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NORMAN S. MOON.

Reviews

Die Mennoniten. Herausgegeben von Hans-Jürgen Goertz. Die Kirchen der Welt, Band VIII. Evangelisches Verlagshaus, Stuttgart, 1971. 286pp. DM 32.

MENNONITES and Baptists belong to the same ecclesiastical family. They may not unfairly be described as cousins, Mennonites coming of an older branch. Of recent generations Baptists have had few contacts with them. In the 17th and 18th centuries correspondence was fairly frequent and friendly, though fitful. It was a sound instinct which led the founders of the Baptist World Alliance to invite their relatives to London in 1905 and to include them in the statistics, which were then compiled. I was glad to be able to have Mennonite fraternal delegates with us at the Golden Jubilee Congress fifty years later.

The relationship gives added interest and importance to this volume, which is one of the series on the Churches for which Dr. J. D. Hughey produced a Baptist contribution some years ago. The volume has other significant features. It is a symposium and the contributors are most of them younger scholars, who are playing leading roles in a Mennonite "renewal" movement, the source of which may be described — using a Biblical analogy — as a redigging of the old wells.

The heart of the volume is in two main sections, the first treating of the main Mennonite doctrines, the second describing the geographical range and variety of the community. The historical background is provided by an introductory essay by Heinhold Fast, editor of a valuable book of documents connected with the left wing of the Reformation. A closing essay by Paul Peachey, who has studied the sociological origin of the Swiss Brethren, looks to the future in the framework of the Ecumenical Movement.

A determination to relate Mennonites to their Christian brethren is evident throughout. Walter Klaassen, a Canadian, who after studying at McMaster University spent three years at Regent's Park College, writes on "Word and Spirit" and does

not hesitate to quote Hans Küng. The contribution on "Faith and Discipleship", beginning with Hans Denck, follows closely the work of the late Professor Bender and draws modern support from Bonhoeffer. There is a valuable essay on "The Fellowship of Believers". One by the editor, Dr. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, on Baptism deals with both Karl Barth and our own Dr. Beasley-Murray. Contributions on the repudiation of oaths, on mission and service, on the rejection of the use of force and on the search for an ecumenical theology provide further evidence of the range and penetration of this volume. They also serve to underline the points at which our branch of the family began to diverge. Thomas Helwys's attitude to oaths and the magistracy was clearly of decisive importance for the future.

To the descriptive part of the book the veteran Mennonite scholar, Cornelius Krahn, contributes a valuable chapter on North America, where there are now a dozen different groups of Mennonites. Many readers will turn with special interest to the account of the fortunes of Mennonites in Russia by Dr. Gerhard Hildebrandt, of Göttingen, and to that by President Erland Waltner, of Indiana, on the eight world conferences, which Mennonites have held since 1925.

Useful appendices include documents connected with the Union of German Mennonite congregations and the World Conference, together with a substantial bibliography, which concentrates on the most important recent literature.

This is an impressive volume to come from a community which can claim only 520,000 members. Half of these are now in North America. In the Netherlands, where Menno Simons worked, there are now some 40,000, in Germany 11,000, but in England in spite of efforts only 50. But there are nearly 40,000 in the Congo Republic, over 30,000 in Indonesia and the same number in India. So far as Britain is concerned, our other cousins, the Quakers, must not be forgotten. They come of the same stock.

A volume of this scope and quality on Baptists would be more difficult to produce, but equally valuable both for Baptists and for others.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Pride's Purge, by David Underdown. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press. 1971. xi 424pp. £4.75.

THIS is a most useful and important book. Professor Underdown has provided a wide-ranging, three-dimensional reconstruction of the political realities which first provoked and then were produced by Pride's Purge of the membership of the House of Commons in December 1648.

It has been clear for some time that the classic account of this crisis as produced by S. R. Gardiner will not do. Now,

Professor Underdown has drawn not only on his own studies but upon a wide ranging collection of work on the Great Rebellion produced by other scholars in recent years to advance our comprehension of the total picture.

During the last few years the 'Independents' and 'Presbyterians', whether 'religious' or 'political', have had a great deal of the attention of the historians of the period: now there are signs that the Millenarians, the Fifth Monarchists, are due for their share. And Professor Underdown's book suggests that it is high time that this were so. While 'Independents' and 'Presbyterians' come into clear focus the Baptists and Fifth Monarchists do not: the author is most uncertain in his treatment of both groups. This may be partly because he has implied that both are more important in the period before the Protectorate than they have so far been shown to be. Historians — and Professor Underdown is evidently among them — have too long been led astray by the enthusiasm of Louise Fargo Brown who, in her *Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men* (1912!), cheerfully and indiscriminately claimed all sorts and conditions of Millenarian enthusiasts for the Baptist fold. Alas, the truth is more complicated, yet Professor Underdown seems to expect that all the most exceptional Baptists were fire-eaters of the most dynamic and subversive type. Regrettably, of course, the great majority of Baptists showed little interest in politics, then as now. Furthermore, those who were committed to politics and government were as likely to be very moderate (like William Kiffin who, significantly, achieves no mention here) as to be red revolutionaries. We *may* deplore all this but the facts cannot be evaded.

Several men are wrongly awarded to the Baptists here: Praisegod Barbone was shown many years ago not to have been a Baptist by Dr. Whitley; it is not clear if Samuel Guy is thought by Professor Underdown to be a Baptist (p.341) or a 'separating Independent' (p.323); Samuel Highland was almost certainly an Independent (p.340).

On the other hand there is some interesting material concerned with Colonel John Rede of Poole (p.321) and Colonel Robert Bennet of Cornwall (pp.261, 308f. etc.) but, on the whole, from the point of view of Baptist history, this book serves rather as a stimulus to renewed inquiry and research.

While, therefore, from the special point of view of readers of the *Quarterly*, this book is unsatisfactory, it will need to have a place on the self of anyone seriously concerned with the politics and religion of the English Revolution.

B. R. WHITE.