

Many readers will become clearer about much that was only previously half understood.

He asks many of the key questions in his chapter headings: 'Was the Church united in New Testament times?', 'Is there convergence about the Bible?', 'Why are Protestants so suspicious of Catholics?', 'Why can't Anglicans and Methodists make it?', 'What of Catholics and Anglicans?', and 'What of Methodists and Catholics?' The latter is a particularly interesting chapter, written out of his experience as Convenor of the British Roman Catholic-Methodist Committee. This gives some detailed material complementing the better known work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic conversations. He has several chapters about the current ecumenical scene - the 'Not Strangers but Pilgrims' process, ecumenical convergence in spirituality, the new scene of black and white churches, and the so-called new churches.

The least satisfactory section is perhaps the last. There is no great attempt to prophesy about the future, and no reference to *Called To Be One*, which deserves a mention as a serious attempt to map the ecumenical future in England. The last chapter, 'Finding the Perfect Church', offers a rather personal contribution in the shape of a couple of league tables, suggesting how different churches make out when they are given marks out of five for their performance in a range of areas under the 'human' side of the life of the churches and the 'God-ward' side. I daresay that this will irritate as much as it illuminates, because denominations have such diversity within themselves and will not like being pigeon-holed, even in this slightly light-hearted way. However, the point is being made that no one church can really claim to 'have it all' and to be the ideal church to which everyone ought to belong. The final word is, 'May it not be that all the present churches in England have to say to each other, "I need your faith to make mine whole".'

If no one church can 'claim it all', we need another chapter, building on all that has gone before, and showing how we can find an expression of the 'one body' that will affirm the strengths of the denominational traditions, and not seem to smooth them out; and bring us into a *koinonia* of common faith, sacraments and ministry. That is the tough challenge ahead that historians and theologians need to help us with, in particular at the CTE Forum in 1997. Indeed, whether the churches in England are truly *Dying to be ONE* will only become clearer then.

There are one or two slips. The Baptist Union will not be happy to be called the Baptist Church. The Ichthus Fellowship has lost an 'h'. Archbishop's Ussher's calculations at one point give the date of creation as 400 BC, even more unlikely than 4004!

Overall, it is an excellent piece of work, and reflects David Butler's deep ecumenical commitment based on his experience of growing up in Methodism, of ecumenical ministry in the suburbs of London, in Kenya, and in theological training.

ROGER NUNN *Field Officer, Churches Together in England*

Tappan, a supporter of Finney, was wrecked by a mob who disapproved of his abolitionism. No such fate befell Octavius Winslow, the notable Baptist minister who seceded to the Church of England and was *ordained* by the Bishop of Chichester in 1870.

It is always possible to think of persons missing - my old friends, James Rooker and Henry Rogers, for example. And what of James Wells and Benjamin Wallin? But the *Dictionary* is as comprehensive as may reasonably be expected, and for the most part the authors are well chosen. Similarly, it is not difficult to find gaps in the information provided - R. S. Candlish's critique of F. D. Maurice, for example - but one appreciates that when word allowances are tight hard choices have to be made. Again, the relative length of articles prompts a raised eyebrow from time to time. Alexander Duff is allowed twice as much space as Philip Doddridge; Francis Asbury receives a column more than John Wesley, and two more than Whitefield. Three columns for Henry Bidleman Bascom seems over-generous, and fourteen lines for Benjamin Beddome niggardly. On the other hand, in cases where the present entry is virtually the only treatment of a lesser known but significant person (William Briggs, for example), a longer entry is fully justified. The fact that a number of bibliographies omit significant works, by no means all of which are so recent as to have appeared during the publishing process, is much to be regretted.

These sturdily-bound volumes contain some 3,500 articles and have occupied 360 scholars drawn from many parts of the world. An index assists the user to identify the geographical area, denomination (where known), and occupation of the several subjects; however, it contains a number of slips and should be used with caution: for example, the Baptist A. Austin is also listed as a Congregational minister.

