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Reviews

Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages, by Jeffrey Burton Russell. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. 1965, pp. 323. 56s.

The Associate Professor of History in the University of California has in this substantial and learned book, gathered together the scattered references to "dissent" in the Middle Ages from roughly A.D. 700 to 1150. For the purposes of study dissent is taken to include not only heresy in a strict theological sense, but also deviations, whether explicit or implicit from the ecclesiastical and practical norms of medieval Catholicism. The author lays stress on the importance of the outlook and work of St. Boniface and seeks to minimise the influence of Manichæism, to which Sir Steven Runciman has taught British students to give attention.

Professor Russell's criterion for orthodoxy at any given time is the position taken by the Pope. He distinguishes Reformists, whose attacks upon corruption and suspicion led them to extremes; Eccentrics, such as Aldebert, against whom Boniface had to proceed, the woman Theuda, Liutward and Eudo of Brittany: Reactionaries, who clung to old ways, long after these had been judged erroneous; and the Intellectuals, among whom several of the Scholastics were to be found.

Special attention is given to Tanchelm, who early in the eleventh century, led a religious movement of considerable size in the Low Countries. Professor Russell describes it, in accordance with his classification, as "in the Reformist tradition though it was overlaid with Eccentricity." According to hostile sources, Tanchelm proclaimed himself as the Holy Spirit and "married" the Virgin Mary in the form of an image; he encouraged excitement and debauchery. But it is never easy to know how much credence to place on hostile witnesses. Of that, we who come of the Anabaptist tradition and have brethren in Communist lands have every reason to be aware.

"Between the great revolutionary reformer and the great revolutionary heretic there is little difference", writes Professor Russell. "Robespierre, Lenin, Calvin, Hildebrand, Valdes, Tanchelm, Claudius of Turin—enthusiasts all, puritans all, fanatics all and all revolutionaries and reformers. Call men of this spirit orthodox or heretic as you please; the same fire dwelt within them all." Whether this attitude helps the understanding of the past may be questioned. For all its erudition this book—based it would seem on class-room lectures—should be used with some caution or it may confuse rather than illuminate.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, by Patrick Collinson. Jonathan Cape, London 1967. Pp. 528. 63s.

This is a really attractively written book by one who has not only mastered the relevant printed works but also introduces the reader to a new world of manuscript source material. Dr. Collinson is already known for several important essays in this field and has now provided a full-scale study which reveals something of the very texture, the light and shade, the grouping and re-grouping of Elizabethan puritanism. The care with which he probes and interprets his sources will be manifest in comparison even with M. M. Knappen's treatment of the same material in *Tudor Puritanism* (1939). Nevertheless it is to be hoped that in the new edition which will certainly be required reference to the notes at the back of the book will be made easier for the student.

Since, however, this book will be quoted as the major authority on its subject it is necessary to draw attention to one matter about which the present reviewer believes Dr. Collinson to be mistaken. This concerns his understanding of Separatist ideals. In his preface the author explained (p. 12) why he had relegated the Separatists to the margins of his narrative: "Somewhat like the continental anabaptists, they believed, not in reformation, properly understood, but in the creation or restitution of a totally alien, select Christian society." Such a statement, from such an authority, may well be quoted, by those who do not know the writings of the Separatists for themselves, as the truth of the matter. Yet a very strong case can be made for the view that the Separatists shared almost precisely similar ideals with those who stayed within the established church. The difference was that the Separatists believed that the reconstitution of the Scriptural ideal of the church was a matter of obedience *now* though the heavens fell (although, as a matter of fact, they believed that obedience now was the best way to prevent the heavens falling) and other Puritans believed that, rather than break the outward unity of the Church, they should be prepared to wait for the magistrate. The ultimate consequence of Separatism *may* have been "a totally alien, select Christian society" but their "congregationalism" seems to have been an accident of circumstance rather than a built-in ideal. Both groups sought "the discipline" so that Christ might rule in His Church; both groups modelled their ideals upon the Apostolic Church. Dr. Collinson has clearly shown that his Puritans vary in the radicalness of their programme and in the aggressiveness of their activities: surely his own book provides an abundance of evidence that the Separatists are only one further gradation to the left of the Elizabethan Puritan spectrum. They belong to the same family.

B. R. WHITE.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the Puritan Revolution, by Roger Howell, Jr. Oxford University Press, 1967. Pp. xiii, 397. 63s.

This book is a valuable contribution to the local history of England

during the period of the Puritan Revolution. Whilst the mass of detail it contains does not make for easy reading it does make a rewarding study. In general Dr. Howell's work underlines the thesis which is necessarily becoming very familiar at the present time: namely, that few of the generalizations of the older historians of this crucial period for English history can remain unchecked, uncorrected and undisturbed.

