

Reviews

Reformation, Conformity and Dissent: Essays in honour of Geoffrey Nuttall. Edited by R. Buick Knox. London: Epworth Press, 1977. Pp. 302. £8.50.

This handsome volume opens with John Huxtable's brief portrait of Dr. Nuttall, illuminating for those of us who know him only by his published writings, and it closes with a bibliography of these writings, compiled by Professor Tai Liu. In between are twelve essays by mature scholars working at the height of their powers. All are good, and some are superb. The subjects range in scale from A. G. Dickens' reflective and beautiful piece on the *Commentaries* of Johannes Sleidan, a mature humanist scholar whose assumptions permeated Reformation historiography into the present century, down to Patrick Collinson's fine vignette of Christian magistracy in action in a Suffolk parish. They range in place and time from mid-sixteenth century Germany to mid-eighteenth century New England. Owen Chadwick persuasively argues that Frederick III, Elector Palatine, made his decision in the direction of Calvinism, so fateful for German history, for spiritual reasons based upon his own reading of the Bible; Professor Chadwick's essay is a nice illustration of the benefit of going beyond Sleidan's humanist-political framework in reconstructing Reformation history. John F. Wilson carefully analyses Jonathan Edwards' notebooks as Edwards laboriously studied his Bible in a remote Indian mission for a projected *History of the Work of Redemption*, on the eve of his invitation to the presidency of New Jersey College; it is hard to imagine a more fitting moment to symbolize the end of the heroic age of the Protestant Reformation.

Several essays deal with an area where Dr. Nuttall has himself been a pioneer. Gordon Rupp eloquently argues for the persistence within Protestantism of powerful strains of inward religious feeling which he characterizes as "a devotion of rapture"; and R. L. Greaves identifies this spirituality as the inner key to the coherence of English puritanism as a whole. R. Tudur Jones illuminates the contrasts that could exist within this spiritual tradition by a finely-wrought comparison of the "vigorous activism" of Vavasor Powell with the eloquent (in Welsh) but quietist piety of Morgan Llwyd. J. van den Berg shows how a common spirituality could diverge in other directions by tracing the initial attraction and subsequent conflict between the Quaker missionary William Ames and the Amsterdam Collegiant Petrus Serrarius.

Other essays deal with English themes. The most important of these, and of special interest to readers of the *Baptist Quarterly*, is B. R. White's definitive account of a neglected man who stands at the very heart of the religious radicalism of what used to be called the puritan revolution. Henry Jessey was a Baptist by personal conviction; but as a resolutely open-communion congregationalist in practice his

role was that of a mediator among differing congregations. His centrality in the 1650s arose from his powerful millenarian enthusiasms tempered by a realism that made him in the end a moderate. R. Buick Knox emphasizes the continuities of the seventeenth century by examining episcopal sermons; one wonders if the point could also be made from puritan and nonconformist sermons. Christopher Hill, rightly I think, places the "much-maligned practice of occasional conformity" into the context of the long-established Independent practice of semi-separatism and reminds us that nonconformists never lost their sense of the "unity of the Protestant nation". Basil Hall, finally, shows how Daniel Defoe's Presbyterian background contributed to the diligence with which Defoe worked to secure the union with Scotland; although a reviewer in this journal is obliged to observe that Hewling is not among the "names lost to us", being the name of William Kiffin's grandsons made famous both in Kiffin's memoirs and in Macaulay's *History*.

Any reader interested in the first two centuries of Protestantism will find this a rewarding volume. Dr. Nuttall can be pleased, and the rest of us grateful.

MURRAY TOLMIE.

The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London, 1616-1649. Murray Tolmie. Cambridge University Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 257. £9.00.

A comprehensive account of the origins of the Baptist movement is long overdue. Professor Tolmie illustrates the complexity of the phenomenon in his judicious analysis of the emergence in London during the early years of the English Revolution of a variety of sectarian, separatist and gathered churches, mostly branches of the prototypal Jacob-Lathrop congregation. Despite differences of doctrine and discipline, Baptists and Independents maintained close co-operation and unity of interest in defending their congregational autonomy against the exclusive Presbyterian system. With the exception of the General Baptists, usually isolated by their Arminian heresy, the separate churches formed a radical coalition yet to acquire the denominational mentality characteristic of later nonconformity. The heterogeneity of London puritanism is clearly established but the urban environment which encouraged such mobility and variety deserves more attention.

