

## Reviews.

*The Fellowship of Believers*, by Ernest A. Payne. (Kingsgate Press, 3s. 6d.)

In this age of many questions, thoughtful Christians cannot escape a fresh consideration of the important question, what is the Church? For such a task, Mr. Payne's well ordered and carefully documented book is a welcome help. The purpose of the book is clearly defined, as Mr. Payne tells us that his pages are "intended as no more than a preliminary submission of some of the historical evidence that has to be considered and some suggestions as to its bearing on modern issues" (p. 14)—a modestly accurate statement of the contents. In thus enabling us to make an historical approach to our problem, Mr. Payne is rendering considerable service, for he quotes from documents and books all too little known among Baptist folk, and the evidence which he presents is so skilfully selected and ordered that his conclusions emerge with a clarity no reader can mistake. Both preachers and scholars who seek to clarify in their minds and message the Baptist doctrine of the Church will be indebted to Mr. Payne, and will be especially grateful to him for the extensive quotations which he gives; they are a most valuable feature of his book. The two appendices, A and B, also are a useful addition, while appendix C may stimulate further reading on this subject.

When the book is considered as a whole, however, certain gaps appear upon which information is needed in the building up of any complete doctrine of the Church. The titles of the chapters—The Subject and the Sources; The Visible Church; The Ministry of the Church; The Lord's Table; Baptism; Some Modern Issues—show that most of the ground is covered; but one notices the omission of any section dealing with worship apart from the two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Table. Does it denote a lack of perspective in our Baptist tradition that a book of six chapters can give two to a consideration of rites and none to a consideration of worship? The changes which have occurred in customs of worship in recent years suggest that this part of our churchmanship needs thinking about as much as any other. The same applies to the Church meeting, about which Daniel Jenkins has written so forcibly. Is this inherent in our Baptist witness? What place did it occupy in past days in the

life of our churches? That Baptists need "to recover a more serious churchmanship" at public worship and in the Church meeting as well as at the Lord's table is a conclusion Mr. Payne makes on page 89, but references to worship and the Church meeting are all too brief. Again, as Mr. Payne points out, the development of such work as that of the B.M.S. or the B.U. implies a larger conception of our churchmanship. He writes: "Due recognition of special gifts and special functions has always been an essential part of true churchmanship" (p. 48). What does this imply for the development of local organisations e.g. Sunday school attached to the local church? Such work is an important part of Church life to-day, and many are expressing their churchmanship through it. Is this a right conception? What is the place of leaders of organisations in the Church? What is to be the attitude of the Church to them and their work? This brings us also to the consideration of the many social and public works in which Baptists are engaged. What is the relation of these to their churchmanship? Many Baptists have been prominent in educational and social work, and have regarded this as an expression of their Christian life. How far are the boundaries of the activity of the fellowship of believers to be carried?

We turn now to ask, what does the historical approach along which Mr. Payne so surely guides us teach us about the Church? Four answers may be suggested:

1. The variety of Baptist practice and theory. We must not forget that in us two streams unite, that of General and that of Particular Baptists. There were differences between these groups, and within each group there were differences of custom and thought. "There has been variety in our life and sometimes tension. Things stressed in one generation have sometimes fallen into the background in the next, only to be revived later on. It is a rich and diverse tradition to which we are able to appeal" (p. 16). This variety is interesting, and a realisation of it is a safeguard against a dogmatism not unknown among Baptists; but it makes any appeal to history inconclusive.

2. The isolation of individual congregations is not inherent in Baptist witness. Dr. Wheeler Robinson calls attention to this in his preface! The presence of numerous Ministers at an Ordination, the experiment of Messengers, the formation of Associations, the drawing up of Confessions by groups of Churches, all suggest the wider fellowship. These are not "optional and secondary," but a "necessary expression of Christian fellowship" (p. 27). Mr. Payne summarises his chapter on the Visible Church by writing: "These various citations make clear that from the seventeenth century Baptists

have regarded the visible church as finding expression in local communities of believers who constitute themselves churches by the election of officers, the observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and Christian discipline, and who find an extension and expression of their life in free association, first with other churches of their own faith and order, but also with all other groups of Christians loyal to the central truths of the apostolic Gospel" (p. 32).

