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Reviews

Steps to Christian Understanding. Ed. R. J. W. Bevan. (Oxford University Press, London, 15s.)

This book consists of twelve essays, ten by well-known theologians, both Anglican and Free Churchmen, one by a mathematician, Professor Coulson, and one by an historian, Professor Butterfield. The book is in three parts: (1) *God and the world* (mostly concerned with the relations between science and religion); (2) *God and Man* (with essays on revelation, the Christian view of man, and God in history); (3) *Christian doctrine* (The person of Christ, The Holy Spirit, the Trinity and the Christian hope). The Editor is one of the very few teachers of Religious Knowledge working in a Technical High School.

Such a book, in which specialists write for non-specialists, can be judged on two grounds. First the quality of the material: this test the book passes with points to spare. Here is solid scholarship and sound exposition which the pupils at the Technical High Schools and Grammar Schools will not hear from the pulpit (though they ought to hear it from there) and which only the highly trained Scripture specialist could give them in the class-room. The Christian doctrines are set firmly in their biblical context, and the formulations in modern terms are, on the whole, well argued.

The second test of such a book is more difficult to pass. Have the writers solved the problem of communicating their specialized knowledge to non-specialists? Have they climbed the wall which separates the university quadrangle and the cathedral cloister from the class-room of the secondary school? In my judgement, the book fails to pass this test. It is not that the language, apart from an occasional lapse from grace, is unduly difficult. It is rather that the book wears a slightly old-fashioned air. Perhaps in part this is due to the fact that five of the twelve contributors are Professors Emeritus, or "formerly Canon of . . ." The quotations are, in the main, from Addison, Anselm, Apollinaris, Aquinas, Aristotle, Athanasius, Augustine (to go no further than the first letter of the alphabet in the *Index*). More seriously there is no attempt to examine and to answer the arguments of those who, in 1958, are

the best known and most vocal opponents of Christianity. A good deal of space in the book is devoted to the relations between science and religion, and especially to the meaning of the Christian doctrine of Creation. Yet the most damaging criticisms of Christianity are coming today, not from the physicists or astronomers, but from biologists like Sir Julian Huxley and social scientists like Lady Wootton of Abinger. These are the personalities who air their agnostic views on the television Brains Trust, and write articles in the Sunday papers. These are the people whom the pupils of Grammar and Technical Schools see and read. The conflict between science and religion will have to be fought out again in our time, but the issues will be different: no longer Geology versus Genesis, but whether man is any more than the intelligent servant of the evolutionary process, and any more than a member of a man-made society which the sociologists can study and which they hope to plan and control. On this contemporary issue the book offers little guidance.

ROBERT C. WALTON

Greek New Testament, Second Edition (British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 8s. 6d.).

The British and Foreign Bible Society's Greek Testament has been a familiar volume in the studies of ministers and theological students for many years. This new edition has been produced in connection with the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Society, under the editorship of Professor G. D. Kilpatrick, with whose name is associated that of Dr. Erwin Nestle. Thorough testing of a work of this kind involves constant use over a long period, which is impossible for an early review. It seems safe to say, however, that for general usefulness this will be the Greek Testament chosen by many. The print is admirably clear, comparing favourably with the 1956 Nestle. The excellent introduction is in English, a great advantage over Souter in these days of sparse Latinity. Whereas the 1904 edition gave no manuscript authority even for the variants it noted, the 1958 gives an excellent critical apparatus, in some ways (such as the use of the Bodmer Papyrus for the Fourth Gospel) more up to date than any other edition of the Greek New Testament.

We must confess disappointment, however, that the text printed, as a result of what may be felt to be undue caution, is almost identical with that of 1904 (not 904, as we are informed on page vii as a result of a misprint!). It is difficult to understand, in view of this general policy why two very questionable changes of punctuation, at *Mk.* i :1 and *Jn.* i; 3-4, should have been adopted.

IVOR BUSE

The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul, by Neill Q. Hamilton. Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers, No. 6. (Oliver & Boyd, London, 8s. 6d.)

The choice of theme for this book is due to the writer's desire to discover what practical significance lies in the long standing discussion of eschatology and its bearing on the life of the individual Christian. Consequently, although the book embodies a doctoral dissertation it does not move in a rarified academic atmosphere wherein it is difficult to breathe but keeps solid earth ever under the feet.