The argument of this book, of which about one-third presents a picture of development in Newcastle before 1645, involves a reconstruction of political, religious, economic and social factors in the life of the town 1645-1662. The facts and figures quoted in the narrative tend, broadly speaking, to support the author's view that (p. 337) "Newcastle was experiencing a revolutionary period, but it was experiencing it in distinctly local terms." Although it is clear that both the King and Parliament had their enthusiastic partisans it is equally clear that the majority of its citizens were unmoved by any profound loyalty to either side and, in fact, gave their hesitant support to which ever party had the upper hand, militarily speaking, in their part of the country. Similarly the Civil War had little lasting effect upon the structure of Newcastle politics although it did mean a change in the set of oligarchs who held power.

Nevertheless, whilst Newcastle at the Restoration was regarded as a centre of Puritan Dissent, even here it could be argued that there was no "revolution". In fact, as Dr. Howell has shewn, the Puritan movement had deep roots in the town and its neighbourhood before 1640. Another interesting discovery he has made is that there was, during the 1650's, a period of close and amicable co-operation between Presbyterians and Independents in the face of the common threat posed by Baptist and Quaker sectarianism. For the Baptist historian few new sources have been uncovered beyond a tract or two overlooked in Whitley's *Bibliography*. It is, however, satisfying to have the early congregations in Newcastle and Hexham set in their wider context with care and accuracy. In addition, some new facts about the activities, both suspected and actual, of Paul Hobson have been uncovered. Among these is an intriguing reference (p. 233, omitted from the Index and ambiguously documented) to Hobson's exposure of a "witchpricker" as a fraud during a witch-hunt in 1649. Neither Nathaniel Strange nor the John Turners find any place in this account and this underlines a possible weakness in the narrative: whilst considerable attention is paid to the activities, proper and improper, of Arthur Heselrige it may have been unwise to neglect the other members of the Puritan garrison and leave it virtually out of all consideration as one factor in Newcastle's affairs in this period.

However those who follow Dr. Howell will be grateful for the patterns of action and reaction he has uncovered and so carefully documented. Perhaps Baptist historians in the North of England may be encouraged to examine for themselves some of the sources he has drawn upon.

B. R. WHITE.

The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity, 1689-1765, by Peter Toon. The Olive Tree, 2, Milnthorpe Road, London, W.4. 1967, pp. 171. 21s. (plus 1/-d. postage) U.K. \$3.50 (plus 20 cents postage) Canada and U.S.A.

Hyper-Calvinism, as Mr. Toon tells us, is "a system of theology . . . which was framed to exalt the honour and glory of God, and did so at the expense of minimising the moral and spiritual responsibility of sinners to God." Readers of the *Quarterly* will be familiar with the deadening effect of this kind of thinking on the life of many Baptist churches in the 18th century, prior to the evangelical influence of men like Fuller and Carey.

It is surprising that a study of this sort has not been attempted before. Certainly there has been a need. Happily, however, Mr. Toon has now begun to fill this "long-standing gap in the story of English Calvinism", as Dr. Packer calls it, by tracing the rise and development of hyper-Calvinism.

His treatment is thorough and careful. Starting with a brief account of authentic Calvinism, he shows how "high Calvinism"—the rigid form of Calvinism which came into being after Calvin's death—developed into "hyper-Calvinism", the birth of which he traces to the publication of Joseph Hussey's two books *The Glory of Christ Unveil'd* (1706) and *God's Operations of Grace but no Offers of His Grace* (1707). John Skepp of Curriers' Hall was in large measure responsible for introducing Hussey's "No offers of grace" theology to Particular Baptists.

The main features of hyper-Calvinism as expounded by the Baptists Gill and Brine and by the Congregationalist Lewis Wayman, are outlined in chapters VI and VII. The book is well documented and contains a useful bibliography as well as two appendices, one on Hussey's "diary", the other on the doctrinal basis of the King's Head Society. Indeed it is amazing how much Mr. Toon has managed to pack into a mere 171 pages. He has certainly made a valuable contribution to our understanding of a very much neglected aspect of the history of English Nonconformity, and it is good to know that further works can be expected from him.

ERNEST F. CLIPSHAM.

Lady Glenorchy and her churches, by D. P. Thompson. The Research Unit, Barnock. Crieff, Perthshire, Scotland. 1967. 80pp. Cloth 12/6, Paper 7/6.

