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Reviews

Kingdom and Church, by T. F. Torrance. (Oliver & Boyd, 16s.).

The main object of this study is to show how the leading Reformers restored the Apostolic expectation of "a new age in which an earthly future figured as prominently as a heavenly," and also how this perspective determined their differing views of Church and State. Dr. Torrance divides his work into three "Eschatologies"—that of Faith (Luther), of Love (Bucer), of Hope (Calvin). The Kingdom is entirely future, but we live in its "overlap." It is not the destruction of creation (except for Luther) but its re-investiture in *our* time. The Church, her ministry of the Word, her sacraments and her doctrines are only meaningful in the light of this event.

Divergences start over the problems of the "time between." Luther found the State evil and the Church impure. But Christ would soon come. He would then destroy the State and sift the Church. Bucer and Calvin, under longer perspectives, gave Church and State creative roles. One of the most rewarding features of the book is the exposition of how they did this, and why. The Church through its preaching, sacraments and discipline brought up men in grace, spread Christ's rule in the world, and evoked those "works of love" which make ideal community life possible. Bucer and Calvin were not content with a merely formal or technical righteousness—a man must live the love in which he belongs to Christ. The State is the area of this activity, and therefore really becomes the religious community in its secular calling. As such, the State had its sanction in the Bible, and was to be served in Christ's love. This rests upon something foreign to Baptists—the concept of a *Volkskirche*, a people's Church, of which the State is merely the civic dimension. Both would then constitute what Bucer calls the *Christian Commonwealth*. There is no question of failure. The Church would grow, because she shared by election in an event God had already designed. By their very nature both Church and State looked forward to their ultimate perfection in the coming Kingdom, which was both grace and order. And the fact of this election obviously changes the complexion of Faith. It merges into Hope.

Dr. Torrance rightly apologises for the brevity of the Bucer section. Its seventeen pages do little justice to this extraordinary man, who provided the groundwork for Calvin, gave us our doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and was congenial enough to the English Reformers to be invited to a divinity chair at Cambridge.

References to Anabaptists are few. Calvin linked them with the Pope as those who lost the Word in extravagant views of the Spirit. He also made the now—threadbare—accusation that they destroyed the historical continuity of the Church.

The book is well-documented, and meets the need of those who want a reliable digest of Reformation thinking. The scheme of the three "Eschatologies" is a good one, and, although strained in the case of Bucer, it enables Dr. Torrance to present a fresh and intensely relevant exposition of themes we are always talking about—for the Reformers are *us*—but are loath to read in the original, cobwebbed tomes.

G. H. PRICE

Prophecy and Religion in Ancient China and Israel, by H. H. Rowley. (University of London, Athlone Press, 21s.).

In these the fourth series of the Jordan Lectures, given in the University of London in 1954, Professor H. H. Rowley seeks to bring together the prophets of the Old Testament and the great thinkers of ancient China in the three centuries 530-230. This is a task which few scholars could attempt, and fewer still succeed with the success which Professor Rowley has achieved.

By means of six chosen themes, whereby the Israelite prophets and the Chinese sages are considered as statesmen and reformers, or whereby their teaching concerning the Golden Age, Worship, and God are set forth, he portrays the prophets and the sages in the context of their own cultural heritage. The various summaries of the Old Testament material in the book are models of brevity and comprehensiveness. No doubt, as the documentation shows, the same is true of the material from the Chinese side. At the same time the reader must be warned that the Chinese material suffers by comparison, for it is not so familiar, or so passionate or so theocentric as the Israelite material. The comparisons are instructive, though, more often than not, the points of comparison are freely admitted to have become points of contrast. In respect to their understanding of worship and of God, the contrast between the sages and the prophets have become virtually a chasm. Indeed one wonders at times whether Professor Rowley's advocacy of the prophetic character of the sages is not somewhat strained, and whether a truer point of approach would not have been through the 'Wise' in Israel and Judaism rather than through the prophets.

Of the boldness, the interest and the success of these studies there can be no question. We are indebted to our author for throwing light on those great contemporary movements of life and thought in Judaism and in China, which with the movement of the also contemporary Greek Philosophy surely constitute together one of the precise epochs of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the divine education of our race. Thus the real significance of Professor Rowley's work is that it is another step forward in the understanding of man's spiritual history and unity.

A Companion to the Communion Service, by W. Robinson. First printed by the Oxford University Press, 1942. Reprinted by the Berean Press, 1955. 5s.).

