Book Reviews

The First Book of Samuel: By PETER R. ACKROYD, pp. xii+238. Price £2.20 cloth; 96p paper.

Amos, Hosea and Micah: by HENRY MCKEATING, pp. x+198. Price £2.20 cloth; 96p paper.

Old Testament Illustrations: By CLIFFORD M. JONES. pp. 189. Price £3 cloth; £1.40 paper. All published by Cambridge University Press, 1971, in the Cambridge Bible Commentary Series.

The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible, we are told in the General Editor's Preface, is intended to provide 'a commentary in which the results of modern scholarship are made available to the general reader'. This laudable aim must have been repeated in a hundred previous prefaces, yet the result, all too often, is a book which oversimplifies the problems, or is just so dull as to provide no incentive to the long-suffering general reader.

Neither of these faults applies to Professor Ackroyd's commentary on 1 Samuel. The concise nature of the comments, the admirable freedom from theological jargon, the format of grouping the comments together at the end of a section of text, all make this book a pleasure to read—an experience all too rare with commentaries. Yet the problems are not dodged. We are continually shown the differing traditions which lie behind the composite stories of the finished book, for 'great events in every community call forth rich traditions, expressive of the many different points from which an event may be viewed'. So too we are reminded of the way in which theological interpretation affects the writing of history, for the authors are 'offering stories and traditions about the past of their own people in such a way as to tell us what they believed that past experience to mean'. But all this is done simply by pointing to those features in the text which suggest divergent traditions or a certain theological viewpoint. While the questions which the book raises are thus opened up, we do not have solutions imposed upon us. Not the least of the qualities of this book is the way in which it can be used to begin discussion about the nature of the truth which the writers are trying to convey.

The commentary on Amos, Hosea and Micah by Henry McKeating also contains clear, concise and, on the whole, balanced comments. There are a few exceptions: he clearly finds it difficult to accept Amos's puritanical tendencies. 'His apparent assumption that God's taste in furniture, music and cosmetics is the same as his own is open to challenge'. Yet it is surely obvious that Amos is not simply attacking

current fashions, but unnecessary luxury. Apart from one or two such instances, this book can be welcomed as a reliable guide.

Nevertheless, it presents a noticeable contrast to the commentary on 1 Samuel. For here questions are not opened up and left for the reader to decide. The answer is given to him, one might almost say forced on him, since he is not always given the materials to help him to decide for himself. This applies to judgements about the authenticity of sections of the text (e.g. Amos 2:4-5) and to questions of interpretation. The day of the Lord in Amos 5:18 may refer to a cultic festival, but this is not as certain as the comment suggests. In the case of Hosea's marriage and the relationship of chapters 1 and 3, some suggested solutions are set out, and we are then told which view the commentary accepts, though no arguments are offered. This is a useful commentary, but its usefulness would have been still greater if more questions had been left open and the reader allowed to do his own thinking.

Old Testament Illustrations is a collection of photographs, maps and diagrams, produced as a companion volume to the Cambridge Bible Commentary. In recent years so many of these have appeared as to lead one to doubt the need for yet another. Yet this is one of the most useful and attractively produced. The photographs have on the whole been well chosen and are complemented by clearly drawn maps and diagrams, which omit unnecessary detail. The text which accompanies them is lucid and readable, and only very rarely so oversimplified as to lead to distortion (though this does happen, for example, in the description of the Settlement).

The section on the social background makes discerning use of photographs of comparable contemporary situations, and the final section on Judaism, a novel feature, is particularly welcome.

The only complaint of the present reviewer is the habit, not unusual in such books, of including reproductions of renaissance and more recent paintings and engravings, and photographs of sculptures. These throw more light on the understanding and imagination of the artists themselves than on the Old Testament text, and take up space which could have been occupied by more useful illustrations. Why include two pictures of Samson, the inferior picture of David carrying Goliath's head by Poussin, or Judith with the head of Holophernes dangling from her left hand, when no space can be found for a picture of such important excavations as, for example, those at Shechem?

This, however, is a minor complaint when compared with the overall excellence of the book. Some of the series of pictures, particularly those on Assyrian warfare and the series of coins, are of the highest interest and value.