This is the story of Willielma, Lady Glenorchy (1741-86), one of the most remarkable women in Scottish religious history. She married the wealthy heir of the Earl of Breadalbane. In her twenties, she came under deep religious impressions through the influence of a female member of the Rowland Hill family. She persuaded her husband to purchase historic Barnton House, near Edinburgh, in order to carry on her religious work in the city from there.

On what is now the site of Waverley Station she built a large

chapel and fought the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland until she obtained recognition for it. Over the congregation which crowded into it, she settled a minister of her own choosing, Thomas Snell Jones. After her husband's early death, being left with a large fortune, and having to travel constantly to various Spas to combat growing ill-health, she sought out companies of Christian people requiring help. In Carlisle, Workington, Matlock, Exmouth and at Bristol she built or acquired chapels for congregations, the successors of whom still meet for worship. In Edinburgh her original church is now represented by two congregations, Holy Trinity and Hillside, while the Church of Strathfillan in Western Perthshire, which she helped to found, is today placed in one of the largest parishes in Scotland.

English readers may find it interesting to compare Lady Glenorchy with her famous contemporary Lady Huntingdon. If so, they may want to read the long book (519 pp) by T. S. Jones, *Life of Viscountess Glenorchy*, 1824. The book under review is written as one long essay with no chapters, just sub-headings. The material is very compressed; there is no index and the critical apparatus is rather weak. Nevertheless, it is a book worth buying. It is well-produced and has 34 photographic illustrations.

PETER TOON.

British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837. The history of Serampore and its Missions, by E. Daniel Potts. Cambridge Univ. Press. 276 pp. 57s. 6d.

Some notices of this well-documented and informative book have already appeared, but the publication of yet another is, in this year of jubilees, most opportune. Serampore College is celebrating its ter-jubilee in the first week of December, and the Serampore Mission, which is here portrayed in its early development, is itself nearing a triple diamond jubilee.

After an introduction in which the story of Serampore is set against the background of earlier missions, both Protestant and Roman, four chapters are devoted to the personnel of the Mission, to the expanding evangelistic programme, to relations with other groups in mission and church, and to specific enterprises of a social character such as medicine, agriculture and, less immediately fruitful, forestry and a savings bank. It is a little disappointing that, in the first of these chapters, the story, with its prescribed date of 1837 on which to end, concludes with the assessment of Adoniram Judson that, with the death of the three principals (Carey, Marshman and Ward), "the glory had departed". One could have wished for some indication that "in these last days" and in a new century there was to be a rekindling of the flame, the emergence of an Arts-Science College of distinction and a Theological Centre of University status, for the service of the new India and of all sections of the Church in and beyond the sub-continent.

If the first chapter had much to say of a fluctuating harmony within Serampore itself and in relation both to the Home Board and to the younger group of missionaries centred in Calcutta, the second and third chapters are much more exhilarating: they show an expanding field of work, a progressive employment of Indians in its service, new emphases in presenting the gospel, and the promotion of concord and co-operation among the growing number of Protestant societies. K. S. Latourette's opinion is echoed by Dr. Potts—"Both the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches directly owe their origins to the wide-spread missionary enterprise in which the English Baptists played so important a role".

The subsequent parts of the book afford a wealth of information for which no mere summary review can be adequate: they deserve the fullest attention and careful study.

Accounts are given of the remarkable programme of translation, literature, journalism and printing, and, in another chapter, of the establishment and equipment of educational and benevolent institutions in many centres by which all classes and ages, male and female, Indian and Anglo-Indian were served.

Then there is set out a seven-fold picture of the social evils of the time and the struggle of the Mission to break the age-old chains. In this campaign, governors-general like Wellesley, Bentinck and Minto gave valuable assistance; but there were occasions when on the mission's side some indiscretion, or on the government's a compromise in face of popular pressures and vested interests, caused final success to be delayed. Restriction of the movements of missionaries and even deportation were in those early days not unknown. Yet there is general agreement among Indian historians that "missionary activity allowed fresh air to enter the enlightened Indian minds, to blow away practices harmful to human dignity and depressing to human conscience".

In the closing chapter, Dr. Potts seeks to assess the Indian response to Christian mission. Here, perhaps, one feels that, in addition to the many authorities, facts and figures which he has diligently and competently adduced, there must be others that could off-set some of the conclusions he has reached. A large amount of space is given to the case of that early friend and supporter of the Mission in the field of social reform, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who became the founder of the Brahmo Samaj: as a keen nationalist, a staunch adherent of the eclecticism that characterises Hindu religious philosophy and a promoter among the intelligentsia of quasi-unitarian views, he became unsparing in his criticism of orthodox Christian belief and in his opposition to the building up of the Church. Yet the very opposition served to make Christ better known, and although "not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were called", their number has increased until today it stands at near ten million, and one may hope that there is a sincerity and stability in their faith—qualities which, in a somewhat overweighted criticism, were judged to be lacking among the earliest converts.

