of Libraries in the Manses of the Free Church of Scotland; with a Catalogue of Books, Revised and Recommended by the The Rev. W. Cunningham, D.D., Principal, and The Rev. J. Buchanan, D.D., Professor of Theology, New College, Edinburgh 1849*.

³³ D'Aubigne concluded breathlessly after meeting Chalmers and sitting in on the Free Church General Assembly in 1845 that the infant denomination “is perhaps destined at the present period to be the vanguard of Christ's army”. D'Aubinge, *Germany, England, and Scotland* (cf. fn. 22), 120.

³⁴ Caspar Gregory, *The Study of Theology in Germany, especially at Leipzig*, in: *ET 3* (1891), 18–20, here 18.

³⁵ Drummond, *The Kirk and the Continent* (cf. fn. 18), 235.

including the right to train ministers in the divinity faculties in the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St. Andrews. They had to educate their own candidates for ministry. The humble state of theological education in the secessionist churches in the early part of the nineteenth century meant that these candidates gathered with part-time professors for an intense summer session. A ten-month recess followed in which students studied independently while working at jobs or in a ministry practicum. This ‘long vacation’, which remained until the United Presbyterian Divinity Hall was reorganized in 1878, allowed students to spend the fall, winter, or spring in Germany.³⁶ And so it was, wrote Andrew Drummond, that “between 1840 and 1850 several brilliant students (afterwards made famous in the United Presbyterian Church) made history by resuming the habit of post-graduate study, which two centuries earlier, had drawn our theologues to Heidelberg, Herborn, and Helmstädt”.³⁷

III. Which German faculties of theology?

Presbyterian students crossed the *Nordsee* in three waves.³⁸ The first wave carried over a small number of students from the secessionist tradition during the 1840s and early 1850s. Like their American Reformed brothers, the secessionist students gravitated to Halle and Berlin; Göttingen’s reputation among American evangelicals as a stronghold of neology appears to have kept it off their *Wanderjahre*, too.³⁹ Theology at Halle had also been dominated by neology when Americans began arriving in the 1820s, looking to improve their philological skills under the famous Hebraist Wilhelm Gesenius.⁴⁰ But the 1826 calling of August Tholuck (1799–1877) to a professorship in the faculty was a landmark moment in the history of the transmission of German theology to the English-speaking world. Tholuck’s Christ-centred

³⁶ David Woodside, *The Soul of a Scottish Church; or, The Contribution of the United Presbyterian Church to Scottish Life and Religion*, Edinburgh 1917, 109–10, 135–36.

³⁷ Drummond, *The Kirk and the Continent* (cf. fn. 18), 235.

³⁸ A tally of around 250 is made from the denominational records, which give details of where ministers studied: William Ewing (ed.), *Annals of the Free Church of Scotland 1843–1900*, Edinburgh 1914; John A. Lamb (ed.), *The Fasti of the United Free Church of Scotland 1900–1929*, Edinburgh 1956; Robert Small (ed.), *History of the Congregations of the United Presbyterian Church from 1733 to 1900*, Edinburgh 1904; Hugh Scott (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: the Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, Edinburgh 1915–1928. These annals are neither comprehensive nor exact. They do not always record if a student studied in Germany even when other sources like biographies and autobiographies indicate that he did. Nor do they give the exact date of study. This I estimate by adding twenty years to the date of birth. For these reasons, I give approximate dates for the three waves of students and avoid making a final tally of exactly how many evangelical Presbyterians studied in Germany in this period.

³⁹ H. C. Alexander, *The Life of Joseph Addison Alexander I*, New York 1870, 323–37; A. A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge* (cf. fn. 18), 164–66, 181–84. See also James Moorhead, *Joseph Addison Alexander: Common Sense, Romanticism and Biblical Criticism at Princeton*, in: *JPH* 53 (1975), 51–65.

⁴⁰ Ernst Kähler, *Halle, Universität*, in: *TRE* 14, 388–92, especially 390–92; *250 Jahre Universität Halle: Streifzüge durch ihre Geschichte in Forschung und Lehre*, Halle 1944, 88–109.

piety—he had made Zinzendorf's motto, "Ich hab' nur Eine Passion, und die ist Er, nur Er" his own—Biblicism, and orthodoxy resonated with evangelicals.⁴¹ He became a beacon that drew many of them to Halle, and his fluency in English and willingness to befriend students of promising intellect and pious heart created lasting friendships with many evangelical students from Scotland and America. The friendships formed in these early years were maintained over the next decades by Tholuck's involvement in the Evangelical Alliance, even if Halle ceased to be a destination for Scottish evangelicals after the early 1850s.⁴²

From the standpoint of evangelicalism, Tholuck well deserves the epitaph 'church father of the nineteenth century' (Martin Kähler). He mentored students who would become among the most significant Reformed theologians of the nineteenth-century evangelical world.⁴³ Tholuck's interpretation of the history of German theology was very important in convincing these future leaders of evangelicalism that the cold and impious neology of the Enlightenment was *not* the extent of German theology. Rather, through the impulses of the *Erweckungsbewegung* and Schleiermacher, much German theology had returned to the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, and the Reformation's testimony to the reality of sin and grace, even if this return tended to skip over seventeenth-century orthodoxy.⁴⁴ Tholuck's American students included Hodge of Princeton, whom he came to consider a close friend, George Park Fisher of Yale, H. B. Smith of Union Seminary, Moses Stuart and Edwards Amasa Park of Andover Seminary; Tholuck's Scottish visitors included the Congregationalist theologian, W. Lindsay Alexander, John Ker, an influential United Presbyterian pastor and professor who studied with him for six months in 1842, and John Cairns (1818–92), who would shoot to prominence as the leader of the secessionist tradition in Scotland, and principal of the United Presbyterians' Divinity Hall.⁴⁵ In the spring of 1844, Tholuck was orienting Cairns to contemporary German theology, even as *das Studentenleben* was opening the young Scot's mind to a new culture—he excitedly wrote to his family that almost all his fellow students owned a strange thing called a coffee machine! Cairns was a gifted student who quickly mastered

⁴¹ See Hans-Walter Krumwiede, August G. Tholuck, in: Martin Greschat (ed.), *Gestalten der Kirchengeschichte* 9.1, Stuttgart ²1994, 281–292.

⁴² See August Tholuck, *Evangelical Theology in Germany: Survey of my Life as a Teacher of Theology*, in: Phillip Schaff/S. Irenaeus Prime (ed.), *History, Essays, Orations, and Other Documents of the Sixth General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance, Held in New York, October 2–12, 1873*, New York, 85–89.

⁴³ Witte, *Das Leben Tholuck's II* (cf. fn. 27), 21, 73–78, 142, 169, 490–91, 527. Useful (from the American side) is Roland H. Bainton, *Yale and German Theology in the middle of the nineteenth century*, in: ZKG 66 (1954), 294–302.

