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A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

Reviews

Christian Baptism, edited by A. Gilmore. (Lutterworth Press, 27s. 6d.)

The modern discussion about baptism has now assumed considerable proportions and has drawn scholarly publications from almost all the major Christian communities; but the contribution from Baptists has been limited. In an introductory chapter to the book under review, Dr. Payne makes the careful statement that "Baptist scholars have not been entirely silent" and he rightly suggests that ". . . there is a growing feeling that Baptists should share in the present discussions."

This book on Christian Baptism, in which ten scholarly Baptist ministers have written chapters, is a genuine contribution to the modern discussion; it will be welcomed by Baptists as by members of other Christian communities and it should be widely read. The editor is to be congratulated that although the individual chapters are of varying merit they are all fitted into the general theme and they all serve to develop the total argument of the book. Here is a symposium that possesses an inherent unity.

Let it be stated at once that the book presents a powerful advocacy of believers' baptism. Here is a mass of carefully documented scriptural and historical material leading to numerous theological statements and judgments which together form a solid foundation for the practice of believers' baptism. Every Baptist minister ought to study this book diligently; then he will realise the significance of believers' baptism together with the scriptural and historical evidence by which it is justified. Since the Baptist position is presented in this careful, scholarly manner the book may be regarded also as a contribution to ecumenical discussion and it will no doubt be studied with much interest in those areas of the world where Baptists are considering schemes for church unity.

But it must not be supposed that the book provides easy reading for Baptists. We are not here concerned with the challenge of the book to those who hold the Paedo-Baptist position; that challenge is forceful and penetrating. The concern of this review is with the manner in which the book raises questions which Baptists must ask themselves, and continue to ask until more adequate answers are formulated.

Here is one question that needs to be faced. Have Baptists rested their position too complacently upon the practice of the Apostolic Church? "Baptists . . . have tended to assume that because believers' baptism was the practice of the apostolic age, it must be obligatory in all ages." This sentence from the chapter on "Scripture, Tradition and Baptism" puts the position fairly; it then goes on to make the important statement that "essential practice arises out of the very nature of the Gospel itself." That is a theological task! Baptism is to be grounded not merely in apostolic practice but also in the nature of the gospel. Here is a point of view emerging frequently in the book and particularly discussed in the last chapter on "The Theology of Baptism" which is of very real importance.

This has been the point around which so much of the modern discussion, especially in regard to the evidence of Scripture, has centred. It is no longer adequate to cite apostolic practice and to quote *Romans* vi, for in numerous books the practice of Infant Baptism is being justified on the ground of Biblical theology. It is a merit of this book that it does present the New Testament evidence with careful exegesis and that especially in the chapters on the epistles of Paul and on I Peter it does seek to uncover the theological justification for the baptism of believers.

Yet this long section of the book, extending to about 130 pages, is not altogether satisfactory. Old Testament scholars will not be happy to find the discussion of Old Testament themes under "Jewish Antecedents" and will want a more adequate discussion of such theological concepts as the covenant, the people of God, the nature and mediation of Divine mercy, the significance of ritual practices. New Testament scholars will not feel that justice has been done to the significance of John the Baptist to whom a separate chapter might have been devoted. If the theology of baptism must be "written around the two poles of the baptism of Jesus at Jordan and its fulfilment in His death, resurrection and ascension" as the book claims, the work of John the Baptist belongs to Heilsgeschichte and not to Jewish antecedents, and much more must be said about the theological significance of John's baptism within the totality of God's purpose. This would lead to a fuller exposition of the Baptism of Jesus than the book presents, in which more might properly be made of the unique relation of the Son and the Father involving the Son in His work as Servant in which is included the creation of a Messianic community sharing his death and resurrection life.

But the chief lack in this whole New Testament section is the absence of a chapter which would collate the exegetical results, so attempting to assess the development of the doctrine accompanying the rite. What is needed is what has been attempted in the Church

of Scotland report on "The Biblical Doctrine of Baptism" published late in 1958, where the exegesis is not so satisfactory or comprehensive as in the book under review but the theological basis is much more fully stated. Such a chapter would press home to Baptists the question about grounding believers' baptism not upon apostolic practice but in the nature of the gospel.