We have much for which to express thanks to Dr. Potts, and not least for some words from the brief epilogue, which almost lost itself in the voluminous bibliography that follows! Here are the words—

“Preceding and contemporary missionaries evangelised, translated, practised medicine and succoured the poor—among a multitude of other activities—but the Baptists were the architects and builders of a richer, broader concept of missionary work, and they, with their bare hands or improvised tools, laid the foundations for the modern Christian mission. Their goal from the beginning was, and always remained, to make Christ known to India’s people”.

HAROLD M. ANGUS.

Spurgeon: Heir of the Puritans, by Ernest W. Bacon. London. George Allen & Unwin, 1967. Pp. 184. 35s.

Mr. Bacon rightly reminds us that the time is ripe for a new study of Spurgeon’s life and influence. Whether he has himself provided the kind of study most needed, however, is another matter. He obviously has a deep regard for Spurgeon, and there is little doubt that his warm and sympathetic presentation will help readers to catch something of the spirit of the great preacher.

At the same time, one cannot help wondering how many people will be prepared to spend 35s. on a book of this sort. Certainly, its usefulness is limited so far as the historian is concerned, and though in general it is a well-written and readable volume, it is not without its blemishes. Some of Mr. Bacon’s statements, for instance, are surprising, and even misleading. They serve to remind us how dangerous it is to allow one’s theological presuppositions to influence one’s historical judgments. This is particularly true of any attempt to assess the pros and cons of an event like the Downgrade Controversy.

It is true that Spurgeon and Clifford differed theologically, and that Clifford was keenly aware of the social implications of the gospel. On what grounds, however, does Mr. Bacon assert that John Clifford “was on the whole, more concerned with a social gospel than with the salvation of sinners?” Again, what does he mean when he describes Dr. E. A. Payne’s account of the controversy as “the official Baptist Union version”? Other similar examples could be cited. Enough has been said, however, to indicate the need for discernment on the part of the reader.

Even so, we are grateful for being reminded of one who was in every sense an outstanding figure. Spurgeon, though a Baptist and a theological conservative, belongs, like Luther and Wesley, not to one party but to the whole Church. He is fittingly called “heir of the Puritans”. The Church to-day cannot afford to ignore the central Puritan insights and emphases. Nevertheless, they need to be interpreted afresh by each generation. Spurgeon himself was regarded by the conservatives of his day, who claimed to represent the true

Puritan position, as unsound. To-day, there are many who, though unable to share Mr. Bacon's theological standpoint, thank God for C. H. Spurgeon.

Attention has necessarily been drawn to the weaknesses of this book. Its merits, however, should not be overlooked, and many will undoubtedly be grateful for the glimpse it gives of Spurgeon's life and ministry.

E. F. CLIPSHAM.

Dissenters and Public Affairs in Mid-Victorian England, by F. R. Salter

There is here issued in printed form the twenty-first lecture promoted by the "Friends of Dr. Williams's Library." The author, a Cambridge historian with deep personal roots in the life of the Free Churches, was intimately acquainted with the period to which this lecture is devoted and the result is a most valuable discussion of the subject. It begins with some account of the considerable extent to which Dissenters, by this time, were becoming involved in public affairs, and glances at the kind of education which such men had and how it contributed to their attitudes. The interests and activities which claimed so much of their attention are then surveyed and for this purpose Mr. Salter gives special attention to Edward Miall ("the best representative of political Nonconformity at its most militant") and Samuel Morley (who stood for "Dissenting Liberalism at its best"). One of the important features of the period was the increase in the number of newspapers, with their power in the formation of public opinion, and it is significant that both Miall and Morley had a paper for the dissemination of their views. In spite of their influence, however, and the influence of Nonconformity as a whole, the country remained unmoved regarding the disestablishment of the Anglican church, and "the abiding anger of the Dissenters" over the Forster Education Act had little positive result so far as their interests were concerned. Mr. Salter chose not to talk about "the Nonconformist Conscience"; he preferred a phrase from the *Eclectic Review* of 1844, "Nonconformist conscientiousness." Whatever name one adopts, and it is surely a little late in the day to dispense with the more familiar of these, his lecture offers some useful data and ripe, reflective comment on the subject.

G. W. RUSLING.