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**Dictionary of Evangelical Biography 1730-1860**

Donald M. Lewis (ed.)

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These volumes make fascinating browsing and this reviewer soon found himself constructing a parlour game of obscure questions, a sort of 'Evangelical Trivial Pursuits'. Which brewer marketed beer as a better solution to whisky drinking than Temperance? Which Evangelical politician was murdered by a madman? Which clergyman harangued his family from the pulpit? Which Evangelical scientist believed there was life in other planets? Which preacher is known only by a Christian name? (Arthur Guinness, Prime Minister Spencer Percival, Revd. Mark Pattison, Sir David Brewster, and Elizabeth, an African-American itinerant.)

But there is nothing trivial about this *Dictionary*. It consists of some 3,500 entries and is the product of some 360 historians worldwide. It is a major scholarly resource and anyone working on Evangelical history will want to have access to a set. It had its genesis in the fertile brain of Professor Andrew Walls when he was lecturing in West Africa in the 1960s. Work began on it in the following decade, but the project faltered due to its scope and lack of finance. It was rescued by the editorship of D.M. Lewis and the publishers Basil Blackwell in 1988. The Evangelical world is in their debt.

The early Brethren are well represented. It was one of the initial editorial decisions to include them and the areas of the world where they were strong. Dr Harold Rowdon acted as specialist editor for British Brethren and a number of prominent Brethren historians have contributed. The *Dictionary* gives the fullest profile of the movement through a biographical approach since *Chief Men Among the Brethren* (1918 & 1931). The comparison with *Chief Men* is not misplaced, for the chosen cut-off date means that it is mainly the early Irish and English Brethren who appear, also the backbone of the former work. *Chief Men* has been used to demonstrate the higher social class of the nascent movement and the entries here confirm that picture. Of the forty-seven British Brethren whose occupations are given (out of fifty-three entries) eight were landowners or had private incomes (including four peers); three were larger businessmen (two bankers and one industrialist); thirteen were clergymen (nine Anglican); ten were professional people (lawyers, doctors, university fellow, and dentist); four were commissioned officers; two were scientists; two were artists; one was an actor; one was a small businessman (a draper); and three were artisans.

However, there the similarity with *Chief Men* ends. The advances in Brethren historiography since 1931 are obvious. The enthusiasm of Roy Coad for Groves is evident as is Roger Steer's for Müller, but both are contained within a proper historical exegesis. T.C.F. Stunt's entries, *inter alia*, on Darby, B.W. Newton, Bulteel and F.W. Newman are models of scholarship. Diversity of patterns within the early Brethren are not smoothed over. Chapman, the Howards, Müller, Craik, and Collingwood all had settled ministries. The variety in Brethren origins is displayed. In addition to Anglicans, there are Quakers, Congregationalists, Baptists, and one Methodist represented here. Later divergence between those who created an established sect and those who wanted to preserve presectarian ecumenism is shown by the entries on William Kelly and W.J. Stokes. Lord Congleton's political action is noted. But above all, the *Dictionary* allows the Brethren to be seen in context with articles on Alexander Haldane, Robert Daley, Edward Irving and other contemporary radical Evangelicals. How quickly the movement spread through the international Evangelical network can be glimpsed from entries on Brethren in France, Germany, Italy, and New Zealand. And chief women can now be acknowledged: there are entries on Frances Bevan, Lady Margaret Cockburn-Campbell, Emily Gosse, Mary Jane Walker, Elizabeth Paget and the Marchioness of

Queensberry. Their activities were those most acceptable of nineteenth-century roles for women of their class: writers (the first four) or philanthropists (the last two). A fully-rounded picture of the movement emerges.

Inevitably in a multi-author work such as this there will be criticisms. It is regrettable that the movement is entitled 'Plymouth Brethren', surely the least acceptable name which has been applied to it (but one which perhaps reflects the editor's north-American background). The article on Francis Hutchinson needs some qualification. The omission of John Bowes and William Trotter has meant that the contribution of Free Methodism to Brethren origins, particularly in the north of England and Scotland, continues to be neglected. John Kitto has been omitted from the index and the late F.F. Bruce's name from the list of contributors.

But these are minor cavils in so rich a work. The index lists each country separately with individuals given under denomination. Articles have a select list of the subject's writings and a bibliography of secondary sources, providing an invaluable starting point for further research. The price will probably put it beyond most personal libraries. But this is all the more reason for librarians and archivists of tertiary institutions to ensure that they acquire a copy.

Neil Dickson