

characteristically witty. Collini's excellent and stimulating book not only feeds and enlightens, it is a pleasure to read.

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R. W. Davis and R. J. Helmstadter, eds., *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society. Essays in Honor of R. K. Webb*, New York and London, Routledge, 1992, pp. x + 205.

The eleven essays in this collection, dedicated to the influential student of Unitarianism, range across the 'Victorian' era in its broadest sense. They also cover a wide geographical area and an impressive variety of religious movements and beliefs.

J. M. Winter's contribution, for example, discusses the growth of Spiritualism during and immediately after the First World War. He shows how this represented no 'modernist' trend but the continuation of a development of the Victorian period, in conditions which naturally favoured it. David C. Itzkowitz follows the role of the Board of Deputies of British Jews during the nineteenth century, and traces how that role changed from one of ensuring that Jews fitted smoothly into British society to actively pressing for specific concessions and exemptions in their favour. Ainslie T. Embree and Jeffrey Cox offer studies of religion as exported to the British Empire, writing on Christianity and the state in India and on independent Englishwomen in Delhi and Lahore.

There is, however, plenty on what the term 'Victorian religion' usually brings to mind. Patricia Kuppa writes on how the Victorians viewed Mary Magdalene (they seem to have been unable to resist the temptation to enrol her among the upper classes) and Reba Soffer discusses the view of history, progress and the role of religion to be found in the works of J. R. Seeley.

Peter Gay, on Thomas Hughes's *The Manliness of Christ*, dissects the various elements of which Hughes believed 'manliness' to be composed. He reveals the difficulties which arose for the author when Christ apparently behaved in ways incompatible with those ideals, the pettish behaviour of the twelve-year old Jesus in the Temple causing considerable problems. It is, of course, very easy to poke fun at Hughes but Gay is making a serious point here. He traces the development of Hughes's thought in his earlier and more famous *Tom Brown's Schooldays* and *Tom Brown at Oxford*. Hughes, we learn, progressed from the 'muscular Christianity' urged by Charles Kingsley, to defining 'manliness' as a set of virtues which were not necessarily restricted to men and which he imparts in good measure to Tom Brown's wife, Mary. There is, however, room for doubt as to whether this really 'raises some serious questions about the absolute distinctions that we have long thought differentiated the sexes in Victorian ideology' (p. 113). Surely most readers would already agree that 'life is a matter of shadings rather than absolutes' (p. 112).

The earlier decades of the period are represented by four of the essays. A useful contribution from R. W. Davis addresses the question of whether the achievement of Catholic emancipation in 1829 was followed by a division among the Whigs on religious issues. Davis argues that Lord Grey's aversion to

more far-reaching measures over lay appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish church was due not to 'High Church principles', but to fear of an Anglican reaction detrimental to his party.

Darwin makes his appearance in Sandra Herbert's account of the debate which centred on Georges Cuvier's attempt to reconcile the Biblical version of the Creation and the Flood with the geological discoveries of the early nineteenth century. Herbert suggests that this debate strongly influenced the young Darwin, then a student at Cambridge and Edinburgh. 'Popular irreligion in early Victorian England' by I. D. McCalman provides a refreshing change to the common picture of sober English artisans eager to obtain 'really useful knowledge' on the Sabbath. McCalman focuses on the Reverend Robert Taylor whose extravagant and irreligious displays in the Rotunda at Blackfriars in the early 1830s drew enormous crowds. Nor was he, McCalman argues, a lone eccentric but a far more representative figure of the period than might be supposed.

R. J. Helmstadter's contribution seeks to show how some of the utilitarian precepts, embodied in contemporary technological and economic improvements, can also be discerned in the activities of evangelical preachers of the period. Taking the example of Andrew Reed, minister of the New Road Chapel congregation from 1811 to 1862, Helmstadter balances the predictable eulogy written by Reed's sons with the sour comments of an estranged friend, Francis Barnett, to produce a penetrating insight into Reed's motivations. A believer in the 'decided usefulness of the ministry as a profession' (p. 20), Reed was committed to constant improvement and expansion, rebuilding his chapel on a larger scale, creating five new national charities and making a study of revivalist techniques while on an American tour, with a view to their adoption in England. However, all this gave some substance to contemporary claims that men like Reed had 'turned religion into a trade' and Helmstadter gently points out that Reed's improvements often worked to his own financial advantage.

The volume is well produced and, apart from the confusing appearance of the same individual as both 'John Angell James' and 'John Angell Jones' (p. 24), there are very few serious typographical errors.

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