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"Reviews," Baptist Quarterly 25.5 (January 1973): 237-240.

Reviews

The Cambridge Bible Commentary: Genesis 1-11. R. Davidson. Cambridge, The University Press, 1973. 118+x pages. Cloth edition £1.90, paperback edition 80p.

The Cambridge Bible Commentary: The Book of the Prophet Isaiah 1–39. A. S. Herbert. Cambridge, The University Press, 1973. 219+xiv pages. Cloth edition £3.60, paperback edition £1.40.

The Cambridge Bible Commentary: The First and Second Books of the Maccabees. John R. Bartlett. Cambridge, The University Press, 1973. 358+ xiv pages. Cloth edition £5.20, paperback edition £1.80.

These three volumes make a very valuable addition to the Cambridge Bible Commentary series, maintaining the high standard set by previous volumes and following the same general pattern and layout.

Prof. Davidson has provided us with an excellent and succinct exegesis of the early chapters of Genesis and with a good outline of some of the major introductory problems. His work presupposes the traditional Documentary Hypothesis in its modern form. The exegetical notes are full of useful information, and are characterized by sound judgement and fine scholarship. One might wish for a more detailed discussion on a number of points but within the limited space of the commentary one can only admire the author's achievement in selecting what is important and apposite for the understanding of the relevant chapters.

Of particular interest to the readers of the *Baptist Quarterly* will be the commentary by the distinguished Baptist scholar, Prof. A. S. Herbert, on Isaiah 1-39.

The volume opens with the usual introductory questions which include interesting sections on the life and times of the prophet, the nature of prophecy, and the message of Isaiah. The author rightly emphasizes that it would be misleading to speak of the theology of this prophet because we "do not find a systematic presentation of the ways of God with men" (p. 14). The comments on the English text are necessarily brief but well chosen and very informative; the commentary will be, no doubt, a helpful, concise guide to any reader of the Book of Isaiah.

Passages of special concern and theological significance, such as chapters 6, 7, 9, etc., receive slightly more detailed treatment. Among the many points of interest one may note that in Isa. 7.14 the "young woman" is regarded as "probably one of Ahaz' wives" (p. 64), and the original significance of chapter 7 is found in its reference to the immediate future (p. 20). Isa. 9.2-7 is fittingly

described as a "hymn of praise to God expressing faith in the fulfilment of the divine purpose" which "could have partial fulfilments, or stages of fulfilment in the history of this people" (p. 74). This embraces also the Christian interpretation which finds "the fulfilment of the hymn in the life and work of Jesus" *(ibid.)*.

Due to unfortunate misprints Lachish is located about 40 metres south-west of Jerusalem (p. 202) while Libnah lies some 16 metres north of Lachish (p. 203).

Mr. John R. Bartlett has made a much appreciated contribution by his exegesis of the First and Second Books of the Maccabees. Although these books have been dealt with in a number of recent one-volume commentaries, it is good to have an up-to-date English work on this subject.

In Mr. Bartlett's view the Books of the Maccabees may enable us to "open our eyes to the feelings and passions that are bred in minorities with deep convictions, and help us to sympathize with them" (p. 347). In his opinion also 2 Maccabees contains "much genuine and valuable historical material" particularly in its "account of the early stages of the hellenizing process in Jerusalem" (p. 217).

This volume will be an indispensable tool for any student of Judaism of the inter-testamental period, and it will be of great value for the understanding of the New Testament background.

A. A. ANDERSON.

Joel Hurstfield: *Freedom, corruption and government in Elizabethan England.* Jonathan Cape. London 1973. Pp. 368. £4.50.

In this volume Professor Hurstfield introduces eleven essays previously published elsewhere with a short piece concerned with the "boundaries of freedom". While, naturally enough, the various articles differ considerably in weight, they are always a joy to read whether their author is discussing liberty in Shakespeare's England or the Court of Wards under Edward VI and Mary or Gunpowder Plot. The whole collection gains interest and unity from sharing the author's continuing preoccupation with what sixteenth century Englishmen felt about freedom, corruption and the nature of government.

