

point is that there is no reason to accept the traditional doctrine of creation with its implications of disembodied knowledge and action, as opposed to other doctrines about God; setting aside the point that if so there is little reason to accept the other doctrines either, I should claim that the cosmological and teleological arguments supply ample reason for belief in God as creator, despite Jantzen's rather superficial rejection of the former argument (131); and that his timeless knowledge (based on intentions) and timeless creativity of an everlasting but creaturely universe should be understood accordingly.

If, however, Jantzen were read as putting forward a new pantheistic theology or religion, a different assessment might be in place. Purged of its inconsistencies, the model of the universe as God's body might indeed "help to do justice to the beauty and value of nature" (156). I have argued elsewhere that belief in the intrinsic value of the flourishing of creatures coheres well with a traditional belief in God and his love (*The Ethics of Environmental Concern*, 161); but those who reject the latter belief, and among them eco-holists in particular, may find in Jantzen's position a theological articulation of their own. So too may adherents of other world religions (158); in particular, the teachings of Ramanuja seem close to some of Jantzen's (as, of course, some of Hegel's also are). There would be the danger of worship of the creature rather than of the creator; but, as long as the resulting religion adhered to "the importance of conservation and ecological responsibility, the significance and dignity of the human body and human sexuality" (156), little harm and perhaps much good would be done. The days of pantheists (such as Bruno) being burnt at the stake are happily over; as a Quaker I should add that they should never have begun.

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**THE REFORMATION AND THE ENGLISH PEOPLE** by J.J. Scarisbrick *Basil Blackwell*. Pp viii + 203. £14.50.

Historians of the Reformation seem to rejoice in the certainty that it is impossible to write purely objective unbiased history. It was certainly time for a new emphasis on the Catholic point of view. For some decades several well known historians have been displaying their researches from a fairly bluntly anti-Catholic point of view. Drawing on a wide range of original material Scarisbrick presents a picture which shows that the Reformation was not wanted, was imposed and was successfully resisted by a very wide spectrum of individuals who subsequently handed on the old traditions in spite of all the efforts of the State, the State Church and the sects.

Fifteenth century wills show entire contentment with things as they were. Anti-clericalism was largely a myth. Lollards were only occasionally found and burnt and were of little importance in any case. Indulgence preaching provided excellent incomes for important undertakings and charities. It was not a bad idea to have the bishoprics of Salisbury and Worcester held by Italians so that there was a lobby at Rome. Things were not perfect, they never are. But the Church was supported by the whole of society and the faithful enjoyed their religion. The Reformation was not based on any kind of consensus, populist or otherwise. It was imposed. The brutal tyranny of the 'spoliation' is told again in summary, the callous destruction by Henry VIII and Cromwell, with all its dishonesty and special pleading, of the monasteries and other religious houses—a destruction desired by no one. The general resentment at the changes helped to power most of the rebellions of the rest of the century. Finally, Scarisbrick shows the very considerable determination and success, intellectual and social, of the recusants who included people from all classes, whether secular or Jesuit priest supported. He issues what looks like an effective challenge to Bossy's theory of the birth, in Counter Reformation times in England, of a quite new kind of seigniorial Catholicism.

Essentially Scarisbrick's picture is one we have seen before, notably in the 1400 pages of Philip Hughes great work of thirty years ago, *The Reformation in England*.

Scarisbrick now buttresses this with a whole further range of facts—though he confines himself to little digs rather than the sharp sarcasms of Hughes as he lays bare the legerdemain of the reformers. He makes out a good case, as far as it goes. But how far does it go? How truly historical is it?

The opening sentences of the book describe its theme: 'on the whole English men and women did not want the Reformation'. I find it profoundly misleading to speak of 'the Reformation' in this way. The great complex of events which historians call 'the Reformation' was not envisaged beforehand and could not be so envisaged by anyone. It was that kind of unique event, that kind of revolution, which the occasional perceptive observer can foretell as likely to occur, but which is simply not in the realm of things people 'want'. I am not so sure that a good case could be made out for saying that people did not want 'reforms'.

However my main criticism of this book is the absence from it of the centrepiece of the Reformation. The Bible hardly gets a mention. Tyndale's name does not occur in the book's index, though he is mentioned in passing in the text. The author does not address himself to the central drives of the Reformation, and that is because, as it seems to me, nowhere in the book does he address himself in any substantial way to the Gospel of Jesus of Nazareth or the relationship of a Church or a Church doctrine to that Gospel. It is a book simply about the historical church and about churchy life, cult and the social dimensions of the old and the new. This, I suggest is to accept the assumptions of the modern school of history that one can after all only record appearances. The result is that a historian can, on the basis of a selection of this or that set of facts, present whatever picture he prefers, and shrug his shoulders about why on earth it all happened. That, by implication is a subject perhaps for ideologists, anyhow not for scrupulous academic historians. Scarisbrick, however, does, perceptively, compare the Catholic Church of the fifteenth century with the Catholic Church of the first half of the twentieth century, and the Reformation with the Second Vatican Council, but astonishingly does not seem to grasp that in both cases a critical consensus of theological, pastoral and spiritual understanding had been evolving which made wide ranging changes inevitable. The central topic in both cases must be *ta biblia* and the Tradition. Ignore these and all you have is 'traditions' in the conservative sense on the one hand and 'experience' on the other, and no key to an understanding of events.

Scarisbrick gets quite chesterbellocian towards the end, and one enjoys it. The Reformation 'moved from the high colours of statue, window and painted walls to whitewash; from ornate vestments and altar frontal to plain table cloth and surplice; from a religion that, with baptismal salt on lips, anointings and frankincense—as well as image, word and chant—sought out all the senses, to one that centred on the word and innerliness. There was a shift from a religion that often went out of doors on pilgrimage and procession to an indoor one; from the sacral and churchly to the familial and domestic', etc. Well, it needed saying again! But ought one not to look at what it was that lay beneath the different appearances? Scarisbrick gets quite interesting when he occasionally turns in direction as for example when quoting Patrick McGrath's observation that Protestant and Catholic renewal preaching (Scarisbrick enjoys the pejorative 'hot' as an adjective here) were remarkably alike one another. All in all if you want a full picture of the Reformation read *The English Reformation* by A.G. Dickens, and then to counter the residual Protestant bias of that book read Scarisbrick's, in many ways most interesting and rewarding, text. It is a book which does set the record straight, even whilst omitting the substance of the story.

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