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Book Reviews

THE TRIUMPH OF GOD

A Series of Essays. Edited by Max Warren. Longmans, Green. 377 pp. 15/-.

Asked to produce an appraisal of a book which may be described as a corporate study of the essential nature, message and function of the Christian Church, and of her commitments, problems and strategy at this particular juncture in world affairs, a reviewer is tempted to reflect that his way, like that of the transgressor, is hard. Alternative methods of fulfilling his task present themselves. He might, on the one hand, try to follow the course of the argument from chapter to chapter, offering his own remarks thereon. The present writer did, in fact, pursue this course, and produced an essay so long, so disconnected and, above all, so intolerably dull that it shouted for destruction. He therefore finds himself shut up to the less detailed, and certainly less academic, expedient of making a succession of general comments on the importance and the significance of the book as a whole.

And to begin with, it is worthy of note that here we have the fruits of the hard thinking of a group of English Evangelicals who have brought competent scholarship and first-hand experience to the work to which they have addressed themselves. The pressure and the complexity of the issues now confronting the Church require just this kind of action. Last year, on the other side of the Atlantic, a volume of essays by five American scholars, and with a similar concern but a rather different approach and technique, was produced under the editorship of President Van Dusen. *The Christian Answer* and *The Triumph of God* might well be studied together. Canon Warren has led a larger team of twelve contributors. It would be tedious, and it is hardly necessary, to introduce them one by one. But among them are Bishop Stephen Neill, Canon Fison, Dr. Dillistone, C. S. Milford, J. S. Trimmingham (a missionary in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and an authority on the Muslim world) and Miss Garlick. No despite or discourtesy is implied by the omission of other names! But the group as a whole rises to the measure of the names that have been mentioned, and to that fact—together with the editor's genius for generalship—is due the sustained quality of the work they have produced. Certainly there is less disparity, less repetition, and less unevenness than might well have been expected in so composite a volume. More positively we owe them a debt of gratitude for thinking and working and writing together.

When we turn to the contents of the book we are impressed, in the first place, with its clear and confident assertion of basic Christian principles. This is in welcome contrast to the days, not so far behind us, when Evangelicals gave evidence of only the most vague, or the most arid, conception of the Gospel and had practically no doctrine of the Church. There are, of course, those who will contend indignantly that this is an unjust indictment of the past, but there is enough

of truth in it to serve the present point. *The Triumph of God* rests its case and its contentions on theological foundations soundly laid in the first of the three main sections of which it is comprised. Bishop Neill opens with a grand chapter on "The Everlasting Gospel" and reminds us both that "the recovery of the sense of the Church as essential to the Gospel is one of the outstanding developments in modern theology" and that "the greatness of the Church is in its witness to that which is beyond itself." If these truths are held in due proportion and perspective we shall not go far wrong when we face the practical implications and demands of our Christian calling. The other contributors to this first section bring into the open what is latent in the initial statement. There is both illumination and fire in "The Spirit of Victory" by Canon Fison. Dr. Dillistone, in his own substantial and searching way, introduces us to the essentials of a sound New Testament Eschatology, Mr. Hickinbotham comes to close grips with the fact and idea of the Church, Bishop Neill—the only writer to produce two full-length chapters—shows us the primary and intimate relationship of Worship to the existence of the Church, with occasional but forthright reference to the missionary situation, and Mr. Leslie Brown winds up the argument with a penetrating study of "The Knowledge of God". It is worthy of comment that every one of these writers is an accredited scholar, and that four of them think and write against the background of experience outside, as well as in, England.

A second impression left with the reader of this book is the writers' open-eyed awareness of the present state of affairs alike within the world at large and within the Church itself. We are never allowed to suppose that the Gospel is preached, or the Church's task undertaken, in a vacuum. On every hand, in every direction, we are involved in inter-locking relationships. The Ecumenical movement has made us increasingly aware of them in respect of the Church, and Canon Herklots deals adequately with this specialised aspect of a larger problem. When we move into the wider realm of external world developments, the same issue presents itself with a truly terrifying intensity. The contemporary Christian is, today, almost everywhere confronted with "the dilemma of citizenship." On the one hand he cannot escape from "the fact that, according to the Biblical view, the State exists in its own right as an ordinance of God." Yet, on the other hand, the State tends increasingly to make claims, exercise pressures, and pursue policies which cannot be reconciled with the demands of the ultimate loyalty to which the Christian is committed. And this is increasingly true of the lands in which the Christian Church has been established in relatively recent times and in which, for the most part, she is a minority institution. Here is the most pressing single problem of our time. It is tackled by the one member of the team best fitted to cope with it, by reason of his historical insights and his world-wide contacts. It is difficult, and perhaps slightly improper, to write in superlatives about the work of a former colleague, but the plain truth is that Dr. Warren's chapter ought to be read again and again by anyone who would serve the Christian purpose in the year of grace 1948. He sets the Church in its right relationship to

both the State and the time-process, and thereby prepares the way for Miss Garlick to examine the kind of contribution that it should make to the life and welfare of the general community. We need her reminder that that contribution should be in terms of quality rather than of quantity and that "unless the Church . . . has something quite distinctive to offer, we may well question the relevance of its education and medical work now that governments are rightly assuming far greater responsibility for social services."

