

indeed reinforced, the notion of innate and inimical racial difference. It is hard to see that Darwinian naturalism, at least in this nineteenth-century guise, did not produce – against rather than with the grain of Christian thought – a pretty appalling and enduring form of scientific racism.

I might risk pushing this further and suggest that in view of recent resurgence of ‘scientific realism’ about race, it is not at all clear that, by its own lights, Darwinian evolutionary theory can provide the alternative patterns of thought that Keel appeals for. His important book has argued with verve and vigour that the entanglement of Christian thought with racial science helped to form persistent and pernicious kinds of scientific racism. This is far from a baseless argument. But, at least in its drift and rhetorical framing, there is a risk that it unhelpfully obscures countervailing trends within the history of Christian thought which might turn out to provide vital aids for constructing more nimble, just and reparative ‘habits of mind’ in the face of ongoing challenges to them.

QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY,  
BELFAST

DIARMID A. FINNEGAN

*The fountain of public prosperity. Evangelical Christians in Australian history, 1740–1914.* By Stuart Piggin and Robert D. Linder. Pp. xiv+674 incl. 8 tables. Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2018. A\$49.95. 978 1 925523 46 1  
*JEH* (71) 2020; doi:10.1017/S0022046920000445

This large and sprawling work is for the authors a deeply personal work, as well as a contribution to opening up a discussion which the broader literature too often thinks closed. How one writes about a past with regard to which one has no natural affinity is, of course, a very basic question for historians. Piggin and Linder’s major point in this book – with regard to William Dawes, for example – is that historians of Australia have been far too little bothered by this question, their high modern present(s) accepted casually as the proper position from which to dismiss plural Australia’s Christian past. The result, they demonstrate convincingly, is that we miss important trends in the past which influence critical inflections in the present. For instance, the account of William Dawes points to the fact that in addition to the story of conflict and dispossession which the British imperial project brought to Australia’s Indigenous peoples, there were moments of deep connection which over time would produce fruit. Today, despite the political *casus belli* surrounding public recognition of traditional cultures, the vast majority of Indigenous Australians are Christians, who locate themselves in the world through their faith. The role of religious dispositions and cosmologies, Piggin and Linder point out, rather than a simple identification with doctrines and structures, turns out to be far more important than most historians allow.

The authors are well equipped to follow such a theme through the unpacking of the Evangelical Christian role in building Australian colonial societies. Piggin’s *oeuvre* includes strong emphases on the histories of revivalism and Jonathan Edwards, excellent preparations for the study of religious affections in history. In addition to his work on American Evangelicalism, Linder has had a career-long fascination with Calvin, the reformer whose symbol was a hand offering a heart to

God. Methodologically, *The fountain of public prosperity* follows dispositions by leavening the history of institutions (parliaments, charities, churches, colleges) with a strong emphasis on prosopography. The book is full of individual voices and reconstructions of their motivations (a style which distinguishes the authors of this work from the ‘helicopter histories’ which they abhor). And so, chapter xvii traces the story of ‘how liberalism and Catholicism divided the evangelical movement, effacing the family likeness among its members’. It is a story, they note, ‘not missing from Australian history as sectarian conflict between Protestants and Catholics is the most rehearsed subject of the history of Christianity in Australia, closely followed by the default secularist critique of fundamentalist obscurantism and irrelevance’. This conflict narrative (which is so strong in the broader neo-Marxist norm of Australian historiography), they contend, misses the constructive elements of the marriage between Evangelicals and the Victorian moral and political empires: ‘would Australia really be a better place if the Evangelicals had not had a vision for its settlement as an optimistic reform experiment instead of a cynical disposal of human detritus?’ The common critique of Evangelicals in the literature (and increasingly in the post-Christendom Church) misses the point. It depends on positing a better future in which such things not only are surpassed, but which acts as if the previous history had never happened, replaced either by distortions of the past which do not reflect what actually happened, or by simple ignorance. Australians, as a whole, at the end of the nineteenth century, considered themselves to be living in a Christian Commonwealth within a Christian empire, and believed that both those facts were essential goods. Every other position is essentially an argument from silence, a position which (as Collingwood noted) takes more nuance and self-awareness than is common among the common run of historians.<sup>1</sup> Such an observation (with a few exceptions) is all the more apt in the small, ideologically-driven world of Australian history. As Paul Bourke noted as early as 1967, the key issue with Australian intellectual history is that it has not been very intellectual.

