

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

Book Reviews.

The Development of Religious Toleration in England, by W. K. Jordan, Ph.D. (George Allen & Unwin, 21s. net.)

THIS valuable work of over 400 pages, with fifty-seven pages of bibliography and a copious index, is a minute study of religious toleration in England from the beginning of the Reformation to the death of Queen Elizabeth. It therefore deals with a period which had not received the careful attention given to the Lollards who preceded it and the Commonwealth which followed.

In his opening chapter, Dr. Jordan seeks to define toleration. It is more than indifference; complete tolerance does not mean only complete indifference. "Perhaps the finest conception of religious toleration presumes a positive attitude of mind which enables us charitably and sympathetically to hear another man whom we consider to be in error." He suggests that the idea of toleration springs from the theory that the civil power has inalienable and absolute prerogatives, and that the Government thus elevated may allow certain persons to differ from it in theory and in religious practice. Liberty of conscience, on the other hand, springs from the theory that the final object of the State is man, that man is responsible for his own actions, and that the State assumes no responsibility for his thoughts or beliefs. In a further definition Dr. Jordan argues that "toleration, in the historical and legal sense of the term, represents the withdrawal of external authority from the control over certain ranges of human activity, and is essentially negative. Toleration represents, on the part of the State, a definition of those areas of human conduct over which it professes control. The State reserves the definition of those areas to itself and undertakes the difficult task of fixing the boundary between the free actions of the individual and his religious group and the forbidden sphere of activities, and even opinions, which the State has not relinquished from its control." The subject is thus approached from the political aspect rather than the religious.

We have not space to follow Dr. Jordan in detail as he develops his argument. He ranges over a wide field in six lengthy chapters, discussing the conditions prior to the

Elizabethan Settlement of Religion, the dominant and minority groups during the reign of Elizabeth, and Lay and Roman Catholic Thought and their relation to the problem of Toleration. He has read extensively and gives many extracts from the literature of the period which add considerably to the value of the book for reference purposes.

Probably had Dr. Jordan been resident in England instead of the States, he would have avoided a few blemishes. He assumes his readers will instantly recognise a writer by his surname although there may be two or three of the same name. Thus Bacon, mentioned on page 90, is not Francis Bacon, as many would assume, but Sir Nicholas Bacon, who flourished earlier in the sixteenth century. On page 192, Tillotson's sermons are referred to as though he was contemporaneous with the dissentients from the Elizabethan Settlement, but he was not born until twenty-seven years after Elizabeth's death, and the quoted sermons were not preached until the second half of the seventeenth century. But the most interesting of these few blemishes, which are surface only, is on page 84, where the author suggests that "perhaps Tennyson only slightly overstated it when he characterised the settlement (of Elizabeth) as 'faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.'" What would Tennyson say to his

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish
escapes,
Maud, the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the
Hall;
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled
the grapes,
Maud, the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling
of all,

being identified with the Virgin Queen of England? And what was Dr. Jordan's proof-reader doing in passing this delightful slip?

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

Establishment in England, Being Essays on Church and State,
by Sir Lewis Dibdin, D.C.L. (Macmillan, 7s. 6d. net.)

IT is a far cry to the days when the demand for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church was heard from the public platform. There is a new atmosphere. Then the demand came from outside; to-day it is from inside. Not that the Free Churchman has forgotten the injustice of the Establishment and of the preservation of all ceremonial occasions to one privileged Church; but he believes that ultimately the

Established Church will, of necessity, seek release from the trammels of the State. That day will not be just yet, for, as Sir Lewis Dibdin learnedly shows, "the Established Church of England has been the growth of centuries," and most Churchmen think there is much to be said for continuing it.

The earliest of the essays which are collected in this volume was written forty-nine years ago, but Sir Lewis claims, and rightly, that there is not much inconsistency of view. The opening chapter on "The Present Outlook" is of particular value in view of the Anglican Commission which is now considering the relations of Church and State in England. Sir Lewis recognises that the public were greatly shocked at the spectacle of Bishops disregarding—he suggests it is hardly fair to call it flouting—the decision of the House of Commons regarding the Prayer Book of 1928, but adds, "The Bishops have been and are in a great difficulty; and it ought to be added that in many dioceses the Bishops have found it easier to obtain some measure of order by requiring adhesion to the limits laid down by the Prayer Book of 1928 than seemed practicable at an earlier date." An attempt to reconcile the Bishops' solution of their difficulties with their emphatic declarations at the time of the Enabling Act discussions, that the power of Parliament was intended to remain unaltered and absolute, would afford an interesting example of dialectical ingenuity.

Three possible methods of dealing with the existing relations of Church and State are indicated: (1) leave things as they are, (2) Disestablishment, and such an amount of Disendowment as would be demanded, (3) alter the existing relations without Disestablishment. Those who have to do with discussions on Church Unity and the relations of the State and the Anglican Church would find this volume of service. Sir Lewis is recognised as the leading authority on ecclesiastical law, and, with all the weight of his legal and historical knowledge, he enables his readers to grasp more completely what is meant by the words "the Church of England as by law established."

A History of the Baptist Church, Abercarn, by Rev. H. Pugh.
128 pages, map, photographs. (Newport, Mon.)