While all the essays are the product of a cautious and mature scholarship their value and interest should carry them far beyond the ranks of Professor Hurstfield's fellow professional students of the subject. To them, indeed, he has much to say—both directly when he debates one of the major theses of another contemporary specialist in the subject and indirectly when, for example, he stresses the overmastering importance of the Bible for Puritan policy (69) or, as in another place (96), he suggests, without pausing to explain why he has come to believe this, that the Puritans posed a greater threat to the government of Queen Elizabeth I than did the Papists. At the same time the general reader with an interest in the history of Tudor England will find much to enrich and instruct his understanding of

what was really going on from one who, over the years, has himself felt and thought his way to mastery both of the sources and of others' work upon them.

Although now six years' old the essay entitled "Was there a Tudor despotism after all?" puts some very pertinent questions to those who, like Professor G. R. Elton of Cambridge, have argued that under Henry VIII the government, particularly in the years of Thomas Cromwell's power, sought to develop a constitutional monarchy. While the whole debate has not been ended by this essay it provides a model for historians not only in its careful probing of sources but in its concern to ask realistic questions about what we mean by "despotism". Professor Hurstfield not only concludes that there *was* something very much like the Tudor despotism of the older historians but also that, whether we like it or not, it was this that enabled England to survice the various threats the century posed as nothing else could.

But the most interesting chapter for readers of the *Baptist Quarterly* who ache to try their hand at some local history, is the long contribution reprinted from the fifth volume of the Victoria County History of Wiltshire.

This, with the superficially unbeguiling title of "County government: Wiltshire c.1530–c.1660", shows how a master historian can build up his own changing picture as the years move on of a society itself undergoing stress and strain and change by using the evidence of both local and national records. The whole piece is an object lesson in the interpretation of fragmentary and often frustratingly uncertain evidence. While the only way to learn to write history is to do it, in the end, oneself, the study of a specialist craftsman at work will serve both to raise one's own standards and keep one (or make one!) humble.

B. R. WHITE.

George Williams and the Y.M.C.A. Clyde Binfield. London. Heineman. 1973. pp. 408. £4.00.

Nineteenth century religious revivalism evolved from spontaneous eruptions from below to careful planning from above, from diffuse evangelistic endeavour to specialised concentration on particular groups and classes. George Williams whose career is recorded in this important and well illustrated biography is a figure of the later phase, with a particular concern for the welfare of young men which led directly to the foundation of the Y.M.C.A. It is a fascinating story of a businessman-evangelist, a phenomenon of the Victorian period, for Williams' example can be parallelled in towns and cities throughout the land. Shrewd in his secular calling, passionate in his soul-winning, perhaps over generous in his philanthropy, not particularly interested in specific political issues save Early Closing which is directly connected with his evangelistic concern, Williams emerges

in this sympathetic biography as an attractive character whose motivation Dr. Binfield is not ashamed to identify as a simple Evangelical "goodness". The author has skilfully incorporated into his biography a number of useful and always informative digressions on the personalities, issues and ideas which form the background to his subject's career. Two of the most revealing passages in the book are in fact the telling portrait of the later Earl of Shaftesbury and the account of Williams' precise rôle in the Keswick Conventions which, like the later Victorian holiness movement in general, is still largely an uncharted sea. Baptists figure conspicuously in the George Williams' saga, Dr. Brock, Spurgeon, Baptist Noel, F. B. Meyer, among many others. Only in one instance does the narrative appear rather thin, and this is clearly due to the paucity of surviving evidence. What led Williams, following the eclipse of his mentors, Binney and Leifchild, to desert Congregationalism for the Established Church? Not the attraction of outstanding clerical personalities, for of those the Anglican Evangelical party was by then largely bereft; rather, Dr. Binfield suggests, it was theological declension in his former denomination, which is odd considering that other Victorian Dissenters took the road to Canterbury for exactly the opposite reason, hoping to find a freer spirit within their new communion. George Williams was temperamentally conservative, but there is in his shift of allegiance no hint of the status-seeking which affected other wealthy Nonconformists of his time. To the end he preserved, in Dr. Binfield's words, a delightfully "elfin" quality, which is not usually associated with the Victorian business world.

I. SELLERS.