Our final comment on the book and its message is that it provides not only a sound theological background for the Church's world-wide task, nor only a penetrating diagnosis of the present situation, but also courageous direction and, wherever possible, positive prescription. It is the work of a group that has a sure understanding of the Christian enterprise, of the way in which opposition—both ideological and material—should be faced, of the strategy necessary for the campaign in which we are engaged. The writers are fully alive, for example, to the meaning and the urgency of what last year's Whitby Conference called "Expectant Evangelism". It is heartening in this connection to be told by Mr. Trimmingham that "positive evangelism must once more become the chief emphasis of missions to Muslims, and if it does it will revolutionize every other sphere of their work. We are called primarily to preach the Gospel, not to heal or teach, for these arise out of the Gospel." This is the considered judgment of one who knows all the difficulties presented by the evangelism for which he pleads. It is not the theorising of the arm-chair critic. And it is important that we heed what he says—in respect of all our missionary work but doubly so of work among Muslims, otherwise disappointment at apparently scant success will mislead us into accepting falsely reduced objectives. Again, throughout the book there is a like concern that renewed men and women shall be built up into a strong community life in Christ, a community life which will be both unmistakably Christian and genuinely indigenous. That is our immediate commission, and in proportion as we succeed we take the most effective steps for the releasing, in our desperately needy world, of the tides of healing and reconciling love. The Gospel, the Bible, the Church, and the Kingdom belong together.

T. W. ISHERWOOD.

THE JEWISH NEW YEAR FESTIVAL: ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT.

By Norman H. Snaith. S.P.C.K. 13/6.

There must be few scholars capable of writing a book of this sort. Not only does the author need a knowledge of Semitic languages, but he must be acquainted with numerous date systems of the ancient world, with ancient and modern Jewish calendars and services, and must also have that mathematical turn which will enable him to see, without laborious calculations, the intervals between one date and another. It is safe to say that, whether or not Mr. Smith's different theories are generally acceptable, the facts that he has collected in

this book will be of supreme value for anyone who does any work on the Hebrew calendar and festivals; for although the main subject of the book is the New Year festival, there is much in it that bears upon the main dates of the Hebrew year.

Although Mr. Snaith thinks it possible that the Hebrews originally had a New Year in the spring, the evidence is that from the time of the settlement in Canaan the Feast of the Ingathering of the Vintage marked the beginning and end of the year. The year was adjusted by this feast, so that each year ended on the night of the harvest full moon. The rest of the year looked after itself, but was roughly divided up by the phases of the moon, the Passover full moon falling six months after the beginning of the year.

Mr. Snaith has an interesting discussion on the use of the word *chodesh*, which he holds meant originally "new-month day". In post-exilic times the new-month day was the day of the new moon, but Mr. Smith gives reasons for believing that before the exile it was the day of the full moon. The straightforward translation of Psalm lxxxix. 4 would support this. Based on this we have the Sabbath as originally the opposite to the *chodesh*, i.e., the day of the new moon. Contact with the Mesopotamian calendar before the time of Assurbanipal, brought this Sabbath into conjunction with the Assyrian new month day, which was the first of the month, and which was marked by severe restrictions. In the exile the Jews adopted the reformed Mesopotamian calendar, in which the restrictive days were the 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, and the word Sabbath then became attached to these. At this time also the New Year was switched from the autumn to the spring, again following the Mesopotamian system.

This is a most inadequate summary of one conclusion, which is backed up by copious facts. But we do not feel altogether satisfied about the Sabbath. It is not enough to say that "there may have been seventh day restrictions in the J tradition which are linked up with the Sabbath in the P tradition" (p. 106). Apart from the association of the seventh day with the Sabbath in the Decalogue, the use of the verb in Exodus xxiii. 12 (E) and xxxiv. 21 (J), makes it unlikely that the seventh day here was not the Sabbath.

The present reviewer is biased in favour of the substantial Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and has tried to view some of Mr. Snaith's facts in relation to this. Granted that the New Year in popular estimation began in the autumn, there is no reason why from the Exodus onwards an official New Year, based on the command of Exodus xii. 2, should not have been counted in the spring, as happened in Babylonia (p. 146) and in later Judaism (pp. 148, 149). The author is perhaps rather too sure that the Jews in Palestine made no exact astronomical observations in early times. Fr. Eric Burrows in *The Oracles of Jacob and Balaam*, holds that "a standard list of constellations on the Way of the Moon was probably in course of formation in the age of the earliest Israelite literature" (p. 7). Moreover, the education of Moses in Egypt would have given him a fair knowledge of the basic facts of astronomy, which he would have taught the priests, who presumably would be in charge of the calendar.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT.

CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP.

By J. P. Hickinbotham. Church Book Room Press. 3/6.

In this short but very able examination of the theological attitude of the Church of England to the problem of Reunion and Intercommunion with the non-episcopal Churches, the Vice-Principal of Wycliffe Hall gives a concise and illuminating summary of our relations with the Continental Reformed Churches from the 16th to the 19th century. He shows that our Church sided unequivocally in doctrine with these non-episcopal churches and that on that basis acts of intercommunion were fully recognized, although not with the unreformed churches owing to their defective scriptural basis. While the Anglican Church jealously preserved its episcopal polity, in special cases non-episcopal ministers were allowed, as in the Channel Isles and Scotland before and even after 1660, since greater importance was placed on orthodox Faith than on any special church polity. The current rigid view of an exclusive National Church naturally led to the proscription of separate English sects as violating the legally established order of this "Church and Realm".

Mr. Hickinbotham deals specifically with the Lambeth Conference Appeal conditions for Reunion and Intercommunion and he points out that the requirement of episcopacy for *Reunion* does not imply its necessity for a degree of *Intercommunion*. He notices the new attitude of the Lambeth Appeal of 1930 in which the Free Churches are "no longer treated as schismatics but as partners". As a member of the Bishop of Derby's Commission to examine the Constitution of the South India Church, Mr. Hickinbotham is able to speak with intimate knowledge on this important question, and his analysis of the implications of the Lambeth conditions of fellowship is thorough and searching. He shows that the Lambeth Conference now regards "the single National Church as a future ideal" since "she cannot claim any longer to be the only legitimate representative of the Catholic Church in this country". The English Free Churches may therefore be regarded "as on a level with Continental Reformed Churches", and so the traditional limited Intercommunion can be extended to them as well as occasional ministerial interchanges. He regards the formal agreement with the Old Catholics and the Orthodox Church, who do not expressly accept the Lambeth Appeal rule of Scripture as "the ultimate standard of Faith", as a generous gesture but as a weakening of our Reformed position. Any acceptance of Tradition as interpreting Scripture would, Mr. Hickinbotham declares, be contrary to Article VI and would "revolutionize the doctrinal foundation of our Church". In a careful examination he shows that the criticisms levelled against the South India Church constitution are captious or unsubstantiated. He advances cogent reasons to prove that *immediate* full communion could and should be established with the Church of South India as a whole "without compromising the Church of England's own loyalty to episcopacy", since "for the sake of unity we have encouraged our fellow Anglicans to enter into organised union with their non-episcopal partners".

