

Reviews

Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel, by Aubrey R. Johnson, (University of Wales Press, 12s. 6d.).

In this monograph Professor Johnson deals with a theme which, he confesses in the preface, has engrossed his attention for nearly a quarter of a century. The author's earlier publications were intended to be a preparation for this product of long and intensive study.

The book maintains that as early as the tenth to the sixth centuries B.C., there was an elaborate festival held in Solomon's temple which had roots in an earlier Jebusite cultus and which now celebrated both Yahweh's triumph of creation in the primeval past and the final victory in the future over all that impedes the realisation of the purpose of that creation, namely "the fulness of life for all mankind." Meanwhile, the ritual drama issues a summons to Yahweh's people to hasten the day of this "universal realm of righteousness and peace" by renewed faith and endeavour. The Davidic king is a key figure in this drama because in him "the life of the nation as a corporate whole finds its focus." In the mime belonging to this festival the king, as the Servant of Yahweh, suffers an initial humiliation, but he is granted salvation for himself and his people because of their common "fidelity, devotion, and righteousness." The humble Messiah now becomes, as the adopted son of Yahweh, his enthroned vicegerent on earth, and the "trustee of Yahweh's chosen people."

This picture of the festival grows out of a study of Psalm 72; II Saml. 23, vv. 1-7; Psalms 132, 89, 29, 93, 95, 99, 24, 47, 68, 48, 149, 46, 97, 82, 98, 84, 101, 18, 118, 2, 110 and 21. The careful exegesis of these passages is based on the principles of the unity of the individual psalms (not excepting the notorious 68th) and of the fundamental soundness of the Massoretic text. Foreign texts (Babylonian and Canaanite) are used to illustrate what is already present in the Hebrew psalms rather than to read into the latter extraneous ideas. The author's own translation of the Old Testament passages contain a number of new and suggestive renderings.

That such developed Messianic ideas as are here set forth could be current in Israel during the early monarchy will no doubt come as a surprise to many readers, especially to those whose

conception of a suffering Messiah is anchored to the teaching of Deutero-Isaiah. Equally the universalism of this great prophet of the Exile is presented as an essential feature of the theology of this early festival, and as implicit even in the Sinai-Horeb Covenant. This is a severe challenge to the older view of the pattern of development in Old Testament religion and would give a very early basis for much of the teaching of Christ which was rejected by His own generation. But Dr. Johnson suggests in the preface that his thesis has implications for New as well as Old Testament exegesis. This is a book to read and ponder. The indices are a valuable appendix.

G. FARR.

The Septuagint Bible. Translated by C. Thomson, revised by C. A. Misses. (Falcon's Wing Press, U.S.A., \$6.50).

Here is made available for English readers a translation of the oldest translation of the Old Testament. This volume of more than 1,400 pages, beautifully produced with large type, is very good value for money. The foreword tells us what the Septuagint is and how this English translation arose. The introduction that follows is a reliable account of ancient sources of information concerning the Septuagint with examples to show that Jesus used and Paul used this form of text. The ordinary reader will be interested to compare this translation with the English versions, and will no doubt be amazed at the differences between them. Thus *Isaiah ix. 4*, reads: "And his name is called *The Messenger of Great Counsel.*" Bagster's edition of the Septuagint is increasingly difficult to come by, and the Falcon's Wing Press have done the general reader a great service. This was their aim and they have admirably fulfilled it.

The Cross in the Old Testament, by H. Wheeler Robinson. (S.C.M. Press, 10s. 6d.).

A happy inspiration led the S.C.M. Press to issue at a reasonable price in one volume the late Baptist Principal's three monographs, *The Cross of Job* (revised edition of 1938), *The Cross of the Servant* and *The Cross of Jeremiah*. To have these studies again and together is most satisfactory. Through the scholarship and the spirit of Wheeler Robinson we study some of the greatest portions of the Old Testament as the approach to the cross of our Saviour. Those of us who were unlucky enough not to obtain the works when they were published, and those too young formerly to have obtained them, have now their welcome opportunity. For in spite of the changing fashions of scholarly approach, these studies will always be read.