A second question that Baptists need to face is this: Have Baptists ignored too readily the traditions of the churches and jumped too easily from apostolic practice of the first century to the modern Baptist movement in the 17th century? The historical section in "Christian Baptism" will both raise and help to meet this question.

Baptists will note carefully in the chapter on "Baptism in the early Christian centuries" the factors which promoted the development of the practice of infant baptism; these factors include a "failing grasp of the Biblical doctrine of grace," "an imperfect grasp of the full Pauline conception of the faith-union of the penitent believer with Christ through personal self-committal to a personal Saviour," "popular sentiment expressed in a concern for the welfare of the children of Christian parents," "the doctrine of original sin." Defenders of infant baptism will want to launch a vigorous attack upon these positions, but they are positions well fortified with references to the writings of the Fathers. What is significant, of course, about these assertions is their reminder that changing theological emphases led to changing practices; so we are back again at the intimate association of baptism with theology.

If infant baptism was not established so easily as some defenders of the position have asserted, it is interesting to read in the chapter on "Anabaptists and the Rise of the Baptist Movement" that the Reformers also had serious doubts about the baptism of infants. "Zwingli hesitated longer than Luther and at one point appeared to reject infant baptism." Does that explain some of their fierce opposition to the Anabaptists? It is more generally appreciated today that the Anabaptists were not all fanatics, but do represent certain implications of the Reformers' experiences and teachings carried to their conclusion. The excellent survey of the Anabaptist movement and of the rise of the modern Baptists will be appreciated by many, even though at times it appears to be more a historical survey than a chapter in a discussion on Christian Baptism. But that is justified with the comment that the historian writes to "illumine the work of the theologian"; with this is the important reminder that the renewing of the practice of believers' baptism "was accompanied by a definite ecclesiology." Whatever judgment is passed upon early Baptist desires to re-institute the apostolic church life, their perception that the practice of believers' baptism belongs to a doctrine of the church is important.

The historical survey which concludes with an account of

"Baptismal Controversies 1640-1900" is a reminder that the Baptist position has at times been justified by arguments which we are no longer able to hold, and is important in showing that baptism cannot really be discussed except by reference to doctrines of church, of faith and grace, of the work of Christ and the purpose of God. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this historical survey is that it is in the book at all! It is at least an attempt to recognize that the ongoing life of the Church through nineteen centuries cannot be ignored.

A third question posed by this book and needing to be faced may be expressed in this way: have Baptists placed such an emphasis upon the necessity for personal decision and upon the value of the act of baptism as individual witness as to obscure and at times to lose sight of the realities of God's saving acts in Christ? It is just here that the need for a theology of baptism becomes evident. This book will render a service to Baptists if it deepens the awareness of a need for such a theology and helps to meet the need.

It is undoubtedly a merit of the book that the fundamental theological issues implied in the biblical and historical sections are made explicit in the last chapter on "The Theology of Baptism." Here it is rightly claimed that Baptism "is grounded on the atoning work of Christ which it applies and extends"; therefore "its theology must always be an inference from Christology transposed into its true eschatological key." This approach, of course, implies a criticism of the undue emphasis upon the human elements of decision and witness. "Baptism is a sacrament of the Gospel, not of our experience of it; of God's faithfulness, not of our faithful response to Him . . ." Some will feel that the paradox is too sharply presented, that baptism cannot take place until the proclamation of the Gospel becomes personal experience of Christ and God's faithfulness is realized in personal response. This is true, yet it is equally true that a sharp paradox can serve to make a needed emphasis.

If the necessity for the personal response of faith is not forgotten, we may allow that the needed emphasis is upon the objective realities of God's saving acts. And the two poles of God's saving acts are Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection, and Jesus Christ in His power and glory at the End. If "the pattern of New Testament baptismal interpretation is Christological through and through," this must be the "pattern of the whole Christ seen in its proper eschatological perspective." Hence baptism belongs to the time of the Church, i.e. "it is marked by the dual sign of fulfilment and unfulfilment." Deriving from the work completed by Christ on the Cross it takes its place in the life of the worshipping, witnessing community which is the body of Christ, finding its fulfilled significance only in the realization of the End. So it may be said that "our redemption was accomplished at the cross and resurrec-

tion, it is accomplished at baptism, it will be accomplished at the parousia."

