

place in the study of theology.

This long review is only a bare outline of a complex book and the publishers are to be congratulated (despite a few misprints) on having made available a work

which is addressed to professional theologians and as such to a rather restricted readership.

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THE IMPROBABLE PURITAN, A LIFE OF BULSTRODE WHITELOCKE, by Ruth Spalding. Faber & Faber, London, 1975. 318 pp. £4.50

If Bulstrode Whitelocke does appear as an 'improbable' Puritan, the fault lies entirely with us. One is so accustomed to having such responsible and thoughtful men as Selden, Whitelocke, Fairfax and Hampden dismissed as dry, sanctimonious kill-joys, that it is a real pleasure to come across a book like this one. Miss Spalding takes Whitelocke out of our stereotyped historical categories and shows him as part of the rich and varied society of mid-seventeenth century England.

The son of a judge and a highly respected lawyer, Whitelocke was elected to the Long Parliament and became an important figure in the Parliamentary party. He was sent as a peace delegate to the king on three occasions and, although he managed to avoid being implicated in the trial and execution of Charles I, he was twice appointed a Commissioner of the Great Seal under the Republic and Protectorate, and was a highly successful ambassador to Sweden for the Republic, (1653-4).

Always at the centre of government, then, Whitelocke was important not so much for his leadership as for his respectability; his firm upholding of the rule of law and—against the Royalists and the Presbyterians alike—of religious toleration under that law. Like all the high-principled men of his generation, he was overtaken by the speed of events and had to do the best he could in an unprecedented situation. The theme throughout his varied career was to preserve the rule of law. But how was one to be consistent when the ground of the law—King and Parliament—were swept away? By 1653 Whitelocke

had come to believe that sovereignty lay with 'the people of England', and that the form of government—monarchical or republican—was purely a matter of 'acceptability'. He held similar views on church matters and one of his favourite sayings was that men could no more be expected to believe or worship alike than all to have the same faces or the same taste in food.

The great charm of Miss Spalding's biography is that, basing herself on Whitelocke's diaries, annals and published works, she allows public and private matters to merge and overlap. In 1634, at the age of twenty-nine, Whitelocke was charged with being 'disaffected to the Church', but his main preoccupation when summoned to London was not the threat of Laudianism, but changing his hair-style and buying new clothes to advance his courting of Frances Willoughby, with whom he later eloped. Similarly, when advising Cromwell on his Scottish campaign, his mind is on the wooing of Widow Wilson (his third wife) and as he was only able to spare five days after waving Cromwell goodbye, he 'made use of his time', as he records in his diary. Above all, it is in Sweden that we see our 'Puritan' as an educated and cultured man, quite at ease as ambassador to the sophisticated Queen Christina. Here, more than anywhere else, his diary, through this fascinating book, sheds a new light on the personalities and events which go to make up our historical categories and text-book histories.

JOHN FARRELL, O.P.

ERRATUM

In Brian Davies's *Theology and Natural Theology* (June 1977) part of a sentence was unfortunately omitted. Page 262, Line 5 et seq. should read:

It might be said that human reason does not make this claim, that it is actually part of Revelation; but then, in order to recognise a revelation one must employ some rational criteria not themselves derivable from Revelation. This may be denied . . .