

T.L. Underwood, *Primitivism, Radicalism, and the Lamb's War: The Baptist-Quaker Conflict in Seventeenth-Century England*, Oxford University Press/OUP USA, 1997, xii + 188pp, £30.00. ISBN 0 19 5108337

In the years that followed the outbreak of Civil War, children of the Puritans, grandchildren of the Reformation, emerged from the shadow of ecclesiastical discipline to leave an enduring stamp on the face of English Christianity for three centuries. Professor Underwood considers the Quakers, 'the fag-end of Reformation', and their relationships with the other radical believers, the Baptists.

The central theme is that whilst all of the emerging groups embraced primitivism, the desire to reclaim the earliest believers as the model church, the Quakers identified themselves with the early church experientially. Participating in the Spirit, they believed they entered the 'Great Time' as did the post-Pentecost followers of the risen Christ. This cut away all ground for any authority vested in church structures, sacraments or scripture. For the Baptists scripture was normative; for the Quakers it was the inner light that witnessed the activity of the Spirit, and the Spirit was prior to the word.

Comparing like and unlike, the book proceeds thematically, covering scripture, the person and work of Christ, baptism and the Lord's Supper, the nature of the church and the authenticity of spiritual experience. What emerges is a pattern of fluctuating proximities. Fellow travellers on some issues and bitter adversaries on others, the Quakers' insistence on the authoritative indwelling of the Spirit meant a difference of quality and not degree in the space between them and the Baptists. This insistence carried an implicit challenge to the historicity of faith and its external signs, even to the importance of the earthly Jesus. Baptists were not slow to point out the potential for spiritual anarchy - Bunyan, Caffyn, Collier, Grantham, Keach, Kiffin and Tombes all entered the lists, whilst Quakers claimed Baptists were slaves to the word that kills rather than liberated in the Spirit that quickens. The one accepted the Bible through the Spirit, the other encountered the Spirit through the Bible. It was a question of authority. Perhaps there is room in this volume for a little more analysis of the writings of those Baptists who turned Quaker.

The methodology adopted has its limitations. It tends to view Baptist (General, Particular and Sabbatarian) and Quaker beliefs as systematic and homogeneous, lacking context or personality. Did George Fox, James Naylor, John Perrot and the Wilkinson-Story secessionists always speak from the same script? In the heat of verbal battle, combatants often fired the heaviest rather than the most accurate salvos. Secondly, it allows little account for the development of ideas within networks that first rapidly expanded and were then necessarily curtailed after the Restoration. The First and Second London Confessions illustrate this shift and although there is some acknowledgement of this evolution in the Conclusion, in previous chapters it passes without comment.

(continued on p.335)

conversation with author, 8 December 1997.

- 52 Letter to author: February 1998.
- 53 Revd Robert [Bob] Archer: letter to author, 6 December 1997.
- 54 Letter to author, 8 December 1997.
- 55 Published in *Bloomsbury Magazine* 221, April 1991.
- 56 *Room to grow*, p.128.
- 57 Freda West: telephone conversation with author, February 1998. As a student preacher, Howard often visited her Bradford church and home.
- 58 Raymond Brown: letter to author, 8 December 1997, and subsequent telephone conversation. The *Honest to God* debate was traumatic, and conservative evangelicals were also divided over ecumenism, with Martyn Lloyd Jones urging them to leave mainstream denominations and John Stott wanting to work from within.
- 59 *Room to grow*, p.56.
- 60 *Room to grow* p.183.
- 61 John Hough: letter to author, 1991.
- 62 E.A. Payne's private journal, p.619. I am grateful to his executor, Dr West, for permission to consult this in the Angus Library.
- 63 I am indebted to Dr David Charley for checking the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, to the Revd Stephen Copson for checking the *Fraternal*, and to the Revd Dr Anthony Cross for checking there was nothing in a range of other possible Baptist sources.
- 64 Dr Williams showed the author his own copy of this many years ago.
- 65 *My Word*, p.49; letter from Dr Williams to John Hough.
- 66 The saga is recorded in the Bloomsbury Deacons' Minutes, and church members remember how the business rankled with Howard. When Geoffrey Haden was dying, Howard told John Hough, 'I liked him and his company when away from the LBA context. After retiring he became the attractive person he sometimes felt compelled to conceal'. He seemed to equate the Metropolitan Superintendent with the London Baptist Association and may not have grasped the delicate relationship of the Union employee whose area was coterminous with the Association.
- 67 Dr Davies notes that all but three of those who signed the subsequent protest letter to the college senate failed to become or remain Baptist ministers.
- 68 'This is what I would go to the stake for', *Baptist Times*, 16 October 1980.
- 69 *Baptist Times* 10 June 1965.

FAITH BOWERS *Member, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church*

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(Conclusion of review begun on page 364)

None of this should deflect the reader from appreciating what is good in this work. Professor Underwood expertly maps the contours of the dispute with its salient features, drawing widely on printed tracts, and almost a third of the book comprises notes to the text. This is a significant contribution to understanding the genesis of seventeenth-century radical dissent.

STEPHEN COPSON

Skip One, an anthology of the poetry of J.E.L. Logan (1884-1796), Baptist minister who trained at Regent's Park College and had pastorates in Bradford, Great Broughton, Sherborne, Southwell and Honiton, and of his grandson, John C. Logan, is available from Merian Derwent Publications, 1 Malvern Close, Winstanley, Wigan WN3 6DZ, £3-00 + 50p p&p.