Reviews

The People of the Covenant, by Murray Newman. First British Edition, London, The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1965, 190 pp. plus select bibliography and appendices. 25s.

The aim of this book is to show that the divisive tendencies in Israel between North and South which led to their separation after so short a period of unity under the monarchy, were due, not only to differences of origin, history and geography, but to different theological conceptions of what it meant to be the covenant people of God.

It is widely recognized today that the historical records of the Old Testament have come to us out of a cultic " milieu " and that one may therefore expect to find reflected in them later views of the traditions as these were recounted and re-enacted in the people's worship.

It is argued here that the two accounts of the covenant do reflect such divergent theological interpretations and cultic emphases. The northern " Elohistic " account, of Exodus 19-24 is " more congregational, prophetic and ethical . . . it reflects a . . . 'kingdom of priests' covenant theology " (p. 51), while the southern " Yahwistic " account of Exodus 33-34 is " more priestly, cultic, authoritarian and dynastic in teaching " (*ibid.*).

The book seeks to show how these antagonistic tendencies were already apparent during the sojourn at Kadesh, and led to the separation of the two groups, the northern Joseph tribes entering Canaan from the east, while the southern group pushed up from the south. The development of the two traditions is then traced throughout the formation of the twelve tribe amphictyony, the emergence of the monarchy, to the final rejection by the north of the extension of the southern conception of a dynastic priesthood to that of a dynastic monarchy, founded upon the immutable " Davidic " covenant.

The book is clearly written and will be readily intelligible to the general reader. It will be found useful either as an introduction to this confused and difficult period of Israel's history, or for bringing readers up to date with some current trends in Old Testament studies. There is a tendency to build conclusions too rapidly on inadequately prepared foundations and, at times, to oversimplify the very complex problems of reconstructing the course of events. That these divergent theological views existed within Israel, however, there can be no doubt, and this treatment brings together much work which has already been done upon these lines.

It is to be hoped that the adventurous spirit which now animates the Carey Kingsgate Press, of which this work is further welcome evidence, will meet with the kind of response which will encourage more such publications.

R. MASON

An Introduction to the History of the Christian Church, by Wilfred W. Biggs. London. Edward Arnold. 1965. 238 pp. 21s.

A survey of the history of the Christian Church up to 1948 in just over 200 pages is an ambitious task. But Mr. Wilfred Biggs, who is secretary of the Congregational Historical Society has avoided the danger of giving a bald picture or a mere chronological catalogue of events. By careful selection and arrangement he presents the life of the Church as a connected and moving story. Inevitably, one questions at times his proportion, e.g. four pages on Gnosticism, and one and a half on the School of Alexandria. The author avoids mentioning every movement as it arises in point of time, e.g. Donatism is deferred until he writes about Augustine. Again and again, it is the apt quotation which sums up a lucid characterisation of a movement. The chapter on the " Eastern Church from Chalcedon to 1054 " is a good reminder of a stream of Church history often overlooked by us. Four chapters, each dealing with various aspects of life, sum up the Middle Ages, but should the Renaissance have been passed over in two pages at the end of the chapter on Medieval thought?

There is a graphic contrast between Luther and the Swiss Reformers " who gave rise to a more optimistic view of the possibility of realising the Kingdom of God ". Mr. Biggs' sense of proportion in portraying the English Reformation is a welcome change! Political events are subordinated to a more extended examination of the causes of the Puritan revolution, and the establishment of Non-conformity. Consideration of the Anabaptists has been deferred to serve as the exposition of the principles of Puritanism.

Baxter, Bunyan and Fox are singled out for attention; so are the misgivings of dissenters in Queen Anne's reign. Methodists may justly complain that their contribution is less adequately portrayed than that of the Oxford Movement, or of the significance of ultramontanism. The closing chapters bring the story into our own day with " The Expansion Continued ", and " The Oecumenical Movement ".

Planned for sixth form pupils and for technological students seeking " a preliminary survey of the field prior to undertaking a more detailed study ", the book must surely be commended to the thoughtful laymen to help them find their historical bearings in contemporary discussions on Church Relations.

N. MOON

The Later Lollards, by John A. F. Thomson. London. Oxford University Press. 1965. pp. 272 (including index and bibliography). 42s.

The historiography and theology of John Wycliffe and Lollardy has been given a new impetus in recent years. Since K. B. MacFarlane brought out his *John Wycliffe and the Beginnings of English Nonconformity* in 1952 with the avowed intention of removing 'several layers of rich brown protestant varnish' from its titular hero there has been a steady trickle of learned studies concerned with Wycliffe, his theology and his Lollard disciples.

