

Reviews.

The Relevance of Apocalyptic, by H. H. Rowley. (Lutterworth Press, 8/6.)

In the summer of 1942 Dr. H. H. Rowley, of University College, Bangor, delivered four lectures at the Vacation Term for Biblical Study held at St. Hilda's College, Oxford. It is substantially these lectures which Dr. Rowley now offers us under the title of "The Relevance of Apocalyptic," and they represent a survey of the Apocalyptic Literature. As such the published lectures are doubly welcome, for the book comes not only to fill a gap in the shelves of most serious students of the Bible, but also to give guidance to us in these days "when apocalyptic commands much interest."

Dr. Rowley begins with a chapter describing how apocalyptic thinking and writing began, and he does this by reference to several of the leading ideas common to this way of thinking. He shows too how Old Testament prophecy, especially its apocalyptic elements, and foreign ideas and influence made their contribution, though neither of these was so important as the actual historical circumstances of the Maccabean age which really gave birth to this literature. This chapter, brief yet copious in illustrative matter, also helps us to understand the difference between eschatology and apocalyptic.

In the two middle chapters of the book the author gives us a brief introduction to the apocalyptic writings from Daniel to the Book of Revelation, dealing with their principal characteristics and content. Of special interest here is the treatment of the Little Apocalypse of Mark xiii., etc., and the lengthier treatment of the Book of Revelation. On the score of usefulness alone one is truly grateful for such a handy and compact reference book to these works.

In the last and most important chapter Dr. Rowley seeks to extract the leading principles of apocalyptic and to show their relevance for us to-day. In particular he attempts a new interpretation of the devil (Beliar) by giving a new turn to the idea of corporate personality, and it is very probable that his suggestion will be acceptable to many people who are concerned with the problem. The apocalyptic writers were concerned with a new order, and so their teaching that new orders are the gift and work of God, and that new orders mean new men is of vital significance for Christians in these days.

In the result then Dr. Rowley is to be thanked for such a useful and clear book on a much neglected and difficult field. Ministers will find it useful also because it will give them a firm standpoint from which to deal with all the extravagancies which they so frequently meet. The new interest in the beginning and the end, manifest in science as well as in religion, places new emphasis on the importance of mythology and apocalyptic, and so the present book helps in the larger issues also. Dr. Rowley is to be congratulated on the timely nature of his book, and the Lutterworth Press, so increasingly important, on a shrewd publication.

G. HENTON DAVIES.

From Jesus to Paul, by Joseph Klausner. (George Allen and Unwin, 15/- net.)

Dr. Klausner is Professor of modern Hebrew and Literature in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. He is a man of immense learning in his own field, and he is already famous for his *Jesus of Nazareth*, to which the present book is really a sequel. In an interesting preface Klausner tells that he began his research into the origins of Christianity in 1907. It took him fifteen years to write his book on Jesus, but from the first he felt that he must go beyond Jesus to answer, if he could, two great questions that seemed to call for solution: first how was Christianity transformed from a small Jewish sect in Palestine to a great non-Jewish world movement? and second why did the Jews so forcibly reject it and adhere firmly to the Jewish faith? It is these two questions that provide the motive for the present book, and for over twenty years Klausner has been wrestling with them. In 1929 much of his material was destroyed in the anti-Jewish disturbances in Jerusalem, and it was five years after that before Klausner could resume the work he had planned. In spite of many difficulties he has at last managed to finish it, and Christian students must be glad that he persevered. Naturally they cannot accept his main conclusions because they differ in their attitude to the fundamental postulates. But the book is a storehouse of information, and considering that the writer is an orthodox Jew, the treatment is wonderfully sympathetic. We approach Paul from the Jewish angle, and that means that we not only understand him better, but we realise also what a mighty transformation was wrought in his whole mental and spiritual outlook by the vision on the Damascus road.

Klausner treats his subject in seven parts, but strictly speaking there are only two, the background and the amazing man who stands out against it.

The background as Klausner paints it is very illuminating.