Not all Baptists will accept this theological exposition, for some will assert that it is capable of impersonal, sacramental interpretations which are foreign to Baptist insights. But no one can deny its value as a challenge to Baptists to engage in much more serious theological thinking and to endeavour to give a more solid and objective foundation to the practice of believers' baptism.

Included in this stimulating chapter is a brief attempt to provide a theological explanation of the place of children in the church and the responsibility of the church towards them. What is called "the instinct of the church" in developing a sacramental act in regard to children is seen to be right, as Baptists who hold Infant Dedication services must admit. If then we reject the baptism of infants because the nature of the gospel requires the baptism of believers, we must find some theological justification for the attitude to children which all sections of the Church have adopted. The line of thought suggested is that Christian marriage provides "the link between the children of Christian parents and the Body of the Lord." From the marital union "in Christ" derives the theological relation of infants of Christian parents to the Church, and that relationship is a real, though indirect one." This is a matter that requires much more thought; but at least this chapter starts the thinking.

The final question provoked by this excellent and valuable book is this: what still needs to be done? As far as Baptists are concerned this book may be regarded as the real beginning, but only the beginning of certain tasks. We need a much fuller theological exposition of the total Baptist position. It is inadequate to assert that Baptists generally accept the Apostles Creed, but hold particular views about the Church and its ministry, about baptism and the Lord's Supper, about the obligation for evangelism and the right to freedom; we need an integrated, systematic presentation of the doctrines of grace, of the work of Christ, of the nature of the church, of faith and baptism, of Christian life and hope as these are implicit in the witness of Baptist churches. If that task can be fulfilled, we can then go on to the task of examining, in the light of the theological exposition, Baptist organizations, practices, systems. The results of this second task might be somewhat disturbing, but disturbance often betokens life. Together with these two tasks is a third challenge, namely that we shall understand the relevance of all this discussion to the task of communicating the gospel. Here it is easy to fall into the temptation of regarding all this discussion about baptism as an ecclesiastical logomachy, perhaps even worse, as a sinful escape from the stern demands of discipleship in the 20th century society. If the discussion is valid at all it

must be shown to be essential to our apprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus, and then its results must enrich and guide the proclamation of the gospel to the unbeliever. Here, therefore, is the most searching question implied in this book: can Baptists formulate their experiences and understanding of the Christian Gospel in a manner so coherent in its theological exposition, so clear in the practice of its church life and so characterized by the spirit of Christ that it will be recognized as an essential contribution both to the thought and life of the universal church and in the communication of the gospel to the world.

This book may be a sign that we can look to some of our younger scholars and ministers to labour at these important tasks.

L. G. CHAMPION

Hegel, a Re-examination, by J. N. Findlay. (Geo. Allen and Unwin, London 35s.)

It is well known that since the deaths of Bradley and Bosanquet, a vast revolution has taken place in philosophical thinking, a revolution due to some extent to the writings of Wittgenstein and A. J. Ayer. This revolution has taken the direction of empiricism and semantics, and a profound dislike of system-making, of the *a-priori*, and of "unverifiable" metaphysical speculation in general. This movement has resulted in a neglect of not only the English so-called Neo-Hegelians mentioned above, but also of Hegel himself, as well as a hostility to most of the thinkers of the past. "Yet," says Dr. G. R. G. Mure, in the preface of his *Study of Hegel's Logic* (1950), "there may still be some students of Philosophy . . . who feel a sense of oppression and sterility when they attempt to labour in the confined atmosphere of modern philosophic thought . . . To them it may still seem that 'there is a world elsewhere' and that the wider fields in which great thinkers used to range and sow have long enough lain fallow."

It seems probable that many readers of this short review will share this feeling. The philosophical students among them will assuredly welcome the appearance of Professor Findlay's new and, in many ways, illuminating volume on the great German thinker, the more so because the author, who is a great-nephew of Olive Schreiner, a Rhodes scholar, and a recent President of the Aristotelian Society, and who has been a Professor at King's College, London, since 1951, writes from the point of view of one who has lived through the revolution mentioned above, and was himself a student under Wittgenstein, and who is therefore well qualified to look back at Hegel from a new point of vantage. It is this fact, indeed, which gives the book much of its value and some

advantage, from the point of view of the present day student, over such previous great commentators as Edward Caird, Sir John Baillie, McTaggart and Stace.