Piggin and Linder’s book, in that sense, is an important one, as it provides breadth to a discipline dominated by *a priori* positions on race, politics and gender. It helps to expand the conundrum (again noted by Bourke in 1967) that, if historians do want to emphasise the secularity of Australian history, ‘it may not be sufficient to present Australian ideas mainly as the projection of a wider world’.<sup>2</sup> By penetrating beyond the public facade of Georgian and Victorian respectability, and investigating the private lives of public people, Piggin and Linder point out that Australia was not as different from the rest of the Anglosphere as its historians (driven by a desire to define a field) have sometimes presented. ‘[E]vangelical denominationalism’, in Bourke’s words, ‘took root’ far more than has been imagined, though perhaps less than was the case in the USA. It was not just a provincial point of religious reception, but a reflexive contributor to global trends in revivalism, millennialism,

<sup>1</sup> He describes this as ‘the business of pure historical methodology’: R. G. Collingwood, ‘Lectures on History’, section 35, in his *The idea of history*, ed. J. Van Der Dussen, Oxford 1994, 387.

<sup>2</sup> Paul F. Bourke, ‘Some recent essays in Australian intellectual history’, *Australian Historical Studies* xiii/49 (1967), 99.

colonialism, migration, liberalism, progressive social causes and more. All of these elements were, Piggin and Linder note, important vectors for the activist, Evangelical *tertium genus* as a ginger group, and sometime near moral monopoly, at the antipodes of the Christian British Empire.

As a revisionist history, of course, Piggin and Linder have written a book which will not be to every reader's delight. The authors specifically address a large and varied Christian readership which has been waiting for this book for some time – a factor, no doubt, in the book winning the 2019 Australian Christian book of the year award. This has the effect of 'encapsulating' the discourse somewhat, locating it in the antagonisms of the 1980s and 1990s rather than in the more open, global concerns which historians such as Wayne Hudson (*Australian religious thought*, Clayton, VIC 2016), Hilary Carey (*God's empire*, Cambridge 2011), Hugh Chilton (*Evangelicals and the end of Christendom*, London 2019) and others have recently demonstrated. In the end, sadly, it may not be the contribution of extended arguments such as *The fountain of public prosperity* which drives increased openness to understanding the character of religious worlds. Rather, it may be the decline of Australian history as an academic discipline and the refusal of the increasingly dominant international presses to support its efforts. The decision by Monash University Publishing to publish Piggin and Linder's work, both this volume, and its projected twentieth-century successor, is thus to be lauded. Both will be signal contributions to studies with international ramifications.

ALPHACRUCIS COLLEGE/WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

MARK HUTCHINSON

*White women, Aboriginal missions and Australian settler governments. Maternal contradictions.* By Joanna Cruikshank and Patricia Grimshaw. (Studies in Christian Mission, 56.) Pp. x + 207 incl. 4 maps. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019. €99. 978 90 04 39700 2

*JEH* (71) 2020; doi:10.1017/S0022046920000172

The missions in Australia were different from those in other fields around the world, argue Joanna Cruikshank and Patricia Grimshaw in their new book on white women and Aboriginal missions. In Australia, single and 'professional' missionary women were rarer. Instead, women missionaries to Aboriginal people tended to be wives and daughters; the mission was an extension of the home. But, crucially, these missions were also an extension of settler-governments. An 'entanglement' between government and missions meant that missions were variously constrained and enabled by settler government agendas. 'Missionary maternalism', therefore, emerged both from settler government policies of 'protection' as well as Protestant visions for family life.

Rather than a focused study of a denomination, region or subculture as others have done, this book gives a much needed and fresh account of Aboriginal missions in Australia. This alone is an important undertaking. In doing so, its authors bring new intellectual questions to bear – particularly the entanglement of missions with processes of settler-colonisation – on a vital chapter in Australia's Aboriginal and religious history as well as mission history more broadly.

Meticulously researched, the book ranges from the first colonial institutions, which sought to 'civilise and Christianise' Aboriginal people, to the remote