

REVIEWS

Alan P. F. Sell, *Aspects of Christian Integrity*, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990, x + 160pp, US\$ 14-95.

Alan Sell's chair at the University of Calgary is the joint creation of the University and a number of Canadian Churches. The occupant teaches and researches within the University Department of Religious Studies but is also required to serve the Christian community as a theologian. This book is a collection of six public lectures given towards fulfilling that responsibility.

Sell sees Christian theology as a rational task, a subject to be studied with intellectual integrity. As such it has a place in a modern university where it properly participates without being partisan. However, he is quite clear that the subject must and can keep its integrity as *Christian* theology. His lecture on doctrinal integrity argues that the church suffers for want of serious theology. A particular concern of the author's is with the proper systematic study of the Faith in order to show the essential integration of doctrines. He illustrates his point with a careful discussion of the necessity of linking together the *person* and *work* of Christ.

Believing that Christian ethics are a matter both of gift and demand, he discusses how Christian morality does and does not relate to the morality common to all humanity. In the lecture on ecclesiastical integrity, there are some good things said about ministry but, as so often, this question seems to dominate discussions on doctrines of the Church. Is there no way to reflect theologically on the unity already given in Christ?

Sell faces squarely the challenges to the whole enterprise of Christian missions. With integrity he recognizes there have been distortions in the past and present but creatively goes on to articulate a theology of mission grounded in the Trinity. Here we find explicit what is implicit in all the lectures, that is, the author's belief in the validity of and need for apologetic.

The final lecture is on pastoral integrity, where some wise things are said about the priesthood of all believers, discipline, and the need for the Church to be inspired, above all, with the vision of God. The concluding paragraphs are of that kind where distinctions between lectures and sermons are hard to find.

Professor Sell is a reformed theologian. These chapters well express the thoughtful theological conservatism that believes the truths of Christian theism and is ready to affirm them with intellectual care and a modesty appropriate to the subject. The lectures have a lively style and read easily. They were delivered by a theologian of conviction, and some passion, who admires P. T. Forsyth.

BRIAN HAYMES *Principal, Northern Baptist College*

P. Basden and D. S. Dorkery (ed.), *The People of God: Essays on the Believers' Church*, Broadman Press, 1990, 367pp.

The People of God is a festschrift to John Garrett, Southern Baptist academic, who has the distinction of having both attended the Second Vatican Council as a guest and served as Co-ordinator of the first Believers' Church Conference, and hence the sub-title of this publication: *Essays on the Believers' Church*. The explorations are in part biblical and theological, in part historical, with a final section of contemporary challenges. In the

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earlier sections there is a tendency to employ footnotes too much to the advantage of self-publication and other members of the symposium team. The historical section progresses chronologically from patristic to mediaeval to reformation and contemporary, with studies of Reformation, Anabaptist and Roman Catholic views of the Church and an essay on the relations between Baptists and others, the author of which is clearly a careful reader of this journal. The last section contains much expert writing, Bill Estep on 'Church State Relations', Bill Hendricks on 'The Church and The Arts', and two classic pieces on the Radical Reformation and its consequences: Franklin Littell on 'From Christendom to Christian Renewal' and G. Hunston Williams on 'The Believers' Church and the Given Church'. Littell's article provides an over-view of the church in Germany during the last hundred years and more. He cites the opinion of Julius Koebner with regard to the events of 1848 - and his hope for a religious dimension to the year of revolutions: 'There is rejoicing among those of your fellow citizens whose heart beats even more warmly for God than for political freedom, they they may speak Christian truth, no longer crippled by a control system which limited the Word to a monopolizing churchianity alone, so that there was eternally hidden from you the truth that Christianity and state-priesterdom are just as different from each other as Christ and Caiaphas'. That language magnificently captures the aspiration of the German Free Churches against a dominant Lutheranism. Littell looks at the development of the post-1945 church *vis-à-vis* the antecedents of the Confessing Church and the so-called German Christians, noting that Franz Hildebrandt's Ten Articles in favour of a True Church were rejected, and in the Federal Republic a patched-up Lutheran establishment restored. In the DDR there was a greater radicalism: at a Synod in 1956 it was stated 'the end of the Constantinian era has arrived. The Theses of Barmen, in which all-hyphenated Christianity is repudiated through the proclamation that Jesus alone is Lord, remain significant as the document of the emancipation of the Biblical message from a Babylonian captivity', posing the question whether now that conviction will impact on the newly united Lutheran Church in Germany, or whether the East will accommodate to the comfortable Constantinianism of the West, where the difference between a high percentage paying church taxes and a low percentage having effective connexion is highlighted here (cf. Hamburg: 84.5% paying church tax but only 3.5% having effective connexion). But Littell warns that this is a problem of wider significance because some of the historic Free Churches in the USA 'are developing some of the danger signs of establishment'. Thus the plea is for radical conversion, for legal European 'Christendom' and American social 'Christendom' to be turned around in their teaching and preaching. Williams works out a similar theme for North America, tracing the temptations to those in the Believers' Church tradition to accept some form of semi-establishment, arguing for the need for a continuing Believers' Church witness as over against the life of all Given Churches, amongst whom he boldly includes not only the mainline Protestant Churches in the National Council of Churches but also 'the national transculturation of the Southern Baptist Convention'.

