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Reviews

Studies on Baptism, edited by James Gray (Churches of Christ Publishing Committee, 2s. 6d.).

Bishop Westcott predicted more than fifty years ago, that the next great controversy in the Church would be "Baptism." The appearance of yet another book on this subject is a further reminder of the fulfilment of that prediction. *Studies on Baptism* is a small book of fifty-seven pages written by six members of the Union Committee of the Churches of Christ. We are told in the preface that "these studies were completed before the publication of *Christian Baptism*, edited by A. Gilmore and written by a group of Baptist ministers." As was inevitable in so small a book, little evidence is adduced for some of the statements made, and less than justice is done to some of the convictions and arguments of paedo-baptists.

The writers have obviously set out to defend and advocate believers' baptism; but that does not prevent them from making some trenchant criticisms of what they call "believer-baptist churches." Such churches "have often distorted their own witness" by spiritualising, by individualism, and by isolating baptism from churchmanship. Special stress is laid on the truth that "believers' baptism is no individual rite: it is bound up with the Church and entrance into it as the Body of Christ." The relationship of baptism to the gift of the Holy Spirit and to the rite of the Laying-on-of-Hands, is also helpfully discussed. While claiming that "believer-baptist churches are as active as the mass-churches in their love and care for little children," it is admitted that they "have grievously defaulted in not giving regular liturgical expression to their pastoral responsibilities concerning infants."

The real issue between infant and believers' baptism is admirably set forth. God deals with sinful men as *persons*. "This is the root of the matter, for the baptizing of the necessarily unwilling and unknowing infant admits legal or mechanical or magical views of the Divine-human encounter." The criticism so often made against us, that we deny the prevenient grace of God is effectively answered. "It can scarcely be more clearly said than by the constant affirmation of the believer-baptist churches that baptism is a *response* and the Church is a *responsible* fellowship, that prior to all human action is the gracious action of God."

Making due allowance for the fact that it is little—this is an admirable little book. It might well be read as an introduction to the much larger book *Christian Baptism* referred to above. It will be, because of its brevity and simplicity, of especial value to busy

laymen and young people, and the questions on each chapter, found at the end of the book, will be useful for group discussion.

STEPHEN WINWARD

A Treasury of Christian Verse, editor Hugh Martin, C.H., D.D. (S.C.M. Press, 9s. 6d.). 126 pp.

One tends nowadays to approach yet another collection of poetry with a feeling that one has seen it all before. The large anthology is bound to contain something new or unfamiliar (though probably also unimpressive), but the small book will comprise mainly the well-worn favourites; and how unfortunate it is that we should dismiss with the contempt of familiarity the "Nativity Ode," Blake's "The Lamb," or the wonderfully beautiful little carol "I Sing of a Maiden."

It is refreshing therefore to find a small anthology which, first, has a theme—"It is concerned with Jesus Christ Himself"—and which secondly omits some of the familiar and includes a number of poems which, whilst not always unfamiliar, nevertheless acquire a freshness in this particular context. Dr. Martin has boldly included some writers comparatively little-known, and some not strictly orthodox in their views. Consequently, and not really surprisingly, he has strengthened rather than weakened the total impression of the immense effect of the life and death of Jesus Christ on the lives and ideas of ordinary men and women.

The collection begins with Medieval verse, its unselfconsciousness and simplicity perhaps best revealed in the extract from Cynewulf, "Christ the Corner Stone." Familiar names appear representing the Elizabethan and metaphysical periods, but many well-known 18th century hymns are omitted. The unexpected names and unfamiliar poems are chiefly 19th and 20th century, and it is in John Bannister Tabb's "Christ and the Pagan" that the theme of this enjoyable little book is plainly expressed:

"... none may grope
Beyond eternal hope."

IAN R. DUNCAN

A Light to the Nations: An Introduction to the Old Testament, by Norman K. Gottwald. (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, New York, \$6.50).

The author of this book is Professor of Old Testament at Andover Newton Theological School, and he is already well-known in this country as the author of "Studies in the Book of Lamentations."