It will be very difficult to challenge the accuracy of Mr. Hickin-

botham's historical facts or his theological conclusions based on them, and this timely and valuable pamphlet should be carefully studied and widely circulated.

C. SYDNEY CARTER.

THE WORD OF GOD AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

By F. W. Dillistone. Church Book Room Press. 3/6

The Church Book Room Press is doing a useful piece of work in publishing, particularly at this critical time, a series of small books which constitute a study in Reformed Anglican Theology, with particular reference to the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry.

The first in the series, by the Professor of Theology in the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge, Mass., is a collection of essays concerned with the Word of God and the People of God, the Bible and the Church, the Gospel of Christ and the Body of Christ. These essays are written in the light of the fact that at this time a choice lies before the Anglican Communion—*either* to commit itself to closer inter-relationships with other Churches, thus freeing creative energies for truth, *or* to withdraw from such wider relationships and to insist on the primacy of such matters as its liturgy, the form of its Ministry, and the system of its doctrine. There is no doubt that the author of these essays thinks in terms of the former rather than the latter course of action.

The first essay ("How is the New Testament related to the Old?") is a helpful review of the broad outlines of the Old Testament revelation in terms of election, redemption, government, and growing fellowship—but only as *beginnings*. Not until we come to the New Testament do we find these things universal in scope and eternal in duration. The second essay ("How is the Bible the Word of God?") is a review of the main ways in which thinkers have interpreted the phrase the *Word of God* in relation to the Bible.

Chapter three discusses the question "How is the New Israel related to the Old?" In particular, Dr. Dillistone reviews the work of Phythian-Adams and of Hebert. His criticisms of the latter writer's interpretation of the meaning and implications of continuity are of importance in their relation to present discussions on the doctrine of the Ministry. So in Chapter four ("How is the Church the Body of Christ?") he warns us against reading into the concept of the Body more than it can legitimately bear, against 'dogmatising' about the form of the Ministry from the general idea of the 'Bodily' nature of the Church.

The closing chapter poses the questions: "Continuity or Discontinuity? . . . Is it more important to cling to the traditions and institutions of the Catholic Church, or to be alive and adaptable to the demands of a new day?" The writer bids us "Launch out into the wide-open sea of the relativities of history", for "Christ entered into history, Christ subjected Himself to the limitations and relativities of history."

This is a book to make one think. It might well serve as a study book for those who are concerned with the problems facing us in this year of Lambeth and Amsterdam.

F. D. COGGAN.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHURCHES.

By *K. L. Carrick Smith*. *S.C.M. Press*. 7/6.

This book on Christian unity, which sets out to study the contribution of the churches to the Church, tackles the problem from the point of view that the basis for reunion is not so much the common minimum of faith and order in the churches, but the asset of their particular diversities. Miss Carrick Smith, therefore, in the first part of her book concentrates on the fundamental differences which characterise the main Christian denominations to be found in the United Kingdom, and in the second part attempts to show the value of their individual contributions to the Church as a whole.

The author obviously desires to be completely fair and impartial in her estimate, and wisely makes quotations in explanation of particular tenets by leading writers of the churches concerned, but she betrays her non-Anglican affinity by the use of the term "Catholic" when obviously the reference is to Roman Catholicism. There is no suggestion that it is possible to be Catholic and Protestant at one and the same time, as the convinced Evangelical Churchman is. Similarly, the traditionalism of the Roman Catholic, with a doctrine of an infallible church, is put alongside the fundamentalism of an outworn view of an infallible Bible. The reference to "a few instances of harrassed minds taking refuge in fundamentalism," and the obvious deduction, by illustration, that a reasoning mind must be abandoned, shows how little the author understands the strength, in numbers and intellectual quality, of Evangelicals who accept the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and are not ashamed to apply the word "infallible" to the Word of God.

In a chapter on "The Three Denominations of Protestant Dissenters" (Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist) the writer classes these together on account of their "close spiritual kinship," but then proceeds to show how much the genius of Presbyterianism differs from the other two.

There is much, however, that will commend itself to the Evangelical Churchman in the detailed treatment of the subject. To take a few instances: the danger of indiscriminate Baptism, the fact of the historic episcopacy, the complete absence of sacerdotal ideas from the teaching of our Lord, the importance of the Ministry being regarded as prophetic not priestly, and the rediscovery at the Reformation of the simple truths underlying the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The chapter on "Ways of Worship" gives a reasoned argument in defence of liturgical worship, and it is pointed out that nonconformists often fail to perceive "that the keeping of festivals arises from a love of the Bible, as well as fostering intimacy with it. . . . The events of our Lord's life and the mysteries of redemption are put before the minds of Anglicans regularly, objectively, scripturally, as facts" (pp. 91, 92). We might single out other phrases such as "Disestablishment might be good for the Church; it could hardly fail to be bad for the country"—but enough has been said to indicate that the book is well worth reading.

A. T. HOUGHTON.

GREATER ENGLISH CHURCH SCREENS.

By Aymer Vallance. pp. VIII, + 184 (plus plates). Batsford. 30/-.

The author died in July 1943, leaving the text of this book "nearly completed"; and it has been carried through the press by his literary executor, Mr. Edward T. Long, with the help of Mr. Harry Batsford. It may be noted that the adjective "greater" qualifies the noun "church," not screens.