⁴⁴ E.g. Hodge, *Systematic Theology I* (cf. fn. 15), 303, II: 440, 452, 534. See also Peter C. Erb, *Pietism and Tractarian Oxford*. Edward Bouverie Pusey, *Evangelicalism and the Interpretation of German Theology*, in: Wolfgang Breul-Kunkel/Lothar Vogel (ed.), *Rezeption und Reform: Festschrift für Hans Schneider zu seinem 60. Geburtstag*, Darmstadt–Kassel, 399–412.

⁴⁵ Lionel Alexander Ritchie, Ker, John (1819–1886), in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15453>, accessed 9 Sept 2008]; Cairns, *Principal Cairns* (cf. fn. 3), 55–58; McEwen, *The Life and Letters of John Cairns* (cf. fn. 29), 148–209. The chronology is uncertain: Cairn's biography states that he visited Germany in 1843, and that Ker and others followed him there.

German, and Tholuck sought in vain to have him remain in Halle as a *Privatdozent*. It is not difficult to see Tholuck’s warm piety and ability to build ecumenical bridges around evangelical essentials, as well as his wariness of rigid dogmatic theology, reflected in Cairns’ subsequent career in Scottish church life and worldwide Reformed and evangelical circles.

Before visiting Halle, Cairns spent the winter semester of 1843–44 in Berlin. The theology faculty in Berlin was visible across the seas as the shining star of nineteenth-century German theology—Schaff insisted in *Germany* it was the best faculty in the best university in the world.⁴⁶ From the 1840s to 1914 it was, overall, the theology faculty most visited by evangelical Scots. By the time they began attending lectures there, Schleiermacher was, of course, dead.⁴⁷ But well-known professors remained who were perhaps more amenable to evangelical belief. The formidable E. W. Hengstenberg (1802–69) was *professor ordinarius* since 1828. His strict views on the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, and the dogmatic rather than historical method shown in his masterwork *Christologie des Alten Testaments*, are often ridiculed in German scholarship as regressive and restrictive. But such views were, in fact, standard in nineteenth-century evangelical churches like the Free Church and the United Presbyterians, and even within the more diverse Church of Scotland.⁴⁸ The church historian August Neander (1789–1855) attracted secessionist students, as he did other evangelicals. Cairns was wildly enthusiastic about Neander’s lectures. In letters home to his family he described how the eccentric professor lectured in a dirty coat, pausing every second sentence to spit, twisting his pen to pieces as he lost himself in passion for his subject. “When he has finished his lecture, you see only a mass of saliva and the rags of his pen. Neander is [...] the most wonderful being in the University [...] and I would gladly have come to Berlin to hear him alone”.⁴⁹ While Cairns professed to value above all Neander’s lectures in *Dogmatik* and *Sittenlehre*, his historical works had a much greater influence on Scottish Presbyterians and the evangelical world. The combined effect of Neander’s pectoral theology and his romantic historiography was to focus attention on the organic growth in history of the mystical body of Christ. This challenged evangelical Presbyterians’ inherited theory of church history as a fall from early purity of belief and piety, which was repaired only at the Reformation. It encouraged them as well to reckon historically with the subjective life of the Christian believer, instead of just with doctrine and polity.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Schaff, *Germany* (cf. fn. 2), 63.

⁴⁷ Walter Elliger, *150 Jahre Theologische Fakultät Berlin*, Berlin 1960; Walter Dreß, *Berlin, Universität*, in: *TRE* 5, 631–38, especially 635–36.

⁴⁸ Andrew Fairbairn, who had fled the stricter Calvinism of the Presbyterian churches in Scotland for Congregationalism, was still finding profitable Hengstenberg’s lectures on exegesis during his visit to Berlin in 1865. See W. B. Selbie, *The Life of Andrew Martin Fairbairn*, London 1914, 38.

⁴⁹ Cairns, *Principal Cairns* (cf. fn. 3), 57.

⁵⁰ Neander is recommended reading in *Proposal for the Foundation and Formation of Libraries in the Manses of the Free Church of Scotland* (cf. fn. 29). Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church I*, Peabody, Mass. 2002 [³1890], 37, notes Neander’s wide circulation among evangelical Protestants, as does G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, London ³1928, 535.

In the mid 1830s, on one of Tholuck's several visits to Britain, he remarked with surprise: "merkwürdig, welchen Einfluß aber allmählich die deutsche Theologie auch hier gewinnt. In Schottland lernen alle Theologen deutsch, mein Kommentar zur Bergpredigt und Römerbrief ist in Schottland übersetzt; auch in Cambridge lernt alles deutsch".⁵¹ It is important to note, that alongside this first wave of Scottish Presbyterians to Germany, an Edinburgh publishing house began translating German theological works for evangelical purposes. Upon a tour of Germany in the 1820s, Thomas Clark was struck by the idea of publishing translations of German theology and biblical studies which could strengthen the kind of evangelical beliefs he held, and which the denomination he joined some years later, the Free Church, exemplified.⁵² In the 1830s, Clark's Biblical Cabinet published works by theologians who were touched by the *Erweckungsbewegung*: Friedrich Krummacher, Hengstenberg, Neander, and no less than six volumes from Tholuck. In combination with his nephew (of the same name), T. & T. Clark of Edinburgh then established the Foreign Theological Library imprint, which published Neander's nine volume *General History of the Christian Religion and Church* (1847–55), Hengstenberg's *Christology of the Old Testament* (4 vol., 1854–58), further volumes by Tholuck, and works by theologians whom Scottish Presbyterians considered evangelical, like Hermann Olshausen, Rudolph Stier and Tholuck's Halle colleague Julius Müller.

A basic theological orientation connects the German theologians with whom secessionist students studied and the translations made by the Free Church-connected T. & T. Clark. This orientation explains why the University of Bonn was also a destination for the secessionist students: from its establishment in 1818, the theological faculty was mixed confession and pro-Union, and remained a conservative stronghold of the *Vermittlungstheologie* until the 1870s.⁵³ Scottish Presbyterians found this mediating theology amenable to their own evangelical convictions. Beyond that, this theological orientation explains the faculties of choice for the second wave of Scottish Presbyterians to Germany, which encompassed the years 1850 to 1890, and now included Free Church students in addition to United Presbyterians, as well as smaller numbers from the Church of Scotland.⁵⁴ At this point it is of the utmost importance to tune out the cries of 'Teutonic infidelity' heard

Neander's influence was by no means limited to evangelicals, either. Mrs. Oliphant, *A Memoir of John Tulloch*, Edinburgh 1888, 59–60, records Tulloch, the future principal of St. Mary's College at St. Andrew's University and liberal churchman, as deeply impressed by Neander's lectures upon his 1847 visit.

⁵¹ Witte, *Das Leben Tholuck's* II (cf. fn. 27), 248.

⁵² See James Harvey, *The Publishing House of Messrs. T. & T. Clark*, Edinburgh, in: ET 51 (1939), 10–13; J. A. H. Dempster, *A History of T. & T. Clark*, Soham 1992. Richard W. Pfaff, *Anglo-American Patristic Translations 1866–1900*, in: JEH 28 (1977), 39–58, here 48, notes that Philip Schaff credited T. & T. Clark with doing more than anyone else to make German theological scholarship accessible to the English-speaking theological world.

