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Reviews

The English Presbyterians: From Elizabethan Puritanism to Modern Unitarianism, by C. G. Bolam, J. Goring, H. L. Short and Roger Thomas. George Allen and Unwin 1968, pp. 297. 50s.

This is the story—interestingly and competently told—of the Presbyterians ejected in 1662, and their successors. It is a story somewhat neglected hitherto. Consequently this volume fills an important gap in the history of Dissent. This is a book about the *English* Presbyterians, and English Presbyterianism, as the authors make clear, had its own distinctive character. It is the contention of the four writers that the real heirs of the early Presbyterians are the modern Unitarians. H. L. Short, in the closing chapter, maintains that “there is a direct line of inheritance, not merely of institutions, but also of outlook, from the Presbyterians ejected in 1662 to the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches”.

While it is true that the majority of former Presbyterian congregations eventually became Unitarian, one cannot help feeling that an account of the development of the others would have been helpful, if only for the sake of completeness. Some became Congregationalists, and a few linked with the Scottish Presbyterians to form the modern Presbyterian Church of England. Were they any less true to their Presbyterian heritage than the Unitarian majority? Could it not be that, however much their English Presbyterian identity was altered by contact with Congregationalism and Scottish Presbyterianism, the more orthodox minority were the true successors of the early Presbyterians?

This is not to deny that the book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of Presbyterian development. It does; and its factual, well documented account of English Presbyterianism is to be welcomed. Moreover, though the composite work of four authors, it is characterised by an underlying unity of presentation, due no doubt to the editorial skill of Dr. Goring and Mr. Thomas.

A great deal of ground is inevitably covered in tracing the fortunes of the English Presbyterians for the journey between “Presbyterians in the Parish Church” (chapter II) and “Presbyterians under a new name” (chapter VI) is a long and complex one. Bolam, Goring and Thomas between them are responsible for the first five chapters which tell the story of the early period down to the break up of the “Old Dissent” in the 18th Century, which was marked by a widening of the gulf between the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists and an increasing sense of denominational consciousness. H. L. Short then

takes up the story in a chapter of some sixty-eight pages, outlining the development of Unitarianism in the 19th and 20th centuries. He traces the emergence alongside the older tradition of Priestley, with its emphasis on "rational" Christianity, of a more devotional and "catholic" (in the Baxterian sense) element originating with Martineau. The two traditions combined in 1928, in the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.

The authors emphasise that this is not a history of Unitarianism, and acknowledge that there were other "contributory streams in the making of later Unitarianism, such as those from the General Baptists", which receive no close attention. Their avowed intention not to revive ancient theological or ecclesiastical controversies, and the spirit in which they write are to be commended. Even so, an orthodox evangelical Christian may perhaps be forgiven a "sneaking feeling" that the very design underlying the book indicates a desire on the part of the Unitarians to have the best of both worlds—to reject orthodox Christianity, and at the same time to claim a spiritual pedigree which belongs properly speaking to mainstream Christianity.

E. F. CLIPSHAM.

Dutch Calvinistic Pietism in the Middle Colonies, by James Tanis. Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, pp. 203.

This careful study of the life and theology of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen (1692-1747), the "Father of American Pietism", is by the librarian of Yale University. It will introduce the English reader to an unfamiliar but important source of American religion. The pietism of Frelinghuysen was Reformed, not Lutheran. The Raritan Valley, to which he went in 1720 from Emden, was largely peopled by Dutch settlers. His parish covered 250 square miles, much of it wild, uncultivated country. A "brusky-bold" man, whose manner created even more antagonism than his doctrine, he led a tense and rather stormy life, but played an important part in preparing the ground for the Great Awakening.

"To Calvin the Renaissance world seemed a revelation of the goodness and the wonder of God, whereas Frelinghuysen more nearly viewed the world as a vehicle for the wrath of God". A firm believer in church discipline and even excommunication (the ban), he insisted on severer standards than many were ready to accept. Other difficulties were created by the reluctance of the Reformed Classis in Amsterdam to surrender its authority to ordain and the consequent delays in securing adequate assistance. Frelinghuysen found an ally in Gilbert Tennent, a Presbyterian; warmly welcomed George Whitefield when he arrived in America in 1739; but was critical of Count Zinzendorf two years later.

Strangely enough Frelinghuysen seems to have shown little missionary concern for the Indians in his neighbourhood. J. A. Freylinghausen, the hymnwriter, colleague and successor of A. H. Francke, was an older cousin.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Adventures and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa from 1849 to 1856, T. J. Bowen, Charleston 1857: reprinted London, Frank Cass, 1968, pp. 359. Introduction by E. A. Ayandele, pp. 44, 84/-.