We have first a discussion of Judaism outside Palestine, and here we are faced with the fact that the Jews of the diaspora were inevitably affected by their Gentile surroundings. They were loyal to the old faith, but they saw it differently, and this does much to explain both Paul and the success he had among proselytes and "God-fearers" when he preached the new faith. Next, we are shown a picture of pagan thought and religion, the collapse of the old religions, and the tendencies in both philosophy and religion (with its mental cults and strong sacramentalism) all of which, from another point of view, made possible the "transformations" of the Jewish religion of Jesus into the Christianity spread by Paul. Next, the literature is analysed, both in Hellenistic Judaism and the New Testament, and lastly we come to an examination of the Christian movement before Paul came into it. This for Klausner (and for us) is really the crux of the book. Was pre-Pauline Christianity fundamentally different from Christianity as Paul later on taught and disseminated it? Klausner really answers Yes, though he points out that even before Paul's time Christianity was beginning to be something different from the religion that Jesus Himself taught, because, under Hellenistic Jewish influence (for example in a man like Stephen) it was being modified. Jesus, Klausner insists, was not a Christian but a Jew, and His message was designed for Jews. He no doubt considered Himself the Messiah, but He was the Jewish Messiah, and He never intended to found a new religion, a religion that would be so different from Judaism that Jews could not accept it and at the same time be loyal to the traditions of their fathers. It is clear that this demands a reading of the mind of Jesus that Christians would not endorse. Klausner sees Christianity as something other than the religion of Jesus. It began with Jesus, but it was modified by the entrance into the primitive community of Hellenistic Jews and finally transformed by the remarkable man we know as the apostle Paul.

To Paul Klausner devotes the second half of his book, and the discussion is both interesting and illuminating, especially on the side of Paul's debt to Judaism. The last chapter discusses the rather intriguing question, What is Paul for the Jews? We know what Judaism thought of him in the old days, and Klausner quotes some of the statements made. He says, as we would expect, that there is much in Paul that Judaism must reject. But when all is said Paul is still a Jew, and, Klausner says, a Jew of outstanding ability. One gathers that Klausner admires him. Though he cannot follow him, Klausner tries to look at him with real understanding and sympathy, and his work gains as a consequence, Paul, he says, was a man of unusual personality with a combination in himself of contradictory qualities that were never quite har-

monised, strong hatred and deep love, masterfulness and humility, above all mysticism and practicality. Paul thus took the centre of the stage inevitably, and his influence transformed Christianity from the inside while his administrative power and adaptability to conditions enabled him to work out a missionary policy for the Church that made it rapidly triumphant. Item by item Klausner analyses Paul's central ideas both theological and moral, and in his own way he shows how Paul turned the crucified Jesus into the exalted Son of God, the Lord and Head of the Church.

Christians, of course, will feel about Klausner's analysis—as they do about Gibbon's famous "causes" for the spread of Christianity—that the vital thing is completely omitted. But none the less they must feel grateful for all the knowledge that has been brought to bear on the subject, because it enables them to see familiar ideas in new lights, and anything that does this for the New Testament is of value. Klausner himself sees little hope of the Jews as a people embracing Christianity, but, so long as scholars on both sides can write about each other understandingly and sympathetically, we must inevitably come nearer together.

HENRY COOK.

The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England, by Ernest A. Payne. (S.C.M. Press, 6/-.)

The need for a fresh survey of the history and principles of the English Free Churches has been felt for some time. The well-known books by Silvester Horne and W. B. Selbie were both written before the first World War, and since the former appeared the religious climate of England has undergone a change. In 1900 Nonconformity was "excited, confident, eager," and, perhaps, even a little strident. To-day it is hesitant and a little discouraged. It is this situation which has drawn Mr. Payne into undertaking a fresh evaluation of the Free Church contribution to English life. His task was by no means an easy one. At one and the same time he had to tell the story of a movement covering more than three centuries, to keep his eye at each period on the contemporary background, and to bring to life the chief actors. He has succeeded brilliantly. Behind the book is a wide range of reading from which he has made a judicious selection. Within the space at his disposal, he cannot tell us all about everything; but what is remarkable is not how much he has left out but how much he has got in. The technical difficulties of handling and presenting so much material have been surmounted with remarkable success. The style is clear and concise, displaying considerable verve at times. We cite the following as an excellent piece of compression: "Take away Milton and Cromwell, Owen and

Baxter, Fox and Bunyan from the records of seventeenth-century England and what living voices remain? Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne? The Cambridge Platonists? These are fainter voices, whereas the others still speak directly to our modern need in language that the simplest may understand."