Dr. Thomson's book is concerned with the period after the failure, crucial for Lollardy, of the Oldcastle rising in 1414, down to the early years of Henry VIII. His studies of Lollard prosecutions by the authorities of both church and state have been arranged upon a regional basis and it is now possible to see in detail what has long been suspected, that the North was hardly influenced significantly at all. On the other hand he has shewn how widespread the movement continued to be in the Midlands and South throughout the fifteenth century and that it shewed signs of revival toward the end of that century and in the early years of the next.

The work has now been done with considerable care, the evidence has been cautiously weighed and the author has been at considerable pains not to carry his conclusions beyond the point that the evidence, sometimes very ambiguous in its bearing, can reasonably be said to warrant. One of the problems he faced was the incompleteness of records, particularly in some dioceses. Another was the problem of the right interpretation of the evidence of suspected Lollards under official interrogation. Like the Anabaptists on the continent and the Separatists in England under Elizabeth it is not always easy to decide with the Lollards in such circumstances just how far the questioning determined the form and content of the testimony obtained. This especially applies to evidence of doctrinal aberrations.

The witnesses proved only too willing, when abjuring themselves, to inculpate others by name since this was acceptable proof of the sincerity of their own repentance. With the threat of burning but one step away from the heretic it was not usually difficult for the authorities to persuade men to turn informers.

On the other hand Dr. Thomson points out (p. 235) that the comparative leniency with which they were treated probably reflects their relative unimportance both politically and religiously. Perhaps the stepping up of prosecutions in the years 1486-1522 may argue their growing importance. It would certainly be useful to have a study of the growing anticlericalism in England at that period which would give a wider context for the study of the separate significance of Lollardy.

One of the interesting points made by the author on various occasions in the course of his study is the occasional and violent opposition of the laity to the Lollards. This was exemplified by the gruesome provision made in the will of a London goldsmith in 1463 (p. 152) of 6s. 8d. for faggots for the burning of heretics. Nevertheless it seems probable that, on the whole, there must have been fairly widespread support for them, otherwise they could not have survived as they did.

The chapter on 'Lollard doctrines and beliefs' is thin and only extends over twelve pages. Whilst it would be true to say that a chapter reflects the thinness of Lollard theology it does suggest a line of evidence which Dr. Thomson has ignored and yet which requires full treatment—the bibliography of Lollard writings. Only a slight indication of the parallels and dissimilarities between Lollards under interrogation and the Lollard handbooks would have usefully enriched the doctrinal chapter.

But it would be ungrateful to end on a note of criticism for what, within its limits, is a fine and careful piece of work which will need to be taken fully into account when the time is ripe for a full-scale study of Wycliffe and Lollardy.

B. R. WHITE

Protestant Worship and Church Architecture, by James F. White. New York, Oxford University Press, 1964, 224 pp. 42s. net.

Here is a book which I wish could be made compulsory reading for every Protestant Church Building Committee. No one reading it will put it down knowing how his new church should look but he will know the questions he must ask and answer if his new building is to succeed.

The plan of the book is wholly right. Chapter 1 is a discussion of what public worship is—not an exhaustive discussion, and one which is here and there a trifle naïve perhaps—but a discussion wholly relevant to all the architectural considerations that follow. Either we want a "nice" building whose prime requirement is a "worshipful atmosphere" that will help us "get something", or we want a building of functional integrity that will serve the "work of worship" that is to be done in it. This chapter would prove a challenge and a tonic to any congregation that faced it.

The second chapter on the principles of liturgical architecture places squarely on the local congregation (where it belongs) the responsibility to define to its architect the theological convictions which the building is to embody and the precise actions in public worship which its "spaces" and fitments are to serve. "First and last, the problems of church architecture are theological ones . . . no congregation is in a position to engage an architect until it has discussed the theological questions of what the church is and what

it does when it gathers for common worship." The chapter is so well written it would help any congregation to do just that.

Chapters 3 to 6 give a bird's eye view of the history of church architecture from the earliest house churches to those of our own day. The survey of so vast a range in so short a compass has perforce to be streamlined, and the purists no doubt will quarrel with omissions and emphases here and there, but the coverage is surprisingly adequate nonetheless. By the time it is done, the first two chapters have been amply illustrated. Chapter 5 has reference entirely to the American scene, of more interest than relevance to the English reader. The whole book, indeed, is angled to an American readership, but only here does its irrelevance to the English scene obtrude.

Only the last chapter is concerned with how church buildings should look, with architectural style and aesthetic concerns and emotive factors. Discussion is also given to the place of the choir, the organ and liturgical art.

The argument is marred here and there with repetitiousness, but the language is lucid and reads easily. As a Baptist, I find the discussion of the place and importance of the baptistery inadequate, which is a pity when so much else is good. If every Baptist church building committee were to read this book and—as an introduction to it—the recent publication of the Carey Kingsgate Press in the Living Issues series, *Baptist Places of Worship* by G. W. Rusling, the future of Baptist building in this country would be spared many indiscretions. What we build is a monument, either to our faith or to our confusion.

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