After three very important chapters in which Hegel's notion of Spirit and his Dialectical method are dealt with, the author proceeds to give in greater detail a sort of thread which he hopes will help the reader to cope more successfully with the bewildering contents of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the *Science of Logic*, the *Philosophy of Nature*, and Hegel's other major works. The volume closes with a highly important section in which the author attempts a brief but profoundly interesting re-assessment of Hegel's contribution to human thought.

Throughout, he stresses the empirical side of Hegel's teaching and denies that he is "a transcendent metaphysician, one who deals with objects and matters lying beyond our empirical ken" (p. 19), nor that he is "a subjectivist, one who thinks the realm of Nature . . . exists only *in* or *for* someone's consciousness, whether . . . of a mind like ours, or of some cosmic or supercosmic mind" (p. 19). Likewise he denies that "Hegel thought that our mind (or the mind of God), *made* up the world in some witting or unwitting fashion" (p. 19). He thus stresses far less than Stace does, the Idealist principle of the ultimate identity of Thought and Being, which, however hard to accept, if abandoned, seems to lead back to the Kantian Thing-in-Itself. Stace represents this as being absolutely fundamental to an understanding of what Hegel was trying to say, and if so, we seem to be offered here a somewhat watered-down version to fit the spirit of the present age. It is not easy to say who is right, but the present reviewer has always thought that the empirical and realist elements undoubtedly present, had to be "taken up" into a larger Spiritual whole, answering more nearly to Stace's interpretation.

Findlay describes Hegel as the philosopher who took Christianity most seriously, but even the one sentence quoted above from p. 19, indicates how far he was from the Theism of the Christian churches. Indeed, there are many passages in the book dealing with the subject of Teleology, which would place him rather with the Emergent Evolutionists of the Alexander type. One cannot explore this further in a short review in which it is possible to glance at only a few aspects of this thoughtful, well-informed, but very difficult book. Findlay remarks that the reading of Hegel is "mental crucifixion," and one can only add that the reading of Findlay's book is not exactly an easy ride in a Rolls Royce and can scarcely have been intended for philosophical tyros.

W. H. AXFORD

The New Testament Text of St. Ambrose, by R. W. Muncey.
(Cambridge University Press, 1959, 32s. 6d.)

This book belongs to the New Series of Texts and Studies (Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature), edited by C. H. Dodd, and is intended to be correlated with a new critical edition of the New Testament, sometimes called the "New Tischendorf" which is being prepared by a joint Anglo-American Committee.

The introduction deals first with the accuracy of the New Testament quotations of Ambrose, which generally show agreement either with the ordinary Greek reading or a variant, or with some Latin MS. authority. A misprint occurs in one of the examples here: *inveniamus* (p. 14, II *Cor.* v 3) should be *inveniamur* (as on pp li, 83).

It is shown that the New Testament text of Ambrose is predominantly Old Latin, but has several agreements with the Vulgate, and therefore probably represents a comparatively late stage in the development of the Old Latin text. Ambrose is also a witness to certain readings which are peculiar to the Codex Bezae. Some readings in which Ambrose differs from the Textus Receptus have a strong degree of probability. For instance, in *Matthew* iv 4, Ambrose has "*non in pane vivit homo, sed in omni verbo dei*," which agrees with D. Lat. b, Syriac and Jerome.

The introduction then deals with the syntax and vocabulary of the New Testament text of Ambrose. Particularly interesting is the distinction between *amare*, the rendering of *philein*, and *diligere*, the rendering of *agapan*. The distinction seems to be that the former expresses the personal love of human affection, the latter is more used of reverential love towards God and man. In *John* xxi 17 Ambrose points out the distinction with reference to our Lord's own words: "*denique tertio dominus non iam, diligis me? sed, amas me?*"

Examples are given of "Europeanisms" and "Africanisms." We are told that there are marked difference(s) [another misprint here, singular for plural, p. 65] between the European and African texts, but a wise warning is added that too much stress must not be laid on these differences. There are instances of "African" readings in various MSS whose connexion with Africa had never been suspected.