The African renaissance and the modern missionary movement have been indissolubly intertwined over the past 150 years. Any history of Africa during this period must take account of the writings of its missionaries, but these are not always easily available. The volume under review is the third in a series of reprints of missionary travels and researches in Africa in the 19th and early 20th centuries, under the general editorship of Professor Robert Rotberg of Harvard.

The earlier volumes are by the Wesleyan pioneer in West Africa, Thomas Birch Freeman, and the German Dr. Ludwig Krapf in the service of the Church Missionary Society in East Africa. T. J. Bowen was the first missionary of the Foreign Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nigeria, a man described by Dr. Ayandele of the Department of History in the University of Ibadan as "a missionary of no mean importance, an informant of considerable value, and an Africanist gifted with the right instincts and an uninhibited mind".

Born in Georgia in 1814, the year of Alfred Saker's birth, the two men were to work within a few hundred miles of one another across the Gulf of Guinea. Offering himself to the Missions Board in 1848 for the work begun the previous year in Liberia and Sierra Leone, he was unable at first to gain official support. He sailed for Africa in December 1849, touched first at Monrovia and in August 1850 reached Yoruba country. The record of the next six years is one of much hardship and little success, but Africa had entered his soul. In 1852 he travelled back to America, via London, to return the following year with two new couples. Work was established at Lagos on the coast, and at Ijaye and Ogbomosho in the interior. But already his health had been undermined by his exertions and in 1856 he was compelled to return to America for good. Later he went as a pioneer missionary to Brazil but again his health failed him and from 1861 until his death in 1875 he eked out a precarious existence on his home soil, "insane, unlamented and forgotten".

Despite this rather sombre history, Bowen is an attractive figure, and his comments on the Nigerian scene and on missionary policies and problems are often strikingly relevant for to-day.

CLIFFORD PARSONS.

Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England (Studies and Documents), E. R. Norman. London, George Allen & Unwin, August 1968. 240 pp. 35s. cloth. 18s. paper.

The widespread and deeply imbedded Protestantism of so large a sector of the population of Victorian England is increasingly seen as one of the more important factors in the formation of Victorian

attitudes: the number of ministries owing their demise to Protestant conscientiousness—especially as expressed with regard to Ireland—was large. The origin of this popular Protestantism was theological, moral and political. Saint-craft was superstition, the rule of celibacy was too demanding to secure obedience, and the “double allegiance” made every Catholic potentially a traitor. These ideological objections were reinforced in the nineteenth century by demographic realities: the increase in the number of Catholics from an insignificant 400,000 to 1½ million in the forty years after 1841, largely, of course, as a result of Irish immigration. Against this background Dr. Norman chronicles the story of riot and of itinerant anti-Catholic, and often ex-Catholic, preachers. He clarifies the confused partisanship of the Maynooth crisis, the split between the moderate dissenters who were willing by virtue of their common Protestantism to join with Anglicans in the attack upon Rome and the dogmatic voluntarists who wanted no false allies and used the Maynooth platform to propagate their own attacks on all State established churches. The principal support for this uncompromising voluntarism is identified by Dr. Norman as distinctly Baptist (pp. 40-48). Five years later Protestantism was again marshalled to combat the so-called “Papal Agression”, and again the occasion was one for increasing partisanship to which, perhaps, Russell, as prime minister lent too generous support when, in the famous Durham letter, he confessed, “There is a danger, however, which alarms me much more than any aggression of a foreign sovereign.” He then proceeded to label the Puseyites, a kind of Fifth Column within the Protestant Church. His Ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1851 is one of the most outstanding examples of the ineffectiveness of the law in religious controversy. Similarly ineffective was Disraeli’s Public Worship Regulation Act of 1875, passed in the atmosphere of suspicion following the Vatican Council as a check upon crypto-Catholicism within the Church of England: in fact the censures of Gladstone, England’s most distinguished High Church layman, upon the Vatican decrees indicated that there was in fact no conspiracy between the Ritualists and Rome. Growing partisanship within English Protestantism is also the theme of the last chapter in which Dr. Norman considers the legal implications of ritualism up to the trial of Bishop King of Lincoln, which, he suggests, although ostensibly a victory for the Catholic party, left popular suspicion of ritualism still smouldering in the country.