⁵³ Asserted by McEwen, *The Life and Letters of John Cairns* (cf. fn. 3), 149, although not supported by the *Fasti*. On the Bonn theology faculty see J. F. Gerhard Goeters, Bonn, Universität, in: TRE 7, 75–79, especially 76–77.

⁵⁴ Marcus Dods (ed.), *The Early Letters of Marcus Dods, D.D.: 1850–1864*, London 1910, indicates that the future New College professor was anticipating studying in Germany in the early 1850s.

often in Victorian Britain to listen closely to how Scottish Presbyterians *themselves* described German theologians and schools of thought. For even when Scottish Presbyterians engaged in such bluster, they were nevertheless aware that, from an evangelical perspective, theology in Germany contained wholesome wheat along with much chaff. There was no such thing as the ‘German theology’ of this polemical literature. Instead, a variety of theological positions and schools were found in the German university faculties over the long nineteenth century. Even within a faculty diversity of opinion was possible. Further, it is essential when listening to how Scottish Presbyterians described nineteenth-century German theology to bracket out contemporary scholarship’s carefully drawn categorizations like *Erweckungsbewegung*, *Neupietismus*, *Neuluthertum*, and *die Vermittlungstheologie*.⁵⁵ Evangelicals of this era did not use such neat categories.⁵⁶ They spoke, rather, of a montage of evangelical and orthodox theologians rooted in the *Erweckungsbewegung* and Schleiermacher’s rejuvenation of Protestant theology, deeply opposed to the rationalistic theological tendencies in Germany. It went under the name of “Liberal Orthodox”, “Liberal Evangelical”, “Mediating school”, “believing theologians”, or just “Evangelical”. For example, William Hastie included within this mediating evangelical school Johann Tobias Beck, Stier, and Tholuck, theologians whom most church historians would now classify as pietists or neo-pietists.⁵⁷ Upon the death of the Old Testament scholar Franz Delitzsch, his friend Stewart Salmond of the Free Church College, Aberdeen, wrote: “We owe much more than we have yet confessed to men like Ewald, Rothe, Hofmann, Beck, Tholuck, Müller, Dorner, Dollinger, not to speak of Schleiermacher, Neander, and others of earlier date [...]. May God raise up among us scholars of the same rank and of like spirit, able to wed the new learning of the present and the robust, evangelical faith of the past”.⁵⁸ Under editor William Blaikie of New College, Edinburgh, *The Catholic Presbyterian* (the organ of the Presbyterian and Reformed Alliance) ran a series of articles in 1879–80 on contemporary evangelical German theologians. Included were the neo-Lutheran Christoph Luthardt and mediating theologians Isaak Dorner and August Ebrard.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ E.g. Felix Flückiger, *Die Protestantische Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 1975; Eckhard Lessing, *Geschichte der deutschsprachigen evangelischen Theologie von Albrecht Ritschl bis zur Gegenwart I: 1870–1918*, Göttingen 2000; F. W. Kantzenbach and Joachim Mehlhausen, *Neuluthertum*, in: TRE 24, 327–41; Michael Murrmann-Kahl, *Vermittlungstheologie*, in: TRE 34, 730–737.

⁵⁶ For some evangelical opinions see Schaff, *Germany* (cf. fn. 2), 155; Bainton, *Yale and German theology* (cf. fn. 40), 298; George Park Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine*, Edinburgh 1896, 512–23; A. S. Peake, *The History of Theology*, in: A. S. Peake (ed.), *Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, Manchester, 129–184.

⁵⁷ William Hastie, Introduction, to: Frederic Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, Edinburgh 1889, xv.

⁵⁸ S. D. F. Salmond, *Franz Delitzsch: the Tribute of a Friend and Pupil*, in: ET 1 (1889/90), 201–203, here 201, 203.

⁵⁹ George Matheson, *Theologians of the Day- Dorner*, in: *The Catholic Presbyterian* 1 (1879), 350–58; idem, *Theologians of the Day- Ebrard*, in: *The Catholic Presbyterian* 2 (1879), 10–20; Alexander Stewart, *Theologians of the Day- Luthardt*, in: *The Catholic Presbyterian* 2 (1879), 446–54. Also see A. I. C. Heron, *An Exchange between Scotland and Germany in 1879: Ebrard of Erlangen and Matheson of Inellan*, in: SJTh 42 (1989), 341–366.

It is not surprising, then, that an inventory of the New College library from 1868 shows bookshelves full of divines whom church historians today would classify as neo-pietist, mediating, and neo-Lutheran.⁶⁰ During the decades 1850 to 1890, T. & T. Clark was making accessible in translation this German evangelical school: Johann Peter Lange, Dorner, Beck, Delitzsch, K. F. A. Kahnis, Richard Rothe, Friedrich Phillipi, Karl Nitzsch, Karl Ullmann, F. R. Frank, as well as Swiss evangelicals like Frédéric Godet and Alexandre Vinet. Of course, Scottish Presbyterians recognized diversity in this theological mosaic. Moreover, they were aware that this German evangelical group differed from their own evangelicalism in its more critical stance to the confessions of faith, enthusiasm for philosophical speculation, and willingness to concede errors of historical fact and detail in the Bible—this is what made some of them *liberal* evangelicals. Still, a stock evangelical faith was assumed between the Free Church and United Presbyterians and this German theological mosaic. The *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* (1853–89), closely linked with evangelical Presbyterians in Scotland, reviewed for its readers the contents of the mediating journal *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, the *Jahrbücher für Deutsche Theologie* edited by Isaak Dorner, and the confessionalist *Theologische Zeitschrift* and *Zeitschrift für die gesamte lutherische Theologie und Kirche*.⁶¹ It also translated articles that had originally appeared in these periodicals. Its mandate, of course, was to present a common evangelical front from Germany, Britain, and America against the forces of theological rationalism and infidelity.⁶²

With one exception, the second wave of Scottish Presbyterian students to Germany consistently reached university faculties and/or professors who shared this common evangelical faith. The *Fasti* indicate that Tübingen, Heidelberg, Berlin, Leipzig, and Erlangen were the schools of choice between approximately 1850 and 1890. The faculties of theology at these universities were either of a conservative or mediating reputation, or they hosted evangelical professors, such as the University of Tübingen, where Beck and Gustav Oehler taught alongside the theological descendants of F. C. Baur.⁶³ The one exception was Göttingen's faculty of philosophy, where the Old Testament scholar G. H. August Ewald (1803–75) was a magnet for Scots keen to improve their language skills and historical sensibilities.⁶⁴ Although even Ewald, it was explained to Scottish evangelicals, owed much to the Württemberg pietism of Bengel!⁶⁵ The Free Churchman A. B. Davidson (1831–1902), who studied at Göttingen in 1854, was probably the most influential of Ewald's many foreign

⁶⁰ William Paterson (ed.), *Catalogue of the Printed Books and Manuscripts in the Library of the New College, Edinburgh*, Edinburgh 1868.

⁶¹ I have taken information about these journals from Friedrich Mildenerger, *Geschichte der deutschen evangelischen Theologie in 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1981, 239–252.