Beginning with the conviction that Paul's doctrine of the Spirit starts from his christology, the writer examines the Pauline passages in which the Spirit is related to Christ and concludes that the identity which Paul postulates between the two is dynamic—the Spirit mediates the benefits of the new covenant available in Christ, hence in the receiving of these benefits the Spirit and the Lord are viewed as one. That leads on to a consideration of the Spirit and the resurrection. The Spirit is primarily related to the eschatological future, yet as the Spirit who accomplished Christ's resurrection and is the life principle of His exaltation existence He is even now at work in the believer and in the Church, for with the Resurrection of Christ the future has broken into the present. "The Christian's life is altogether a product of the Christocentric, eschaton-related Spirit." To grasp this enables an avoidance of two false extremes—that of sinless perfection, which dissolves the tension between the now and not yet of the Kingdom, and that of a mournful Christianity which forgets that the Spirit of the Kingdom is here.

These views are compared, contrasted and clarified by an examination of the constructions of Albert Schweitzer, C. H. Dodd and Rudolf Bultmann. The whole is ably done.

G. R. BEASLEY-MURRAY

Baptism, by Johannes Warns. (The Paternoster Press, London, 15s.)

The issue of baptism is one which is very much alive in ecumenical circles at present, and is likely to continue so for some time. To this debate, the recent translation of this book (first published in Berlin in 1913 in German) makes a valuable contribution. The author was a German Lutheran clergyman who had doubts about the meaning of baptism, and who, on examining the Scriptural teaching on the subject, actually felt obliged to resign his living as a matter of conscience. Its value is further enhanced by the fact that the author was also a master of the Greek language, and one who had written several other books on church history. His competence in both these fields amply befitted him for this task.

In a short notice of this nature it is only possible to mention some of the gems which this book offers. The author throughout makes it quite clear that for him baptism is a Biblical question as well as a Church question. His first chapter deals with the teaching of Scripture concerning baptism, and his last with the significance of Biblical baptism for the present time. As regards the Church question, the author has no doubts whatsoever that infant baptism is practised in order to maintain the idea of a State Church, and he says so continually. Infant baptism arose and gained ground for two reasons: superstition and the State Church. "It was very unfortunate that the superstition of the multitude accorded with the necessity of the State" (p. 87). From here he goes on to argue that believers' baptism has its place not only because it is Biblical, but also because it is a protest against mass-Christianity. It is very refreshing to read the arguments to show that the development of infant baptism was not at all the natural development which many modern paedo-baptists would have us believe; and also to read the admission that infant baptism has point and meaning, followed by the question, in italics, "But has the Lord appointed baptism for this purpose?" (p. 150).

From the Baptist view-point, this book is valuable in that it is basically the Baptist position, by one who was not himself a Baptist but an exponent of the Scriptures, whilst at the same time it draws attention to some points where not even Baptists have been as faithful to Scripture as we sometimes like to imagine. So that it is both a defence and a challenge. Moreover, it brings together within a comparatively small compass much ammunition which will be very useful to future Baptist writers on this theme.

The style is easy to read, and is in places both prophetic and forceful; the translation, by G. H. Lang, is good; and the Paternoster Press is to be congratulated on producing such a timely volume so efficiently and at such an extraordinary low price. There are misprints on p. 55 (Tertullian), p. 217 (Utrecht), p. 237 (1911 instead of 1611), and p. 304 (Willams).

A. GILMORE

Christianity among the Religions of the World, by Arnold Toynbee.
(Oxford University Press, London, 8s. 6d.)

This book consists of four lectures delivered by the author in 1955 to three important theological seminaries in U.S.A. under the auspices of the Newett Foundation.

Dr. Toynbee suggests that the basis on which the major living religions may be fairly compared should be sought in the "attitude or spirit of a religion" rather than in its particular beliefs, or the corresponding standards of conduct attained by its adherents. He

then outlines the characteristics of the modern world, in which the main element challenging all the higher religions, is "the worship of collective human power," "armed with new and fearsome weapons, both material and spiritual," particularly exemplified by Nationalism and Communism.

With a view to meeting this challenge, the author sketches the ground common to all the higher religions, chiefly their conception that "Man is not the highest spiritual presence in the universe." Therefore he urges that they should subordinate their traditional rivalries, and make a new approach to one another, characterized by greater open-mindedness and open-heartedness than before.

He then turns to consider the place and responsibility of Christians in this matter, and suggests that if Christianity is to face the future with confidence (which by its nature it may), Christians "should try to purge their religion of its western accessories, and of its traditional belief that Christianity is unique." Here he has something provocative and debatable to say about Christianity's claim to exclusiveness, and its intolerance.