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Luke: An Introduction and Commentary: by MAURICE BLANCHARD, C.L.S. 1969. Pp. 158. Price Rs 5.

The Commentary on St Luke's Gospel by Dr Blanchard (of Rampatnam Seminary) devotes 120 of its 158 pages to actual comment on the text, and 38 pages to Introduction dealing with source- and form-critical analysis. The author seems to waver between the need for higher critical study and the fundamentalist view of divine inspiration; and the latter sometimes seems to condition the former in his treatment of the subject of source analysis.

At the end of each sub-section the Commentary contains an item labelled 'Homiletical', giving clear-cut points for exposition. Likewise, points of comparison are supplied with Hinduism, Buddhism etc., with discussion of the themes. These indicate the orientation of the Commentary for the Indian Christian minister and preacher. This orientation is highly commendable, and herein lies Dr Blanchard's chief contribution.

There seem to be a number of inconsistencies in the book. One concerns the question of Divine Inspiration: If the author can hold that the RSV is closer to the original written word of the scriptures than some of the older translations, then to set aside the 'results' of later critical investigation seems to strike a false note! Likewise, we find the author holding the view that each gospel writer borrowed from the available source material; but his conclusion at the end is that Luke is independent of the other gospel writers, especially Mark. This certainly goes against the general consensus of modern scholarship on the question of 'Markan Priority': to quote Vincent Taylor, 'significant of the stability of critical opinion is the fact that in a modern commentary it is no longer necessary to prove the priority of Mark'. Again, we may query the use of comparative religion to provide proof of the authenticity of Christian faith. For example, the Lucan Infancy Narratives are contrasted with the miraculous conception of Krishna by his mother through a serpent, or Buddha by his mother through the visit of a six-tusked elephant. The latter are treated as fiction, while the Virgin Birth is regarded as authentic. But one may ask whether this contrast can really give sufficient 'proof' of the genuineness of the Virgin Birth.

Despite these queries, the publication of Dr Blanchard's Commentary, based on his teaching experience at Rampatnam, is a very welcome addition to the books written on St Luke's Gospel.

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Jorhat

Church Dogmatics: Vol. IV, The Doctrine of Reconciliation, Part 4. By KARL BARTH. Translated by G. W. BROMILEY. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1969. Pp. 266. Price £2.00.

THE LION'S LAST ROAR?

Karl Barth died on 10th December 1968. He was never able to complete his massive *Church Dogmatics* according to the pattern he had planned, yet—homorously recalling the incompleteness of many medieval cathedrals and of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*—he gracefully accepted this result of illness and old age, and arranged for the publication of this final 'fragment' of *Dogm.* IV/4, a fragment of what was to have been a fully worked out ethical section relating to the doctrine of Reconciliation. The 'fragment' is in fact a substantial book of over 200 pages, and it gives us Barth's final thoughts on the vital subject of Baptism.

It is well known that in 1943, in the book *The Teaching of the Church regarding Baptism* (Eng. transl. 1948), Barth took up a position in opposition to infant baptism, and he maintains that position in his final writing. But this time he goes considerably further, attacking all 'sacramental' interpretations of baptism, and indeed stoutly maintaining that baptism should not be regarded as a sacrament at all. The other new departure in his teaching here is the sharp distinction he draws—and works out in detail—between baptism with the Holy Spirit and baptism with water, in which he treats the former as the prerequisite of the latter; water baptism is not to be regarded as a sacrament, but as the *human* response—the response of the candidate and of the Church—to what God has already given in baptism with the Spirit. We may say, then, that the book has three main themes: (*i*) a comparison of Spirit baptism and water baptism; (*ii*) a refutation of sacramental interpretations of baptism, whether by Catholic or Protestant theologians; (*iii*) a renewed refutation of infant baptism. These points are all of great interest and concern to the Church in India, and especially, perhaps, to the C.N.I. with its high ratio of members from a 'believers' baptism' background, and with constant pressure from Pentecostal groups.

