

Reviews.

The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, by H. Kraemer (Edinburgh House Press, 8s. 6d.)

In preparation for the World Missionary Conference to be held at Madras this year, the International Missionary Council invited Dr. Hendrik Kraemer to write this book dealing with the theme of "The Witness of the Church". The author is very conscious of his limitations for such a task, since no one man can be fully acquainted with the problems of all Mission Fields, but the reader is only conscious of the vast range and depth of the author's knowledge, and of his magnificent justification of the Council's choice. That a Professor of the History of Religions should display a profound knowledge of the non-Christian religions, and should give us a penetrating review of the spirit and genius of these faiths that would of itself make this a valuable work, is not surprising, but to this Dr. Kraemer adds the qualities of a philosopher, a theologian, and a statesman. Yet none of these terms, nor all of them together, can adequately describe the great book he has produced, for it is pervaded by a spirit which far surpasses the learning and wisdom it displays. The vision of the Kingdom of God is before the author's eyes, and in his heart burns the desire to see the vision realised. Yet never does he allow his zeal to blind him to facts, and the balanced judgment displayed throughout the work is beyond praise.

A generation ago missionary leaders talked of "the evangelisation of the world in this generation." No longer does Dr. Kraemer hold such an exuberant hope before us, for he has a juster appreciation of the forces ranged against us. He analyses faithfully all the causes of the disillusionment of the hour, whether found in the many troublous currents in our western world, or in the political and intellectual ferment in the lands where Missions are at work. He exposes the strength of the various non-Christian religions, and the weakness often manifest in our witness. Yet if any reader of these lines should suppose that this is a book of despair, and that he will rise from reading it with a sense of the hopelessness of the Christian task, he will be completely mistaken. For while the vastness and difficulty of our task are set forth with the utmost plainness, Dr. Kraemer has given us a book which inspires hope and confidence, a book which reminds us of the greatness of our resources in the Gospel, and of the complete relevance of the Gospel to the needs of men everywhere in this bewildered age.

To traverse all the ground covered in this book would be

far beyond the scope of this review, and the reviewer may be pardoned for singling out those things which seem to him of special significance. That there have been divisions of opinion within missionary circles on larger matters of policy in recent years is well known. Dr. Kraemer does not burk the issues they have raised, but seeks to clarify the confusions out of which they have sprung. He exposes the fundamental error of those who have urged that in Mission lands the Scriptures of the non-Christian faiths should replace the Old Testament as the preparation for the Gospel, and equally the folly of those who have held that by the pooling of faith and experience Christian and non-Christian should co-operate to achieve some new and richer thing. He expresses his firm rejection of the view that proselytism is something of which the Church should be ashamed, and that social and philanthropic service is an end in itself. Of all these rejected attitudes the reviewer has had personal experience, and he is well aware that the author's views will not command unqualified approval in all quarters. But of their essential soundness he is fully assured. Deep and sympathetic study of the culture, faith and outlook of the non-Christian world, the glad recognition that "God hath not left Himself without witness" amongst men, eager participation in educational social, or philanthropic work, are all fully consistent with a deep and firm grasp on what Dr. Kraemer repeatedly calls Biblical realism. The Church is charged with the message that God "so passionately wants contact with man" that He "goes to the length of the Incarnation," and sends His Church forth to testify of "the creative and redemptive Will of the living, holy, righteous God of Love."

Admirably is the many-sidedness of the task of the Church brought out. It has to make individual disciples, gladly and unashamedly; but it has also to establish Churches, and to transform cultures, to touch life at every point, and to refashion all it touches. Before such a task the Church might well quail, until it remembers that it is not self-assigned. Never must we lose a theocentric attitude, or forget the Lord Who sends His people forth to their vast enterprise. Such an attitude alone can save us from the superiority complex which some have shown, and from the false humility of a common seeker with the non-Christian after Truth to which others have turned. "The real Christian contention is not: 'We have the revelation and not you,' but pointing gratefully and humbly to Christ: 'It has pleased God to reveal Himself fully and decisively in Christ; repent, believe and adore'." The very sense of humble wonder that God has committed to him this amazing message will keep the messenger from compromising its grandeur, or forgetting

its uniqueness, for he will realise that to depreciate his message or his Master is not humility, but disloyalty.

For this great book a wide circulation is assured, and it is earnestly to be hoped that it will everywhere exercise its ministry to clarify thought, to quicken faith, to awaken zeal, and that its wisdom, sobriety and confidence will direct the witness of the Church into fruitful channels during the coming years.