The most attractive feature of this sumptuous volume lies in the illustrations. Besides the coloured frontispiece from a drawing of J. S. Cotman (1807) of a screen (still in being) at Norwich, there are 155 numbered plates, mainly from photographs, but with some reproductions of old drawings showing screens that have failed to survive the hands of either zealous iconoclast or enthusiastic "restorer," besides nearly a score of line drawings in the text. The dust cover is a reproduction of J. W. M. Turner's water-colour of the major transept at Salisbury before the concoction of Wyatt (incorporating fragments of earlier work) had given place to the existing mean metal screen: a smaller black and white reproduction of the same drawing appears as plate 78a.

Perhaps the most striking of the line drawings is that of the iron screen that at one time filled the western arch of the crossing at Canterbury: but when we come to the plates there is such a wealth of material that it is hard to discriminate. But the dainty drawing of the Rood screen at St. Alban's as it was in 1832 (which may be compared with a modern photo), and that of the pulpitum at St. David's in 1815 (both by J. C. Buckler) deserve special mention. Those of Lichfield, Chichester, Hereford and Salisbury, before destruction of the screens, and the work at St. David's that still remains, must be noted. The vanished pulpitum at St. Augustine's, Bristol, is given without note or explanation: and many of the plates are tantalising for lack of any adequate reference in the text. The screens of college chapels at Cambridge and Oxford are also included in the plates: as are also those, some still subsisting and some now vanished, at quite a number of little known churches up and down the countryside.

The text of the book is of uneven merit. Where the author has had access to local documents he lets himself go with an almost baffling wealth of detail: but where he has been more or less dependent upon one or more personal visits there is a countervailing scarcity of facts. But the book provides a huge quarry of information which can be dipped into by the diligent student who has the foundation knowledge to appraise it accurately, and the historical, liturgical and theological capacity not to be led astray by the evident bias of the author in favour of "the old religion", as in sixteenth century phrase he terms the medievalist attitude to worship. Carefully used, and duly weighed, the book is of very great value, and will for a long time be a stand-by for the churchman who does not disdain to feel and show a discriminating interest in these by-ways of church life. It will make special appeal to those who are interested in the college chapels of the two older Universities as well as to those whose lives and duties centre in the

"greater English churches" that give the treatise its title. But it might be courteous also to refer to two points that are not English: the plate of the rood screen at Kerfons, Brittany, placed as a foil to the "restored" Rood and loft at Higham Ferrers; and the line drawing of the Rood-screen at Lubeck. No student can read the book without learning much. Some of the author's nomenclature is amusing; and his history is by no means impeccable; but he disposes of not a few fanciful theories that have had vogue in post-tractarian circles, such as the use of Rood lofts for reading the gospel.

ALBERT MITCHELL.

MARRIAGE IN CHURCH AND STATE.

By T. A. Lacey. Fully revised and supplemented by R. C. Mortimer. S.P.C.K. 10/6.

The present alarming increase in the number of divorces makes the appearance of this well known treatise, first published 36 years ago, most timely. Canon Lacey's most comprehensive survey of the institution and history of marriage from early Jewish times, the Middle Ages and the modern period has now been carefully revised and brought up to date with a valuable concluding chapter—"Of Marriage in England"—by Canon Mortimer. Canon Lacey asserts that "the divine law of Marriage is nothing else but the order of nature," and that the divorce or "absolute dissolution of the marriage bond" is an impossibility and an attempt "to alter a fact of nature." The exceptive clause "saving for the cause of fornication" attributed to Christ in Matt. v. 32, is dismissed as "meaningless" (an exegesis which has been seriously challenged by many New Testament scholars). Thus if either party in a divorce re-marries it is in effect "a dispensation for bigamy." This rigid rule of "indissoluble marriage" is however modified by the grounds for nullity which our Authors fully recognize, such as refusal to cohabit or to consummate the marriage, the impotence of one party, the want of free consent, or any pre-contract.

In discussing the fresh grounds for nullity in the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1937 Canon Mortimer agrees with the Court of Appeal's decision of 1946 that "sexual intercourse with contraceptives does not consummate marriage," and, consequently such a marriage could be nullified by ecclesiastical law in spite of the more recent decision of the House of Lords to the contrary. But he would concur with the Archbishop's statement (*Times*, Feb. 6th, 1948), that this decision "is salutary in the public interest," although not in accordance with Canon Law. He insists strongly on the great evils of our easy divorce laws and well says that "the happiness created by divorce and re-marriage is vastly outweighed for Society as a whole by the unhappiness and mischief of the broken homes for which divorce laws are responsible." So while not condemning all divorced persons who re-marry as "immoral" or as "evil livers" Canon Mortimer insists that such people can never be admitted to Communion, although they may be welcomed to ordinary Church services. He is certainly correct in asserting that "recent legislation supports the idea of Marriage as a mere private contractual relation with which the State has no

concern. The idea of Marriage as a public institution, the foundation of social order, is disappearing from view." C. SYDNEY CARTER.

THE BIBLE CHURCHMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY: THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS (1922-47).

By W. S. Hooton and J. Stafford Wright. B.C.M.S. 7/6.

This history of the first twenty-five years in the life of the youngest missionary society will have an especial appeal to the friends and supporters of that society. The work which it has undertaken, although widespread (Canada, the Arctic, India, Ethiopia, North Africa, Burma and China) is yet on a sufficiently small scale to enable most of the missionaries and their work to be familiar to the supporting churches. In common with other missionary societies, the record presented by B.C.M.S. combines high endeavour and heroic achievement with unexpected failure and bitter disappointment. The years of its life have been years troubled by an ebb-tide of Christian faith in Britain and by the cruel disturbances of war and after-war conditions. Four comments may be allowed.