Dr. Toynbee asserts his belief that God, because He is Love, has granted some revelation of His truth to the exponents of other higher religious faiths. But he also considers that Christians should continue to preach, and in particular to exemplify, the truths and ideals of the Christian faith to others; and that if it is proclaimed in the spirit of humility and charity, adherents of other faiths may be won to its allegiance.

Dr. Toynbee writes as a Christian, and historian, but makes no claim to be a theologian, nor has he had practical experience of preaching Christianity to devotees of other living religions. There is much in this book that is informative and freshly expressed, and for which one is grateful. But while one agrees that other religions should be considered sympathetically, and with due appreciation of the truth they preserve, we cannot but continue to believe and proclaim that Christ is unique, and that Christianity "has the fullest vision, and gives the greatest means of grace."

H. R. WILLIAMSON

The Kingdom of Free Men, by G. Kitson Clark. (Cambridge University Press, 18s. 6d.)

This book offers a liberal re-education. It is a broadly-based apologia for the ideals and practices of what may be termed the "liberal democracies" as over against the totalitarian States of the present day. It is also a penetrating discussion of the fundamental application of Christian principles to political life. Dr. Kitson Clark is Reader in Constitutional History in the University of Cambridge, and this book is based upon a series of open lectures given by him at the invitation of the Divinity Faculty. Although

the subject is deep and abstruse, Dr. Clark's treatment is extremely lucid and persuasive. He has a remarkable facility for "seeing the opposite point of view." His arguments are thoroughly realistic, his illustrations are contemporary, and his conclusions are models of clear statement.

The Kingdom of Free Men of which Dr. Clark writes "corresponds to no earthly kingdom, is ruled on no special ideological theory, and is inhabited by men and women of all nations, peoples and languages." Some of us might have preferred some such title as "The Nature and Necessity of Freedom," as giving a more informative and attractive indication of the contents of the book. What is needed now is a summarized version in a popular 2s. 6d. edition. For it is above all the mythical "man in the street," or rather thousands and thousands of men in the street, who really ought to read what Dr. Clark has to say.

On such a subject, it would have been easy to be platitudinous and inconclusive. Dr. Clark, however, continually challenges us to re-examination of "the obvious." He keeps his feet on the ground all the way, and leads us to a moving conclusion.

The author makes evident that there is less difference between the liberal and the totalitarian State than we like to imagine. He stresses the dangers of large organized mass movements of political opinion, the rootlessness of modern urban life, the uncertainties and frustrations as well as the dull routines of modern economic conditions, and the inevitably growing power of the expert, the technologist and the propagandist. He offers an impressive study of religious persecution in Europe since 1945, and makes accurate reference to what has happened in China. He gives a critique of determinism and materialism, and discourses on the values and problems of education. He analyses the concept of freedom, and indicates the danger of not equally studying what freedom is from and what freedom is for.

Dr. Clark's central assertion is that the principle of freedom is of supreme importance in human affairs because of the absolute value of the independent thoughts and actions of individual men and women. Yet he leaves us under no illusion as to the very limited nature of all human freedoms. The essential difference between the totalitarian and the liberal State is that in the latter there is an intention to respect individual rights as far as possible, whereas the former seeks to make all its subjects' choices for them.

Will this liberal intention survive in the Western world of to-morrow? Dr. Clark shows clearly many grave threats even in Great Britain. His book is another call to eternal vigilance.

VICTOR E. W. HAYWARD

The Whole Gospel for the Whole World, by Alan Walker.
(Marshall, Morgan & Scott, London, 8s. 6d.)

Slight though this volume is, it strikes a different note from most current writing concerning evangelism. It insists that if modern man is to hear the message of personal salvation that message must be couched in a social context. Only then is the whole Gospel being proclaimed.

"The evangelist in our world who, when asked for comment on the hydrogen bomb and atomic war, says: 'No comment' . . . who looks on the racial ferment of the world and says: 'No comment' may save trouble for himself, but he has no full saving word for this generation." To try to tackle the 20th century with a 19th-century theology is not only hopeless but can be pernicious. "Some forms of narrow evangelism have contributed more than their share to the shame of unethical religion."

But will not the broadening of the presentation lessen evangelistic passion? The question is often nervously asked, with a certain trembling for the ark. William Temple, described by our author as "that great Archbishop," ought to be sufficient reassurance. Alan Walker himself is certainly living proof that to take stock of the great social issues of our day, at bottom moral, can increase the yearning to win men for Christ. He is in no danger of becoming a mere social reformer. "Personal evangelism without the fashioning of a social conscience is largely futile. Social witness which has lost touch with its evangelical base is impotent."