H. H. ROWLEY.

The History of Israel: its Facts and Factors, by H. Wheeler Robinson, M.A., D.D. (Duckworth, 5s.)

In no field of theological learning are the Baptists better represented than in that of the Old Testament, and of their scholars in this field none enjoys greater repute than Principal Wheeler Robinson. Hitherto his chief contributions have been concerned with the psychology of the Hebrews and the theology of the Old Testament, where he is without rival amongst British scholars. He has now given us a short *History of Israel* as a worthy companion to his *Religious Ideas of the Old Testament*. Of the need for such a work every teacher is aware. For the advanced student we have the large-scale work of Oesterley and Robinson, whose volume on the pre-exilic period issued from the pen of another Baptist, Professor Theodore Robinson, but we have lacked a short work, abreast of modern scholarship, to serve for less specialised readers. That need is now admirably supplied in this work. Terse and judicious, accurate and informed, it will provide for all who study it reliable guidance through the many problems that surround Israelite history.

Curiously enough, but a few weeks before Dr. Robinson's book appeared, yet another Baptist work on the same subject was published, in Mr. J. N. Schofield's *Historical Background of the Bible*. These two almost simultaneously issued works are so different in design and interest, however, that they will supplement, rather than rival, one another. Mr. Schofield's is more concerned with archaeological material than Dr. Robinson's, which seeks rather to find the spirit of Israel in her history, and which culminates in a chapter on the philosophy of history. Interest in this subject peeps out at several points, as on p. 199, where he says: "The dependence of the future history of the world on the relations of this absolutely unprincipled pair (Herod and Cleopatra) is suggestive, and raises interesting questions for a philosophy of history."

On the vexed question of the date of the Exodus, Dr. Robinson presents a brief but balanced summary of the evidence, and decides in favour of the view that Ramses II. is the Pharaoh of the Oppression. In recent years a number of British writers have favoured an earlier date, and have sought to save the chronology of 1 Kings vi. 1 at the expense of much else in the Old Testament. I am persuaded that Dr. Robinson is right in holding to the later date, and I am glad to find that Mr. Schofield agrees with him in this.

In general, Dr. Robinson's work rests on a critically orthodox view of the Old Testament. Thus he accepts the account of Josiah's reform, and holds the Law-book on which it rested to be the book of Deuteronomy. Here Mr. Schofield differs from him, and dismisses the story of the reform as the propaganda of the historian, while relegating the book of Deuteronomy to a later age.

It is now nearly fifty years since Van Hoonacker argued that the traditional order of Ezra and Nehemiah should be reversed, and that in reality Nehemiah preceded Ezra by about half a century. For many years he secured little following, but recently this view has become almost general, and it is a satisfaction to find that Dr. Robinson attaches himself to it.

Less satisfying is his view that the more likely of the two accounts of Sennacherib's campaign against Jerusalem attributes the deliverance to the approach of the Ethiopians, while the less likely ascribes it to a supernatural visitation of the Assyrian camp. On this view Isaiah's word was completely falsified by events. For Dr. Robinson points out that the prophet in his confidence in Yahweh dismissed with courteous detachment the Ethiopian envoys, and spoke with scorn of the Egyptian aid that was promised. I find it hard to doubt that Isaiah was vindicated, and that the Egyptian aid proved vain, while effective deliverance came through the outbreak of plague in the Assyrian camp. It was the way of Yahweh to use such agencies, and as our fathers found the hand of God in the storm which discomfited the Spanish Armada, so the Hebrews saw in the plague the evidence of the divine intervention in history.

A query may be raised on another point, this time a very trifling point of chronology. On p. 51 it is said that the Ark remained at Kirjath-jearim for twenty years, and it would seem to be implied that this was the total time it was there. The figure, of course, is taken from 1 Samuel vii. 2, where it is given as the time between the placing of the Ark there and the renewal of religious loyalty, leading to the deliverance under Samuel. The figure belongs, therefore, to the same pragmatic chronology as that of the book of Judges, and shares in its artificiality. And

if it provides no authoritative estimate of the period it professes to define, it can scarcely be used as authoritative for a wholly different period, to which it makes no reference. For when the Ark was captured by the Philistines, but a few months before it was placed in Kirjath-jearim, Samuel was still quite young, whereas he had already died as an old man before the Ark was taken away from Kirjath-jearim. In the tradition itself, therefore, much more than twenty years is implied. Radical criticism of the infancy narratives of Samuel might turn the edge of this argument, but it would not at the same time establish the reliability of the "twenty years" of 1 Samuel vii. 2.

