

## Reviews

*Spirit Versus Structure.* Jaroslav Pelikan. London. Collins. 1969. 149 pp. 30/-.

This book is sub-titled: Luther and the Institutions of the Church; and therein the broad theme is delineated. The making of a critical assessment would seem to involve the asking of at least three questions.

Does the book assist in the knowledge and understanding of Luther's thought and work? Without doubt the answer must be affirmative. Dr. Pelikan lets Luther speak freely in his own words. From the pages of *The Babylonian Captivity*, we hear the great Reformer on priesthood, monasticism, infant baptism, canon law, and the sacramental system. Then each of these themes is taken up in turn as, at various points between 1523 and 1537, Luther had to wrestle with them afresh in critical situations. It hardly needs saying that the scholarship is impeccable.

Is the book's methodology convincing and successful? On the whole—yes. Dr. Pelikan is seeking to show how the early Luther, who denounced the contemporary structures of the Church and without misgivings assisted their destruction, had to confront them anew with the passing of the years and, at crucial points, modify his iconoclasm. Monasticism might be condemned: but who was to take over the task of coping with poverty, and from what group would the impetus to mission derive? The sacramental system of the medieval Church might be overthrown: but when others started drawing conclusions involving the repudiation of infant baptism and the pinning of the Supper to the idea of "remembrance", how was grace to be preserved as sovereign unless sacramental structures of grace were properly maintained?

Does the book speak to our contemporary situation? It may be that there are really two strands in the story the author has to tell, and that they need disentangling. Luther the prophet is, in some respects, a rather naïve figure. He speaks the Word of God without regard to consequences. He has to live with the results, and is somewhat baffled and bewildered when, at crucial points, the last state seems worse than the first. But Luther is also the biblical theologian who knew what Incarnation meant, who understood the Spirit by reference to the Word made flesh, who staked all on the *finitum capax infiniti*—and who therefore, in the name of grace itself, had to seek, discern, and defend the structures of the Spirit.

History does not repeat itself. Luther's problems are not ours. In that sense it would be folly to plot analogies and comparisons too simply. But we share with Luther the awful privilege and responsibility of living amid a crisis of the institutions. And it may be that the great lesson we can learn from him is that, deep down, it is a

theological crisis. In that broad sense, Luther speaks not only to his age but to our own. We are in Dr. Pelikan's debt for assisting our understanding both of our present and of our past.

N. CLARK

*A History of the Reformation in Germany to 1555*, by Franz Lau and Ernst Bizer. A. and C. Black. 1969. Pp. xii, 249. 40s.

This book, which originally formed in German a section of a larger work published in 1964, falls into two parts: Franz Lau takes the story to 1532 and Ernst Bizer to 1555. It has several virtues not least that of providing a survey of the progress of the Reformation in Germany at several levels: it is perhaps strongest in linking that progress to imperial and papal policies and least adequate in its presentation of the theological issues involved both between the two major parties and also within the Lutheran ranks themselves.

Professor Lau, who has already provided us with his *Luther* (1963), does not here discuss Luther's relationship to the Peasants' War but does stress that the Reformation was most consistently welcomed among the urban artisans. He is probably less than fair in condemning *all* the American Mennonite historians' work as (38) "plainly tendentious" and as seeking to prove that the Anabaptists were unique and free of any contamination from Medieval sectarianism. On the other hand he is not the first to warn against some of the assumptions implicit in the valuable work done by the Mennonites in this field.

Professor Bizer of Bonn makes the interesting point, early in his narrative, that during the 1530's Melancthon's influence was (90) "more penetrating, more widespread, and more sustained than that of Luther himself". His reconstruction shows real sympathy with the problems faced by Charles V and, to a lesser extent, with those of the Papacy as he traces the complex of problems encountered by the Schmalkaldic League and its opponents. The whole book is more one for historians than for theologians and this is rather unfortunate since theological issues played so large a part in the course of events. Even the historical narrative, however, would have been greatly assisted by the provision of some maps to clarify the ever-shifting balance of alliances and counter-alliances.

While the treatment is thoroughly ecumenical and irenic, so that, for example, great use is made of Hubert Jedin's major study of the Council of Trent, it can hardly be doubted that this book would have been better if twice the size. It does not only suffer from having no conclusion (presumably a consequence of its extraction from a larger work) but also from an irritatingly sketchy treatment of the development of the ecclesiastical structures of Lutheranism. However, an unexpected bonus appeared in the review copy: between pages 4 and 5 was included an additional printing of pages 197-212.

B. R. WHITE

*John Bunyan*, by Richard L. Greaves. The Sutton Courtenay Press, Appleford, Abingdon, 1969. 176pp. 36s. (£1.80)

This is a good book in every sense of the word. It is scholarly, well documented, and—what is no less important—interesting to read. Based on original research for which the author was awarded a London Ph.D., it breaks new ground and makes a valuable contribution to our understanding both of Bunyan and of Puritan theology.

Dr. G. F. Nuttall, in a Foreword, describes it as one of those books about which one says, "What a good idea! I wonder why no one ever thought of that before!". This perceptive comments sums up the book better than any lengthy review could do.

This is the second of the Courtenay Studies in Reformation Theology, which means that its scope is less comprehensive than its title suggests. It is essentially a study of Bunyan's theology, the details of his life being referred to only in so far as they help to indicate his place in the English Protestant movement.

Dr. Greaves, who is Assistant Professor of Humanities, at Michigan State University, has, in an astonishingly small compass, provided a useful account and appraisal of Bunyan's theology, guiding us carefully through the otherwise bewildering labyrinth of 17th century theological discussion, which in itself, is no mean achievement. He has even added a glossary of technical terms for the benefit of non-specialist readers.