As compared with the tomes mentioned at the outset, the distinguishing characteristic of this *Dictionary* is not comprehensiveness in the ODCC sense, confession, geography, discipline or theme, but a movement or party (very broadly conceived). This suggests that the work is least effective (because one-sided) in the field of intellectual history in general and polemics in particular; for some of those against whom the evangelicals sharpened their quills (not being themselves evangelicals) are not present. But for the many good things we have received we may return thanks to the editor, his specialist advisers, the legion of contributors, and the publisher. Since for many this *Dictionary* will provide the only source of information on a large number of evangelicals of the period 1730-1860, it may be hoped that theological and other libraries will make every effort to accommodate its cost within their increasingly strained budgets.

ALAN P. F. SELL

A. P. F. Sell (ed.), *Protestant Nonconformists and the West Midlands of England*, Keele University Press 1996, 192pp + ix, hb £40.00.

It is heartening to see work whose design is to encourage followers of Nonconformity

to step across denominational borders. This volume presents lectures given at the inaugural conference of the Association of Denominational Historical Societies and Cognate Libraries, a wordy title for a worthy initiative. Each of the major traditions is here, addressing some aspect of its regional history and in the foreword the editor suggests a chronological thread, inviting the reader to travel from seventeenth to twentieth century taking in Quakers, London Missionary Society links to Coventry, the Priestley Riots of 1791, the progress of Baptists in Victorian Birmingham, the 'civic gospel' of R. W. Dale, Welsh migration and the foundation of a Primitive Methodist college. These disparate themes suggest the richness of denominational variety.

John Briggs represents Baptists, surveying the expansion made possible by strategic church planting often backed by generous benefactors and the flow of Trust monies. Fellow nonconformists were impressed that more churches meant careful planning and not schisms. Church polity was tinted with pragmatism on occasions as buildings were erected sometimes prior to members being collected, allowing churches flexibility in following population movement. Congregations included both 'the opinion-forming sort' and artisans, although poor people were always difficult to hold. Here we find figures of stature - the revivalist Charles Roe, George Dawson and Charles Vince - alongside the politically active congregation of the People's Chapel ('A great title!' observed the Chartist, Thomas Cooper, 'I wonder whether they're worthy of it?'). John Briggs's brief survey illustrates well the relative success of Birmingham churches to adapt and prosper in the Victorian era.

For the rest, David Wykes's perceptive study, building substantially on a topic first aired in a previous article marking the bi-centenary, looks beyond the days of riot to repercussions in the Unitarian community. Each essay has its own merits: Alan Argent's solid scholarship on the LMS and David Thompson's comparison of Dale's 'civic gospel' at local and national levels are useful contributions. The Quaker piece is the shortest and least satisfying.

Some typographical errors creep in and the foundation of the LMS appears as 1775 *twice* - thankfully not in Alan Argent's piece. The weakness of the book is that mere geography does not give coherence. The essays are self-contained and there is little cross-reference. What the reader is offered are snapshots lacking the framework to understand how the various branches of Nonconformity developed alongside each other - perhaps an opening outline was needed.

This reviewer was left wanting to read another book (or books) yet to be written: the story of how the different traditions competed and co-operated as they evolved in this emerging industrialized region. Time may tell that the lasting significance of this volume lies not so much in its individual essays as in the fact it has been done at all.

STEPHEN COPSON

E. Kaye, *Mansfield College, Oxford: Its Origin, History and Significance*, 347pp, 1996, £40.

Much of the earlier part of this book overlaps material already discussed by Mark Johnson in his *The Dissolution of Dissent*, published in 1987, but from a much more

optimistic perspective. Free-church acceptance in the University of Oxford owed much to the massive theological scholarship of Mansfield's first principal A. M. Fairbairn, all the more remarkable in that Fairbairn was wholly without secondary education at the age of twenty-four. Fairbairn, in his *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* and *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* is seen as representing Free-Church Liberal Theology at its best and as a critical strategic planner in putting Mansfield at the centre of Oxford theology, though he himself was never a member of the Theology Faculty. Of the 162 students admitted to Mansfield under his principalship, fourteen were Baptists, including Wheeler Robinson, who in due course was himself to supervise the removal of Regent's Park College from London to Oxford, where he was to become the first Free-Church Chairman of the Theology Faculty. From 1914 Wilfred Bradley, a Mansfield graduate, was tutor in Philosophy at Mansfield and Chaplain to Baptist students, with some support from BU finance.