(*i*) Barth makes it clear (pp. 1-40) that when he speaks of baptism, the vital action is baptism with the Spirit, yet unlike Pentecostals he has no interest in the mere external manifestations of the Spirit's work. Immersion in the Spirit, we might say in all reverence, interests him more than the accompanying splashing.

What is it, he asks, which brings about the 'change' in a man when he becomes a Christian, when he turns from unfaithfulness to faith in God? (pp. 4, 5). And the answer is that the change comes about when the 'history' of Jesus Christ —that is Christ himself and the events of his life, death and resurrection—is applied to a man. 'This history is the change . . . in which a man becomes God's friend instead of his enemy' (p. 13), for Jesus Christ and his 'history' is the foundation of Christian existence (p. 14). And when we go on to ask how this 'external' history (*extra nos*) can become an event *in us* (*in nobis*) the answer is that this happens through baptism with the Holy Spirit.

'The power of the divine change in which the event of the foundation of the Christian life of specific men takes place is the power of their baptism with the Holy Ghost' (p. 30). In this work of the Spirit the living Jesus imparts himself to men. (p. 31.)

So if we discuss with our Pentecostal friends the question, 'Who can claim to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?' the answer does not relate to external manifestations like the gift of tongues, or any kind of emotional symptoms. The answer rather is that the man whose life has been changed or converted through the self-impartation of Christ the Word in the power of the Spirit has in fact received the baptism with the Holy Spirit. And it remains for that man to take the first step of the Christian life, namely to ask for, and to receive water baptism.

(*ii*) The second main point to consider is Barth's assertion that water baptism is a *human* act—man's respone to God—and therefore not to be regarded as 'sacramental'; that is, as a rite in which, through the use of the symbol of water, God's grace is conferred on the candidate. As the basis of his argument he takes the baptismal event which the New Testament describes more clearly and fully than any other, Jesus' own baptism in Jordan (pp. 54 ff). John baptised those who heard God's Word, obeyed it, and responded in confession, conversion and readiness for service, and in all this Jesus made himself one with his human brethren, causing their sins to be his own sins (p. 59). 'He shows Himself to be the true Son of God and Son of Man by accepting water baptism in obedience to the direction of the Father' (p. 65). This action of Jesus Barth calls the 'basis' of Christian baptism; as He responded to the call of God, so we must respond in asking for baptism. And as for Him baptism was the beginning of a ministry of humble service, so for us water baptism marks the first step forward in the Christian life.

Examining the meaning of the Latin term *sacramentum* and its application to baptism (p. 109), Barth comes to the conclusion that there is nothing in NT usage which obliges us to say that 'sacrament' is a word which should be applied to baptism. The true cleansing or washing of the believer is that which took place once and for all in Christ, and which is applied to the believer in baptism with the Spirit; water baptism cannot effect this true and actual cleansing (p. 113). Baptism, then, should not be regarded as a sacrament but as 'a true and genuine human action' which responds to the 'divine work and word of the cleansing and renewal which have taken place in Jesus Christ and are mediated by the Holy Ghost' (pp. 128, 130).

At this point Barth gives an interesting treatment of *conversion* in relation to baptism (pp. 135 ff). Water baptism must be accompanied by conversion to God, 'the transition from self-will to obedience to God, from anxiety before Him to hope in Him' (p. 136). Such conversion necessarily involves faith and repentance, and a turning from the old path to the new. Water baptism is indeed a human decision, but it is very different from a mere decision to change from one ideology to another, for it must be in the context of conversion, and it presupposes 'the unity of the Christian with Christ, his total cleansing and

renewal in Christ's death, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit' (p. 140). In brief, conversion is the 'meaning' of baptism, for it 'summons, leads, drives and impels to baptism, to its human confirmation in the human sphere' (p. 145). And beyond baptism, conversion drives men on to service and evangelism: 'Since Jesus Christ is a Servant, looking to Him cannot mean looking away from the world, from men, from life' (p. 150).