⁶² J. A. H. Dempster, *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, in: *Dictionary of Scottish Theology and Church History* (cf. fn. 10), 95–96.

⁶³ Ulrich Köpf, Tübingen, Universität, in: *TRE* 34, 157–65, especially 161–64.

⁶⁴ J. Meyer, *Geschichte der Göttinger theologischen Fakultät*, in: *ZGNKG* 42 (1937), 7–107; Rudolph Smend, *Theologie in Göttingen*, in: Gerhard Besier/Edward Lohse (edd.), *Glaube-Bekenntnis-Kirchenrecht*, Göttingen 1989, 235–247.

⁶⁵ See Herman Freiherr von der Goltz, *Bengel and his School*, in: *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 11 (1862), 304–42, here 339.

students. Davidson’s biographer wrote: “In Old Testament and other Semitic studies he received effectual help elsewhere than in Edinburgh [...]. He went at the beginning of one of his summer vacations to Gottingen, where Ewald, the greatest Old Testament scholar of his time, was at the height of his power and fame. There he had doubtless much the same experiences as many another student in that pre-war time which now seems so far off”. His biographer assures readers, however, that despite the deep mark Ewald made on Davidson, the Scotsman “kept his head and was rather inclined to be critical”. In a teaching career that lasted until 1902, Davidson mediated an evangelical form of Ewald’s understanding of the Old Testament as historical revelation to an entire generation of New College students (as well as using a translation of Ewald’s Hebrew grammar as a textbook).⁶⁶ Davidson’s protégé, the flashy William Robertson Smith, whose aggressive pursuit of a critical historical approach to the Bible landed him before the Free Church Assembly on heresy charges, also studied with Ewald, and to the end of his life counted him as one of his biggest influences. But it is typical of evangelical Presbyterians of this time that Robertson Smith combined study with Ewald with a summer semester (1867) in Bonn with J. P. Lange (1802–84),⁶⁷ whose conservative Biblical commentaries and *Das Leben Jesu* were published in Edinburgh at this time, and then Heidelberg, with the mediating divines Rothe and Friedrich Nippold.⁶⁸

Robertson Smith had been initially wary of going to Heidelberg. Scottish Presbyterians were ambivalent about Rothe (1799–1867), who formed the centre of the Heidelberg faculty during his professorships from 1837–49 and again 1854–67. Despite a converted heart, his speculative mind pushed the boundaries of evangelical and orthodox theology.⁶⁹ The conservative Calvinist John Laidlaw, professor of systematic theology at New College from 1881–1904, shows well this ambivalence. Laidlaw studied at Heidelberg in the summer of 1858.⁷⁰ While Daniel Schenkel was a “windbag” [*Schwätzer*], Rothe’s words were gold. Laidlaw acclaimed him as the greatest Protestant theologian since Schleiermacher. Almost forty years later, he recalled lecture halls packed with students listening to Rothe lecture on the beauty of the mediation of the human and divine, church and world, *Wissenschaft* and piety. But Laidlaw implied that Rothe’s insistence that the Bible was not the Word of God but merely an historical witness to it—and even then not divine revelation’s only witness—was clearly less than the evangelical position on Scripture. Might it also be

⁶⁶ James Strahan, *Andrew Bruce Davidson*, London 1917, 66–67. Compare also with Roger Tomes, ‘Learning a New Technique’: The Reception of Biblical Criticism in the Non-Conformist Colleges, in: *JURCHS* 7 (2004), 288–314.

⁶⁷ S. D. F. Salmond, Professor William Robertson Smith, in: *ET* 5 (1894), 356–361, especially 358; J. Sutherland Black and George Chrystal, *The Life of William Robertson Smith*, London 1912, 55–95. See also Ronald Nelson, *The Theological Development of the Young Robertson Smith*, in: *EvQ* 45 (1973), 81–99.

⁶⁸ J. P. Lange, *The Life of the Lord Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh 1864. Lange’s long tenure at Bonn from 1854–80 helped ensure the faculty’s conservative character.

⁶⁹ Heinrich Bornkamm, *Die Heidelberger theologische Fakultät*, in: *Ruperto-Carola. Aus der Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg und ihrer Fakultäten*, Heidelberg 1961, 135–162; Gustav Adolph Benrath, *Heidelberg, Universität*, in: *TRE* 14, 574–81, especially 576–80.

⁷⁰ John Laidlaw, *Richard Rothe, of Heidelberg*, in: *ET* 10 (1899), 439–443.

the case that the ambivalence felt toward Rothe by evangelical Presbyterians owed *something* to the fact his Hegelian-influenced belief in the ultimate fusion of state and church sounded very much like the sanctification of the Erastian principle that Free Church and United Presbyterians disavowed? In any case, it is remarkable that twenty-five years after Rothe's death, T. & T. Clark's *Expository Times* was publishing in instalments his commentary on I John. Rothe's enduring popularity among British evangelicals, Scottish Presbyterians included, throughout the latter third of the Victorian era, in other words, long after the sort of speculative mediating theology he promoted was *passé* in Germany, is partly attributable to the fact that philosophical idealism was in vogue in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century. Hegel's thought was receiving much attention, especially at the universities of Oxford and Glasgow.⁷¹

Another mediating theologian, Isaak Dorner (1809–84), drew many Scottish Presbyterians and Congregationalists to Berlin. Indeed, the *Expository Times* reported: "Dorner has been singularly fortunate in the favour he enjoys with British students".⁷² As with Rothe, long after Dorner's own star had faded in Germany and, in fact, long after his death, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi* and *System der christlichen Glaubenslehre* remained influential in evangelical theology.⁷³ Already from the 1860s, Free Church and United Presbyterian theologians considered very seriously his criticism of the Chalcedonian Christology their confessional standards committed them to; they also appropriated many of his insights concerning the priority of the incarnation in theological methodology, and were challenged by his critique of the dualism inherent in evangelicalism's traditional view of redemption.⁷⁴ The personal link between Scottish divinity and Dorner also continued after his death: his son August Dorner warmly greeted the initial publication of the *The Catholic Presbyterian*, and hoped it would serve as a bridge for continued contact between Scotland and Germany.⁷⁵

Scottish Presbyterians flocked to the University of Erlangen c. 1850 to 1865.

This was the theology faculty's *Blütezeit*: August Ebrard (1818–88) and J. J. Herzog (1805–82) held the chair in Reformed theology, and the neo-Lutherans Gottfried Thomasius (1802–75), Hofmann (1810–77), and Delitzsch (1813–90) were famous.⁷⁶

⁷¹ See A. P. F. Sell, *Philosophical Idealism and Christian Belief*, New York 1995.

⁷² John S. Banks, *Our Debt to German Theology*, in: *ET* 4 (1892/93), 72–74, 121–122, 172–174, here 122. For an American Presbyterian perspective see Friedrich Wilhelm Graf/Johannes Wischmeyer, "Verständigung der Protestanten diesseits und jenseits des Ozeans" – die Korrespondenz zwischen Isaak August Dorner und Charles A. Briggs (1866–1884), in: *JHMTh/ZNThG* 15 (2008), 56–118.