His new book is a worthy attempt to make a synthesis of

an Introduction to the literature of the Old Testament, a history of Israel, and the Theology of the Old Testament. In spite of the wide scope of the work, the author has succeeded in giving us a reasonably detailed account of most points of interest and importance, and he has expressed not only his own views but also those of other scholars thus giving us a brief but clear outline of the present position of Old Testament Studies as a whole.

The book contains 33 maps and although most of them are rather small in size, yet they are quite adequate for the illumination of the respective periods of history. There are also eight different charts dealing with subjects such as the Chronology of Hebrew Literature, Kings of the Divided Monarchy, etc. The book includes also some fifty well chosen illustrations. An interesting feature of the book is a glossary of the technical terminology of Old Testament Study, and many students of the Bible will find it most useful. There are also lists of books recommended for further reading, the main commentaries, and special studies on the different books of the Old Testament. The Appendix includes a very valuable selection of various Near Eastern Texts, such as the Babylonian Creation Story, the Tell el-Amarna Letters, Assyrian Annals, etc.

The book is well written and equally well produced, and it is one of the best of its type. The author's sketches of the different Old Testament personalities are clear and often very well put; e.g. the author thinks that Solomon is the most overrated figure in the Old Testament, the pampered son of David who "inherited the sins of his father without David's virtues" (p. 202).

In the chapter on Hebrew Prophecy the author points out two widespread misconceptions: the idea that the main, if not the only, function of the prophets was to foretell future, and that they were nothing but social reformers. "No prophet," says the author, "leaped across the centuries and foresaw the specific person Jesus of Nazareth" yet some of the prophets' deepest convictions were His and "the spirit of his ministry was that of prophecy incarnate" (p. 275). The main difference between the social reformers and the prophets was that the former talked about the rights of man while the latter spoke of the Word of Yahweh.

Professor Gottwald does not always follow the views of the majority, but even in such instances other views are given due consideration; e.g. in the discussion on the sign of the child Immanuel, he comes to the conclusion that the most likely candidate for Immanuel is a son of the prophet Isaiah (p. 321).

The author deserves our thanks for this readable and helpful book.

A. A. ANDERSON

The Pastoral Calling, by Paul Rowntree Clifford, 162 pp. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 10s. 6d. net.)

Perhaps there are two reasons why the number of books written about the task of the minister is steadily increasing. One is external, the minister finds himself in an office the value of which has been called into question by the majority of his contemporaries. The second is internal, due to a deeper understanding of the nature of the Church and a movement for the renewal and reformation of the churches in the light of these fresh insights. But any reformation of the Church which is the fruit of indifference to one's own tradition is immediately suspect. This book, which is an attempt "to expound the nature of the ministry from within the Baptist tradition in the British Isles," shows no such indifference. The author, who is lecturer in Pastoral Theology at McMaster University, has another aim "to interpret and apply what seem to be some of the more valuable insights of our American brethren into the mission of the Church and its ministry."

The main argument of the book is that the ministry should be defined in terms of the Pastoral Office "grounded in the interpersonal character of the Gospel itself."

The writer briefly outlines the account of the nature of the Baptist ministry put forward by Dr. Dakin 15 years ago and 11 pages later comes to the conclusion that on "historical doctrinal and practical grounds it is inadequate." Then he seeks to show that "The Separated Ministry" is true not only to the principles of the Primitive Apostolic Community but is also implicit in the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. His authority is the call of God and the outward election and appointment of the Church.

He then examines various views of the Ministry and comes to the conclusion that "the concept of Pastor, the shepherd of the flock should be the dominant one in our thinking." He lays down three essential requisities of the Pastor, all of which are grounded in the reality of a man's relationship with God.

It is in the light of the person to person relationship that the author interprets the proclamation of the Word. "The truth is that the preacher has the double duty of expounding the given Word of God and relating it to the actual needs of the congregation to which he ministers."

