

Reviews

Hans von Campenhausen: *The Formation of the Christian Bible*, A. & C. Black, £3.75.

English readers have had hitherto to rely on Souter (revised by C. S. C. Williams, 1954) plus chapters in New Testament Introductions. Now we have this splendid volume. Its merits are:—

- (1) Thorough acquaintance with New Testament Scholarship and a magisterial mastery of the Patristic sources.
- (2) The ability to ask the right questions and thereby enable the reader to see with greater clarity the issues involved in the question of the canon:—

(a) why the church retained the Old Testament (chs. 1-3).

If Paul had to fight with the Judaisers in such a way that he can bind the Old Testament and God's activity in Jesus together and yet secure the freedom from the Law's demands for his Gentile converts, in the second century the fight was to retain the Old Testament against the Valentinian gnostic position (fundamentally polytheistic, since it attributed different elements to different divine powers) and later Marcion (the whole Old Testament was inspired by an inferior deity). von Campenhausen shows how Justin defended the Old Testament by showing the consonance of the Old Testament Christological passages with the facts of Jesus and claiming thereby the authority of the Old Testament (the first century approach had been the other way round—proof from prophecy to validate Jesus). Justin also built on Paul's salvation history idea: he saw the law as God's counter-measure against Jewish stubbornness. Thus he could explain the imperfections of the Old Testament and still retain it.

(b) why the concept of a bipartite canon developed (chs. 4-5).

(c) the basis on which the canon was closed (ch. 6).

von Campenhausen shows how the great church reacted to the Montanist stress on the Spirit by restricting the works accepted as canonical (see the *Muratorianum* c. 200) and grasping in principle the concept of a 'closed' canon (even if dispute surrounded certain works for some time to come, e.g. Hebrews, Revelation).

- (3) The capacity to subject long-accepted positions to thorough scrutiny and to argue his own case convincingly and compellingly.

In particular, von Campenhausen attacks:—

(a) the Harnack-Zahn position that the concept of a canon existed before Marcion (ch. 4). He, surely rightly, strongly emphasises the need to distinguish between the use of or allusion to a work which later became a New Testament book and the concept of canonisation (p. 103). He shows how flimsy are the alleged supports for this in

the Apostolic fathers (pp. 119-120 and footnotes) and his use of Papias is most telling (incidentally on p. 131 the translation ought to read "what Aristion or John the Elder *were saying*", i.e. they were alive and Papias' informants heard them as opposed to the apostles who were dead—the tense in the Greek is the present of reported speech, *legousin*, as is acknowledged in footnote 117, p. 132). To establish its own canon was contrary too to the essence of gnosticism. The chapter on Marcion and Irenaeus is extremely well done. In contrast to Marcion, Irenaeus gave to the Twelve an equal standing with Paul; defended church tradition as consonant with Scripture; upheld a four-fold gospel (against Marcion's edited Luke) and (like Paul and Justin before him) relied heavily on a salvation history schema from creation to consummation to bind Old and New Testaments together.

(b) the idea that the criteria of acceptance of a given New Testament work was not apostolicity, but rather what was ancient and reliable, plus the usage and judgment of the church (this is true of Irenaeus pp. 204f, Muratorianum pp. 254-261, Tertullian p. 283 and Origen p. 321).

There are minor caveats which we might raise (e.g., Mark 7.1-23 is hardly used; the idea that John's attitude to the Old Testament is wholly negative; a mid-second century date for the Pastorals), but overall this is a work which compels admiration and earns our gratitude.

J. E. MORGAN-WYNNE.

Brian P. Levack: *The civil lawyers in England, 1603-1641: a political study*. Oxford. Oxford University Press, 1973. Pp. xii, 311.

This book is primarily based upon a study of the careers of two hundred doctors of civil law who practised in England 1603-1641 who formed "a professional elite", according to the author, "which has not received the historical attention it deserves".

The greater part of the volume expounds the part they played in the years before the outbreak of the Great Rebellion and explains their generally "Royalist" sympathies. Almost a third of the work, however, provides a biographical dictionary of the men concerned. This latter practice, which seems to be growing in popularity among historians at the present time, not only assists the reader to compare and contrast the varying careers and varying fortunes of the men concerned but also does much to indicate the sources upon which the author, Dr. B. P. Levack, has relied.

The support of the civil lawyers for the monarchy in this crucial period of English history arose from "an interaction of ideas, economic activity and professional expediency" (p. 6). Unlike the common lawyers (who provided a number of notable Parliamentarians) the civil lawyers identified themselves virtually to a man with the "court" rather than the "country" party. This was undoubtedly due in

part to their dependence upon the King at a time when they had come under pressure in a conflict with the common lawyers: "in their search for assistance to reverse the declining fortunes of their profession, the civilians became even more dependent upon the monarch than they already were by the very nature of their occupations" (p. 82).