⁷³ *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Edinburgh 1861–72; *A System of Christian Doctrine*, Edinburgh 1880–1890.

⁷⁴ For example, Dorner on the Sinless Perfection of Christ, in: *British Foreign and Evangelical Review* 11 (1862), 583–632; Dorner on the Immutability of God, in: *British Foreign and Evangelical Review* 12 (1863), 348–77. Note especially Dorner's influence on James Orr, professor at the United Free Church College in Glasgow: *The Christian View of God and the World as Centring on the Incarnation*, Edinburgh 1893; *The Progress of Dogma*, London 1901. See further Glen G. Scorgie, *A Call for Continuity: the Theological Contribution of James Orr*, Macon 1988, especially 48; 50–51; 97; 111; 125; 155.

⁷⁵ J. A. Dorner in *Notes and Queries*, in: *The Catholic Presbyterian* 1 (1879), 159–60.

James Candlish (1835–97), who studied at Erlangen and later became professor of systematic theology at Glasgow Free Church College, wrote: “In these days, when so many students are, year by year in increasing number, flocking to the Universities in Germany, and studying the productions of its fertile minds, the University of Erlangen is one that has become of late a very favourite resort of this purpose. Many reasons might be assigned for this. For one thing, the place possesses no small attractions of an external kind. A quiet country town in Northern Bavaria, it lies amid pleasant and picturesque scenery [...]. Erlangen is a place where a summer may be pleasantly spent, and where the aspects of German life in town and country may be observed, free from the disturbing influence of tourists and travellers. And then, too, in its University it possesses attractions of a high order for the theologian. It may be said to be the head-quarters of the modern Lutheran orthodoxy”.⁷⁷ The Erlangen school of neo-Lutheranism owed as much to the *Erweckungsbewegung* (as did Ebrard and Herzog) as it did to the doctrines of the Reformation, so among Scots it had the reputation as being evangelical, even despite the haughty attachment of many of its professors to the Book of Concord. Among the Erlangen faculty, Hofmann himself should be singled out for the profound influence he had on Scottish theology through his writings and through the Presbyterian students who attended his lectures. Hofmann’s defence of supernatural revelation, God’s saving action in Jesus Christ, and the authority of the Bible, suggested John Dickie, were valued by Scots as buttresses to orthodox and evangelical theology.⁷⁸ Dickie added, however, that Hofmann’s insistence on the historical process of divine revelation weaned evangelical Presbyterians away from their strong view of the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible, while his emphasis on the organic nature of Christian truth challenged the traditional Presbyterian tendency to systematize revelation into doctrine. Be that as it may, Hofmann’s fingerprints are all over Robert Rainy’s important *Delivery and Development of Christian Doctrine*.⁷⁹ Rainy (1826–1906), the principal of New College and ecclesiastical mastermind of the Free Church in the late Victorian era, leaned on Hofmann’s concept of *Heilsgeschichte* to encourage Presbyterians to view revelation as above all historical. Further, he appropriated the Erlangen school’s interpretation of confessions of faith as the living expression of the church’s own progressive understanding of divine revelation, rather than as a *regula fidei* imposed from outside. Schaff had complained in 1857 that English-speaking Protestants had shut their eyes to the law of development, “which pervades all created life, all the

⁷⁶ Karlmann Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie*, Erlangen 1993, 58–111; Martin Heim, Erlangen, Universität, in: TRE 10, 159–64, especially 161–64.

⁷⁷ James Candlish, *German Discussions of the Atonement*, in: *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 14 (1865), 121–147, here 121–122.

⁷⁸ John Dickie, *Fifty Years of British Theology: A Personal Retrospect*, Edinburgh 1937, 87–88. Alexander Robb, *Inspiration and Modern Criticism*, in: *The United Presbyterian Magazine* 21 (1877), 396–401, is a good example of Hofmann being enlisted to defend a traditional notion of inspiration from radical criticism.

⁷⁹ Robert Rainy, *Delivery and Development of Christian Doctrine*, Edinburgh 1874. One of Hofmann’s Scottish students, S. D. F. Salmond, found that Davidson and Hofmann shared a similar method and goal. See Salmond, A. B. Davidson, D.D., in: ET 8 (1897), 441–46, 536–42.

works of God".⁸⁰ Rainy's *Delivery and Development of Christian Doctrine* shows that Scottish Presbyterian eyes were being opened to the law of historical development at work in revelation and church history – with help from neo-Lutheranism. Under Rainy's cautious oversight, the Free Church opened itself both to the historical analysis of biblical history and the need to revise the seventeenth-century Westminster Confession according to the consciousness of the nineteenth-century church.⁸¹

Franz Delitzsch's departure for Leipzig in 1867 drew students away from Erlangen to Saxony's famous university.⁸² Delitzsch was often acclaimed in the evangelical world as Germany's greatest evangelical divine.⁸³ He attracted numerous Scottish and American students, so many, in fact, that he led a seminar for English-speaking internationals. Evangelicals found a kindred soul in a man who would tell his English-speaking *Studienkreis* how "he found the Lord" as a young man, who vigorously defended supernatural revelation and the atoning death of Christ, and whose own commitment to the Lutheran standards – unlike Hengstenberg, whose reputation among Scottish Presbyterians lowered as his Lutheranism became higher – did not prevent warm fellowship with students of various denominations.⁸⁴ Upon his death in 1890, tributes to "the great evangelical divine of Leipzig" poured in from these former students.⁸⁵ All Scottish ministers owned at least a few of Delitzsch's commentaries, claimed one of his former students. Perhaps Scottish Presbyterians, like other American and British evangelicals, increasingly accepted the composite nature of the book of Isaiah and Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis in part because their respected mentor of "evangelical and conservative position" himself eventually accepted both.⁸⁶

Following the first and second waves of Scottish Presbyterian students to Germany leads to theology faculties that were 'awakened' and orthodox like Berlin, Bonn, Erlangen, and Leipzig, or that hosted professors of evangelical reputation, like Tholuck in Halle and Beck in Tübingen. The theological traffic leads not from

⁸⁰ Schaff, Germany (cf. fn. 2), 311.

⁸¹ K. R. Ross, *Church and Creed in Scotland*, Edinburgh 1988; James Lachlan MacLeod, *Revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Free Church of Scotland's Declaratory Act of 1892*, in: J. Ligon Duncan (ed.), *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century*, Fearn 2003, 343–366.

⁸² Günther Wartenberg, Leipzig, Universität, in: TRE 20, 721–29, esp. 725–29; Otto Kirn, *Die Leipziger theologische Fakultät in fünf Jahrhunderten*, Leipzig 1909, 198–221.

⁸³ E.g. *Short Notices: Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*. By C. F. Keil, D.D., and F. Delitzsch, D.D., Professors of Theology, in: *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 36 (1864), 576.

⁸⁴ G. Elmsie Troup, Franz Delitzsch, in: ET 1 (1889/1890), 174–177. See also Salmond, Franz Delitzsch (cf. fn. 55), 201–203.

⁸⁵ Owen C. Whitehouse, Franz Delitzsch – Exegete and Theologian, in: ET 1 (1889/1890), 177–179, here 177.