Fairbairn was succeeded in 1909 by Selbie who remained in office until 1932, during which time sixteen Baptists prepared for ministry at Mansfield where the Neobard Scholarship had a first preference for Baptist ordinands. When Regent's first moved to Oxford its students and staff shared Mansfield's facilities; many from the Mansfield side entertained hopes of a joint college for both kinds of Congregationalist, but there was apparently less enthusiasm from the Baptist side [p180], though in the Second World War when Mansfield's buildings were requisitioned Regent's offered Mansfield students the hospitality of their buildings.

Dr Kaye makes it quite clear that as long as Mansfield was primarily a theological college her destiny was intrinsically linked to the health of the Congregational denomination, which Nathaniel Micklem perceived to be in crisis when he succeeded Selbie as Principal. For many years his ecumenical interests, which included a special interest in the developing church crisis in Germany, and his neo-orthodox theology appeared to bring him into some conflict with the College Council under the chairmanship of Sidney Berry, Secretary of the Congregational Union, and with his Vice Principal, C. J. Cadoux, who offered a more robust defence of Liberal Protestantism and historic Congregationalism. As Congregationalists moved closer to their reformed colleagues of the presbyterian order, and whilst Regent's were still developing their Oxford site, although some collaboration took place, aspirations towards a united college proved unfounded. Subsequent hopes of uniting with Wickliffe Hall also proved nugatory. Mansfield's most effective collaboration was with the Lutheran diaspora in the UK, which gave Mansfield the ability to weather some severe financial crises through the assistance of the Lutheran World Federation.

The last part of the study shows how Mansfield found it increasingly difficult economically to survive as an institution limited to preparing candidates for the ministry of a declining Congregationalism [and from 1972 the United Reformed Church] for as long as its role was so confined it found it difficult to raise the additional funds needed to balance the books and provide funds for new developments. In 1955 the college became a permanent private hall and in the following year admitted its first non-theological students, with its first non-theological staff appointed in 1960. These were to prove staging posts in Mansfield's moves, overcoming many a frustrating

obstacle, towards becoming 'an ordinary Oxford College', with all that that involved in adapting the college's internal administration.

The story is well told, though perhaps sometimes a little uncritically in evaluating Mansfield's uniqueness and significance. Some of the detail must, however, be questioned. The 1989 Basel Ecumenical Assembly [p307] was not a World Council of Churches event as such, though convoked in preparation for the WCC's Seoul Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. Rather it was initiated by the Conference of European Churches, who unlike the WCC at Seoul, were able to secure the co-sponsorship of the European [Roman Catholic] Bishops' Conference. Norman Goodall, though very influential in the life of the International Missionary Council was never its Secretary, a post held by Lesslie Newbigin from 1959 to the time of integration with the WCC, when he became Director of the new Commission on World Mission and Evangelism until his return to India in 1965. Norman Goodall was, however, the full-time secretary of the Joint Committee of the IMC and WCC which from 1955 to 1961 prepared for the integration of the two bodies, and was later secretary of the International Congregational Council. It may well be true that at Mansfield's Centenary Celebrations Charles Brock 'pointed out that Mansfield was the only place in England where one could train for ministry alongside those studying other subjects in the same building'[p298], but the critical historian will need to explain that such a claim was inaccurate even with regard to other colleges, for example Regent's Park, within the university.