Much of the book is concerned with reconstructing the intercongregational politics of the period and the patchy, disparate evidence is handled with confidence. But a method well suited to such reconstruction cannot adequately evoke the revolutionary climate in which the radical congregations blossomed. The social appeal of separatism receives scant attention. The Levellers figure prominently but their programme hardly at all. The detailed study of their relations with the separate churches admittedly demonstrates that there are other approaches to the movement than the cul-de-sac of the franchise

problem. We are reminded that the Levellers cut their ideological teeth on the issue of religious toleration and relied on the organisation and energy of the radical London congregations to flex their political muscle. But the author overemphasizes their dependence—they become little more than an ephemeral appendage. While commenting on the strong support for the Levellers among the General Baptists he misses the opportunity to consider the influence of radical Arminianism on Leveller theory, in particular its rejection of the innate corruption of man through the sin of Adam as the most likely source of the principle of a natural birthright.

Professor Tolmie's endeavour to accommodate both the origins of nonconformity and the political activities of the London separatists strains his thesis. To characterize their essential triumph in 1649 as the creation of English nonconformity perpetuates the Whiggish hindsight and "anachronistic denominational perspective" which he deplores. By inspiring a decade of theocratic aspirations the saints' triumph in fact jeopardized their survival after the Restoration. Only when memories faded of their zealous endeavour to impose by force their own vision of godly rule on an unwilling society were they grudgingly allowed the status of nonconformity. Professor Tolmie's argument does not dispose of Christopher Hill's contention (disapprovingly quoted in the preface) that revolutionary puritanism differs from later nonconformity as water from wine. Nor can any work claiming to be a study of the origins of that nonconformity conclude at 1649 without conceding the limitations of its perspective.

J. F. MCGREGOR.

The Re-establishment of the Church of England 1660-1663. I. M. Green. Oxford University Press, 1978. Pp. x, 263. £8.50.

Dr. Green's thesis is that, far from there being a "Laudian" party which masterminded the restoration of the Church of England 1660-1663, such a group hardly existed. He also argues that the King did not share the policy of that restoration and the people who provided the real pressure for it were the royalist gentry. It was they who believed that Anglicanism would be bulwark against both schism and rebellion. The arguments in support of these positions are impressive and there can be little doubt that Robert Bosher's *The Making of the Restoration Settlement*, now over a quarter of a century old, is seriously to be questioned.

In his book Dr. Green draws much evidence from the dioceses of Canterbury and Winchester for the behaviour of both the clergy and gentry and, if this material is typical of the rest of the country, he has a good case. The view, too, that Charles II was a crypto-papist from the start certainly explains his consistent attempts to modify the vengeance of the royalists and for this view the present book yields some support although the author is cautious in his own judgment on the matter.

The "anabaptists" achieve but two mentions in the text (and none

in the index) and this will not be a work of immediate and direct importance for Baptist history. Rather does it help to explain the avalanche which overwhelmed all English Dissent in a common disaster. Within his account of that disaster two points seem strange. Could Dr. Green be right in believing that it was a *failure* of morale which led the ministers to leave their livings in August 1662? (pp. 200f.) And is he right to say he has thrown *new* light (p. 177) on the settlement when he shows that far more former commonwealth clergy conformed than were ejected in 1662? Has he never heard of the vicar of Bray?

But this book represents some very hard work in the archives and will be a well worthwhile and necessary stiff read for those concerned with this period.

B. R. WHITE.

Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832 to 1868. G. I. T. Machin. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. 438 pp. £15.00.

Dr. Machin has written a book of major importance dealing with the development of religious equality in Great Britain in the 35 years following the passage of the Great Reform Act. This is not a book which features voluntarist banners waving and the triumph of virtue over establishment, for it is an objective tracing of the process of changing relationships of the state to the churches. This process included not only the problems of dissenting disabilities such as marriages and burials but also those of full political rights for the Jewish community.