3. The importance of the Ministry in the Baptist life. It would be a shock to some in our Baptist churches to-day to read that the Ministry is necessary to the Church. We do well to ponder sentences like these: "The seventeenth century Confessions make it clear that no company of believers would have been regarded as properly constituted as a church or in a full church-state until officers or ministers had been chosen" (p. 35). "Church officers, duly chosen and commissioned, were regarded as necessary to the proper functioning of the church" (p. 49). "Our fathers would surely have questioned whether a community of people could rightly be described as a church if they had not some kind of regular pastoral oversight, and if the sacraments, and in particular the Lord's Supper, were not regularly observed among them" (p. 82-83).

4. The need for understanding the meaning of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The emphasis of Baptists seems to have been upon the qualifications of the individual to take part in these services and upon the mode of administration. Writing about open and closed Communion, Mr. Payne remarks: "It has occupied far more attention in Baptist circles than have theological questions regarding the meaning and significance of the Lord's Supper itself" (p. 54); or again about Baptism, he writes: "Baptist apologetic has inevitably tended to concentrate far more on questions of the subject and mode of Baptism than on questions of meaning" (p. 70). This has clearly brought the danger of needless divisions, and implies a re-orientation of Baptist thought so that the meaning of these services becomes central. These conclusions suggest that Baptists need to do a good deal of constructive thinking about the nature of the Church.

Such reflections upon these results of the historical approach to our conception of the Church inevitably raises further issues. Ought we Baptists to give more attention to the Ordination service at the beginning of a ministry? Would this make the work of the ministry more significant in our churches? Should the Ordination service, as something separate from a "Recognition" service, be an act of the whole Baptist fellowship and not merely of the local church? Questions about the ministry raise questions about the relationships of congregations to one

another, and their responsibilities for one another, and the place of each congregation in the fellowship of Baptist churches. Is the General Baptist experiment of Messengers a valuable one for us to develop? It seems hardly accurate to say that they "exercised functions analogous to those entrusted of recent years to the General Superintendents appointed by the Baptist Union" (p. 37). Dr. Whitley makes it clear that the Messengers were first appointed as evangelists, and then continued oversight over the churches they had founded; while the Orthodox Creed of 1678 quoted by Mr. Payne on page 37 calls them bishops, and suggests that "they have the government of those churches that had suffrage in their election." This is a much wider office than that of the Superintendents with their association with the Sustentation Fund. The conception of the Messenger is a more worthy and dignified one, and closer to the function and spirit of the New Testament Church. The book itself raises questions about Baptism and the Lord's Table and their relation to church membership and their connection with the experience of the Holy Spirit (p. 75). All this brings us to the fundamental question: What is our standard for any decisions upon the ordering of the life of the Church? Is it the New Testament? But scholars are agreed that many different practices can be justified on the basis of the New Testament. Is it to be historical precedence? But history shows many different experiments. Dr. Wheeler Robinson asks: "Is there any test of methods of organisation and government save that they should be the best to promote the faith and service of the Gospel?" (p. 6). Is this what Mr. Payne means when he says that Baptists "have claimed the guidance of the living Spirit of Christ present within His Church, a guidance inspired, confirmed and held in check by appeal to the Scriptures and, in particular, to those of the New Testament. The final court of appeal has been neither to church pronouncements nor to history and tradition as such, but to the conscience of the Church inspired by the Spirit of God as a result of the study of the Bible" (p. 17)?

The fact that Mr. Payne's book raises more questions than it settles is all to the good if it leads to systematic and prayerful thinking about these questions. At the same time, we must not fall into the danger of concentrating so much attention upon the Church as if an institution, its officers, rites and customs were all-important in the Christian life. That would not be true to our Baptist witness. It may be asked, indeed, whether the word "churchmanship," which appears so frequently in the book, properly belongs to Baptist vocabulary. The title is an altogether happier phrase! Our task in developing our doctrine of the Church is that of exploring the meaning of personal faith in

the saving love of God and of the fellowship of the Kingdom created by that love through our faith. Christians will be to the world what the soul is to the body not through dwelling on their churchmanship, but by developing the fellowship of believers.