Naturally chapter V, "Ecclesiastical Politics" is likely to be most interesting to readers of the *Baptist Quarterly*. The close association of the civil lawyers with the ecclesiastical hierarchy during the generation before the outbreak of the Civil Law was due to the fact that a large share of their income was drawn from their work in ecclesiastical courts. Puritans were therefore very rare among them, not least, perhaps, because they were inclined to conservatism due to the very material with which they worked. "No Bishop" turned out to mean not only "no King" but a blow to the profession which eventually meant "no civil lawyers".

This is a book with a special interest for all those who are interested in the past of the legal profession—and in some of the men who helped to make life difficult, no doubt, from the very best of motives, for our Puritan and Baptist forefathers.

David Underdown: *Somerset in the Civil War and Interregnum*. David and Charles. Newton Abbot, 1973. Pp. 229. £4.50.

This book, by the author of *Pride's Purge*, is a labour of love produced by a Somersetshire man now teaching in Brown University, Rhode Island, U.S.A., who is, at the same time, a highly competent scholar.

After a first chapter which sets the scene and draws selectively upon the valuable work of T. G. Barnes, *Somerset 1625-1640* (1961), Dr. Underdown provides five chapters on the Civil War in his county before arriving at that part of his story which is of greatest interest to readers of the *Baptist Quarterly*. In these early chapters of his book Professor Underdown shows how, while the majority of the more substantial gentry were for the king, many of those involved in the cloth industry were for parliament and all alike deeply resented the way they were taxed and plundered by both sides.

In the period 1645-1654 the outstanding local politician was John Pyne of Curry Mallet, a member of the Long Parliament and one who publicly pressed that the king should be brought to trial for his misdeeds. He was linked with Thomas Collier in supporting the Army's *Remonstrance* in 1648. While the author asserts that "Somerset, like the rest of England, remained a patchwork of theological diversity" (171) under the Commonwealth he is not much interested in the sectarians of the county for their own sake and the Baptists do not come sharply into focus. Perhaps the most exciting suggestion is that one of those who was to become a Baptist and who signed the *Somerset Confession* of 1656, David Barrett, killed the Dean of Wells Cathedral, Dr. Walter Raleigh, an act, according to Underdown,

of murder. (Pp. 136, 145). I believe this to be the only occasion on which a man who either was or became a member of the Baptist community was actually accused of murdering an Anglican Dean although, only a little later, a somewhat similar accusation was refuted by the Baptists of the American colonies. Incidentally, was Thomas Budd (pp. 187, 190) both a signatory of the 1656 *Confession* and also a former Presbyterian minister?

At the same time it is pointed out that the Parliamentary governor of Taunton who accused the Baptists of "damnable pride" (*B.Q.*, XXIV, 101) was the soldier and later admiral Robert Blake. Meanwhile the Baptists "a byword for revolutionary excesses ever since John of Leyden" (146) by 1656 "seemed comparatively harmless" (186). It seems clear that Professor Underdown shares Dr. Hill's view as expressed in *God's Englishman* that from the time of the Protectorate the rulers of England were quietly becoming the gentry once more.

The attraction of this book is that here the story told is really county history and all those interested in the period will want to read it.

B. R. WHITE.

Geoffrey Moorhouse: *The Missionaries*. Eyre Methuen, London, 1973. Pp. 343. Price £3.95 net.

The author, a former Chief Features writer of *The Guardian*, wrote this book after a study of a selection of literature on Christian missions in Africa and a journey across that continent during which he visited among many other places the B.M.S. headquarters at Kinshasa, and the Bolobo district in Middle Zaire (where in one village people sang to him "Auld Lang Syne" in the local dialect . . . "taught many generations ago by a missionary called Mac Beth"). It is primarily the story of Protestant missionaries working in Africa during the nineteen and early twentieth centuries and an assessment of their achievements (or, perhaps, lack of achievement); but a chapter is included on the French White Fathers who are treated rather more sympathetically than are the Protestants. A whole chapter is devoted to Samuel Crowther, the Yoruba who became a bishop of the Church of England, and a whole chapter to David Livingstone, "the greatest missionary." As to the rest the author says, "the most celebrated figures in the missionary pantheon have been somewhat neglected because it seemed important to portray the norm rather than the outstanding." Of B.M.S. missionaries the only one to receive extended notice is William Holman Bentley.

