

Reviews

The ongoing task of Christian historiography, C. T. McIntire, Institute for Christian Studies Publication No. 2, Toronto, 1974, pp 24, \$1.00. (Obtainable in Britain from the Christian Studies Unit, 94 Kennington Avenue, Bishopston, Bristol, BS7 9ES, price 35p).

This stimulating monograph was originally given as a public lecture at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, where the author is a Senior Member in history and historiography. His assessment of the heritage and task of Christian historiography is one which deserves to be taken seriously by Christians engaged in the writing, teaching and study of history.

Dr. McIntire's reminder that all historians have "pre-theoretical commitments, however unselfconscious they may be, which shape their research, method, teaching and writing", is an important though all too easily forgotten one. Christian historians have accepted too readily the assumptions of "positivist-liberal" historians about their own scientific neutrality and lack of metaphysical presuppositions. There has been a tendency, therefore, for Christian historians either to concentrate on historical studies of the Church or theology, or to regard themselves not as "Christian historians" but simply as "historians like everyone else in their profession", who happen to be Christians in their personal beliefs.

McIntire's contention is that historians who are Christians have a responsibility to ensure that their writing and teaching are shaped by "the insights and values provided by a Christian view of man, society, norms, history, the world and the whole of created reality". The task of the present generation of Christian historians is to build on the foundation provided by historians like Carlton J. H. Hayes, Christopher Dawson, R. H. Tawney and Herbert Butterfield who all "reflected self-consciously, and in writing, on the importance of Christianity for history and historical reflection".

With the advance of secularisation, there are new demands on Christian historiography, and McIntire suggests four "crux problems" requiring examination at the present time—(i) What is the field of investigation of the historian? (ii) the role of "religion" in the making of culture, especially now that our culture is secular; (iii) the question of historical judgments; and (iv) the need for extensive historical revision in the light of Christian insights into the world and life.

This is an important and timely challenge to Christian historians. The questions raised by Dr. McIntire could well be usefully discussed at one of the Baptist Historical Society's Summer Schools.

ERNEST F. CLIPSHAM

Cheshire 1630-1660: County Government and Society during the English Revolution. By J. S. Morrill. Oxford University Press. London 1974. Pp. x, 357. £5.50.

This volume is a further welcome addition to the studies now being made of local history during the period of the Great Rebellion. Dr. Morrill's aim, he says, has been to convey "an impression of a whole community under stress" and this he has done while providing his readers with a number of useful comparisons with what was happening elsewhere in England during the period.

The dominant leader on the Parliamentary side was to be Sir William Brereton (b. 1604). An early visit to Holland during the 1630's when he approved that country's practice of complete religious toleration suggests that his own views were likely to be fairly radical. So it proved: his closest friends seem to have been among the Independent ministers and his appetite for power, both locally and later nationally, was, so Dr. Morrill argues, directed not to his own glorification but to the destruction of the powers of the king. Many of his opponents among the gentry supported Parliament but feared that in a general revolutionary situation they might lose their own traditional authority. Hence Richard Janney was punished because (p. 227) "upon the sight of some deere [he] uttered these words, I hope wee shall in a short tyme bee rydd of gentlemen and bucks or deere also". This was in 1650 and, in 1659, after the final collapse of the Protectorate when Sir George Booth led a rebellion in Cheshire some people rallied to him because they feared a Quaker uprising.

Both the Parliamentary side's war effort and its later politics in Cheshire were bedevilled by a not uncommon conflict between the traditional leaders of its society on the one hand and Brereton, with the new men whom he pushed forward, on the other. The author also fairly claims to have shown something of the disturbing impact of the times at the level of village life both in the cost of the war and in the development of new forms of local government.

Jerome Sankey is the only known Baptist leader to flit in and out of the story but Dr. Morrill both argues that in local government the Puritan regime may well have been more effective than its predecessors and also shows the usually tolerant Cromwell in an unexpected light: as Lord Protector he wrote to insist on the prohibition of the use of the Book of Common Prayer because it fed "that old superstitious spirit". The work also contains two useful warnings for the student of the period, first, that a "puritan" will may reflect less the piety of the testator than of the minister who drew it up and, secondly, that the printed *Thurloe State Papers* are not always accurately transcribed. This book makes stimulating and valuable reading.

B. R. WHITE.

The Southern Baptist Association and its Churches, 1824—1974: A Ter-jubilee Sketch, Walter Fancutt, Andover, Holmes & Sons (Printers) Ltd., 1974, pp52 + xi, 25p (by post single copies 30p, 25 copies £4.75). Obtainable from the publishers, 10 High St., Andover.

In 1823 the 78 churches of the Western Association (which covered an area from the Cotswolds to Land's End and from the Chilterns to the South Coast) decided to divide into four regional Associations. This booklet tells the story of one of them—the Southern.

Notwithstanding the destruction of the Association Minutes (1828—1937), in the blitz, in 1940, Mr. Fancutt has provided a wealth of interesting information about the S.B.A. and its churches, helpfully relating events in the Association to what was going on in the wider life of the denomination and nation.

After tracing the fortunes of its churches in the days when they were within the old Western Association, he goes on to unfold the story of the Southern Association itself. Despite slow progress in its early years, the Association's record is one of advance and achievement. At its formation, in 1824, the S.B.A. had only 14 constituent churches; by 1970, however, it had grown to 85 churches with a membership of 7920. It is, perhaps, significant that during the first 100 years, 8 ministers who had served within the Association became Presidents of the Baptist Union. Others who played a leading part in denominational life had links with the S.B.A., including J. H. Shakespeare, whose wife was the daughter of William Goodman, minister at Andover, 1847-51.

Foremost among the Association's priorities have always been evangelism and "the care of the churches" the theme of Joseph Ivimey's sermon on 2 Cor. 11.28, at the inauguration. The churches belonging to the S.B.A. have also had a keen missionary interest. As Mr. Fancutt reminds us, the churches of Hampshire and Wiltshire were, thanks to William Steadman, among the first, outside Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, to support the B.M.S.

In addition to the actual text, there are appendices with details of Moderators, Presidents and other Association officers, the titles of Association circulars and presidential addresses, Association statistics and a select bibliography, as well as 8 pages of photographic plates. It may seem a little ungrateful, therefore, to expect anything else. Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling that an index and a map showing the churches in their District groupings would have made this little book even more useful.

These are small points however. This is a fascinating story, well presented, and Mr. Fancutt, who is the present Secretary of the Association, deserves our thanks. At 25p. it is certainly good value for money.

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