L. G. CHAMPION.

*Son of Man and Suffering Servant* A Historical and Exegetical Study of Synoptic Narratives Revealing the Consciousness of Jesus concerning His Person and Mission, by Edward A. Mcdowell (Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee. 216 pp., \$2.00).

It may be helpful in introducing this book to give some details concerning the author. Dr. Mcdowell is the son of a Baptist minister and a product of Furman University and the Southern Baptist Seminary. He has had a very varied experience as a reporter, as private secretary to Governor Mcleod of South Carolina, and as pastor of several churches. Since 1935 he has been a teacher at the Southern Baptist Seminary, where he is now Associate Professor of New Testament Interpretation.

The scope and purpose of the book are indicated in the subtitle. The author seeks to establish at least three conclusions of importance: "(1) The patterns which Jesus accepted for His character and mission as Messiah coincide with the picture of the Messiah to be found in the higher prophetic stream of the Old Testament; (2) There is a consistency in the character and purpose of Jesus which may be traced from the beginning to the end of His ministry; (3) The consistency of Jesus had its origination in His knowledge of the character of God gained by reason of His unique relationship to God the Father, and in His firm adherence to the principle of redemptive love as seen in the character of the Servant of Jehovah pictured in the latter part of the book of Isaiah" (p. 15).

The method adopted is to choose some outstanding phases of the ministry of Jesus and to examine these "historically and exegetically." Hence the chapter headings are: The Decision in the Wilderness, The Declaration at Nazareth, Jesus and John the Baptist, Caesarea Philippi (two chapters), Jerusalem, Beyond Calvary.

Dr. Mcdowell indicates some of the critical positions which he accepts in his introduction. He rejects the conclusions of the Form Critics, accepts Streeter's four-document hypothesis, and makes very sparing use of the Gospel of John "because it presents its own peculiar problem."

This book is somewhat uneven and difficult to assess. There are many examples of painstaking and careful investigation,

some passages of suggestive exegesis, and a reverent appreciation of the profound issues which underlie the problems in the Gospel narratives which are expounded. But, on the other hand, a number of points call for criticism. The book would certainly benefit from compression, particularly in the disproportionate passages sometimes devoted to the Old Testament background, and in the reiterations of the consistency of Jesus. The style is frequently too verbose and rhetorical for a work of scholarship. (Perhaps the worst example is that on p. 133: "There leaps from His lips a sentence that is like a dart from the depths of a cauldron of fire, pointed with a flame that will sear and burn as it falls upon the ears of those who stand by and listen in paralysed amazement.")

There is no discussion of the following controversial matters, all of which seem to demand treatment in such a study as this: Is "The Son of Man" a corporate conception in the New Testament? Does it not possibly mean simply "man" in one or two of its occurrences? Is the idea of the Messianic secret a literary device? Is the Last Supper a Passover meal? It is surprising that there is no reference to the work of C. H. Dodd, T. W. Manson, Vincent Taylor and R. H. Lightfoot, nor to any German scholars except Schweitzer.

Dr. McDowell sometimes puts forward new suggestions which are interesting, but I do not feel that the following are convincing: That Jesus, by His rejection of the second temptation, renounces the Temple (34-35); that there were two visits to Nazareth (47); that John the Baptist made a distinction between the Messiah and "The Coming One" (77); that the "coming" of the Son of Man "in the clouds with great power and glory" in the "Little Apocalypse" of Mark xiii. and parallels is not the Parousia, but the end of the Jewish state and Temple worship and "the emergence of His Gospel as a real factor in history" (118-123). The sending forth of the angels to "gather together His elect from the four winds" (Mark 13, 27) "may well be applied to the conversion of men of every nation to the Gospel" (123). With regard to the triumphal entry, Dr. McDowell finds it easy to defend Matthew's mention of two animals (an ass and a colt). "This presents no difficulty, since the animal upon which Jesus rode was one that had never been ridden before; that is, a colt—a fact which would explain the presence of its mother" (154). Most scholars are agreed that Matthew misread Zechariah ix. 9 as a reference to two animals instead of one.

The textual problems in Luke's version of the Last Supper are inadequately dealt with. The author accepts the longer "Neutral" reading, and makes the unlikely suggestion that in

Luke's thought Jesus would be drinking the second cup "in the dispensation of the Kingdom of God" (the Lord's Supper thus signalling a "coming" of the Kingdom).

