radical retraction of all that has gone before, for it maintains that there is something other than language, after all. But again, Cupitt has anticipated his critics. He says that there is nothing particularly radical about the development in this book, neither is it a retraction. He simply felt that he had become too locked into his own terminology, and that some 'craftily-chosen' Heideggerian vocabulary might help to free himself from such entrapment. Thus, Cupitt regards this new book as 'a clarifying restatement of the position that was earlier set out in *The Time Being* (1992) and *The Last Philosophy* (1992).' (p. 154). It is therefore a piece of 'fine tuning', making explicit what had previously been implicit, and enabling him to come to a 'partial synthesis or inconclusion.'

Are there any criticisms that Cupitt has *not* anticipated in this book? No doubt, there are several, but I shall raise just one here. This is that Cupitt neglects the distinctively theological interpretations of Heidegger's thought that have been developed in recent years. For instance, Fergus Kerr has argued that Heidegger's overcoming of metaphysics was the overcoming of non-realism, as well as of realism; they are the two opposite extremes of the same metaphysical error. The overcoming of both gives rise to the 'clearing', which Kerr interprets as a space in which theology can be itself. So whereas Cupitt wants to understand 'Being' in terms of non-realism, Kerr wants to understand 'Being' as that to which one turns after one has overcome, or turned away from, both realism and non-realism. This is an important challenge that Cupitt might usefully have discussed. Instead and familiarly, most of his attacks centre upon Platonic metaphysical realism, but as Kerr and others suggest, it is no longer clear that this represents the most serious and important challenge to Cupitt's thought.

Another way in which this book is distinguished from previous ones is that it ends with an 'Inconclusion' that is remarkably conclusive. In this fascinating and uncharacteristically personal account, Cupitt provides a retrospective analysis of his life-long philosophical project. He says: Now at last a long series of experiments in religious thought and writing seems to be reaching a sort of resolution and a paradoxical in-conclusion in the religion of Being.' (p. 152) Although this sounds conclusively final, Cupitt has always resisted all forms of finality. One suspects that it will not be too long before another deficiency is identified, and consequently, that this book will be followed by yet another. One also suspects that if and when this happens, we shall once again be grateful for it.

GAVIN HYMAN

WALES AND THE REFORMATION by Glanmor Williams, Cardiff: *University of Wales Press*, 1997. xii + 440 pp. £25.00.

This book, as the author explains in the preface, is a long-delayed sequel to his highly acclaimed *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Cardiff, 1962). It is a full-length account of the history of the Reformation in Wales from the reign of Henry VIII to the end of the reign of Elizabeth, and as such is the first work of its kind, a remarkable fact in view of the profound and far-reaching consequences of the Reformation for Wales.

If the Reformation was generally resented in England, it was probably

even more resented in Wales. A deeply conservative country with an unbroken tradition of loyal Catholicism stretching back over a thousand years to her very origins, Wales, although she had lost her last vestiges of political independence to England with the fall of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282, was yet on the threshold of the Reformation still sufficiently strong in her ethnic, religious and historical identity to regard the new attacks on her religion as a further imposition by a despised, age-old enemy. This becomes particularly evident in the undisguised pillaging of Church property which characterised Edward VI's reign.

For a combination of reasons, though, the Welsh proved unable to prevent the enforcement of `the religion of the English', and nowhere were there any organised uprisings such as took place in Ireland, the north of England, and Cornwall. The reasons for this were partly political, the main one, according to Williams, being the disappearance of the old Marcher aristocracy, a body powerful enough to pit itself against the Crown. Thereafter, any opposition to the Reformation would depend on the leadership of the native Welsh gentry. However, since the aftermath of the failed revolt of Owen Glyndŵr (around 1409) in particular, the more powerful and ambitious members of the Welsh gentry had developed into a class of land-grabbing proprietors for whom allegiance to the Crown was crucial to their own interests; and the new opportunities afforded by the dissolution of the religious houses naturally tended to strengthen that allegiance further thereby depriving the mass of the population of any strong and organised opposition. Another potent, albeit perverse and ironic, factor was the affection of the Welsh for the Tudor dynasty which they regarded as of Welsh descent and the rightful rulers of the Island of Britain as opposed to the usurping English. This seems to have blinded the Welsh to the double-edged nature of the 'pax Anglicana' of the Acts of Union of 1536 and 1543, which, while conferring certain material and worldly advantages enjoyed by the English upon the Welsh, aimed ultimately at the complete assimilation of Wales to England, politically, economically, administratively, linguistically, and religiously, for the greater convenience of the powerful centralised Crown bureaucracy and its civil servants, thus marking the beginning of a fully institutionalised form of `cultural' genocide.