JHYB

J. Harvey, *The Art of Piety: the Visual Culture of Welsh Nonconformity*, 102pp, University of Wales Press, 1995

On the cover of this attractive volume the unmistakable figure of a one-eyed Christmas Evans Staffordshire figure invites the reader to explore the volume's contents. The book is divided into four chapters, the first four focusing on art in the service of the Chapel, the home, of Commemoration and of Teaching whilst a rather different fifth chapter looks at Nonconformity in the service of Art. In such a way John Parry, professor of art at Aberystwyth, challenges the stereotype that nonconformity had no interest in art. To the contrary he cites the judgment of Anthony Jones [*Welsh Chapels*, 1984] that chapels are 'without question the national architecture of Wales'. So here we have a study of pulpits and pews, communion cups and tables, stencilled walls with handsome scripture texts, elaborate chandeliers and clocks, brass and marble commemorative plaques and carved hymn boards, organ pipes and stained glass, wrought iron gallery fronts and velvet pulpit falls. Some of the illustrations are Baptist: Carmel, New Tredegar; Bethel, Aberystwyth; Soar, Pontlottyn [Monmouthshire]; an excellent colour reproduction of an etching of J. F. Mullock's painting of a baptism in the River Ebbw, near New Tredegar. The art of the home convincingly reflects an all-pervasive piety that engaged the skill of the potter, the print producer, the needlewoman, the book illustrator especially those who produced the pictures that brought the narratives of the Family Bible so vividly to life for a generation that lived with few other visual stimuli.

Thus celebration easily led to portraiture, modelling, statuary, memorial chapels and

commemorative medallions, all helping to develop the congregation or the denomination's sense of identity. The exiled David Davies, minister of Regent's Park Chapel, was committed to using great paintings to illustrate his preaching. Also cited is Evan Williams who wrote a series of articles in the *Baptist Record* on 'Picture Talks to Boys and Girls'. Next to the representation of scriptural events, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was the most popular. Not surprisingly the Sunday School very quickly became a patron of the visual.

All in all a most useful production which sets an example that an English author could well follow up by analysing English Nonconformist visual culture, which might belatedly provide an answer to Matthew Arnold's charge of philistinism. **JHYB**

Alan Sell, *Commemorations: Studies in Christian Thought and History*, 394pp, £19.95, 1993

This further set of collected essays by Alan Sell has much in it of interest to Baptists. In addition to papers which provide rich insights into our puritan and evangelical inheritance [including discussion of Baptist sufferings], a number call for special comment. The opening paper is entitled 'Newman, Spurgeon and Martineau and the Problem of Authority'. Its premise is that whilst Newman might represent the authority of the Church, and Martineau the authority of individual conscience, Spurgeon represented the authority of the Bible. All of these Sell believes have their importance, though arguing that above all, the supreme authority for the Christian is, following Forsyth, 'the redemptive grace of God in Christ'.

The contribution of Robert Haldane, the Presbyterian turned Congregationalist turned Baptist, to the revival of spirituality in a Geneva captured by rational religion is contrasted with the Anglican Henry Drummond's schismatic influences there. A contrasting Baptist voice is examined in the arguments of A.C. Underwood, as a critic of the Barthianism of H.F. Lovell Cocks, which is construed in part as a 'General' argument with 'neo-Particularism'. Sell is keen to indicate that Cocks is not an absolute Barthian.

The paper on Gratton Guinness' 'Harley College and its Congregational Alumni' will explain some otherwise unexplained entries in the *Baptist Handbook*: a similar exercise on Baptist alumni would prove a useful comparative exercise, for Baptists [such as Archibald Brown, William Cuff, Fuller Gooch, F.B. Meyer, and R.W. Hay] were considerably involved in its government. James Culross had been involved in the early years of the college as lecturer and referee. F.B. Meyer was a visiting lecturer, whilst J.S. Morris from Mare Street, Hackney, who trained at Pastor's College, after eleven years lecturing became Principal. On his death several other Baptists were approached before the Revd Forbes Robinson, minister of King's Road, Reading, became Principal. Under his leadership the college initially prospered but by 1910 was facing financial difficulties, as was its parent body, the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. Forbes Robinson left to become Pastor of Crown Terrace, Aberdeen, and after the war the college was sold. The dimensions of ecumenical embrace of the college's graduates encompassed the activities of many interdenominational evangelical societies. **JHYB**