The second half of the book contains a selection of 20 documents illustrative of these themes which are culled from a useful variety of sources. They are of substantial length and are at once both apposite and illuminating, so that within 240 pages the reader is presented with both a clear exposition of a neglected theme in English history and a considerable part of the evidence from which such conclusions are deduced.

Baptist Evangelism in 19th Century Ireland, by D. P. Kingdon. Belfast, Baptist Union of Ireland. pp. 36. 1s. 6d.

In this booklet Principal Kingdon has published the three lectures which he gave to mark the inauguration of the reconstituted Irish Baptist College in Belfast in 1964. The same year also marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Baptist Irish Society by some of the keenest supporters of the B.M.S. and Mr. Kingdon seized the opportunity to unfold something of its story, both for its intrinsic interest and also as a stimulus to new endeavour. No doubt the lectures as given were followed with close attention because the story is one which has largely been lost sight of and also because the author in exploring the sources has found material not only on facts and figures, geography and methods, but also on some of the unsung heroes of this enterprise. It was one which in its day captivated the interest and gained much support from British Baptists. It is good that the story has been re-told and there is enough here to make us hope that one day the author will have time for a full-scale study.

Baptists and Some Contemporary Issues, by D. S. Russell. London, Baptist Union Publications Department, 1968. 1s. 6d. plus postage 3d.

The contents of this booklet were first presented as an address to ministers at the Pastoral Session of the Assembly 1968. Dr. Russell was then carrying through his first Assembly as new General Secretary of the Baptist Union but though the week was thus an onerous one, he seized eagerly the opportunity to speak to his brother ministers about some of the points of tension in the denomination. His able and powerfully expressed plea was, and is, that points of tension can by their intrinsic nature be growing points. "Truth is to be found in tension, at the intersection of different approaches." Dr. Russell holds one of the most responsible appointments in British Baptist life and this booklet is an important indication of his attitude regarding some of the points of difference among us. Most who read it, like most of the ministers who heard it, will be grateful for the strength and wisdom which it reveals.

G. W. RUSLING.

Christian Tasks and Prospects in a World of Change, The Holdsworth-Grigg Memorial Lecture at the Baptist College of Victoria (Whitley College) by Dr. E. A. Payne, C.H.

In this fascinating lecture Dr. Payne once again demonstrates the vast range of his reading and the penetrating insight of his historical sense. He begins by summarising and assessing the work and conclusions of Dr. K. S. Latourette. From that great scholar he takes a sense of prophetic hopefulness and this permeates the lecture. Dr. Payne does not hesitate to criticize some of Latourette's conclusions, however, and he attempts to take up the train of his thought in the light of recent events—especially post-Conciliar movements within the

Roman Church. In our time Dr. Payne believes the church must face four great challenges:

- (1) a much deeper experience of prayer;
- (2) a growing need to realise the essential unity of the Church;
- (3) a wider understanding of the meaning of "evangelism";
- (4) a closer involvement in the changing patterns of society.

On each of these points Dr. Payne writes with lucidity, penetration and a young spirit. We hope that this lecture is the precursor of many more rewarding essays from his remarkable pen.

B. GORDON HASTINGS.

Anglicans/Methodists, ed. by G. E. Duffield. Church Book Room Press. 3s.

The sub-title of this booklet is "A popular appraisal by leading Anglicans and Methodists who believe that the proposals in the report of Anglican-Methodist Unity remain defective". This accurately describes the contents.

The contributors are from the Anglican Church: C. O. Buchanan, G. E. Duffield, O. R. Johnston and J. I. Packer, and from the Methodist Church: C. K. Barrett, O. R. Beckerlegge, F. Hildebrandt and T. E. Jessop. Their statements are based on a series in *New Extra Church Magazine* inset. The brief statements are followed by an open letter from the Anglicans, and a Methodist statement.

All who have followed the Anglican-Methodist discussion will be familiar with the points made in these brief statements. The focal point of opposition to the scheme clearly remains that of the doctrine of ministry, and the interpretation given to the episcopal imposition of hands in the Service of Reconciliation.

This booklet does not present any fresh material; but the arguments are set out very clearly, and in non-technical language. It forms a useful contribution to an important discussion which raises issues for all the churches in this country.

L. G. CHAMPION.

We regret an omission in the review (in our July issue) of *Dissenters and Public Affairs in Mid-Victorian England* by F. R. Salter. A printer's error left out the line which stated that this booklet is published by Dr. Williams's Trust, 14, Gordon Square, London, W.C.1 at 5s.