The narrative of the events leading up to the foundation of B.C.M.S. in 1922 is simple and restrained and every attempt is made to avoid the wrong kind of personal reflection which can only inflame passions. Does the B.C.M.S. recognise that New Testament scholarship in the main occupies very different positions from those which made a conflict inevitable in 1922? That struggle was no shadow-fight about unreal things, but B.C.M.S. must bear its share of the blame for confusing the issue from a complex one into the apparently simple liberal-fundamentalist. Secondly, the authors' comment on the weakness which afflicts evangelistic work overseas when so many missionaries serve only for a brief period instead of a life time, as in the earliest days of the modern missionary movement. Does this development merely reflect the very great mobility of twentieth century life, comparable to the much shorter incumbencies at home, or does it signify a failure to grasp the oneness of the Church and the persistence of the tendency to look upon the home church as the true and abiding home of the missionary? Thirdly, we are reminded of the influence exerted by B.C.M.S. on the life of the Church of England, particularly in the Prayer Book controversy, 1927-28, and in the training of ordinands. This can only be fruitful provided that it removes the excessive parochialism of much evangelistic effort which tends to withdraw from diocesan activity more than is either necessary or desirable. A closer link between "home" and "overseas" is plainly desirable, especially in training for the ministry. Fourthly, in an epilogue the present general secretary asks whether B.C.M.S. is in fact bringing indigenous churches to birth. It is a question which cannot yet be fully answered, but it points the direction for present activity. What must come and come quickly is spiritual help from these younger churches for the church in Britain and the older lands of Christendom.

This missionary history describes a notable page in recent church history and will prove useful just in so far as it forces these and other important questions on its readers.

F. J. TAYLOR.

SYRIAN PAGEANT. A HISTORY OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE FROM 100 B.C. TO 1945 A.D.

By Wilfred T. F. Castle. Hutchinson. 21/-.

A prize-winning entry in a United Nations' competition, this book is dedicated to the memory of Bishop Graham Brown and to all who have worked for "the true well-being of the Eastern Mediterranean lands." In seventeen chapters it seeks to give a background to Religion, Politics and Literature. With such a vast field to cover, the book can only be eclectic in the material it presents, but, apart from this limitation, it gives a very pleasing and living sketch of the whole period. One would have wished for a more detailed map than the one provided, but the illustrations serve to furnish an attractive volume.

So far as theological interest is concerned, the author writes: "The historian cannot enter into the realm of theology except objectively to record facts which have greatly influenced history." Or again, "A secular history is no place to assess the theological significance of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ." So, we have no mention of the Resurrection or of the Christian belief in the deity of Christ. The author alludes merely to the "prophetic revival which Jesus and His herald John inaugurated." Perhaps he is here using the language of J. N. Schofield who, with Oesterley and Robinson's History of Israel, serves as one of his quoted sources for the Old Testament period. Elsewhere the author does speak of the "Cosmic Drama" enacted on the stage of Bethlehem.

In a book that covers so vast a field, one would expect some errors, and the following have been noted. The author accepts over-confidently the Maccabean dating of many of the Psalms, and states quite categorically that the 45th Psalm was "specially composed for the marriage of Balas and Cleopatra." The early origins of the Wisdom Literature are neglected and the Greek strand over-emphasised. Sennacherib's invasion is usually dated 701 and not 700 B.C.; the first fall of Jerusalem in 597 and not 596 B.C. It is doubtful whether Lydia fell to Cyrus quite as early as 547 B.C., and the Temple on Mount Gerizim was certainly not built as early as 519 B.C. The battle of Issus should probably be dated to 333 and not 332 B.C., and Octavian Caesar was not called Augustus in 31 B.C. The two commands given to Pempey by the Lex Gabinia in 67 B.C. and the Lex Manilia the following year are confused as if they were one. It is also surprising to find the date of St. Luke's Gospel put precisely at 59 A.D.!

The Classified Bibliography at the end of the book is a useful guide to further study of the many varied and fascinating topics to which the reader is introduced. The reader cannot fail to be captivated by the seeming incredibility of the history of the Levant, which has so evidently made captive the author.

R. J. HAMMER.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

By Cecil Northcott. S.C.M. Press. 6/-.

Writing on a very topical subject, Mr. Northcott has given us a comprehensive survey of the principles underlying religious liberty and the facts of the present world-situation regarding it. His book is

clearly the result of wide reading on the subject and acute judgment of the situation as reported by authorities with first-hand experience of the varied conditions in different parts of the world. Following three chapters on general aspects of the matter in past and present history, the main section of the volume is a survey on religious liberty to-day—the challenge to it, some problems raised by it, and the actual situation in many lands. Finally, there is a chapter of practical suggestion.

One of the most valuable features of the book is its repeated insistence that religious liberty involves the right to propagate one's Faith as well as to hold it and to assemble for purposes of worship. There is still much confusion of thought in some people's minds; as, for example, when claims are made that religious freedom is guaranteed in Russia. There has been an advance on previous restrictive laws, "but it would be misreading the religious situation in the Soviet Union to claim for it complete religious liberty." In fact, Russia cannot allow full freedom without opening the way to other revolutionary changes; religious liberty and civil liberty are closely interwoven (pp. 42, 57).

In his very first chapter, the author shows that "we are dealing with an issue of world importance, and one which pertinently affects the liberties of the individual man." Even toleration "is not true liberty when it is only a gracious concession made by the state to the individual." The comprehensive world-survey in chapter 4 provides detailed illustrations of these axiomatic claims. "What the younger Christendom asks in terms of religious liberty are the universal liberties of freedom of worship, freedom to persuade, to teach, to propagate, to print." And the hard facts of the situation in many lands—for example, in Egypt and India, Spain and Italy as well as Russia—show how complicated are the difficulties not least for missionary work, through nationalist and religious exclusiveness. The claims of Islam and of Roman Catholicism are chief obstacles on the religious side. It would seem that true religious liberty is in some parts of the world more seriously threatened than for long past. It is not a question of asking a favour but of claiming a right. "Religious liberty, as defined in this book, is the most fundamental of all liberties."

