

BOOK REVIEWS

Collinson, Patrick. *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625*. The Ford Lectures, 1979. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. 270 pp. \$39.95.

Work on the English Reformation has become something of an industry of late, much of it tucked away in learned journals and unpublished theses. Collinson would have put us all in his debt by simply drawing it together in a manageable compass. He has, however, done far more than that.

The title should not be taken too seriously, for the book omits any discussion of doctrine, which Collinson disarmingly admits in his preface to be the heart of the matter; the promise of the subtitle is, however, richly fulfilled. In six lucid chapters, two major themes recur. First and foremost is the "mistake of writing the history [of the English Church] in the anachronistically dichotomous terms of an Anglicanism not yet conceived and an alien puritanism not yet clearly disowned" (p. ix). The second is that the major tragedy for the church he depicts, and for the society in which it moved, was the triumph of the Laudians. This triumph upset the growing, though still delicate, consensus and turned natural conservatives into reluctant rebels.

In a fascinating chapter on voluntary religion, Collinson persuades us that the more earnest (we hardly dare call them puritans any more) contrived to live happily within the church by becoming a self-conscious, sometimes covenanted, community within the parish (one is reminded here of Luther's projected *ecclesiolae*); schism had no place in their program. It was often, though never exclusively, the "better sort" who were to be found in these house groups or attending lectures by combination on market days. And in more than a few places it was the magistrate—the local magnate in the countryside, the councilor in town—who played a leading role in such fellowships, in alliance with likeminded ministers.

The mentality of such men, Collinson amply demonstrates in another chapter, was essentially conservative: they looked for "a reinforcement of social values and objectives which were common to their class, not to the substitution of novel and deviant values and objectives" (p. 187). Thus the "radical" John Udall, one of the Marprelate men, collaborates with his local worthies in having his congregation seated according to social standing. This is a long way from the alienated mentality of Michael Walzer's puritans. If they suffered from anything, it was fear of the dissolution of their society, not the hope that it would be brought low. They were the law-and-order conservatives of their day and found it hard to bear when they suddenly found themselves accused of being law-breakers and schis-

matics, and publicly humiliated, as were the Norwich city fathers, by a Laudian bishop.

It was thus the activities of Laud, rather than those of the puritans, which had such a destabilizing effect on both church and society. Collinson argues that the bishops were coming to approximate the Protestant ideal. They preached widely, confirmed diligently, dispensed ecclesiastical justice and discipline impartially in person or by careful delegation, ordained clergy who were educated and competent, and performed a large number of miscellaneous tasks for both central government and the local community. They were, above all (and, of course, with notable exceptions), reconcilers: reconcilers of their more puritan clergy and gentry to the church settlement, and very often of gentlemen to one another. The Arminian/Puritan, Episcopalian/Presbyterian split was thus by no means inevitable before the advent of Laud and his supporters. Indeed, in another chapter, this time on the ordinary clergy, Collinson argues that far from a rift developing in the Jacobean church, greater unity was achieved, as clergy of similar educational backgrounds and reasonably common goals developed a sense of profession and *esprit de corps*.

We are back once more to what Collinson calls the "disaster" of Laud's triumph at the accession of the like-minded Charles I. As he points out in his first chapter, the story of the English church had been one in which "the two leading forces of monarchy and episcopacy manoeuvred, sometimes together but often in subdued contention, for a controlling interest" (p. 38). The biographer of Grindal is well aware of how hamstrung a bishop could be without the support of the crown. It was a different story in 1625.

But to dwell exclusively on the change that occurred in 1625 is to give a wrong impression of the book as a whole. Here is a rich kaleidoscope of church life during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. The lectures abound in lively and telling illustrative material, and any reader who does not leave this book more aware of what it must have been like to live in the embrace of the Elizabethan and Jacobean church has not been trying.

This is especially so in the chapter on the popular success of the English Reformation. While admitting (and giving evidence of) a quite widespread apathy, Collinson is not happy with the assumption of his colleagues that it was the poorest level of the community—what he calls the Third World of English society—that remained unreached or unmoved. As he points out, many of the activities in which non-churchgoers indulged involved the spending of money. Rather, he identifies the young and the unmarried—those without responsibilities—as those most likely to be found participating in condemned Sunday activities. But if the more elderly and settled tended to conform, they were not necessarily convinced or doctrinally sound, a point which readers of Gerald Strauss's *Luther's House of Learn-*

ing will not find surprising. Josias Nichols complained in 1602 that scarcely a tenth of his parishioners had a proper grasp of sound doctrine; despite his preaching and catechizing, the majority remained easy-going Pelagians. There was an uneasy feeling among the enthusiasts that preaching and catechizing were failing, but their only answer was to clamor for a stricter application of the laws on church attendance and for the punishment of the morally wayward—and, of course, for still more preaching. It was hardly an imaginative approach.

The early English reformers had been ready to use the more popular media—pictures, ballads, and plays—, but by the second half of the sixteenth century these were frowned upon, the moreso as they were fully reclaimed by the secular world. As a result, earnest Elizabethans vainly embarked upon a repression of the popular media and a furious effort to place printed words in the minds of people who “must have found it very difficult to convert the words into authentic and meaningful experience” (p. 234). Much of this is persuasive, although it does not explain why the richer, more literate youth, and to some extent men in general, should also have had little time for godly reformation. Susan Brigden has provided us with some valuable clues about youth (in *Past and Present* 95 [May 1982]: 37-67); but, at least to this reviewer, the greater enthusiasm exhibited by women remains something of a mystery.

The Religion of Protestants is a valuable book and will surely remain recommended reading for many years. Students will find themselves to be further in Collinson's debt if he now directs their minds in an equally erudite but painless way to the doctrinal heart of the church that he has portrayed so well.

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Ferch, Arthur J. *The Son of Man in Daniel Seven*. Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 6. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983. x + 237 pp. \$8.95.

This 1979 Andrews University dissertation addresses two main problems in research on the Son of Man (SM) referred to in Dan 7:13. The first of these problems is whether this figure is individual and personal or symbolic and collective. Although the more prominent opinion in the scholarly world today favors the view that the SM of Daniel is a corporate figure standing for God's saints or something similar, Ferch argues forcibly for the minority view that the SM is individual and personal. The second question examined is whether or not the SM figure in Daniel's apocalyptic