Only those who have worked at the problems of the Old Testament know how intricate they are, and the fact that it is only at so few points that I want to question Dr. Robinson's judgment is the strongest evidence of the satisfaction I have found in his work.

On the post-exilic period, with its growing exclusiveness, he remarks with fine penetration, "Within the hard shell of the exclusive community, the kernel of prophetic aims to some extent found protection," while a sound estimate of the importance of Pharisaism dictates the observation that the Samaritan community "shows us what the post-exilic Judaism might have become without the larger outlook and enthusiasm of the Pharisees." In both cases a popular misconception is quietly corrected in a truer appreciation of the spirit of Judaism.

It should be added that the sobriety of Dr. Robinson's judgment is matched by the lucidity of his style. Especially happy is he in some of his epigrammatic summaries, of which a single example must suffice: "The Exodus from Egypt gave Israel a religion; the settlement in Canaan gave them a land; the pressure of the Philistines gave them a king."

The study of this little book will do much more than acquaint the reader with the outline of Israel's story from the beginning to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It will enable him to see the significance of the history, and especially its religious significance. In his final chapter, Dr. Robinson claims to have reconstructed the argument from prophecy in a new way. The older search for verbal resemblances and all its misplaced ingenuity has been, as he says, discredited, but instead of leaving its place vacant, Dr. Robinson points us to the broader evidence of the inner dynamic of the history as the revelation of the power and presence of God. In this he is but doing what the prophets themselves did. For to history they constantly appealed as the demonstration of the being and character of God, and in history they believed the sphere of His activity still lay.

H. H. ROWLEY.

The Historical Background of the Bible, by J. N. Schofield, M.A., B.D. (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 7s. 6d.)

This volume is the work of an able Baptist scholar who has had the advantage of some years' residence in Palestine and Egypt as an Army chaplain and is now the Lecturer in Old Testament Studies and Hebrew in Leeds University. It is written therefore by a specialist who has first-hand knowledge of the Near East. Clearly and skilfully the author discharges his task of providing a popular account of the history that lies behind the Bible record as this is reconstructed by modern scholarship. With due emphasis on significant events, the long story is unfolded from the earliest times to the revolt of Bar Koziba in A.D. 135. The narrative is introduced by a vivid chapter on the geographical background and is rounded off with a brief concluding section dealing with Palestine in the twentieth century. The latter is of special interest for those who wish for competent guidance on the history which is being made at the present time in the Holy Land. The book is well furnished with maps and photographs, which add considerably to its interest and usefulness. A select bibliography of recent literature is provided for those who wish to explore the subject further.

In view of the extensive archaeological researches which have been carried out in the Near East in recent years, it is not the least valuable feature of this book that it makes full use of them and estimates fairly their bearing on the historical study of the Bible. Most of the photographs reproduced in it are designed to illustrate this side of the subject.

No one who studies this book with due care can do otherwise than go back to the Bible with fresh insight into its meaning and message. This is just the volume to put into the hands of those who realise that the Biblical revelation is rooted and grounded in history, and desire to grasp clearly the course and main features of the history that underlies it. But the general reader should be warned that a popular book which renounces technical discussion is bound to appear more dogmatic than it really is. Many of the conclusions given here cannot be taken as final nor do they always represent the majority opinion of the experts. Readers may be assured, however, that this review of the Bible history is in the main that which is generally accepted by modern scholars. Mr. Schofield has shown himself an admirable workman in his chosen field and his book deserves a cordial reception. This is his first book and it warrants the hope that other works from his pen will be forthcoming.

W. E. HOUGH.

The Church through the Centuries, by Cyril Charles Richardson. 255pp. (Charles Scribner's Sons, Ltd., New York and London, 8s. 6d.)

Dr. C. C. Richardson, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, who is Assistant Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary, New York, has taken as his subject one that is bound to receive increasing attention. He sets himself the task of tracing the history of the concept "Church" from the first century A.D. through the changes brought by the Middle Ages and by way of the teaching of the Reformers to modern times. He has produced a readable and graphic narrative, saved from being too general and vague in its statements by useful examples of different types of Christian life and worship through the centuries. Throughout Dr. Richardson has in mind the problems and issues of our own day. He regards as "the really vital problem for Christians to-day: What can and ought the Church to mean for our generation?", and the fact that his own answer to the question is not very clear and satisfying does not mean that he has not succeeded in producing a very serviceable book.