Despite the publisher's apology that Machin "owes much to previous work", the truth of the matter is that this book could not have been written without the author's own exhaustive research. The significance of the book is not its synthesis but its detailed and well written account of how the governments of the period sought to balance the strident and highly complex demands of the nation's conflicting Christian interests. Saddled with slender or nonexistent majorities and the knowledge that public opinion could not be ignored in the dawn of the democratic era, the Erastian-committed leaders of the nation, always hampered by the House of Lords, moved Britain slowly towards religious equality. The reader must resist the impression that Melbourne and Peel did little but deal with the reform of the Church of England or that their successors were almost totally preoccupied with the various forms of "papal aggression", while cringing at the violent cries of dissenters at the gates. The myopic distortion inherent in a study of this kind is mitigated by the author's sure handling of the political situation which helps to maintain a sense of perspective.

Machin convincingly argues that the reform of compulsory church rates was held up to a large extent by the vigorous advocacy of their repeal by the Liberation Society. The supporters of the rates seemed to be as concerned that repeal would be the first step towards dis-

establishment of the Church of England as that there would be a loss of revenue. This "thin edge of the wedge" argument also had the effect of estranging political dissenters from the Whigs (Liberals). The healing of this breach makes fascinating reading for it was only then that the dissenting political interest could contribute to the development of the evolving Liberal party. One example of the book's detail is its documentation of the some 36 attempts and 20 parliamentary divisions which preceded the final abolition of the compulsory church rate in 1868. A splendid treatment of the Scottish schism is also provided but I retain strong reservations as to how much English voluntarism owes to Scottish theory and practice. Unfortunately Ireland is not similarly treated, possibly because of the lack of authoritative secondary studies. One minor complaint is that Machin perpetuates the Indemnity Act myth of dissenting political usage.

This book is essential reading for any understanding of the development of religious pluralism in this nation. A second volume has been planned, and it is hoped that this will bring the issue to its successful conclusion.

K. R. M. SHORT.

The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible: The Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Rex Mason. Cambridge University Press, 1977. Pp. xii, 168. £7.50 (paperback edition £3.30).

There are few recent English commentaries on these prophetic books, and therefore the present volume supplies a real need. Furthermore, this commentary will be of special interest to most readers of the *Baptist Quarterly* because its author is Lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies in Regent's Park College, Oxford, following in the footsteps of such distinguished Baptist Old Testament scholars as H. Wheeler Robinson and G. Henton Davies.

The volume follows the well-established pattern of the whole series and Dr. Mason has made a valuable contribution to the exegesis of these three books. In fact, he is very well qualified for this task since his doctoral thesis involved a thorough and detailed study of Zech. 9-14, and the readers of the present commentary will not infrequently benefit by Dr. Mason's research. However, in spite of (or, more likely, due to) the author's great expertise the exegetical comments and summaries are both very readable and illuminating. He is careful to avoid dogmatic claims, and his arguments are characterized by clarity of thought and sound judgement. Within the limited space he has provided a useful and up-to-date guide to the Books of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Haggai receives a sympathetic treatment. Although the subsequent events did not fulfil the high expectations of the prophet, nevertheless, the later community seized on his central and ever valid message, namely, the importance of the relationship of the remnant to

God. Thus the people of God can "confidently await the final outcome of God's purposes for them and the whole world" (p. 26).

In the author's view, some of Zechariah's visions "may possibly have been uttered originally earlier in Babylon . . . which would suggest a ministry stretching back before 520 B.C." (p. 27). The complexity of Zech. 9-14 is fully recognized and Dr. Mason suggests that these chapters "may come from the continuing tradition in which we have already seen that the oracles of Zechariah were handed on . . . Perhaps chs. 9-14 themselves represent a continuing development of the tradition extending over a considerable period of time" (p. 79). In his opinion, the people to whom we owe chapters 9-14 may have been "the forerunners not only of the Qumran Community but in some ways of the early Christian Church as well" (p. 134).