The Liturgy of the Church of South India. An Introduction to and Commentary on The Lord's Supper, by T. S. Garrett. (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.).

This little book is a guide to the Communion Service of the Church of South India. That service has nine principal divisions, and the introduction describes the Eucharist portions in terms of these themes: Thanksgiving: Communion: Commemoration: Sacrifice: Presence. The commentary is a guide to the methods and indeed the meaning of the principal parts of the service. As an account of the liturgy it is an excellent and clear statement, and must be of outstanding help to those who use this form. It explains the assembly of the best elements in the eucharistic traditions of the uniting churches. Baptists would wish to start much further back, and to raise issues which are naturally assumed in this beautiful little book.

An Order for Holy Baptism. The Church of South India. (Oxford University Press, 1s.).

This little booklet contains both a series of directions for the ordering of the Ordinance and the order of service itself. Provision is made for Adult Baptism and what is really the christening of infants with appropriate responses. Ceremonies after Baptism such as donning white robes, the receiving of lighted tapers, are suggested, though no mention is made of a possible giving of milk and honey. The order of service is rich and helpful, but the tendency is to swamp the action of the Ordinance with words and prayers. Baptists will find the 'Infant' form of the service difficult, though they may well use some of the passages and prayers selected.

G. HENTON DAVIES.

Knife and Life in India, by T. Howard Somervell. (Livingstone Press, 10s. 6d.).

"Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father." Commenting on this promise of our Lord, William Temple wrote: "It is a greater thing to have founded hospitals all over Europe and in many parts of Asia and Africa than to have healed some scores or some hundreds of sick folk in Palestine . . ."

This book is one of the many pieces of evidence on which Temple could have based his argument. It is a revised edition of a book printed in 1940 whose stocks were destroyed by enemy action. The author, a member of the 1922 and 1924 Everest expeditions:

and now a surgeon in Travancore, tells quietly a most exciting and moving story. The almost impossible operations he has undertaken tell of the devotion of the man. There is humour here, too, particularly in the chapters entitled "Letters, and Other Things." But the lasting impression is one of intense concentration on his task and a wonderful devotion to the One who commissioned him. This book is surely among the finest of a fine company of writings on medical missions.

The True and the Valid, by Richard I. Aaron. (Oxford University Press, 3s. 6d.).

This Dr. Williams Lecture Professor Aaron offers as a contribution to the current discussion on the meaning of the adjective 'true.' As the title suggests, he approaches the question from the side of the relations between 'true' and 'valid.' After a careful examination of cases in which the distinction between these two terms is clear and a further discussion of the terms 'logically true' and 'factually true,' the argument leads on to the idea of 'consistency' or 'non-contradiction.' Dr. Aaron asks: "How have we come to base our thinking on the principle that what is inconsistent with itself cannot be true?" He finds three main answers. Firstly, there is the rationalist. "Reason teaches us that consistency is a feature of our universe, that everything is itself (identity) and is not another thing (non-contradiction)." Secondly, there are those who think that this principle of consistency is "a methodological requirement in thinking" and nothing more. The third explanation is that "the principle of consistency is something we have picked up, almost without our knowing, from our traffic with the world in which we live."

That Dr. Aaron tends to favour this third explanation will not surprise those who know the author as an expert interpreter of the Empiricists and, perhaps, the greatest living authority on John Locke. They will appreciate his concluding sentence which claims that if this third theory is correct, "... a factual element would be present at the heart of the logical, and we should have to deny all pure a priori explanations of human thought, along with all absolute distinctions between the logical on the one hand and the empirical on the other."

The lecture does not provide easy reading. Not that there is any obscurity either of thought or expression. But there are here concentration of thought and precision of style which demand careful reading. This is a notable contribution to an important subject by one whom we are proud to hail as a fellow-Baptist.

J. ITHEL JONES.

The Bent World, by J. V. L. Casserley. (Oxford University Press, 21s.).