⁸⁶ Samuel Ives Curtiss, Delitzsch on the Origin and Composition of the Pentateuch in: PR 2 (1882), 533–589, here 533. Curtiss lamented the direction Delitzsch was taking many evangelicals. A significant example is George Adam Smith, the United Free Church's most famous Old Testament scholar. He studied at Tübingen (1876) and with Delitzsch at Leipzig (1878), and became a popularizer of higher critical views. See Iain D. Campbell, *Fixing the Indemnity: The Life and Work of Sir George Adam Smith (1856–1942)*, Milton Keynes 2004.

‘conservative’ Scotland to ‘liberal’ Germany but from evangelical Scotland to evangelical Germany. This is not to say that Scottish Presbyterians students used German theology to serve a narrow and fixed theological program. “With respect to Scotland,” Tholuck had told an American student in 1853, “it is no use—Scotland will not change—will have everything the way it was in the days of John Knox”.⁸⁷ But Tholuck was wrong. During this period, Scottish students were being challenged and changed by their semesters in Germany and their reading of German theology. As the biographer of A. M. Fairbairn, a Scottish Congregationalist who had studied in Berlin with Dorner and Hengstenberg, wrote: “He had come from a land where religion was free but theology bound, to one where religion was bound but theology free”.⁸⁸ The German evangelicals with whom Scots studied claimed the freedom to look for solutions to the burning philosophical and theological issues of the day apart from theology’s past answers; *even* they—or, at least, many of them—gave history its rights over against Bible and church tradition. This worked to broaden evangelical theology in Scotland and beyond, and loosen Presbyterians’ attachment to their creeds and confession.

Yet, it is equally clear that the results of the transforming encounter of Scottish Presbyterianism with the evangelical mediating theology in Germany were still falling within the limits of the evangelical spectrum. Nor were Scots uncritical of what they were hearing in lecture halls or reading in their studies. Glasgow Free Church College professor Thomas Lindsay, who was no foe of German scholarship, told students in an 1875 address that “Germany has well-nigh done all the work it can for theology in the meantime”, because the university context of German theology had estranged it from the church. He added in reproach: “Germany has failed in a sympathetic construction of the development of dogma, just because dogma stands in the closest relation to the common life of the Christian Church or the Christian people, and so cannot be sympathetically apprehended or cultivated apart from that life”.⁸⁹ And even as late as 1891, that old student of Neander and Tholuck, John Cairns, was maintaining that Scottish divinity’s encounter with German theology was characterized by a critical sifting according to Reformed and evangelical criteria.⁹⁰

The explosion of Ritschlianism in Britain in the last decade of the nineteenth century propelled the third wave of Scottish Presbyterian students to Germany. It ended with the outbreak of the Great War. Scottish Presbyterians seemed to have discovered Albrecht Ritschl (1822–89) when Robertson Smith encountered him on his second sojourn to Germany in 1869.⁹¹ He praised Ritschl for grounding all theology upon the fact of Jesus Christ, for his evangelical doctrine of assurance, and

⁸⁷ Cited from Bainton, *Yale and German Theology* (cf. fn. 40), 300.

⁸⁸ Selbie, *The Life of Andrew Martin Fairbairn* (cf. fn. 45), 37–38.

⁸⁹ T. M. Lindsay, *The Study of Church History*, in: *College Addresses and Sermons*, Glasgow, 85.

⁹⁰ John Cairns, *Recent Dogmatic Thought in Scotland*, in: *PRR* 2 (1891), 193–215. See, similarly, John Laidlaw, *Modern Thought, Its Relation to Christianity and the Christian Church*, in: *PR* 6 (1885), 613–22, especially 614.

⁹¹ Black and Chrystal, *The Life of William Robertson Smith* (cf. fn. 64), 109–113. Troeltsch appears to have had little influence on Scottish divinity. See Hans Rollmann, *Die Beziehungen Ernst Troeltschs zu England und Schottland*, in: Horst Renz/Friedrich Wilhelm Graf (edd.), *Troeltsch-Studien* 3: *Protestantismus und Neuzeit*, Gütersloh 1984, 319–31, especially 319–20, 323–24.

his insistence upon the churchliness of theology. Oddly, he wildly misjudged Ritschl's program as "a sort of shrewd eclecticism which leaned decidedly to Calvinistic orthodoxy". A life-long friendship ensued between the two. Ritschl's entrance into Britain, however, stalled with the 1872 publication of the translation of volume one of *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*.⁹² Ritschlianism really only began to penetrate Scotland in the late 1880s, but became a force in the 1890s.⁹³ Controversy and debate over this new program raged over the next decades.⁹⁴ Indeed, one reason why Scottish theology in the late Victorian and Edwardian period is so fascinating is precisely because Ritschlianism and idealism were competing in the theological colleges and university faculties at the very same time.

In a rare instance of divergence, Church of Scotland students at century's end preferred the liberal University of Jena, perhaps to study with H. H. Wendt, whose works were known in Scotland.⁹⁵ The theology faculty at Berlin, which boasted the eminent Ritschlians Julius Kaftan and Adolph Harnack, was a destination for established church students as well as from the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church and, after 1900, United Free Church. But Marburg's Wilhelm Herrmann (1846–1922) was a phenomenon. David Cairns, the nephew of John Cairns, captured it in his autobiography.⁹⁶ Cairns (1862–1946) began studies at the United Presbyterian Divinity Hall in the late 1880s: the student body was agitated by questions of the reliability of the gospels and the reality of God, and felt isolated from their professors whose theological opinions (Cairns recalled) seemed to belong a more tranquil age of faith. Cairns supposed that many good students were lost to ministry in the evangelical Presbyterian churches at this time because the traditional *Weltanschauung* was too narrow for their questions and doubts. Ritschlianism made inroads into this troubled context. Evangelicals traditionally focussed on the Bible, Christ and his work on the cross, and practical Christianity. It was also, in the Victorian era at least, a species of cultural Protestantism. These were *Anknüpfungspunkte* with the Ritschlian call to go 'back to Christ', to focus on the actual work of Christ rather than speculate about his nature and incarnation, and to live out his ethical vision of the kingdom of God. Moreover, a Ritschlian like Herrmann offered solace to battered evangelicals like Cairns: Jesus' inspiring teaching instead of the old dogmas which were under fire as morally repugnant or tainted by metaphysical speculation; a faith

⁹² Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation I*, Edinburgh 1872.

⁹³ As late as 1889, Church of Scotland theologian George Galloway was introducing Ritschl to English-speaking Protestants in *The Theology of Ritschl*, in: PR 10 (1889), 192–209.

⁹⁴ E.g. James Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith*, London 1897; Alexander Mair, *The Modern Cry of 'Back to Christ'*, in: *The United Presbyterian Magazine* 14 (1897), 701–706; Robert Mackintosh, *Albrecht Ritschl and His School*, London 1915. The influx of Ritschlianism into Britain is handled well by A. P. F. Sell, *Ritschl Appraised: Then and Now*, in: RTR 38 (1979), 33–41. L. E. Elliot-Binns, *English Thought 1860–1900: the Theological Aspects*, London 1956, 79, errs in thinking Ritschlianism was confined to Scotland. He overlooks the fact that English Congregationalists took Ritschl's theology seriously, even if its main interpreters, Robert Mackintosh, A. E. Garvie and Peter Taylor Forsyth, were transplanted Scots.