Because of factors such as these, to which, however, must be added the greatly reduced supply of recusant priests by the end of the reign of Elizabeth, the Anglican Church eventually triumphed in Wales as the established religion in spite of the scattered and heroic resistance and tenacity of many, especially the recusant priests and martyrs and the lesser gentry. It should, however, be noted that it only found acceptance among a tiny and, usually urban, minority of higher clergy, gentry, lawyers and merchants. Among the mass of the populace Catholicism either lived on residually in many parts of Wales (such as Monmouthshire, that most Catholic of counties) until the heinous Titus Oates plot, or else died out leaving behind it a virtually pagan population. The Reformation in Wales, therefore, was a success for the privileged few but for the vast majority a miserable failure.

The central theme of Williams' book, however, is not so much the more

negative aspects of the Reformation in Wales as the activity of a small but determined group of learned Welsh laymen and clerics who perceived all too clearly that, if the Reformation were to succeed in a largely monoglot country, it would have to be presented to the people in their own language, for 'Just as the Danish kingdom had brought the `cultural imperialism' of a Danish Bible to the Norwegians, or the Swedes a Swedish text to the Finns, so the English had done to the Welsh, not even allowing them the use of a Latin text' (p. 235). The eventual result was the translation of the Book of Common Prayer and New Testament of 1567, chiefly by the great Renaissance scholar William Salesbury, and, outstandingly, of the Old and New Testament and Apocrypha of 1588 by bishop William Morgan. That this small group of men, purely by their own initiative and against great odds, succeeded in persuading the Government of the day to authorise these translations is a remarkable—almost providential—fact since the Welsh Bible was `probably the key factor in retaining the native language; it ensured the success of Welsh literature, tied the clergy to Welsh culture, and inspired confidence in the continuance of Welsh nationhood'. Once again, however, it was the privileged minority who benefited, the ordinary Welshman being too illiterate and poor to avail himself of the new asset (even had he wished to), and it was not until the eighteenth century that Protestantism took hold of the population at large, more as part of a national rebirth than a purely religious conversion.

Williams' treatment of the Catholicism of the time is not entirely satisfactory in that, while fully acknowledging its importance and meaningfulness in the culture and daily life of the Welsh, he shows little awareness of its inner, spiritual nature and especially the great solace, joy, and strength it must have provided, as today, for countless people of every station. Too often it is depicted as a plethora of customs and rituals mingled with magic and superstition, with the Mass, of course, celebrated by the priest on behalf of a passive and unthinking audience, occupying central position. Williams is acquainted with Eamon Duffy's brilliant *The Stripping of the Altars* but does not appear to have applied any of it to his own nonconformist preconceptions.

Lacking too is any sense of injustice at the immense damage inflicted on the national fibre of Wales by the Acts of Union and other ruthless political measures without which the Reformation could not possibly have succeeded. The victory of Protestantism is clearly more important for Williams than the integrity of Welsh nationhood. He is, however, by no means alone among Welsh historians in this respect.

But when one recalls the complexities of the period, especially in the clash between two profoundly different forms of Christianity and the historian's difficulty in doing justice to both, it has to be admitted that this book is a masterpiece. Admirably fair, well-proportioned, unflagging in mastery of subject-matter, skilled and judicious in the fruitful interweaving of disparate and limited sources, lucid, readable, and polished throughout, it is the ripe fruit of long years of research and reflection, and the perusal of every conceivable relevant source, by one of Wales' leading historians. As such it will remain for a long time the standard work of its kind.

IESTYN DANIEL