This exposition has a bearing on the Indian situation, especially in view of the fact that Barth has earlier said that 'Christian baptism has nothing whatever to do with the conversion of a man from one religion to another' (p. 46). Baptism should be detached from its sociological as well as from its sacramental implications, and Barth is highly critical of the great historical transformation which took place in the reign of Constantine when it came to be assumed that *all* Christians must be baptised as infants, and that baptism was therefore a mark of one's status in society. It is better, he says, for the Church to exist as 'a small and unassuming group of aliens, though also freed of much ballast, as a mobile brotherhood' (p. 168). One thinks of Manilal C. Parekh's writing on baptism, and his desire that it should not cut a man off from his community. On Barth's view a man would first become a 'disciple' (Parekh's favourite term); would thus receive the baptism with the Spirit; and would then ask the Church for water baptism—not as a sacrament to cut him off from his community, but as an act of response to God, as the first step of a life of Christian service. The Church has indeed its role to play in baptism, but it is not a triumphalist, sociological role.

(*iii*) We come then to Barth's attack on infant baptism. How convincing is his case? To this reviewer it would seem that it is disturbingly so. One of the characteristic features of Barth's theology is its grounding in Scripture at every point; the exegesis is fascinatingly carried out in the famous small-type paragraphs and it is an exegesis distinguished by its honesty and straightforwardness, for it is very rare to find a forced interpretation in Barth. And one cannot but agree with his view that some of the arguments used to support infant baptism, like his colleague Cullmann's well-known exegesis of the words 'What is to hinder?' are, as Barth calls them, 'a slender thread' (p. 182). Barth is, I think, right to make the point that many scholars are ill at ease—'irritated' is the word he uses (p. 170)—when they are asked to defend infant baptism, because they have a nagging feeling that it is indefensible on Scriptural grounds. The doctrine of infant baptism —like all doctrines—'ought to give evidence of its inner necessity' (p. 169), but in fact it does not. We may perhaps justify it to our own satisfaction, but we cannot make it appear that it is what the NT really commands. Barth's refutation of Luther, and of his own beloved Calvin on this point is masterly (pp. 172-5). And his conclusion—that 'the personal faith of the candidate is indispensable to baptism' (p. 186)—and that therefore infant baptism is indefensible, is a highly disturbing one, not least for the 'main-line' Churches in India, and for the C.N.I. as it wrestles with the doctrine of baptism.

Barth does not follow his argument to what might appear its logical outcome by saying that actual cases of infant baptism are invalid. In fact he condemns the 'rebaptism which was postulated by some violent fanatics, the Anabaptists of the Reformation period' (p. 189), and says that although infant baptism is 'highly doubtful and questionable because irregular' it cannot be called invalid (*ibid*). It is a pity that Barth was unfamiliar with that non-violent and non-fanatical Baptist point of view which says that if anyone comes to the conclusion that his own infant baptism, carried out without his knowledge, is invalid, he should be permitted to seek baptism as a believer; for this is one of the crucial issues before the C.N.I. Barth's advice would seem to be, 'Don't rebaptise, but in future stick to believers' baptism'.

The Editors of the English translation (Profs. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance) speak of Barth, in their preface, as 'the great Church Father of Evangelical Christendom, the one genuine Doctor of the Universal Church the modern era has known' (*vi*). When such a man speaks—when the lion roars—we do well to listen, and to turn to our Bibles to see if what he says is indeed true. And if we are as honest as he was, the consequences may be uncomfortable.

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What shall we believe? A Study of Christian Pramanas: By A. J. APPASAMY. C.L.S.-I.S.P.C.K.-L.P.H. 1971. Pp. 96. Price Rs 4.

I think I can say with little fear of contradiction that Bishop Appasamy is one of the most eminent of living Indian Christians. I came to know (and if I may say so, to love) him through his beautiful collection of *bhakti* poems, *Temple Bells*, now sadly out of print and unavailable. He was my introduction to the *bhakti* movement. I came to realise, and I am still convinced, that his approach through *bhakti* contains the richest possibilities for dialogue between the religions.