W. S. HOOTON.

SHORT REVIEWS

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.

W. A. Visser 't Hooft. 112 pp. S.C.M. Press. 6/-.

This little book by the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches is the Stone Lecture for 1946, and has as its sub-title "An Interpretation of Recent European Theology". The theme of the lecture is "the nature of Christ's Kingship and its implications for the Church and the world".

Three chapters are devoted to the exposition of the biblical foundation for this claim of the universal Lordship of Christ. Those on the Kingship of Christ in the Bible and in the Church are particularly fine, bringing out together "the greatness and wretchedness of the Church." Its greatness—in that it is called to proclaim the reign of the King of

kings to "the dethroned powers of this world;" its wretchedness—because "it exists only in permanent dialogue with its Lord."

The difficult problem of the Kingship of Christ in the world is dealt with in the final chapter, and again Dr. Visser T' Hooft has many fine things to say. Some of us may feel that the message of Christ's Kingship in the world is one for the Christian, that he may witness with boldness and submit, sin apart, with cheerfulness, and that the Church is not called to try to get the world to behave in a more Christian fashion while remaining the world. This, however, may be a purely private opinion, and this is a great little book which has been earmarked by its reviewer to form the basis for next Advent's sermons, and he advises the reader to do the same.

P. H. WOOD.

CHRISTIANITY RIGHTLY SO CALLED.

By S. G. Craig. Tyndale Press. 275 pp. 10/6.

To the present reviewer this is a most acceptable book and meets a real need. The writer knows *what* he wants to say. He knows *how* to say it. And he knows *when* he has said it. The volume is a vigorous apologetic of the essential Christian Faith, but in this case the author proceeds by way of exposition rather than defence. For him the Gospel of Christ is something possible of clearly-defined content. There is a norm to which everything that claims to be Christianity can be brought and proved true or false as the case may be. Christianity is essentially supernatural in content and all attempts at constructing a "naturalistic Christianity" are doomed to condemnation because they fail to recognise this fundamental quality. Likewise Christianity is neither mere facts apart from doctrines, nor doctrines apart from facts, nor a way of life independent of facts and doctrines, but it is fact *and* doctrine *and* life in one indivisible whole. Christianity ascribes both its origin and continuance to Jesus Christ who offers redemption from sin conceived of as guilt and pollution, and who sets before His adherents the goal of ethical perfection and makes possible its attainment through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian faith is faith *in* Jesus Christ, and this implies faith in the Bible as authoritative, without which we have no saving knowledge of Christ. The writer is careful to distinguish between deformations of Christianity and what are in essence falsifications of it, and this he does in a manner which combines charity with clarity. For the Christian layman who would be able to distinguish things that differ, for the lay-preacher who wishes to declare the essential Gospel with true insight, and for the theological student before he enters upon a present-day curriculum, this book should prove a safe guide and a true friend. It recalled J. Gresham Machen's "Christianity and Liberalism."

W. LEATHEN.

THE THEOLOGY OF P. T. FORSYTH.

By Gwilym O. Griffith. 104 pp. Lutterworth Press. 6/-.

There is an increasing interest in the works of P. T. Forsyth and slowly his more important books are being made available once again. This gives its relevance to this little volume, for it serves as an appetizer, and it would be tantalising indeed if the reader were denied access to

the treasures which are here touched upon. In no sense is it a summary of Forsyth's thought, and it certainly presupposes that the reader will go on to the writings of the man himself. In particular, the chapters on Christology and churchmanship simply must be followed up, for often Forsyth's conclusions are given without the lines of approach by which he reached them, and the same may be said of the other chapters too, though in these it is less obvious.

Forsyth is an outstanding example of a man not appreciated by his contemporaries, chiefly because he saw further than they did. Mr. Griffith points out how he anticipates the Form Critics and quotes an interesting reference from J. K. Mozley that "very much of what is of special value in the work of Dr. Karl Barth was anticipated by P. T. Forsyth, and, taking one thing with another, I prefer the British to the continental variations on a common theme." This in itself is an encouragement to follow the signposts so admirably created by Mr. Griffith. The book concludes with a little anthology of Forsythian epigrams which add the garnish to the book. R. S. DEAN.

THE NEGLECTED FACTOR.

By Cyril H. Powell. Epworth Press. 6/-.

The book opens with the following quotation from a medical student. "It made all the difference to me, when I discovered that God was interested in the processes of my mind . . . I believe that in this idea about loving God with the mind, we have one of the neglected keys of Christianity." The author, accepting this statement wholeheartedly, proceeds to unfold its psychological and spiritual implications.

It is undoubtedly true that from our earliest years we have been receiving "suggestions" and impressions from the outside world. We have indulged in imaginations and thoughts, and we have been acting on and re-acting to our environment. We have been forming mental habits and thought-patterns. All this has resulted in psychological dispositions which are stored in the mind, and these dispositions, of different moral worth, need stringent over-hauling and cleansing under the influence of "loving God with all the mind," when a new attitude to life will result. We can thus understand why Jesus began His mission with the cry, "Repent ye"—literally, "Change your mind."

The author shows how to make use of psychological and spiritual laws for this purpose. Care must be taken to make sure that good suggestions only are accepted by the conscious mind and passed on to the unconscious. Both prayer and "auto-suggestions" can be used to purify the unconscious. The effort to do this must be sustained by the love of God, and the goal is the unified mind which was in Christ Jesus.

Whilst certain statements may be open to criticism from a psychological standpoint, the book is a valuable contribution showing how psychology can be a real handmaid to Christianity. This book can be used in a study circle, by Sunday School teachers, and others. It is rich in spiritual and pastoral insight, and being free from technical terms should be a real help to the more thoughtful members of an average congregation. G. G. DAWSON.

ST. PAUL AND CORINTH.

By J. T. Dean. *Lutterworth Press.* 5/-.