Such a study is important for at least three reasons. In many different parts of the world to-day the question of the right relation of the Church to the Community and to the State is of growing urgency. Secondly, the development of recent years of the "Oecumenical Movement" among Christians has brought into prominence the very diverse conceptions of the Church which are to be found in Christian tradition and still powerful in different ecclesiastical groupings. Dr. Richardson devotes the last fifteen pages of his book to a sympathetic but probably over-optimistic account of recent "Reunion" movements. It is a little too early to assess their historical significance, though very valuable to set them against the long background of Christian history. Thirdly, and of greatest importance, varying conceptions of the Church involve varying interpretations of the Gospel. Not a great deal of attention is given to this aspect of the matter in this book and this is one of its weaknesses. It has been prepared mainly for American readers, but the section on American Protestantism will be found useful by those in this country also, while Nonconformists will welcome the amount of space given to the Reformation sects and to Free Church life generally. There might well have been more extended reference to the expansion of Christianity in Asia and Africa during the last hundred years. The list of books for further reading has some curious inclusions and omissions. For example, the recent Anglican Report on Doctrine is included, but not the series of volumes issued in connection with the Oxford Conference. In spite of these points,

however, Dr. Richardson has produced a useful and stimulating volume, covering a wide field with care and discrimination.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Paul of Tarsus, by T. Reaveley Glover, M.A., D.D. (Student Christian Movement Press. Torch Library, 3s. 6d.)

The Cross of Job, by H. Wheeler Robinson, M.A., D.D. (Student Christian Movement Press. Religion and Life Books, 1s.)

The Student Christian Movement is doing an excellent service by its cheap reprints of former publications, a service especially valuable in cases where the original edition is unobtainable. Dr. Robinson's brief study of Job, marked by his penetrating and always human scholarship, lights up the contribution of the book to the problem of suffering, emphasising the note of the prologue that such suffering fulfils a purpose that exists in the mind and will of God. Dr. Glover's book on Paul is a delight to re-read, full of suggestion both for the student and the preacher, throwing into relief both the greatness of Paul's creative genius and the enormously interesting personality of this man who was "apprehended of Christ Jesus."

W. TAYLOR BOWIE.

A Diagram of Synoptic Relationships, by Allan Barr, M.A. (T. & T. Clark, 4s.)

This unique four-colour diagram is based upon a minute study of the Greek text, and it has been designed to assist the reader of the Synoptic Gospels by giving an accurate presentation of their relationships in a single conspectus, and by line and colour to contribute to the student's understanding of Synoptic questions. The value of the diagram is enhanced by explicit directions for its use and by a brief survey of the Synoptic Problem.

Peace and the Churches, by Irene Marinoff, Ph.D. (Independent Press, 1s.)

This booklet is the first-fruits of the Jessie Stewart Spicer Peace Fellowship, which was founded by the eleven children of the late Sir Albert and Lady Spicer in memory of their mother. Dr. Marinoff was the first holder of the Fellowship, and she sets out and discusses the main factors of the greatest problem of the day. Peace, she suggests, is something far greater than the absence of war, and dynamic peace can only be realised by the

creation of an international order which will guarantee a peaceful revision of treaties and the settlement of just claims without resorting to arms. She recognises that at least three standpoints are sincerely and conscientiously held by Christians: (1) that war is always sin; (2) that there are "just" wars; (3) that the State is a Divine Order and therefore unconditional support of one's country is a Christian duty. Amid the many booklets and pamphlets on this question, this is one of the most useful.

Thirty-five to Fifty, by Albert Peel, M.A., D.Litt. (Independent Press, 5s.)

One reading does not exhaust this book, it will take its place among those to which a return can be made. "Contrasts make up life," says Dr. Peel, and his life has been enriched by many varied interests. Most of the essays have appeared in the *Congregational Quarterly*, and the sectional headings indicate something of their wide range—Statesmen and Scholars, Pastor and People, Men and Books, Work and Play, and others. We should like to quote many of Dr. Peel's quotations and observations, but must forbear.

Somehow, amid all his historical research, and book reviewing, and literary work, and cricket, Dr. Peel found time to maintain an active ministry in one of the most crowded districts of London, and his pastoral experiences are never far from him. "The minister who goes from a wedding to a funeral, or from a home where a life has just ended to another where a baby has just received a joyous welcome, knows well life's light and shade, the black and white squares which make its chequer board."

The cricket chapters are delightful. But Dr. Peel is a Yorkshireman, and to him Yorkshire cricket is cricket. Well, is it? Cricket is a game, not a business of dour efficiency. Owning as loyal an allegiance to another county, I suggest that, for playing cricket as it should be played over a long period of years, Gloucestershire would be first, Middlesex second, and Yorkshire among the also rans! And, of course, the West Country trio, "W.G.," "The Croucher," and Wally Hammond, stand supreme.

EDITOR.