In this book he briefly traces the four *pramanas* on which Christianity is built: *sruti*, the Bible and especially the Gospels; *yukti*, reason; *anubhav*, experience; and *sabha*, the Church itself. But this book is no dry academic study. Though there is carefully reasoned analysis, there are many experiences and examples—his own and others'—to enliven it. About the Bible, for example, he writes: 'Sanscrit books speak of a shining light on the threshold of a house which sheds its rays on either side. The life and death and teaching of Christ form such a light illumining the long historical processes of revelation both before and after him. In the light which radiates from him we can see what is valuable and worthwhile in the intuitions of sages and prophets both before and after him. With this supreme standard of judgement we preach the Gospel of God's continuous manifestation of himself to those who would live in joyous fellowship with him'.

The author's aim is always to 're-state Christian faith in terms of the Indian heritage', but he warns that 'we should take extreme care that in this process nothing that is vital in our faith and practice is lost. Provided our Christian faith preserves all that is essential, the effort to re-think Christianity in the Indian context is quite a legitimate one and may well be expected to bear fruit'.

He is aware of limitations in the *pramanas* and of possible contradictions even in the Bible itself, but he steers a careful middle path between Fundamentalism and the complete demythologising of Bultmann, he insists that the greatest profit can be got from the Bible not by academic study of it but by prayerful meditation, and he gives tips based on Chakravarty's method as to how this can be done.

Yukti pramana (reason), though less important than *sruti*, is nevertheless necessary. A common danger, however, is of too much intellectualism in religion. Dr Appasamy provides a useful corrective: 'The intellect is an important part of man, but it is not the whole man. A man has his thoughts, his feelings, his will; all these should be fully surrendered to God. It is only when all these capacities are wholly yielded to God (we call this faith) that God reveals himself'. Knowledge glows with the warmth and light of love. That is why *yukti pramana* itself is incomplete and has to be supplemented by *anubhav pramana*. For this explanation of *anubhav pramana* Appasamy understandably draws heavily upon the experiences of Sadhu Sundar Singh, Kagawa, Bishop Kirk, and even relates his own experiences. To those who decry such experiences he responds: 'If a man has no religious experience the statement, "I believe in God" tends to be a cold intellectual proposition. It is only through genuine religious experience that this proposition becomes a vital belief, stirring the personality of the believer to his depths. Also the practical consequences of this belief for life are made clear only in religious experience'.

Of the Church as a *pramana* he is more critical, especially of the institutionalism in the Church. He quotes Chenchiah approvingly: 'Let us get out of sects into vast spaces of community . . . let Christians meet and ask before God why the past should separate us who do not belong to the past, why the West should divide us who belong to the East'. Then he goes on to study the Early Church, especially St Paul, in connection with community and individuality. He concludes, 'We cannot have real Christian life without fellowship *and* solitude. Fellowship gives religious experience its breadth; solitude contributes to its depth'. There must not only be community, there must be organisation and institution: 'Religion is complete only when it is collective, organised and historical . . . if a man seeks to realize God all by himself . . . it is quite evident that his experience will not be as rich and full as that of the man who, in the company of other seekers after truth, draws from the infinite wealth of religion, already available to mankind. It is for this reason that the Church is of great importance . . .' He could have added that Christ founded the Church and established the Church, and the Spirit works primarily through the Church. He admits to many faults in the Church, but he shows

nevertheless that it is indispensable, doing, as it does, a work that only it can do.

This is a charming book, not perhaps as 'Scientific' as some might like, but most readable and surely a good step forward in the laudable process of Indianising the Church's approach to India.

Ajmer R. H. LESSER

Journey into Joy: by LESSLIE NEWBIGIN, C.L.S.-I.S.P.C.K., 1972. Pp. 95. Price Rs 3.75.

This little book contains six talks given to the staff and students of the Christian Medical College, Vellore, by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin. Taking the basic theme of the Gospel as providing a goal, a direction, for life, it succeeds in giving a lucid and concise exposition of Christian faith. In particular the book strikes a nice balance between faith and reason. Reason is employed to demonstrate that Christian faith is worth a hearing, and to clarify what precisely it is, but Bishop Newbigin wisely makes no attempt to argue people into that faith. It is left as a vision, whose validity can in the end only be tested by living it. 'It is as we are committed to and involved in this plan, this purpose, that we can begin to understand its meaning'.