As every Bible student is aware, St. Paul's correspondence with the Corinthian church represents one of the "riddles" of the New Testament. Many attempts have been made to re-construct the story of his visits to the church and of the letters which passed between him and the Corinthians. It is generally agreed that our II Corinthians is not a unity but comprises part (at least) of two, if not three, direct epistles from the apostle's pen.

In this book Dr. Dean undertakes a fresh examination of the whole problem and by re-examining the historical situation endeavours to prove that no less than four separate letters are commingled in the contents of the canonical Second Epistle. His reconstruction is ingenious, if not altogether convincing. He accepts, of course, the suggestion that the section vi. 14-vii. 1 is a fragment of the "former epistle" referred to in I Corinthians, dealing with the subject of "separation"; but he is not satisfied with the widely accepted theory that chapters i-ix represent a letter of reconciliation addressed to the loyal majority at Corinth, and chapters x-xiii a letter of defence, concerned more especially with the disloyal minority. He maintains that the letter of reconciliation embraces i. 1-ii. 13; vii. 5-viii. 24; xiii. 11-14; that the section ii. 14-vii. 4 (with the exception of the passage vi. 14-vii. 1) belongs to the letter of defence, which thus comprises x-xii; ii. 14-vi. 13; viii. 2-4; xiii. 1-10; while he regards chapter ix as a separate letter written shortly before Paul's last visit to Corinth. As will be seen, this reconstruction is somewhat complex, so much so that it is somewhat difficult to see how the various letters came to be brought together into one epistle as we now have it in our New Testament. Unfortunately the author makes little attempt to solve this particular problem.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD "BLOOD" IN SCRIPTURE.

By A. M. Stibbs. *Tyndale Press.* 2/6.

In the Tyndale New Testament Lecture for 1947 Mr. Stibbs has provided us with a really valuable piece of biblical exegesis. He makes clear his purpose at the outset of his paper and consistently keeps to the point throughout. In a word, his concern is to challenge the view, advocated by Bishop B. F. Westcott and shared by many modern theologians, according to which the phrase "the blood of Christ" is interpreted as signifying the *life* of Christ "released" through death and thus made available for a new purpose. Mr. Stibbs' contention is that this is a mis-reading of the evidence and that in scripture the term "blood" is a vivid word-symbol for *death*. It signifies not the life liberated but the life forfeited, laid down, voluntarily ended. The case is argued by a patient and painstaking examination of the biblical usage of the phrase, both in the Old Testament and the New; and the conclusion reached is that "the blood of Christ" connotes the death of Christ in its sacrificial significance, since "blood" is entirely connected with His finished redemptive work on earth, not with His present priestly work in

heaven. Whether this conclusion be accepted or not, the essay is certainly worthy of the most serious consideration.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.

A PRIMER OF OLD TESTAMENT TEXT CRITICISM.

By D. R. Ap-Thomas. Epworth Press. 3/-.

The Epworth Press is doing Hebrew scholarship, at its more elementary level, a very real service in publishing a series of Study Notes on the Hebrew text of certain Old Testament passages, especially those set for examination purposes. Now, in this same series, comes this little Primer of Old Testament Text Criticism. It is only 41 pages in length, but it deals with The Canon of the Old Testament; Language, Script, and Writing Materials; Vocalisation and Standardization of the Text; The Ancient Versions; The Textual Work of the Masoretes; and Types of Error in the Masoretic Text.

Clearly, this can be only an introduction to the bigger books of Swete, Kenyon, Robinson, and so on. But the work is done in an interesting and scholarly fashion, and no knowledge of Hebrew is necessary except in the last chapter.

In a second edition, various small points will no doubt be corrected, e.g. for Syro-Hexaplaric *read* Syro-Hexaplaric (p. 24), for Heironymian *read* Hieronymian (p. 24), and for 15,842 *read* (surely) 5,842 (p. 30). There is a slight error in the printing of the last Hebrew word in the book (p. 41).

F. D. COGGAN.

ON TO ORTHODOXY.

By D. R. Davies. Latimer House Press. 9/6.

SECULAR ILLUSION OR CHRISTIAN REALISM.

By D. R. Davies. Latimer House Press. 6/-.

A welcome is to be accorded to the new editions of these two well known books. *On To Orthodoxy*, originally issued by the Religious Book Club, was Mr. Davies' first volume of theology which quickly established his reputation as a writer of religious significance. It is an arresting and convincing presentation of the living faith of the Gospel, against the background of humanistic frustration and confusion. In this new edition the text has undergone considerable revision, though the substance of the narrative has not been changed, and the strongly autobiographical note remains as before.

Secular Illusion Or Christian Realism is a modern presentation of the Church's dogma of Original Sin—a subject upon which Mr. Davies can always speak and write with the utmost realism. As against the secular faith in man's natural goodness and his ability to save himself, the writer sets forth the stark biblical truth concerning human nature, its radical evil and perverted will, whose cure calls for a power far beyond any human science. It is only at the point of human disillusionment and despair that the Christian message of salvation becomes instinct with ultimate meaning and radiant hope.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.

THE CREED OF A CHRISTIAN. SIX BROADCAST TALKS ON THE NORTH REGIONAL.

By W. M. F. Scott and H. Watkin-Jones. Epworth Press. 3/6.

Mr. Scott is well known to our readers. He is responsible for the first three talks on God created the world; God made man in His image; and God spake by the Prophets. He has a lightness of touch and felicity of illustration that remind us of C. S. Lewis. His exposition of the meaning of the opening chapters of Genesis is extremely readable, and must have been equally telling over the air. The second three talks are by a Tutor of Wesley College, Headingley. The subjects are necessarily handled in a somewhat heavier way, since they demand a more technical approach. They concern the Atonement; the Fellowship of the Spirit; and Eternal Life. The author does not move easily in dealing with the Atonement. On page 37 he comes very near to Sabellianism when he implies that the sufferings of the Father and the Son at Calvary were identical. He is afraid of the idea that the Son offered something to the Father on the Cross. But none the less he is firm on the objective aspect of the Atonement, and brings in the offering by personifying the Love of God; "Christ, as both Divine and human, offered to the injured love of God a penitence and an obedience on our behalf which were perfect." Even here, however, he appears to have backed away unnecessarily from the thought of substitutionary sacrifice.