The book is that of a journalist rather than of an historian. The author tends to linger over the frailties and failures of some of the missionaries, and deals at some length with the struggles in Uganda between French Roman Catholics and English Anglicans which culminated in the battle of Mengo. He judges people not in the light of

their own times but rather by present-day popular opinion. The motives of those involved are not carefully examined. The tone of the book is set by the choice of a dramatic beginning with the great meeting in the Exeter Hall in June 1840, presided over by the new Prince Consort, to mark the first anniversary of the founding of the Society for the Extinction of the Slave Trade and the Civilization of Africa. In the speeches of the principal speakers, Archdeacon Wilberforce, Fowell Buxton and Sir Robert Peel, commerce, civilization and imperialism were all enthusiastically associated with missionary enterprise. Had the author looked at the reports of the annual meeting of the B.M.S. held the following April in the same Exeter Hall, he would have discovered that the speakers then repudiated the sentiments of the former meeting. The mission in West Africa had begun in 1840 mainly because of "the jealous disposition to aid it by the churches in Jamaica" and it was hoped that it would help "to heal the cruel injuries which have for ages been inflicted on the children of Ham."

There are strange inaccuracies in the account. It is stated that William Carey and a small group of other Baptists established themselves at Serampore at the end of 1793; but Carey did not arrive there until January 1800. He quotes Holman Bentley's advice that "nigger" was a word most offensive to an African and says that Bentley was not inclined to take his own advice; in support of which allegation he quotes from a letter written by Hartland! He suggests that the B.M.S. has been able to build up a considerable capital from the great legacies of the past, "from people like Robert Arthington" and so obtain a steady income from its interest. One can only assume that he has misunderstood the balance sheet in respect of the legacy equalization fund: in 1971, the year cited, the general reserve of the Society was no greater than £30,171 (the Arthington money was spent years ago). Bentley's claim that the Pope had issued a Bull directed against Protestant missions in Central Africa is dismissed; but in the government archives in Brussels there is evidence for just such a document. The reviewer can only assume that the author did not have time for patient research and checking.

His assessment of the quality of the early missionaries differs widely from that of Sir Harry Johnstone who toured Central Africa in the years 1882 and 1883 and wrote: "I came to regard them as men deeply versed in the lore of Africa, and above all as Tribunes of the people."

In his references to the B.M.S. he is fair and sympathetic, but his treatment of missionaries generally leaves much to be desired. He tends to create the impression that what was true of some must be true of all. It is a pity that there are these blemishes for there is so much that is good and interesting in the book, and much that counterbalances the one-sided presentation of so much that has been written in the past from within the missionary movement itself. But it is difficult to see how the unprejudiced reader could agree that those of

whom he writes were typical of all missionaries in Africa, or that the story of Africa was typical of the story of Christian missions generally.

A. S. CLEMENT.

R. E. O. White: *A Guide to Preaching*. Pickering & Inglis, 1973. Pp. 244. Price £2.20.

Mr. White offers in this book "a practical primer of homiletics." It is introduced by disclaiming any ambition to teach experienced preachers and by suggesting that the author is better equipped to sharpen the blade for others than to do the cutting himself. Such modesty, surprising and rare though it may be, is to be welcomed.

I know of no preacher who would not benefit from reading this book. It follows traditional homiletic lines but its merit lies in being fresh about the familiar. Dealing with shape and style, with language and thought, it yet succeeds in reminding the reader that the message is all important. The significance of the message demands some care in presenting it.

The students who listen to the advice which White gives may count themselves fortunate. He knows the problems and is able to warn his students of the perils and to encourage them by the splendour of the Word. He teaches them to be honest about the faith and helps them to avoid temptations to popularity by misrepresenting the views of others.

White is anxious that the book should be understood as a primer. This it is and like the books of the law it would be well for the reader to absorb the teaching in such a way that he knows it by heart. If he fails to do this White's book will become a stumbling block rather than a help. It has, inevitably, the danger of all such books in that so much advice is given that the student preacher could become paralysed by the effort of trying to remember what he is supposed to do.

White, unlike most Principals I have known, is sufficiently prodigal to give away many sermon suggestions. It would be unfortunate if a lazy man should seize upon these and warm them up for his own use, serving them to the people with the greater assurance because he is confident about the origin of the mixture.

I commend the book with the sort of caution of which I imagine White himself would approve. Today it seems to me that men need to be alive to the message rather than to concentrate on how to project the voice or move their arms and legs. I hold the innocent view that if a man feels the constraint which preaching demands he will benefit from a book like this. Without the constraint he will be like a puppet worked from the strings of another hand.

HOWARD WILLIAMS.