The book is in fact a transcript of the tape-recordings of the talks and it retains the feel of the spoken word, with a wealth of vivid illustrations—the men of Scott's Antarctic expedition throwing snowballs ahead in a mist in order to mark their direction, Alice going through the Looking-glass, and St Paul as 'a Brahmin trained under Sri Aurobindo, with a First Class M.A. in philosophy from Madras University and travelling on a United Nations Passport'.

A book of sound teaching in a highly readable form.

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Ways of Salvation: The Salvific Meaning of Non-Christian Religions according to the Teaching of Vatican II: by KURIEN KUNNUMPURAM. Pontifical Athenaeum, Poona, 1971. Pp. 111. Price Rs 9.

This is a book on developments in Roman Catholic theology which shows how that Church is making efforts to get out of the limitations set by itself in the past, and is trying to understand the point of view of those whom it has till now condemned. Obviously the book is not meant for the lay reader, but for students of Christian theology. One (like myself) who belongs to the former class and to a different religion would get the feeling that the book is an attempt to justify the changes in doctrine that the Church, willy-nilly, is trying to bring about as she enters the modern times from the medieval. But a religion that believes in certain eternal verities cannot go on changing them to suit particular periods in history. The Catholic Church,

which long claimed to be the only right interpreter of Christian beliefs, today finds itself obliged to change some of its cardinal tenets. Though the author is at pains to show that the spirit of Ecumenism has always been at work in the Church, he has provided ample evidence to show that attempts to perceive 'truths' in other religions was long regarded as sacriligeous.

The fact is that the Church, despite public proclamations of compromise with other religions, has not altogether given up its exclusivistic posture. Though Pope John XXIII assigned the task of 'updating' the Church to the Second Vatican Council, the attempt was promptly negatived by the First Encyclical Letter of Pope Paul VI (August 6, 1964), which says: 'Indeed, honesty compels us to declare openly our conviction that there is but one true religion, the religion of Christianity'. This hardly seems to support the author's assertion that the Church is turning over a new leaf!

Of course, the quotations in the book, and the author's own dissertations, reveal the assumption that all other religions are only 'preparations' for accepting Christianity. Throughout the book one perceives the patronising attitude of the Church towards other religions. In spite of this, the author has made a sincere plea for a better understanding of other religions from the Christian side.

In Chapter I the author has examined the teaching of the Church before Vatican II, and the teaching of Vatican II, respectively. He shows that in the earliest period of Christian history, the 'Universality of God's salvific will' was believed. But the belief that the Church of Christ was necessary for men to be saved developed later, and the idea that there was no salvation outside the Church began to be preached vehemently. Initially this belief must have been propounded as an attempt at self-preservation by the new religion; but in course of time it became a rigorous doctrine. In modern times the Church has come to perceive the irrationality of this doctrine. In the second section, the author traces the historical process by which Vatican II came to formulate the new doctrine, which is more liberal. The Schema of 1964 (Articles 14-16) deals with the salvation of people belonging to other religions.

On p. 51 the author's remark that 'neither Jesus nor the Apostles set out to evaluate non-Christian religions' is significant. Then, we wonder, why should the Church have claimed to judge other religions, forgetting the teaching of Jesus, 'Judge not, lest ye be judged'! The Apostles believed that 'God has no favourites' (p. 52). Then why should the Church have believed that it is the specially appointed authority of God? The Liberalism displayed by some Christian thinkers in the 19th Century was termed 'indifferentism' by the Church and rejected, and the faithful were warned against the dangers of such errors (pp. 58-59).

Whatever liberal views, assumed or real, the Church has been able to gather to itself in recent times, have come about through a tortuous process of legislative activity within the Church. The

author states (p. 89): 'Obviously no religious system, not even Christianity, ever saves man. God alone is the author of human salvation'. If this is true, how, one wonders, can the Church really expect to know God's will through legislative procedures? In summing up, the author says (p. 95): 'All this calls for a deeper reflection on the nature of the Church itself. We need a clearer grasp of its place in God's plan for the world . . . It is our Christian duty to recognise and appreciate the positive values in all religions, in a spirit of faith in God who has scattered his graces and insights among the nations of the earth. Genuine faith is always ready to acknowledge him wherever it encounters him'. Whether God needs a 'plan' or not to bring salvation to people, the Church will need to be sincere in its efforts to expand its horizon so as to understand other religions better. Then only can the author's hope, expressed in the last paragraph of his book, come true, making the task of *aggiornamento* assigned to Vatican II fruitful.