J. STAFFORD WRIGHT.

NOTES ON BOOKS RECEIVED

THE CHURCH AND THE SACRAMENTS. *By P. T. Forsyth (Independent Press. 10/6.)* The highest praise that can be bestowed on this book is to say that it represents Forsyth at his brilliant best. And that is to say a very great deal. It is a remarkable testimony to the prophetic genius of its author that though originally published over thirty years ago the work reads as though written for such a time as this. It consists of two parts, the first dealing with the Church, the second with the Sacraments. Forsyth's theology is so thoroughly in line with that of the New Testament because it is centred in the Cross. To that point he returns again and again. In his thinking—as Canon J. K. Mozley puts it in his Preface—"Church, ministry and sacraments were not additions to the Christian creed and life which involved nothing of crucial importance. The book is continually concerned to refute any such idea by exhibiting them as resting upon and derived from Christ's redemption and atoning work." The chapter on Infant Baptism is one of the very best things on this subject and will do much to clarify thought on the matter, defining as it does the relation of the sacrament to faith and regeneration, and its significance in reference to the prevenient grace of God.

NEW FORMS OF THE OLD FAITH. *By James Black (Nelson. 12/6.)* Based on the Baird Lectures delivered in 1946-7 under the title of "Extra-Church Systems," this volume is an examination of the religious sects which have sprung up in our midst during the last 100 years or so, including Christian Science, Theosophy, Spiritualism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventism and Mormonism. Perhaps it was somewhat unkind to include among these freakish perversions of the Gospel such good and godly folk as the Quakers and the Brethren, who, whatever their faults (and Dr. Black does not hesitate to expose them), not infrequently join with us in inter-church missions and conventions. In connection with all the cults with which he deals the author's concern is not

merely to condemn the errors and evils inherent in them but also to discover whatever genuine germ of truth they embody and emphasise, in however unbalanced a form. The book contains a mass of useful historical data and will be found a most valuable work of reference in dealing with these modern brands of Christianity.

THE TEACHING OF THE CHURCH REGARDING BAPTISM. *By Karl Barth (S.C.M. Press. 2/6).* The translation of this lecture, originally delivered before a gathering of Swiss theological students in May, 1943, is made by the Rev. Ernest A. Payne. The chief interest of the lecture consists in its advocacy of the "Baptist" position with regard to the administration of the sacrament, though with certain important theological modifications. Barth does not deny the validity of infant baptism, nor does he have anything to say in favour of anabaptism; but he regards the baptism of infants as irregular on account of the element of personal moral response being lacking. Moreover, he pleads not merely for "believers' baptism" as the normal practice but also for total immersion in place of the customary affusion. His arguments will be read with more curiosity than conviction. Thus to take but one point, it is no sufficient argument to say (as he does) that in the New Testament baptism is regarded as the "sealing" of the believer's faith and that it should therefore be administered only in response to such faith on the part of the person baptised. So, it could be argued, was circumcision the "sealing" of faith in the case of Abraham, as stated in Romans iv. 11; yet that fact did not militate against Isaac receiving the same covenant sign when but eight days old. It is all too easy to forget that baptism, like circumcision, is not merely *upon* faith but *unto* faith. Moreover, to study the practice of the New Testament Church without keeping in mind its Old Testament background and its distinctive missionary character is quite fatal in reference to the sacrament of holy baptism.

ST. MARK'S GOSPEL. *By E. Basil Redlich (Duckworth. 5/-).* Forming No. 2 in the new Colet Library, this book is described as a "modern commentary" on the Gospel—apparently in the sense of being modernistic. Canon Redlich has grave doubts concerning the historicity of St. Mark's narrative, being of the opinion that it contains a great many "later additions", so that the story is coloured by church practice and beliefs of a later period. As a result, he is inclined to see difficulties where they do not really exist, and to suggest "explanations" which are as unlikely as they are unnecessary. It is odd, to say the least of it, the way in which writers of this type evince an easy-going scepticism in regard to definite statements in the Gospel while displaying quite a dogmatic assurance with reference to their own pet theories and ideas. Dr. Rawlinson's notable volume in the Westminster Commentaries remains the best "modern" commentary on St. Mark.

THE GOSPEL IN THE WORLD. *By Godfrey E. Phillips (Duckworth. 5/-)* No. 3 in the Colet Library, this is an abridgement of a larger book with the same title published shortly before the war which unhappily became a war casualty, as the whole unbound stock went up in flames. The author, who is Professor of Missions at the Selly Oak Colleges, describes it as "virtually a stock-taking of the principles governing the Christian Mission at a turning-point in its history." It is designed to assist the whole thinking laity as well as those engaged in or preparing for missionary work. The book is based on the conviction that evangelism is the communication through the Church of the supernatural and unique revelation of God in Christ, and that this is the sole purpose for which missions are created.

PORTRAIT OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL. *By G. H. Cook (Phoenix House. 12/6).* This is the first volume in the Phoenix English Cathedrals series, to be followed in due course by similar "portraits" of Canterbury, Salisbury, and others. If the subsequent volumes sustain the standard of the first, the series will indeed be of a very high order. This book on Durham is magnificently produced. It includes more than seventy photographs of the cathedral, illustrating the architecture as a whole and in detail; there is a large folding plan of the building, and a number of black-and-white sketches accompanying the descriptive text. The book will make an instantaneous appeal to all who love this, the greatest of all our Norman churches—"the finest Romanesque building in Europe," as it has been called.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.