A list of Graecisms is also given: for instance, the use of the preposition *in* with the ablative to express the means, instrument or manner of an action, due to the Greek construction with.

The introduction concludes with Notes on some select quotations from the New Testament; and then follows the reconstruction of the New Testament text of Ambrose.

This volume is of fascinating interest to the textual critic, and an important contribution towards establishing the original text of the New Testament.

A. W. ARGYLE

The Law, the Prophets and the Writings. Hebrew Old Testament.
Edition of 1958 (British and Foreign Bible Society, edited by
N. H. Snaith).

The Bible Society in general and Principal N. H. Snaith very much in particular are to be warmly congratulated upon the handsome new edition of the recently published Hebrew Bible. It is 92 years since the Bible Society printed its first Hebrew Bible, and it is 25 years since this present edition was mooted. The years of the war meant a delay and the proof-reading alone took twelve years.

This is not a revised edition but a new edition of the Hebrew Bible, and it is based on certain Spanish Hebrew MSS in the British Museum known as Or. 2625-7 and Or. 2375. For a long time Hebrew Bibles have been based on an edition printed by Jacob ben Chayyim in 1524-5, called the second Rabbinical Bible. (The first Rabbinical Bible was published in 1516-17 by Felix Pratensis.) It has long been believed that Chayyim's bible was based on Hebrew MSS, reliable and ancient, and the product of a compromise between the two branches, Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, of the Western (Tiberias) Massoretic tradition as distinct from the Eastern tradition in Babylonia. More recent research, however, has shown that Chayyim manuscripts were not very old or reliable.

In 1937 Kahle published the third edition of Kittel's Hebrew Bible, and this, unlike the first two editions which were based on Ben Chayyim's text, was based on a MS dated about 1000 A.D. from the Public Library in Leningrad. Kahle chose this MS as representing the best Ben Asher text available, and as some five centuries older than Ben Chayyim.

Dr. Snaith believes that his Spanish MSS represent the true tradition of Ben Asher, and so his resultant text is very close to Kahle's edition, though based on different MSS. Dr. Snaith's Hebrew Bible includes many improvements. Psalms, Proverbs, and Job, though unfortunately not the prophets, are printed in poetic form. Great care has been taken with the pointing and the accents, and the Hebrew text is very much easier to read. Tables of readings from the Law and the Prophets for all Sabbaths and special Days have been added.

The editor and the publishers have placed many generations of scholars and students in their heavy debt.

G. HENTON DAVIES

The Apostolic Ministry, by Arnold Ehrhardt, Scottish Journal of Theology, Occasional Papers, No. 7. (Oliver and Boyd, London, 8s. 6d.)

There are those whose doctrine of the Ministry turns almost exclusively on how they suppose it to have been constituted in the early centuries. For them this booklet is essential reading. One suspects they will find many of Dr. Ehrhardt's contentions disturbing, if not scandalous, and will not be slow to put forward counter-arguments. The majority of us will inevitably be left perplexed, for who are we to pronounce judgment on such highly technical matters?

The wealth of scholarship which Dr. Ehrhardt brings to the task is truly amazing. Whether it be in Biblical exegesis of both Old and New Testaments, Rabbinic practice, Patristics or Roman Law, he moves with such ease that one is left gasping.

The titles of the four chapters are : *The Meaning of "Apostolic," Ordination, The Apostolic Succession and Episcopacy*. On the face of it the argument is easy to follow, for each chapter consists of five or six theses on which in turn an exposition is offered. The citation of five of these theses may give some indication of what the reader is in for :

The ministry of the Church began in a spirit of strife and dissension. The ordination of the Seven is meant by St. Luke to establish a precedent for all ordinations in the Catholic Church. The ordination of St. Stephen conferred upon him the judicial power which is the property of the Apostolic ministry. The Apostolic succession of ministers in the early Catholic Church was brought into being by Rome's integration of the Jerusalem system of the Apostolic ministry into her own Church organization. Episcopacy is distinguished from all other ministries of the Church by its duty to signify, through the laying on of hands, the continuance of God's Holy Spirit within the institutional Church.

K. C. DYKES