⁹⁵ E.g. H. H. Wendt, *The Teaching of Jesus*, Edinburgh 1892.

⁹⁶ For what follows see David S. Cairns, *An Autobiography*, London 1950, 123–137. See also Hans Schneider, *Marburg, Universität*, in: TRE 22, 68–75, esp. 71–73.

kept safe from historical critics' scalpel work on the Bible because the present Christ made himself real to souls through the experience of faith. Students returning from studies in Germany began telling of a great prophet in Marburg. Cairns left with two friends to find out for himself. He recalled the atmosphere in Herrmann's lecture-room as like a prayer meeting; tears streamed down Herrmann's face as he warned his students of the dangers of materialistic science; students flocked to him as to the worship of a hero. Herrmann spoke about *Gott* like all German theologians did, Cairns remembered thinking, but *only* the Ritschlians and not the neo-Hegelians spoke about *den lebendigen Gott*. Unlike in America, where Ritschlianism bore great fruit as the 'social gospel', very few Scots fully converted to this school, although elements of the Ritschlian program influenced Scottish pulpits and lecture rooms. The great Scottish theologians who came of age before the First World War and exerted such influence up until the 1950s in theological scholarship and in the ecumenical movement, like H. R. Mackintosh, John and Donald Baillie, and Cairns, all studied with Herrmann during this period.⁹⁷

Did the third wave of students to Germany take place on the change of the tide? Secondary sources often depict the 1880s and 1890s as the time when orthodox doctrines and evangelical views on revelation and the Bible began to crumble before the juggernaut of German theology and biblical studies.⁹⁸ The late Victorian era saw the United Presbyterians and the Free Church pass declarations that permitted a more generous interpretation of the Westminster Confession; several prominent professors in the Free Church and United Free Church were formally accused before the General Assembly of unorthodox beliefs about the Bible. By the turn of the century, 'believing criticism' was becoming widely accepted, and, as David Bebbington argues, evangelicalism was becoming insecure, even if it maintained numerical dominance into the early twentieth century.⁹⁹ Is it a coincidence that John Dickie remembered Scots fawning over German theology in the last two decades of the nineteenth century? "The ultimate problems of theology and Bible [were being] tackled with great courage, and even something like finality [...] in Berlin, Göttingen, and Marburg".¹⁰⁰ Herrmann's answers to such ultimate problems may have seemed especially convincing: one United Free Church student at Marburg not only encountered "coffee and rolls such as the British kitchen never achieved", but also answers to his deep theological questions.¹⁰¹ That New College's Marcus Dods could jest with Henry Sloane Coffin of Union Seminary that they should write their next books "in

⁹⁷ A. C. Cheyne, *The Baillie Brothers: A Biographical Introduction*, in: David Fergusson (ed.), *Christ, Church, and Society: Essays on John Baillie and Donald Baillie*, Edinburgh 1993, 3–39; Robert R. Redman, *H.R. Mackintosh's Contribution to Christology and Soteriology in the Twentieth Century*, in: *SJTh* 41 (1988), 517–534. The American Presbyterian and fundamentalist leader J. Gresham Machen also studied under Herrmann. See D. G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America*, Baltimore 1994, 21–24.

⁹⁸ E.g. Drummond/Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland 1874–1900* (cf. fn. 10), 215–297.

⁹⁹ Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism* (cf. fn. 19), 252–267.

¹⁰⁰ Dickie, *Fifty Years of British Theology* (cf. fn. 75), 5.

¹⁰¹ Robert W. Stewart, *At a German University*, in: *The Union Magazine* 3 (1903), 492–496, here 492.

German under some jaw-breaking name” in order to gain publicity suggests an atmosphere where *Wissen* carried instant authority.¹⁰² The published letters of United Free Church professors from this era are peppered *mit deutschen Wörtern*.¹⁰³

I would caution, however, against reading theological traffic from Scotland to Germany in this period as simply as Dickie and others do, as well as imposing on late nineteenth-century Scotland a ‘liberal versus conservative’ grid more appropriate to the modernist-fundamentalist controversies which occurred two or three decades later in America.¹⁰⁴ For the evangelical Presbyterian tradition in Scotland experienced not only clash and controversy during this period but also significant *continuity* with the evangelicalism of preceding generations. This continuity was twofold. First, despite heresy trials, declaratory acts, fin de siècle anxiety over the future of Protestantism, and everything connected with “Victorian Scotland’s religious revolution”, evangelical Scottish Presbyterianism was still rooted in its theological heritage.¹⁰⁵ T. K. Cheyne, looking north to Scotland from Oxford University in 1893, found the conservative *Geist* of Tholuck at work in the Free Church rather than that of more negative criticism. This spirit allowed historical criticism to be applied to the Scriptures, but prevented it from running reckless by binding it to a presupposition of supernatural revelation and the needs of evangelical spirituality.¹⁰⁶ In fact, around the same time, S. D. F. Salmond judged German theology’s influence in Scotland to be in decline.¹⁰⁷ His opinion is most certainly incorrect, but it provides nonetheless an interesting contrast to views that simply assume the opposite. Likewise, in 1893 the Free Church minister Norman Walker explained in an American journal that the “spirit of change” many believed to be the *Zeitgeist* had not penetrated deeply into the Presbyterian churches in Scotland. Most ministers and most of the people in the pew are solidly evangelical, argued Walker, and the most recently published biblical commentaries from all three Presbyterian denominations are still essentially traditional in their conclusions, even if they acknowledge problems with older evangelical views of inerrancy and inspiration. Even the Free Church’s controversial Declaratory Act was deeply conservative: it conceded only what it had to, and imposed itself on no one.¹⁰⁸

This first line of continuity deserves more argumentation than can be provided here. In keeping with the focus of this paper, the second line of continuity connects the third wave of land-leaping students of divinity to its predecessors. Ritschlians like Harnack and Herrmann are, of course, classified as liberal Protestants par excellence. We should not, however, assume that because Scottish Presbyterian students deliberately sought out (especially) Herrmann, they were surrendering their evangelical-

¹⁰² Marcus Dods (ed.), *The Later Letters of Marcus Dods, D.D.*, London 1911, 235–36.

¹⁰³ E.g. W. R. Nicoll, *Letters of Principal James Denney to W. Robertson Nicoll: 1893–1917*, London 1918.

¹⁰⁴ The essence of this mistake is to read back the full-grown American fundamentalism of the 1920s and 1930s onto some of its seeds in late nineteenth-century evangelicalism.

¹⁰⁵ The phrase is from Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk* (cf. fn. 10).

¹⁰⁶ T. K. Cheyne, *Old Testament Criticism: Biographies, Description and Critical Studies*, London 1893, 213.

¹⁰⁷ Salmond, *Franz Delitzsch* (cf. fn. 55), 201.