Calcutta SWAMI S.

Martin Luther King: by KENNETH SLACK. S.C.M. 1970. Pp. 121. Price £0.50.

The chief merit of this book is readability and economy of presentation. Here is one example picked at random: 'Leadership does not consist only of superb speeches delivered to excited overflowing audiences, nor only of the ideas that have captured the mind of the leader. The leader has to come down off the mountain-top and face the drudgery of tactical decisions, of hammering out strategy and of constant administration' (p. 53).

There is, too, a nose for humour. During the bus strike at Montgomery, a 'white family asked their Negro cook whether she supported the terrible things the Negroes were doing. "Oh no, ma'am", she replied, "I am just going to stay away from the buses as long as that trouble is going on".' Add to these a flair for dramatisation and use of suspense (especially in the descriptions of attacks on King himself and on his home) and you have all the ingredients that go to give some of the chapters the gripping quality they have.

As the title suggests, the last chapter ('The Significance of a leader') is devoted to a discussion of whether 'King (is) an outdated figure whose irrelevance would have become ever more obvious if he had avoided the bullet that struck him down at Memphis'. But such discussion continues throughout of the length of the book. For, as the author emphasises in his Introduction, 'there is a further purpose in this book than the telling of this famous modern Christian's life-story. . . . I have tried to examine the validity of the whole basis of his life and work . . . to enquire whether they have any lasting significance'. So, though the book's 'compass forbids it to have . . . detail, it is essential that the actualities of his life be studied. We may

suspect that both the realists and sentimentalists tend to ignore them while making their large judgements'.

Kenneth Slack is objective in his evaluation of the critiques of King that have been offered by such diverse people as the Rev. Colin Morris and Stokeley Carmichael. King's work has suffered from uncritical adulation as much as from unreasoned and unreasonable insistence on King's irrelevance. Slack attempts to steer clear of both these extremes. That there is thorough work behind the book is evident from the range of material consulted and quoted: books and speeches by King and others, as well as newspaper reports, are drawn upon to give perspective to the picture. While discussing the Montgomery bus strike, for example the author goes right back to Rosa Parks and her standing—or rather 'sitting'—her ground. In discussing the change in Negro attitudes that this incident witnessed, Slack rightly goes back to World War II and the rapid strides towards independence taken by many African countries.

In Chapter I, 'The Formation of a Leader', Slack traces the family history so that we may understand the emotional background; and in Chapter II, 'The Ideas that shaped a leader', he shows that these were drawn from three principal sources: a heritage of vigorous pastoral concern for downtrodden people, a Christian faith that had a passion for swift social change, and an intellectual training deeply influenced by Gandhi, Rauschenbusch, Niebhur and Gregg.

In considering King's beliefs, Slack does battle with some other authors who have written before him and have attempted to brush King's convictions aside and find his significance elsewhere. This, as Slack declares, is often 'an error arising from their presuppositions'. 'I am convinced', he says, 'that we cannot penetrate to the meaning of this man's life unless we recognise and respect his conviction . . . that the Christian way could be *preached* in such a way as to evoke a response from men's hearts that would drive their wills'. Here of course is a crucial question. I would suspect that Slack would disapprove of rhetorical and psychological techniques being applied elsewhere (in evangelism, for example?); but he does not seem to feel the necessity for examining them here.

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PRABHU GUPTARA

The Teaching of the Qur'an: by the late H. W. WEITBRECHT STANTON, S.P.C.K., London, new edition 1969. Pp. 137. Price £1.25.

It is good news for all who are interested in Islam and Islamic Studies that Stanton's famous book, *The Teaching of the Qur'an* has been reissued by S.P.C.K., London. The first edition was published in 1919 and it has been out of print for a long time, although the need for this kind of study has remained.