JHYB

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Nicholas Tyacke, *The Fortunes of English Puritanism, 1603-1640*, 1990, 24pp and N. H. Keeble, *Loving and Free Converse: Richard Baker in his Letters*, 1991, 24pp, Friends of Dr Williams's Library, 44th and 45th Lectures, £2 each from Dr Williams's Trust, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AG.

Nicholas Tyacke's book forms the prelude to an extended study of early Stuart Puritanism from the end of the synodical movement to the Long Parliament, and it promises to be an important contribution, not just to the debate about the origins of the Civil War, but also to our sense of the thinking and organization of Puritanism generally. In this necessarily brief dip into his discoveries and ideas, we get an analysis of the move from presbyterian to separatist models of church government in Bradshaw and Ames, linked to the congregationalism of the Rotterdam and Hamburg English churches, and the New England way. Running in parallel to this is the uncovering, through the evidence of wills, trials and letters, of a series of networks of radical Puritans to help deprived and silenced clergy. Thus, Tyacke argues, against the trend of the revisionist historians who have concentrated on the history of Parliament and local government, there is a continuum of radical Puritanism through the early Stuart period, not just a reaction against Laud and the Scottish bishops. The complete study should be even more revealing.

N. H. Keeble's lecture draws on Baxter's correspondence, which he and Geoffrey Nuttall have just completed calendaring. There is an appealing richness of quotation from the letters. Keeble begins with Baxter's stress on the companionableness of heaven, from the relatively early *Saints Everlasting Rest* through to his reflections in old age. The letters are an attempt to realize part of that fellowship on earth. In Keeble's view, they reveal a genius for friendship, an openness to enquiry, a challenge to narrow allegiances, and a willingness to break down barriers between Christians. This is no starry-eyed hagiography, though; Baxter's tendency to be disputatious and cantankerous is not glossed over, and his personalizing of ideas can be a weakness (attacking the person instead of the argument), as well as a strength (the truth of the idea is best judged from the evidence of the life it produces). The tension between Baxter, the sharp-penned controversialist, and Baxter, the visionary and practical tolerationist, is well caught, though in the end we should follow Baxter's own judgment, from the final quotation in the lecture: 'Good people must be loved for their goodness, though they be troublsome by their weakenes'.

Although both studies are related to larger works, Tyacke's in preparation, Keeble and Nuttall's just published, they are both well worth getting and reading in their own right.

ROGER POOLEY, *University of Keele*

J. A. Vickers, *The Religious Census of Sussex 1851*, Sussex Record Society, Barbican House, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1YE, 1989, 211pp. £17.50

This welcome transcription of the separate churches and chapels of Sussex from the Religious Census of 1851 is well introduced by John Vickers in 25 pages. The fifty Baptist churches in the county show a full range from General Baptists which by this

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date were generally declining Unitarian churches through to Strict Baptist churches of a decidedly exclusive outlook, with many churches in the middle ground. As elsewhere the tendency is to explain low attendance rather than to doctor the figures - the explanations here are bad weather conditions, nearly always associated with the gathering of a congregation from a wide area. The church at Rye, however, adds a new note by referring to the opening of the railway and travelling for pleasure on the Lord's Day. The return from Netherfield, Battle, sought to exploit a political opportunity by remarking, 'We believe that Evangelical religion and genuine piety would flourish and prevail more extensively than it does now were the voluntary principle universally acted on and also that legislation would be less difficult were religion in every form severed from the state'. This statement was signed by the minister and two deacons on behalf of both the Battle and Netherfield congregations who had also planted a congregation at neighbouring Dallington, for cottage meetings emerge from the returns as a clear part of Baptist church planting strategy in the mid-century. It is interesting that the recently founded Baptist chapel in Eastbourne attracted less than 50 to each of its services. By contrast with the Worthing district which had no Baptist presence at all, the three Baptist chapels in Hailsham could muster attendances in excess of 900 for the best service of the day, or Wadhurst's two chapels more than 700, locations where Baptists clearly attracted larger numbers of worshippers than the parish churches. Integrity secures testimony from the Dormansland return where a larger than normal afternoon service (435) was explained by a baptism. Brighton, in addition to four strong chapels, also had Clarence Chapel which though practising believer's baptism did not require it as a condition of membership, noting 'it is deemed expedient to add that they are not of any body or bodies called the "Brethren" or "Plymouth Brethren"'. Baptists, like other dissenters, were stronger in East than West Sussex and had with the exception of Brighton and possibly Hastings yet to develop a strategy for exploiting the emerging coastal resorts. The standard of literacy of the officers making these returns seems higher than those for Staffordshire. The publication of these records is highly desirable and it is to be hoped that other counties will follow the examples of Sussex, here noted, and Lincolnshire and Bedfordshire earlier.

JHYB

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

The Baptist Historical Society is pleased to announce that two new books should be published in time for the Annual Meeting. The exact price is not known as this issue of the *Quarterly* goes to press, but we hope members will come to the meeting eager to view and purchase the Society's latest offerings:

Michael Walker, Baptists at the Table: The Theology of the Lord's Supper amongst English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century

Mike Nicholls, C. H. Spurgeon: The Pastor Evangelist