too many stories. The book is simply too long. Surely a more modest length could have been achieved through selection, compression and a judicious use of appendices.

Length aside, the book reinforces Dr. Elton's (and others') sympathetic picture of Cromwell as a disinterested practitioner of limited liability revolution within the existing framework of English legality. The author's bias is evident but never obtrusive (nor are his characteristic deft cuts at historians who in one way or another fail to meet his exacting standards of interpretation or scholarly method). It is a mark of the Elton fairness that he never lionizes the new leviathan, never (well, hardly ever) glosses over its revolutionary nature. The reader's appetite is certainly whetted for Dr. Elton's promised study of the revolution as a whole, a study which should underline the extreme importance of these years as changing the course of English history, and history-writing.

This book vindicates the legality of the Cromwellian-Henrician revolution, and significantly this is taken as an exoneration. Cromwell would have rejoiced if he had known how much he would contribute to what has become one of the strongest convictions in the English mind – that what is done legally is done well, especially if done in the name of national unity. Cromwell's victims, great and small, were sacrificed to an awakening national self-sufficiency. Their crimes consisted of thinking and saying what had been thought and said from time immemorial. They did not change their minds fast enough. They will always be seen as standing in the way of the march of the English nation, fated to defeat and lucky to be defeated legally. Thomas Cromwell fell, but his cause triumphed. Dr. Elton has both analyzed and illustrated that triumph.

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Derek Wilson. *A Tudor Tapestry: Men, Women and Society in Reformation England*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972. Pp. viii, 287. \$9.95.

This original and imaginative study of the period of the early English Reformation is a popular history in the best sense, in that its matter and style will invite and nourish the interest of the reader who is no specialist in the period, while its scholarship will not betray him. Mr. Wilson rests his work on the history of a group of English countrymen of the 16th century, especially of certain families with a Lincolnshire connection, and examines the way in which the great religious events of the reign of Henry VIII animated and interfered with their lives and fortunes. The strongest thread running through this "tapestry" is the fortune of the Ayscough family (also spelled Askew), in its own connections and in those of families with which it had important ties, especially the family of Ralph Lascelles of Sturton.

Mr. Wilson chose his sample well, since it provides him with a series of related vignettes or "panels" centring on particular individuals, of whom the most celebrated is Anne Ayscough, the dauntless and difficult heroine of some of Foxe's most memorable pages. As the story moves along we find ourselves presented with an interrupted but coherent narrative history of the main events of the Henrician reformation, concluding with the dramatic execution of Anne Ayscough in 1546.

The book is most original, and its authority most important, in the earlier chapters

dealing with the local history of these southern midlands families. It makes clear, as few discussions of the period do, how remarkable were the close links that joined seemingly disparate families, a lesson of English social history that cannot be too often taught. It is only when we appreciate how small the world of literate England was, and how concentrated it was socially and geographically, that we begin to understand the way in which ideas were transmitted and policies formed, and to see the toughness of the social fabric which was able to endure so many dramatic shocks without any very dramatic shifts in power or interest. At the same time Mr. Wilson's book is not without its problems. As his story moves away from the counties toward the court it retreats into the familiar pathways of Protestant historiography which have changed little since the days of Foxe. A modern reader may shrink from the style that can begin the climactic chapter, "While Anne [Ayscough] was nursing her aching limbs in the Tower ..." as he may find it difficult to admire the integrity of John Lascelles, the pious stool pigeon who betrayed the erratic past of Catherine Howard to her sanguinary spouse. At the same time Mr. Wilson's strong sympathies only occasionally lead him to neglect recent scholarly developments (as they do with Dr. John London, a hero to no party, whose rehabilitation by David Knowles is ignored here) and if some would like to hear more about *raison d'état* or economic factors, they must accept the fact that *A Tudor Tapestry* is simply not that kind of a book. Essentially it is a book about ordinary people who felt strongly and even passionately about the religious drama of their time. Mr. Wilson's well-documented and vigorous account has brought that passion to life again in a way that has not quite been thought of before, and his achievement deserves to be read widely.

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Gordon Rupp. *Patterns of Reformation*. London: Epworth Press, 1969. Pp. xxiii, 427. \$11.50.

"Having begun with the English Reformation," Gordon Rupp "turned to Luther studies and after a space came face to face with the question, 'What do they know of Luther, who only Luther know?'" When we have finished these delightfully written studies on Oecolampadius, Karlstadt, Müntzer, Vadianus and Johannes Kessler, many of us will have to confess with their author "how luminous it has been to ponder the Reformation in the first decade of its origin, to see how very swiftly the patterns of Reformation open up, of which Luther's is the dominant but not the only one." Moreover, we *do* get to know Luther better – as a conservative reformer! – especially in the sections on Karlstadt and Müntzer, which constitute well over two-thirds of this impressive book.

Rupp sees Oecolampadius as "the reformer as scholar," who travelled the road from student to divine and from divine to reformer. The latter was a road of difficult and painful growth for this "introverted scholar" – by no means a great one – who possessed neither a forceful personality nor the gift of leadership. But when he was forced into a position of eminence at Basle, as Rupp sympathetically and movingly relates, Oecolampadius "rose manfully" – and effectively – to the challenge, becoming, among other things, a "cathedral preacher making the best of a bad voice, but taking fire beneath the burden of his message