The title of this illuminating book is taken from a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins which describes the Holy Spirit with warm breast and bright wings brooding over the bent world. For the author does not believe that this is, as some would have it, a broken world but one which slants away from its proper purposes, out of line with its past, astray from its destiny, yet not entirely out of contact with the source of its vitality. The subject of the book is Christianity, Communism and Western civilisation. The first part summarises Russo-Marxist Communism and ascribes its main appeal to its mystique of history. In the second part the author examines the weaknesses and follies of the secular outlook which is hostile to Communism but has divested itself of "downright, dogmatic and institutional Christianity." In so doing it has deified democracy, become obsessed with technical achievement and economic doctrines and activity, weakened itself by nationalistic schisms and by the prevalence of domestic instability revealed in the habit of divorce. Finally the task of Christian theology and the prophetic role of the Church at this critical juncture is presented. To all who cherish the characteristic values and ultimate purposes of Western civilisation this volume may warmly be commended. It is packed with good things. Both lucid and wise, it makes stimulating reading.

From One Lay Preacher to Another, by Arnold S. Clark. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 5s.).

In the form of a series of letters, deliberately written in colloquial style, this extremely useful little book offers to novices in the art of lay-preaching helpful guidance and advice which are the fruit of Mr. Clark's own long experience. Not only preaching itself but every aspect of the work is dealt with and much more ground is covered than the size of the book might suggest. Its pages are full of good, sound, practical common-sense, from which ministers in addition to lay preachers may profit. Written by one who approaches the task of preaching with the highest ideals and a dedicated spirit, this book deserves to be widely circulated, and a study of it will better equip lay preachers for the increasingly important part they play in the life and worship of our Baptist churches.

The Preacher and the Bible, by Hugh Martin. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 1s. 6d.).

In this, the Frank Broughton Memorial Lecture for 1956, Dr. Martin quotes Spurgeon's answer to the questioner who asked him

how he would defend the Bible against attackers: "As I would defend a lion—by letting it loose." One method of letting it loose is that of expository preaching, and this is the central theme of this excellent booklet which is as well-informed, readable and profitable to study as are all Dr. Martin's writings.

Hungry Men, by Leonard Hurst. (Livingstone Press, 5s.).

Inspired by the belief that the Incarnation involves Christians in the task of redeeming the whole of life and by the physical and spiritual needs of millions in the world today (though Mr. Hurst emphasises that there can be no dichotomy between physical and spiritual, individual and social), this book is an urgent plea for all men of good will to rise to the challenge of contemporary poverty, hunger, ignorance, fear. Typical of the grim facts the author presents is the information that two-thirds of the world's population of 2,500,000,000 are living in acute hunger, squalor and misery. It was to save such a world that God sent His only-begotten Son. None who read these pages could be left untouched by Mr. Hurst's burning concern and his call to share the burden which weighs heavily on his own heart. Not only missionary enthusiasts but all Christian men should ponder this book, and it would make an excellent basis for study-circle discussions.

Messages from the Parables, by Carl A. Glover. (Independent Press, 8s. 6d.).

Here, by an American minister, is a new and refreshing series of studies in the parables of our Lord, which are helpfully arranged in five groups to illustrate different aspects of the Kingdom of God. While critical questions are for the most part left alone, no reader will be in doubt as to the scholarship which underlies the expositions. Intended for devotional use, the book presents with clarity and skill interpretations of the parables from which the ordinary reader will greatly profit and which preachers will find invaluable in preparing sermons on these subjects. Not only do these studies help toward a clearer understanding of the parables themselves but, with illuminating illustrations, they also relate their teaching to life in the world today. This is a wholly admirable book, interesting, readable, instructive and spiritually rewarding.

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, by John Bunyan. (S.C.M. Press, 8s. 6d.).