This is a devotional manual for use with the Communion service written from within the Reformed Tradition. The book is made up of a number of short paragraphs dealing with various topics relating to the preparation for, and the understanding, the structure and the celebration of the Communion Service. Selections of readings and prayers are given by way of example, and there is also a section giving quotations from the writings of Reformed Divines concerning the Lord's Supper. The book is reverent, helpful and judicious, and there are occasions when its joy approaches rapture. All who use it will find it very helpful. In the paragraph on the Communion Principal Robinson rightly emphasizes that: "We are at the point where *action* is supreme." There is no need to emphasize that point to Baptists, for we are still on our guard lest elaborate verbal forms crowd out the action. There is, however, one statement which is a little strange. On p. 32 Principal Robinson says: "We have very little in the New Testament to indicate what was the actual structure of the service. . . ." I find this statement difficult. Does it mean that our author was looking for evidence of the more ecclesiastical elaborations? He will find none of those. Surely what Paul says is sufficient direction for the ordering of the Communion service of any church. Why and by what authority do we go beyond what the Apostle required of his followers?

G. HENTON DAVIES

Between Two Miracles, by Stuart Craig. (Independent Press 6s.).

The best comment on this book is that when it was taken up it had to be finished in one session. Mr. Craig writes of his seven-month tour of L.M.S. mission stations in the South Seas. It is a fascinating picture of the spread of the Gospel over these scattered island communities. The first miracle is the change wrought in the life of these communities by the coming of the Faith. The story is told vividly but realistically. The author is not so carried away by his theme as not to be conscious of the frailties of the young churches in these lands and their need for a more mature Christian experience and of the dangers that beset them. The second miracle is, to the author, still in future, though he sees varied signs of its coming—it is the work of the Holy Spirit in “carrying the Gospel into the deepest levels of Christian experience.” Mr. Craig has given us a stimulating and heartening little book.

Adventure in Christian Obedience. A Handbook on Christian Citizenship.
Edited by Clifford Cleal. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 5s.).

The roots of this book reach back some years, to the discussions in the Temperance and Social Questions Committees of the Baptist Union, in which the members of both were gradually led to the attempt to unify the various problems with which they were engaged. Ultimately the Department of Christian Citizenship issued its “Rule of Life” (perhaps a somewhat misleading title). To augment this and to inspire further discussion in Christian groups, Mr. Cleal has gathered a team of six who are responsible for this work.

While it varies in quality, as is to be expected in a composite work, we cannot but be grateful to Mr. Cleal and his colleagues for this stimulus. No attempt is made at dogmatic assertions. That some may dissent at various points is of less moment than that the book should stimulate individuals and groups to further discussion of the vital problems of Christian citizenship which it sets forth.

Though this is a Baptist publication, there is nothing distinctively Baptist about it, which is as it should be in this connection. Many besides Baptists should find it a most useful handbook for thought and discussion. Stewardship, Work and Leisure, Family Life, The Christian and Politics—these are a few of the themes discussed. It is a vigorous and healthy exposition of the true aim of Christian education—the complete Christian citizen and his witness in the community.

Who is Jesus Christ? by Stephen Neill. World Christian Books, No. 14.
(United Society for Christian Literature, Lutterworth Press, 2s. 6d.).

No Christian zealot for the missionary task of the Church can fail to be thankful for the enterprise of the United Society for Christian Literature in seeking to present the Christian faith in a series of booklets which are to be translated into many languages. This volume is No. 14 in the series.

The editor, Bishop Neill, has given himself one of the hardest tasks in endeavouring to present in such small compass the centrality and significance of Jesus Christ. In its limits, the work is well and lucidly done.

Bishop Neil emphasises the vital place of experience in the building of the faith, as Christians conscious of His abiding presence and authority came to find increasing significance in His life and words. The problems which they faced in the proclaiming of their faith in Him are frankly dealt with and the successive conflicts on the Person of Christ lucidly explained. The book ends with suggestions for the Christian witness in face of rival

religions and modern substitutes for the faith, with the promise of further books on the great religions and "substitute religions."

This and the companion volumes are intended primarily for use in other lands, but this volume could be used with profit for the guidance of our young people in the essentials of our faith.

W. S. DAVIES

The Gospel of Matthew. A Teacher's Commentary, by Richard Glover. (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 15s.).