WHO would have expected such an elaborate account of a church only eighty-five years old, even if it has 350 members? For six years the preparation has engrossed the editor, and we feel that we know the whole story, even to details of how prominent living men were considered for the pastorate, and by what percentage they were not invited: English churches are usually more reticent on their inner life. We can trace how

a village in the wilds of Monmouthshire, harbouring grouse and salmon, has been utterly transformed into a mining centre which guide-books pass with horror; how a farmer's wife flitted about in search of a spiritual home, became Baptist, and opened her home for preaching, till Beulah was built; how The Room was offered and used by four sets of dissenters, three of whom hived away and built for themselves; how Pontypool College helped at the incorporation of Baptists in 1847. The story is not only most minute for local people, but it has much of interest as to customs that have almost vanished. Students and preachers came walking over the mountains. A Cymreigyddion Society fought a losing battle to keep Welsh language and culture. An orchestra was displaced by an American organ, in its turn supplanted by a pipe organ. The death of a leading member would improve the traffic on the rail, as hundreds would enjoy the funeral. The want of a Building Society compelled the church to work little by little, patching, rebuilding, enlarging. The growth of English led not to services in different languages within the one chapel, but to a division and a second building. Discipline was strict, yet loving, to encourage a brother in the old paths. Adventure was not lacking, for the Band of Hope voyaged seven miles in barges. The poetry of Welsh preaching is illustrated by sketches of noteworthy addresses. The value of the church is shown by the men it has produced, both for civic life, like William Brace, and for religious, sending into the pastorate, and planting new causes. The volume is a welcome gift to our library, and we can commend it to those who contemplate similar work, for the editor explains well how he gathered and used his materials.

England's Debt to Monasticism, by J. Leslie Chown. (The C. W. Daniel Company, 1s. net.)

WE are glad to see this discerning yet friendly survey of Monasticism by a member of our Committee. Mr. Chown confesses to being a keen cyclist and a lover of English scenery, as well as of the ruins which adorn it. He tells the story of the movement behind the ruins in vivid English, worthy of the son and grandson of two Presidents of the Baptist Union who were known for their ability to express in English exactly what they wished to say. Mr. Chown discusses the origin of Monasticism, recognises the many valuable services rendered to religion and learning, and, along social lines, to the poor, and shows how at the suppression of the orders of monks and friars, and the secularisation of their property, "most of the proceeds found their way into the pockets of Court favourites

and Henry, who contented himself with less than a million." His final chapter on "Aftermath or Legacy" is frankly challenging in its review of conditions to-day. Leaders would do well to heed his comment that "at present the economic leadership of this country (not to mention Europe) is in the hands of the blind, who are leading the blind, and both are heading for the ditch. Historians may garner, bankers and economists may attempt to dictate, but until the truth is recognised that the material forces must be directed by the vision and power of the spiritual no improvement in trade or employment can take place."

Whom do Men say that I am? Edited by H. Osborne. (Faber and Faber, 10s. 6d. net.)

IT is an excellent idea to gather together representative modern opinions of Christ, and Mr. Osborne has performed his task with discrimination and ability. He covers a wide field of writers, ranging from Roman Catholics like Von Hugel, Chesterton and Belloc, Protestants like Harnack, Gore, Inge and Pringle Pattison, to the unusual views of D. H. Lawrence and the attacks of Bertrand Russell. In view of the world-wide revolution now taking place in Jewry, readers of this book will turn with interest to the opinions of such typical Jewish writers as Klausner and Trattner, and not the least valuable section of this book is the excellent group of quotations from these writers. It is clear that when we leave the Romanists and the Protestants there is a general tendency to emphasise the humanity of Jesus to the exclusion of His Deity. Such a tendency is found not only in Jewish and Mohammedan writers, but also in Shaw, Wells and Middleton Murry, and is an indication of the real modern challenge to evangelical Christianity. Ministers should study this book carefully if they wish to be abreast of modern thought on this most important issue.

Alexander Gordon, by H. McLachlan, M.A., D.D. (Manchester Press, 7s. 6d. net.)

LIKE Old Mortality, who spent his days in visiting the neglected graves of the Covenanters, Alex. Gordon spent many of his days during more than sixty years in the British Museum and other libraries gleaning information of forgotten Puritans, Dissenting worthies, and others, with the result that the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1885-1912) contained 778 biographies from his pen. He was one of seven whose names appeared in all the sixty-three volumes of the original issue. His knowledge of the origins of Nonconformity was unique,

and by his indefatigable researches he left all denominations his debtors. Dr. McLachlan's biography gives a vivid picture of Alex. Gordon as minister, teacher, scholar, man. It is none the worse for being written *con amore*, and its reference value is considerably enhanced by a copious bibliography of Gordon's writings.

A Methodist Pageant, by B. A. Barker. (Holborn Publishing House, 5s. net.)

IN what is described as a "souvenir of the Primitive Methodist Church," the Connexional Editor has given us a handsome volume, plentifully illustrated, which recounts the interesting story of Primitive Methodism. From the days of Hugh Bourne to the scholarly achievements of the late Dr. Peake, the narrative reveals the fervent evangelism which has been a real factor in the modern Church. We are glad that Mr. Barber has given prominence to the place of women in Primitive Methodism, for few branches of the Church have owed more to consecrated women. Mr. Barber looks forward to Methodist Union to "illustrate the essential unity of faith and purpose of all the Methodist Churches." He feels that readjustments are inevitable, but this age calls for the living witness of a true Christian fellowship. The Holborn Publishing House is to be congratulated on a volume worthy of its theme.

SPELDHURST, Kent, 1739. "These are to certify whom it may concern that a Certificate bearing date the twentysecond day of May in the Year of our Lord 1739 under the hand of Thomas Benge William Ashdowne David Chapman Matthew Copper James Pullenger John Archer junior and John Benge for appropriating a House near adjoining to Mount Ephraim House in the parish of Speldhurst in the County of Kent and Diocese of Rochester for a place of Religious Worship for the Protestant Dissenters from the Church of England commonly called Baptists was registered in the Consistory Court of the Lord Bishop of Rochester on the twentyninth day of May 1739 and in the eighth year of our Translation. Robert Rous Deputy Register."