In a brief Introduction the author discusses the following topics: (*i*) Preservation of the text of the Qur'an, (*ii*) Divisions of the Qur'an and (*iii*) Growth of the Qur'an in the life and career of Muhammad. This section provides important and helpful background material about the Qur'an and sets forth the author's perspective and understanding of the nature of quranic revelation.

The teaching of the Qur'an is dealt with at some length in six chapters. The first chapter deals with the doctrine of God. The second with the doctrine of revelation. Here is given quranic teaching with regard to angels, scriptures and prophets. Chapter three deals with the doctrine of judgement. Death, resurrection, the judgement day, Paradise, Hell, the Divine decrees etc. are discussed in the light of quranic teaching. Chapter four, on the doctrine of salvation, examines the nature of man, sin, the nature of salvation, the conditions of salvation, repentance, faith, good works, the five pillars of religion and the way of salvation in terms of piety and Islam. This section has much useful material for those who are interested in the practical side of Islam. Chapter five deals with the laws of life. The topics covered here are: (1) Law in the Qur'an, (2) Government of the State, (3) Warfare, (4) Slavery, (5) Criminal Laws, (6) Civil Regulations, (7) Domestic and Social Laws and (8) Ceremonial Laws.

The quranic attitude to other faiths, which is dealt with in Chapter six, is summarized thus: 'Against the Paganism of Arabia the Qur'an is one long protest, which is not substantially affected by the adoption of the Ka'bah with its Black Stone fetish into the central ritual of Islam. The Sabean and Zoroastrian cults hardly come into practical account. It is to the prophets and scriptures of the Old and New Testaments that the constant appeal is made' (p. 72).

The author has provided several useful tools for the study of the Qur'an. Most important is a comprehensive subject index of 45 pages listing both English and Arabic terms in alphabetical order and giving quaranic references according to the Arabic edition of the Qur'an prepared by G. Fluegel in 1958. In addition there is a serial list of surahs, a list of historical dates connected with the Qur'an and a comparative table of verse numberings found in various editions of the Qur'an.

A short bibliography has been added to this edition which was not found in the original volume. While the bibliography contains names of some standard works by non-Muslim Western writers, only a couple of works by Muslim writers are included. One of them, *Islam* by Fazlur Rahman, is a controversial book for which the writer was made to leave Pakistan. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* by Pickthal unfortunately is omitted. It is one of the best English translations of the Qur'an. I wish the bibliography had some standard works by Muslim scholars included in it.

The author has expressed his purpose as follows: 'The reader should be able to estimate correctly the actual teaching of the Qur'an as a whole or in any given part. To serve as a practical help in this

direction is the object of this little manual' (p. 4). This emphasis is as timely today as it was fifty years ago and this book succeeds in giving a concise and objective statement of what the Qur'an says and how it is understood by orthodox Muslims. The writer goes on to say, 'This volume is not intended to be a manual of controversy, though I earnestly hope that it may be of service to those who are called to the great task of interpreting the Gospel to Moslems' (p. 5). While the major portion of the work setting forth the teachings of the Qur'an should not meet with any objections, the Introduction which voices the author's own evaluation of the Prophet and the Book will certainly not be acceptable to Muslims. He regards the Qur'an, not as divinely revealed but as the work of Muhammad which is gleaned from imperfect sources and conditioned by historical events. This view is illustrated when he observes, 'The stories of prophets are greatly distorted. It remains one of the outstanding anomalies of history that the religious genius of Arabia, who staked the truth of his message on the witness of previous Scriptures, should have utterly neglected to verify their contents and should have successfully inspired followers through the ages to like neglect' (p. 42).

The author belongs to the era of confrontation between the Christian missionaries and the Muslim preachers in India. His 35 years of missionary experience was in Central Punjab (now in Pakistan) at a time when orthodoxy was rigid and controversies bitter. When seen in that context, he displays a tempered spirit and a high level of scholarship and understanding. Dr Stanton has undoubtedly made a significant and solid contribution to our knowledge of the teachings of the Qur'an which is still so crucial to our encounter and dialogue with Muslims.

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