The chapter dealing with the pastoral relationship many will find most helpful. The author, having given a fourfold analysis of the nature of the ministry that we have to offer, goes on to show the objectives of every pastoral visit not forgetting to warn

us against the dangers of the counselling relationship. "The Pastor will be a good listener." Though the response that he makes will be different in every situation it will take one of four forms, "passive, opportunist, interpretive or questioning."

The final chapter points out that the minister cannot cover the whole field himself and he seeks to show how the whole community must share in the pastoral care. A plan for visitation evangelism which has proved successful in the United States; the integration of Church and Sunday School so that all feel a part of the one family; instead of an evening service on Sunday which is just the repetition of the morning service, a Vesper Hour and the introduction of group activities makes us more conscious of the influence of the North American Scene.

The reader will notice many omissions in the presentation of the calling of the minister. For example, it is part of his office to listen to what God is saying to the whole Church. He will see it as his duty to present to his congregation the mind and the experience of the Great Church. He will help the local Church to become a genuine outcrop of the great Church in that particular place.

One of the most disturbing elements coming especially from the other side of the Atlantic is that the minister must preach to the needs of the people. The supreme test to which the Gospel and preaching is being put is "Is it relevant" and not the vital question "Is it true?". The Gospel is concerned with man's ultimate needs, with his need for forgiveness and redemption. In the experience of the reviewer men and women are more conscious of their less-than-ultimate-needs. The starting point for our preaching must NOT be the needs of M. Jones, etc. (P. 73) but the Gospel in its fulness. Indeed the first result of preaching may be to reveal to these that what they think to be their needs are but trivialities. The minister must beware lest, in satisfying the penultimate needs of his congregation, he prevent them from knowing their real need.

The author has laid down several principles for the pastoral care of those who have "a difficulty" or "a problem." One wishes that he had been just as generous in sharing his experiences amongst those who have no "difficulties" and no "problems." A well furnished home; an assured steady income; the children doing well at school and "just as good as those pious people who go to your Church" and so on. For Christ came to rescue men not only when they were at their worst but even more so when they were at their best.

The Rev. Paul Rowntree Clifford has achieved one other object and that is that he will provoke any reader to a far greater

study of the Pastoral Calling and for this reason such a reader will be grateful for the detailed bibliography.

D. D. BLACK

BOOKS RECEIVED

- G. D. Yarnold, *The Spiritual Crisis of the Scientific Age*. 207 pp. 18s. Geo. Allen & Unwin.
- J. S. Lawton, *Miracles and Revelation*. 284 pp. 37s. 6d. Lutterworth Press.
- D. Roy Briggs, *The Christian Year*. 40 pp. 1s. 6d. Independent Press.
- R. W. Hugh Jones, *His Power in Our Lives*. 14 pp. 1s. 3d. Independent Press.
- R. Osborn, *Humanism and Moral Theory*. 115 pp. 18s. Geo. Allen & Unwin.
- Robert Duce, *Stepping Stones of Faith*. 15 pp. 1s. 3d. Independent Press.
- Eric Routley, *Ecumenical Hymnody*. 32 pp. 3s. Independent Press.
- A. G. Matthews, *Introduction to Calamy Revised*. 68 pp. 5s. Independent Press.
- John Macleod, *Rambles With Young Folk*. 89 pp. 6s. Independent Press.
- James Stewart, *The Message of Job*. 139 pp. 12s. 6d. Independent Press.
- Edith Deen, *All the Women of the Bible*. 410 pp. 15s. Independent Press.
- C. T. Follett, *Everyman's Church*. 15 pp. 1s. 3d. Independent Press.
- H. F. Lovell Cocks, *The Lord's Prayer*. 15 pp., 1s. 3d. Independent Press.
- Cecil Northcott, *Good News From Africa*. 16 pp. 1s. 3d. Independent Press.
- The Geographical Background of the Bible. Part I the Old Testament. Section I. Assyria and Babylonia. A Film strip and Notes. Educational Productions.