The best-known evangelist in Australia, Alan Walker, left the Superintendency of the Sydney Methodist Mission to direct Australia's Mission to the Nation, launched in 1953. There are several references to this Mission throughout the book and a brief account of it is given in an appendix.

E. G. Homrighausen of the World Council of Churches declares in the Introduction that Alan Walker occupies a significant place in ecumenical Christianity, while in a Foreword Dr. W. E. Sangster, who has seen his work in Australia, American and Europe, urges Christians everywhere to face up to the challenge the book presents.

K. C. DYKES

The Baptist Union: A Short History, by Ernest A. Payne. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 21s.)

The task of the historian is not only to record the events of the past but also to trace the developing pattern in these events. On occasions the historian is accused of discovering patterns where there are none, of imposing his own interpretation upon the happenings he describes. In this present book, Dr. Payne can never have been in danger of laying himself open to this accusation for

the pattern is crystal clear. The history records the process of the growing together of autonomous Baptist churches of differing emphases—both theological and non-theological. Not surprisingly, it is a story of remarkable achievement in the face of difficulties and disappointments and we are led through periods of sunshine and cloud, of hopes and fears. We are reminded of the founding of the Union in the vestry of John Rippon's church in Carter Lane, close to the southern end of old London Bridge. We are told of the first years of the Union's striving to clarify its purpose; years of organization and re-organization; of progress under J. H. Millard and especially in the latter years of the nineteenth century under S. H. Booth. After the disturbing events of the Down Grade Controversy—a disturbing yet fascinating story—we are brought to the threshold of the twentieth century with the Union ready for further advance. At that point there came into office J. H. Shakespeare, a prophet amongst Free Church leaders. The story of the development of the Union under Shakespeare in the years immediately prior to the first world war is quite outstanding. In this period the Baptist Church House was built; almost all the departments of the Union were developed; considerable sums of money were raised and, in fact, the Union as we now know it came into being. Events from 1920 onwards are of more recent memory, with attempts to halt the decline in church membership by various schemes of evangelism; with more money raising and with further organizational development bringing still closer together the churches within the denominational body.

The unfolding story is told carefully and often vividly. It is a book which is indispensable to anyone who genuinely desires to understand how the denomination stands today and the problems and decisions it faces. That means it should be in the hands of every member of every Baptist church in fellowship with the Union, for the story is unfinished. The pattern of growing together is clear enough but it is as yet incomplete. To the present reviewer, fascinating though the story was and essential though it was to read, the most thought-provoking section in the whole book was the Introduction in which Dr. Payne summarizes in masterly fashion the chief achievements of the 150 years and shows that certain questions concerning the Union must now be faced.

“For a century and a half—indeed, for three hundred years—successive generations of Baptists have wrestled with the problems involved in the effective co-operation of local churches which claim to be autonomous. What should be the basis of association or union? What its functions? How should it be related to other societies within the denomination? What should be the relationship of the Union to other denominations

and churches whose policy is of a different kind? These questions have become more complicated and pressing of recent decades. They do not admit of easy answers or ones simply in terms of what is practical or expedient. Inevitably they raise theological issues concerning the nature of the Church and the purpose of God." (p. 2.)

There was only one man who could have written this book and that was Dr. Payne, but it is inevitable that although he writes as a Baptist historian he cannot but write also remembering that he is the General Secretary of the Union whose story he tells. Clearly then he can, in his Introduction, only ask the questions without suggesting how they can be answered. This is a pity but inevitable. Some may feel that the Introduction is out of place in this book but it seems to this reviewer that it provides the essential link with the first chapter of a new book which can and must now be written entitled *The Baptist Union: Its Implications and its Theology*. In his Preface Dr. Payne suggests that some readers may find it more congenial to read the Introduction at the end rather than at the beginning. It should, however, be read both before and after reading the rest of the book. Through a movement of the Spirit a General Union was formed in 1813 and under God has existed and prospered and moves now towards its Ter-Jubilee. The decade during which this Ter-Jubilee is celebrated should be a period of thinking through and establishing on a sound theological basis this inheritance.

Apart from the colouring of the jacket, the Carey Kingsgate Press are to be congratulated on an excellently produced volume, properly indexed and with eleven useful appendices.

W. M. S. WEST