Bunyan's theology is discussed under five heads: The Pilgrim's God, the Pilgrim's Call, the Pilgrim's Response, the Pilgrim's Covenant, and the Pilgrim's Stately Palace. His doctrine of the Church, ministry and sacraments, is outlined in this last section, the palace as Bunyan depicted it, being in reality, as Professor Greaves points out, the Separatist church.

This careful survey and evaluation of Bunyan's thought shows clearly that "no single theological label without careful qualification, will fit Bunyan." The common tendency to speak of him simply as a Calvinist is both inaccurate and misleading. Certainly it fails to do justice to the not inconsiderable influence of Luther on his thinking. As Dr. Greaves shows, his foundation principles were basically Lutheran, and upon this foundation he built an essentially Calvinist superstructure. His doctrine of the Church and sacraments was neither Calvinist nor Lutheran, but "a heritage from the Independent-Baptist tradition."

Thanks are due to Dr. Greaves for helping us to see Bunyan in theological perspective. It is to be hoped that his book will be widely read.

ERNEST F. CLIPSHAM

*The First Hundred Years: The Baptist Union of Scotland.* By Derek Murray. Published by the Baptist Union of Scotland. 152pp. 7/6d.

Into its hundred years existence the Baptist Union of Scotland has

packed dissension and controversy, advance and retreat, division and unity. Mr. Murray's "popular" history of the Union records, warts and all, the story of these years and the years of pre-history. The history of the Home Mission and the Scottish Baptist College are also covered.

The Union's history could well be understood in terms of the dissension which ruined an earlier false start and almost frustrated its actual formation in 1869. The points of difficulty, the rugged individualism, the independence akin to isolationism and the strong dislike of central control appear frequently throughout the century and continue to the present day. Mr. Murray comments that "until 1869, the things which divided were stronger than the things which united." At times, since the Union's formation, the things which have united have only been marginally stronger than the things which would divide. From a happier angle the author surveys the Scottish Union in terms of its outreach and extension.

Fully committed to extension throughout the century of its life, the only frustration of the Union has been its lack of finance. "Fervid evangelism and cultured worship and preaching" says Mr. Murray have grown up side by side and both are equally authentic expressions of Scottish Baptist life." The author ends the story on a cautiously optimistic note. Young and visionary leadership, vigorous extension causes and ambitious plans of evangelism are seen as being the spring-board into the second hundred years (though eschatologically minded brethren might stumble over the book's title and its implications for the future!). The last history of the Union was compiled in 1926. Mr. Murray's careful and readable account, however slight, is therefore to be welcomed. May it be the prelude to a fuller work.

J. TAYLOR

*Tyndale Baptist Church Bristol: 1868-1968.* Compiled by L. G. Champion. Bristol. 40pp. No price stated.

It is clear from this slim, colourful, pictorial volume that Tyndale has given much to our denomination in the past 100 years. From 1867 until 1911 the church was led by Richard Glover. During his ministry many gave themselves to missionary service with the B.M.S., the most outstanding being the Revd. J. S. Whitewright, who spent 40 years in China, and at the turn of the century was as powerful a force in China as Timothy Richard.

In Bristol, deacon Edward Robinson "initiated many developments in his expanding business which expressed his endeavour to carry Christian principles into the relationships of everyday living. Schemes of welfare for his work people, of profit-sharing, of pensions, of holidays with pay, were all worked out during his control of the business; much in these forward looking policies is common practice to-day, but over half a century ago these were daring innovations." (p. 21)

Through the leadership of F. C. Bryan, Tyndale gave birth to

Westbury Baptist Church and under W. E. Whilding assumed responsibility for Lawrence Weston. From 1871 until 1961 Tyndale ran a mission in Lower College Green. When the premises were compulsorily purchased in 1961, the capital was invested for making grants to Christian work outside Tyndale.

Edward Robinson once told T. R. Glover: "Your father taught me to give and it's been a great blessing to me." It is good to know that this spirit will result this year in the erection of housing accommodation for the elderly on the church site.

ROGER HAYDEN

*Nonconformist Trust Deeds.* Edwin Welch. Reprinted from the *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. III, No. 8 (Oct. 1968) pp. 397-403.

This paper, perhaps the first on its important subject, deals with the development of meeting-house trusts after 1689; their registration on the dorse of the Close Rolls after 1736; clauses limiting trustees' powers; ultimate trusts, originally a precaution against renewed persecution; doctrinal clauses; and the Methodist model deed and deed poll. Trust corporations are not mentioned. Dr. Welch recognizes that each denomination needs separate treatment. This is surely because most of the clergy ejected in 1662 still favoured a parochial establishment. Nonconformists against their will, they wished ministers to be reasonably free from local pressure, yet under oversight. Instead of replacing episcopacy by a hierarchy of courts, as in Scotland, the English Presbyterians found another way, suggested by Puritan lectureship trusts; there were Elizabethan precedents, which in turn followed the latest of the chantry foundations in providing for supervision by lay trustees. A Presbyterian minister was appointed by a body of trustees, renewed by co-option, men of substance, benefactors of the cause, who could call him to account. In contrast, a Congregational or Particular Baptist pastor was (and is) called to his charge by the local church, a fellowship of covenanted believers with regular communion *in sacris*; he can be removed by them, but not normally by the trustees, who are servants of the church. General Baptist trustees were sometimes magisterial; at Chesham their duties included the prevention of Arian, Eutychian or Anthropomorphic preaching. But this subject would support several theses.

ARNOLD H. J. BAINES.