Similarly, one can reach only imprecise conclusions concerning the date and activities of Malachi. The author places the origin of the book of Malachi "between the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah and the final form of Zech. 9-14, possibly from the circle of tradition which handed on the oracles of Haggai and perhaps those of Zechariah" (p. 139).

A. A. ANDERSON.

The Early Versions of the New Testament. Bruce M. Metzger. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. 498 pp. £10.00.

This is a work of considerable importance for serious study of the New Testament, and in other ways. It supplements the same writer's *The Text of the New Testament* (second edition, 1968) and is worthy to take its place beside it as a standard work of reference. It deals very comprehensively with all the known versions of the New Testament made before about 1000 AD, including such little known ones as the Nubian and Sogdian, and even one (the Caucasian Albanian) that no longer exists—nearly thirty in all. The historical background of each is sketched very thoroughly, sometimes in more detail than is strictly necessary, but it is all very readable and interesting. This has a value of its own as a well documented guide to the history of the early spread of Christianity, of which the many versions are themselves an important part. All the important manuscripts are described in detail, as are also the various printed editions. This forms a useful check-list, better than can be found anywhere else. The probable date, character and textual affinities of each version are discussed, with references to the work of scholars during the past two centuries in almost encyclopaedic completeness.

There are also eight surveys of the limitations of different languages in representing Greek, each from the pen of a specialist. These "outside" contributions are most uneven, both as to content and practical utility. For a future edition some drastic editing of these essays would be desirable. As it is, a cursory reader could be forgiven for wondering whether the versions can have any value at all for the study of the New

Testament! Indeed the main weakness of the book as a whole is the absence of any positive guidance as to how the versions can best be used. This is a pity, as few can be as well qualified to provide such guidance as Dr. Metzger.

His high regard for the Latin Vulgate and its influence on Western culture leads him into a near contradiction. He writes that "Jerome either coined anew or rebaptized with fresh significance words such as salvation, regeneration, justification, sanctification, propitiation, reconciliation, inspiration, scripture, sacrament, and many others", yet 68 pages later he says, "He coins no new words for his revision . . . but retains any word or expression that comes close to expressing the Greek." I may have missed the point, but surely most of these terms in one form or another were originated either by Paul or our Lord Himself? It is surprising that no mention is made of feedback from the Latin into the Greek text. This was undoubtedly considerable, and seems to have taken place continuously from quite an early date. Identification of these corruptions is one of the main values of studying the early Latin versions. One merit of versions like the Syriac and Sahidic is their relative freedom from such influence, even though they are only secondary witnesses to the Greek. Another important contribution of the versions, barely hinted at, is in tracing the origins of doctrinal development and deviation. This could be a fruitful field for future research.

Perhaps the most important point that emerges overall from this useful and thought-provoking book is how intensive the study of the Gospels has been, but how very little has been done with the Pauline Epistles, where perhaps the versions could contribute most. In the Gospels, it is clear that the influence of Tatian's Diatessaron was more widespread and pervasive than is sometimes realised. For the letters of Paul, as a rather lonely example of published research, Metzger refers twice to H. C. Hoskier's listing of 52 readings "where the Ethiopic is practically alone in support of Chester Beatty Papyrus II (p⁴⁶)." Closer examination reduces this list to 23 fairly clear *unique* agreements (plus eight somewhat doubtful), and of these only a handful seem really significant. It must also be pointed out that Hoskier's list was only an incidental part of a much larger apologia for p⁴⁶ soon after its publication, and was hardly intended as an evaluation of the Ethiopic.

As might be expected from the Oxford University Press, the book is well produced and not overpriced considering the complexity of some of the typesetting. The proliferation of footnotes is less commendable, but the information they give can hardly be dispensed with. It is to be hoped that we do not have to accept *Vorlage* into our language for referring to a Greek original—it is used overfreely. On the other hand, H. G. Lunt in his contribution has quite usefully coined the word "textological" to fill a gap in our vocabulary.

W. H. D. YULE.