The sub-title hardly does justice to the store of spiritual insight and wisdom which is offered in the pages of this notable volume. In describing it as "a preacher's gold-mine," Professor H. R. Mackintosh was absolutely right, for so it is. But its use should be by no means confined to ministers or teachers, for here also is a devotional commentary of considerable value which will enrich the spirit of anyone who studies *Matthew* with Dr. Glover as his guide. The problems in which scholars delight are here set aside. After a brief introduction the author plunges into a verse by verse commentary which is studded with comments distinguished by their depth of understanding both of the Gospel and the human heart and by mature practical wisdom, and often expressed with epigrammatic terseness. The publishers have done well to make available to a new generation of readers, so excellent a help to the understanding of *Matthew's* message. For Baptists the book has particular interest, for the author of this stimulating and edifying volume was the Richard Glover of Tyndale, Bristol, fame.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES

The Self-taught Country Organist and Choirmaster, by Marmaduke P. Conway. (Canterbury Press, 8s. 6d.).

A most interesting and well-planned book, which will be of very great assistance to students of organ playing and choir training, working without a teacher. Particularly noteworthy in Part 1 are the chapters on practical work for manuals and pedals, containing in a remarkably short space a course of self-instruction which would soon result in technical freedom if carefully and thoroughly pursued. Dr. Conway amplifies his remarks on expression, phrasing and registration by many useful hints. Part 1, dealing with the choir, also contains valuable suggestions on voice training and the singing of psalms, canticles and hymns.

F. DODSON

Richmond Hill Story, by J. Trevor Davies. (Independent Press, 8s. 6d.).

What makes a great church? The answer lies in this highly interesting account, written by its present minister, of the rise and progress of Richmond Hill Congregational Church, Bournemouth, which recently celebrated its centenary. Unlike so many churches these days this one has no nostalgia for former glories, for with a membership of nearly 1,000 and a weekly attendance of 2,000 and the ability to continue its splendid record of church extension by financing to the tune of £14,000 a new Congregational church to mark its centenary, Richmond Hill is obviously as full of vigorous life as ever. It was a happy thought to include a sermon by each of its last four ministers. These remind one that although the success of the church has doubtless been due to having been on a rising tide, not a little of it is to be accounted for by great preaching. Richmond Hill was not built by the school-hall chats to which so many congregations are nowadays subjected. Dr. Davies, as many know, holds a skilful pen and the story he here tells will be followed with interest and enjoyment by every reader.

The Church on the Air, by Edwin H. Robertson. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 2s. 6d.).

"Some thoughts on Religious Broadcasting" are here offered by a former Assistant Head of the Religious Broadcasting Dept. of the B.B.C. The Department's developing policy, the various types of broadcast, hints on preparing the script and the congregation, the powerful new medium of television, are among the subjects dealt with. To those who listen as well as those who broadcast this booklet will prove of considerable interest and help. Those who may be facing a broadcast for the first time should find it particularly useful.

What Every Congregationalist Should Know, by Francis Gibbons. (Independent Press, 7s. 6d.).

No one having read this well-written and interesting account of Congregationalist belief and practice could plead ignorance of any of the salient features of British Congregationalism. Mr. Gibbons has admirably fulfilled his purpose of supplying information of which every member of a Congregationalist church should make himself aware and at the same time of explaining to members of other communions what Congregationalism stands for, how it is organised and where it stands in relation to overseas missions and the ecumenical movement. It was a happy inspiration to add a third section showing how God is blessing the denomination's witness today. Here are given nine examples, drawn from widely differing situations, of how Congregational churches old and new are living up to the finest traditions of the past and proving today the power of the Word and the Spirit. As a complete but concise guide this could hardly have been bettered.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES

Reading the Bible, by A. Gilmore. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 8s. 6d.).

The purpose of this book is to explain, in terms that the untrained layman can understand, the results of Biblical criticism. Mr. Gilmore does this clearly and helpfully and in an interesting and positive way. This book should help many towards a deeper understanding of the Bible and a fuller appreciation of its message. There is a most comprehensive and useful bibliography.

While we appreciate the laudable aim of the writer we wonder whether he overstates his case on occasions, sometimes giving the impression that only those with a knowledge of Biblical criticism can really read the Bible with understanding. What about the great teachers and saints of the past centuries for whom it was a mine of spiritual truth and inspiration? We would have thought that with not a few of the Psalms the date matters little for an appreciation of the abiding spiritual truth they express. (p. 37). We are not happy about the parallel drawn between the sermons of today and the "Word of God" spoken by the prophets. (p. 27). On two or three occasions "comprise" is mis-used. (e.g. p. 83).

L. J. MOON