¹⁰⁸ Walker, *Present Theological Drifts in Scotland* (cf. fn. 13), 25–27.

ism to liberal Protestantism. Ritschlianism, as some of its critics acknowledged, often sought to be and looked conservative, even if its effects may not have been.¹⁰⁹ This was, in fact, David Cairns’ point: his journey to Herrmann in Marburg was to salvage his evangelical beliefs. That Marburg, then, was the chief destination of the third wave of Scottish Presbyterian students to Germany does not necessarily prove discontinuity with the earlier generations of students who sought out evangelical faculties or professors. In the same way, Robertson Smith thought his controversial views on divine revelation and biblical history, which owed much to Ewald and Ritschl, were not leading him away from evangelical esteem for the Bible but back to the even purer evangelicalism of the Reformers. “His own theological position was that of the Reformers”, claimed one of his supporters. “The fault that he found with their successors, divines of the schools of Chemnitz, Turretin, Maestricht, and the followers of these in our own time, was that they had departed in large measure from the theology of the Reformers, and his object was to bring men back to the teaching of Luther and Calvin and Zwingli”.¹¹⁰ It is disputable if Robertson Smith’s views really do coincide with the Reformers’ doctrine of Scripture, but church historians should at least respect his explicit intent to use German theologians like Ritschl to renew an *evangelical* doctrine of Scripture. In the same way, that theological historiography after Barth has equated Ritschlianism with liberal Protestantism should not blind historians to the intent of Presbyterian students of this era to use elements in Ritschlianism for rebuilding evangelical theology.

IV. Conclusion

Following the land-leaping students of divinity from Scotland to Germany sheds light on the relationship between British and German Protestantism in the nineteenth century, the modern history of Scottish Presbyterianism, and the development of the ‘evangelical mind’. The trails these students have left behind do not always lead to the usual conclusions church historians and historical theologians have drawn. Namely, the flashpoints of ecclesiastical and theological controversy in the nineteenth century, and the sensationalist depictions in Victorian religious literature of German theologians as an “infidel army [...] of [...] high-flying, transcendental, visionary, arrogant, pantheistic philosophists”, are not the best gauges of how nineteenth-century *deutsche Theologie* was received by Anglo-American divinity.¹¹¹ Further, it was not only liberal theological movements in Britain and America who welcomed German theology. A cause célèbre like the novelist George Eliot (1819–88), who translated Strauß and Feuerbach after having had her evangelicalism ravaged, may draw attention, but more typical was a Presbyterian student like John Cairns, whose

¹⁰⁹ See Caspar Wistar Hodge, *The Significance of the Reformed Theology Today*, in: PTR 20 (1922), 1–14, especially 6–7; Robert Mackintosh, *Historical*, in: DCG I, New York, 726–728; Peter Bayne, *The Free Church of Scotland: Her Origins, Founders and Testimony*, Edinburgh 1894, v–vi; Adolph Zahn, *The Drift of Dogmatic Thought in Germany during the Last Decade*, in: PRR 2 (1891), 443–458, especially 447–53.

¹¹⁰ Salmond, *Professor William Robertson Smith* (cf. fn. 64), 361.

¹¹¹ Citation from Hodge, *Review Article I* (cf. fn. 14), 182.

studies with Tholuck and Neander strengthened and refined his evangelical convictions. And Thomas Carlyle's famous rhetorical question is more provocative than plausible: "have my countrymen's heads become turnips when they think that they can hold the premises of German unbelief and draw the conclusions of Scottish Evangelical Orthodoxy?"¹¹² On the contrary, most Scottish students visited German theology faculties and scholars that held many of their evangelical convictions. While there, they critically appropriated some of the premises of the mediating, evangelical theology to draw anew the conclusions of Scottish orthodoxy. Mapping where evangelical Presbyterians studied in Germany in the nineteenth century reflects the complexity of German theology during this time; it helps church historians depict the effect of German theology on Protestantism in Scotland and beyond in full colour, rather than in simplistic black and white.

During the years 1840 to 1914, the ancient routes that connected Scottish divinity to the European universities led almost exclusively to Germany. But the *Wander- und Studienjahr* that was so popular with evangelical Presbyterian students largely ended with the First World War. The Great War was an extreme religious shock for *die deutschen-freundlichen* Scottish Presbyterians, indeed, much more so than in England.¹¹³ Even after the end of the war, lingering bitterness and mistrust between the nations, as well as the turbulence in the Weimar Republic, did not encourage them to return in any great number to Germany. And yet by 1937, George Hendry, who later became a professor of systematic theology at Princeton Seminary, was reminding his countrymen of those old routes to the Continent: "Scottish theology has to find its true affinity with the theology of continental Protestantism rather than with that of England and America".¹¹⁴ Only now, the rise of neo-orthodoxy would make Germany a *Raststätte* on the road to Switzerland.

Abstract

Schon seit der Reformation hatte die Schottische Theologie enge Beziehungen zu protestantischen Schulen und theologischen Universitätsfakultäten auf dem Kontinent. Im 19. Jahrhundert bestand eine große Anzahl der vielen internationalen Studenten, die in deutschen Universitäten Theologie studierten, aus schottischen Presbyterianern. Dieser Artikel analysiert unter anderem, wo in Deutschland diese schottischen Presbyterianer studierten. Trotz des allgemeinen Vorurteils der englischsprachigen Theologie, dass die deutsche Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts überwiegend liberal war und besonders von liberalen theologischen Strömungen in Amerika und England geschätzt wurde, gibt es doch deutliche Hinweise darauf, dass schottische Presbyterianer wiederkehrend Fakultäten oder Professoren aufsuchten, die den Ruf hatten, ihre konservativen und evangelikalischen Glaubensgrundsätze zu teilen. Solche Verbindungen, wie z.B. zwischen der Vermittlungstheologie oder dem Neuluthertum und den evangelikalischen schottischen Kirchen, ermöglichen, eine bisher übersehene Dimension der protestantischen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts aufzuzeigen.

¹¹² This remark might very well be apocryphal. It is always cited without reference.

¹¹³ Stewart J. Brown, 'A Solemn Purification by Fire': Responses to the Great War in the Scottish Presbyterian Churches, 1914–1919, in: JEH 45 (1994), 82–104.

¹¹⁴ George S. Hendry, *God the Creator*, London 1937, viii.

Since the Reformation, Scottish theology has had strong ties to Protestant seminaries and university faculties of theology on the Continent. In the nineteenth century, Scottish Presbyterians comprised a large section of the many international students who studied theology in the German universities. This article analyses where in Germany Scottish Presbyterians studied. Despite the common prejudice in English-speaking theology that German theology in the nineteenth century was largely 'liberal' and was welcomed most of all by liberal theological movements in American and the British Empire, the evidence suggests that Scottish Presbyterians typically sought out faculties or professors who were reputed to share their conservative and evangelical beliefs. Such links between German movements like the *Vermittlungstheologie* or *Neuluthertum* and the evangelical Scottish Presbyterian churches recovers an overlooked dimension of nineteenth-century Protestant theology.