This is one of the "Treasury of Christian Books" series being issued under the general editorship of Dr. Hugh Martin, who writes

a brief but helpful preface to this present volume. Not the least of its merits is that, being attractively printed and produced, it will win new readers from among those who have not hitherto been drawn to the great Christian classics because of their out-of-date and often forbidding appearance. On the contents of the work it would be almost presumptuous to comment, for the spiritual power and literary genius of this account of "the exceeding mercy of God in Christ to his poor servant John Bunyan" long ago established it as one of the really great stories of what Bunyan himself calls "the merciful working of God" upon a man's soul. It certainly merits a place alongside the other treasures which the publishers propose to issue in this series and they are to be congratulated upon making this remarkable account of the evangelical experience available to a new generation of readers.

Minnie Belle, by Loulie Latimer Owens. (Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, \$1.50).

Not many in Britain can be acquainted with the engaging heroine of this enjoyable book. This reviewer, however, happens to be one of that fortunate few. The wisdom, wit and resourcefulness of this delightful little lady has been known to him for some considerable time, and he is also acquainted with her talented creator, Mrs. Ollin J. Owens, of Greenville, S. Carolina. Every month for seven years Mrs. Owens has contributed to *The Baptist Program*—a ministerial journal of the Southern Baptists of the U.S.A.—a brightly written sketch featuring Minnie Belle, wife of Rev. Percy Vere, portraying her humbling Percy when he is proud, cheering him when depressed and helping him cope with the vagaries of Mrs. Longwind, Mrs. Gripes, Deacon Bigwad and other problems arising in his Middleburg Baptist pastorate. The original purpose of the sketches was to point out faults common to ministers in such a way that they would be made to laugh at their own foibles. In this Mrs. Owens has admirably succeeded, and no one will chuckle more over these pages than ministers—except possibly their wives. The Broadman Press has done well to gather these very human sketches together into one volume. Not only is Mrs. Owens a minister's wife herself, by the way, but she is also an officer of the S. Carolina Baptist Historical Society.

G. W. HUGHES.

The Hope of Glory, by H. Lovell Cocks. (Independent Press, 1s. 6d.).

If at one time death and the after-life loomed large in hymns and sermons, these subjects are nowadays too much neglected. For that reason only—apart from the excellence of the contents—this, the 1955 Drew

Lecture on Immortality, should be widely circularised. Its theme is that eternal life involves the redemption and perfecting of our finitude. The author describes the nature of that redemption and shows how home, friendship and church fellowship provide a foretaste of the life to come. Readers will find it helpful and rewarding.

The Treasurer and Church Finance, by John B. Gotts. (Independent Press, 1s.).

Like the perfect minister the perfect church treasurer does not exist. At least, so we thought until we had read this admirable booklet, for its author must evidently be an exception to that rule. Combining economic realism with deep spiritual conviction, this comprehensive guide to the treasurer's task will be found invaluable by those who are new to the office and no less by those who have for long acted in that capacity. Were these practical pages studied and put into practice ministers and churches would have cause to rejoice and be thankful.

Adventures in International Friendship, by E. A. Beaton. (Independent Press, 9d.).

This is the story of how Streatham Congregational Church under the leadership of Charter Piggott sought to contribute to international friendship and to bring the idea of the World Church to life within its own fellowship. Across the barriers of race and colour the hand of Christian friendship has been extended and grasped. Reading this booklet may inspire other churches to similar ventures in making the World Church real to the ordinary church member.

The Devotional Life, by Stephen Winward, *The Office of a Deacon*, by Charles B. Jewson, *The Work of a Sunday School Teacher*, by Jessie Murphy. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 3d. each).

These are Nos. 7, 8 and 9 in the Advance Series of pamphlets. They contain, within the limitations imposed by space, much that is wise and helpful in the way of practical guidance and advice from which those readers for whom they are designed could not fail to profit. It is to be hoped that this useful series of booklets is enjoying a wide circulation among our people. Churches should purchase them in quantity and distribute them where they are needed.

One Hundred Tales Worth Telling, by Albert D. Belden. (Independent Press, 6s.).

From a wide variety of sources these tales, intended for children's talks, have been gathered. Having made practical use of the book this reviewer commends it to teachers and preachers as one of the best of its kind he has met.