Many readers will probably turn eagerly to the chapter which deals with the period 1900 to 1939. "Hesitant" is the epithet Mr. Payne uses to describe it, realising how difficult and dangerous it is to describe. With the turn of the century, the golden age of Nonconformity came to an end. It is not easy to be precise about the causes underlying the decline. It is part and parcel of that drift of civilisation from religion which has affected the Established Church quite as much as the Free Churches. In the great industrial centres of the North the Free Churches began to decline from the time that the capitalistic system and political Liberalism were challenged by the working classes, for whom the Labour Movement became (to quote the words of one of its leaders) "the new religion which gives a chance to all." Mr. Payne has no first-hand knowledge of conditions in the industrial North, where the decline in Free Church life is most pronounced, but he writes of the whole problem with a refreshing candour which may ruffle the complacency of some who dislike facing facts.

What of the future of the Free Churches? Mr. Payne realises that this is a question which cannot be answered without an appreciation of the contribution of the Free Churches to English life. He shows how rich and varied this has been, stressing such things as their contribution to the foreign missionary enterprise, hymnology, education, philanthropy, the trade-union movement and the cause of religious and political liberty. He brings out the abiding value of their stress upon personal conviction in religion, their belief in "gathered" churches, their emphasis upon the priesthood of all believers, and their endeavour to relate religion to life. These, he is confident, are things which must survive, otherwise the life of England will be sadly impoverished. He notes how profoundly the political life of Germany has been influenced for evil because it never had a thorough-going religious reformation such as the Separatists carried through in England. All these considerations provide Mr. Payne with solid grounds for believing that English Nonconformity and its American counterparts are not so bound up with a capitalistic order of society, and with Liberalism, which was the political faith of capitalism, that they are doomed to extinction, now that we are passing to a planned economic order. In any new order of society, the Free Church stress on the sacredness of human personality will be required. He nevertheless refuses to join the facile prophets of an early revival, nor will he dogmatise about the form it will take.

He favours a much closer union of the Free Churches along the lines suggested by Dr. Shakespeare. Here some of his Baptist readers will hesitate; and so will some Methodists. Methodist union has not been the unqualified success its advocates confidently predicted. Our own view is that many, but by no means all, Methodists would rather re-unite with the Church of England than go into a united Free Church. All Free Churchmen will, however, agree with Mr. Payne that what they need is leaders who realise that we are standing at one of the major turning-points of history, and who can face the new world with understanding, courage and creative imagination, and think in "global" terms.

A. C. UNDERWOOD.

Shorter Notices.

The Drum Language of the Lokele Tribe, by John F. Carrington
(*African Studies*, Witwatersrand University Press, Vol. 3,
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In our last number we called attention to an important paper by Mr. Carrington on "The Tonal Structure of the Kele Language." Here we have the first fruits of the important studies he has been making in the Drum Language of one of the main tribes in the Yakusu area. It is a fascinating article and shows Mr. Carrington's great gifts for investigation of this kind. It is much to be hoped that the book on African Drums which he is understood to have prepared will soon be made available in this country.

George Edmonstone, a Great Baptist Benefactor, by J. A. Allwood
(Carey Press, 6d.)

The Baptist Union, the Baptist Missionary Society and the Devon Baptist Association all benefited under the will of Mr. George Edmonstone, who died in 1888. In Devon Mr. Edmonstone's name is still kept green by grants mainly for church extension from the trust fund created out of his bequest. Mr. Allwood has done well to tell the story of his life of service, first under the East India Company and later in Torquay. There will be many who will find interest and inspiration in these pages.