Two renderings of the Greek of Luke's Gospel must be briefly mentioned. In Luke 17, 23 *mian tw'n hemerw'n* is translated "the chief (or first) of the days" (of the Son of Man), and so referred to the Parousia. This rendering of *mian* in an ordinal sense is possible, but not probable here. It is rejected in J. H. Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Vol. II., p. 439, but considered possible by Bruce (*Expositor's Greek Testament*) and Plummer (I.C.C.). J. M. Creed adopts the more usual translation.

The rendering of Luke xix. 31 (and parallel in Mark), *Ho kurios autou chreian echei* as "the owner of him has need" (p. 155), is not impossible, but seems strained, and is not supported by any commentator or translator to my knowledge.

There are the following misprints: "Israelities" (p. 29), "deliberately" (p. 48), "corroborated" (p. 154), "martrydom" (p. 157).

The book is well produced and pleasant to read.

D. R. GRIFFITHS.

*The Missionary Message of the Old Testament*, by H. H. Rowley, D.D. (Carey Press, 5s. net.)

Those who were at the B.M.S. Summer School in September, 1944, at Cambridge, will welcome the printing of these four lectures. It is well that they should reach a wider public. Dr. Rowley expresses the hope that "this little study will not alone stimulate interest in the missionary message of the Old Testament, but will evoke some response to the claims of that message, and the fulfilment of the mission. It should be said at once that this is a book to be read and studied, especially by those who are eager to share in the rich heritage of our Christian Faith. One might go further and wish that it could be put into the hands of many for whom most of the Bible, the Old Testament certainly, is a closed book, regarded as having no relevance to our present day.

The first chapter considers the work of Moses, and rightly judges that in that work there are profoundly significant ideas out of which the post-exilic ethical monotheism could and did arise. In the Exodus, God was revealing Himself as a Saving God and an Electing God. Israel was saved, not for any inherent virtue, but in her weakness and need, in order to reveal the Saving purpose of God. She was chosen that she might serve God. Failure to serve meant renunciation of her election. Moses was himself a missionary to the Israelites in Egypt, and led them to that great Covenant, a pledge of loyalty to this Saving God.

(This chapter would be worth reading if only for the sake of the ideas involved in Election and Covenant.) Thus Missionary enterprise is shown as not humanitarian only, nor primarily ethical, but as the inevitable outcome of real religion. Where there is no true religion, there will be no effective missionary activity—and the converse is true.

Chapter II refers mainly to the pre-Exilic prophets and some of the Psalms and contains some helpful translations of the passages referred to. We doubt the statement that the goal of obedience was painted largely in terms of pleasant ease, although Old Testament religion consistently suggests that only as man lives in a right relation with God can he know the full bounty of the natural world. Surely, too, an effective missionary purpose must be concerned first with the Glory of God, from which alone can come an enduring compassion, free from sentimentality and patronage. Dr. Rowley's exposition of Isaiah ii. 2ff, Micah iv. 1ff, should be most carefully considered. It is full of importance for our day.

We read with gratitude the treatment of the Servant Songs in chapter III, and felt, as Dr. Rowley obviously feels, the great significance of these words for the Church, the New Israel, the Body of Christ. It is with these implications that the closing chapter is concerned, and the argument moves with a fine sense of inevitability towards the three closing paragraphs, which none can read unmoved by their challenge and inspiration.

A. S. HERBERT.

*Humanism and Christianity*, by W. S. Urquhart. (T. & T. Clark, 11s.)

This is a valuable and important book. It consists of an expanded form of lectures delivered in the University of Edinburgh in 1939 under the Croall Trust by the Emeritus Principal of the Scottish Church College, Calcutta. The object of the lectures is "to develop the thought that the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to be the guiding principle of every action of our lives, and that it provides the only world-view which is religiously and philosophically satisfying." Dr. Urquhart may be said to stand in the great Alexandrian tradition. He is eager to relate the Gospel to the best thought of the day and to grapple with the intellectual problems of the age. After describing the scientific determinism at present so widely current, he considers the attempts to escape from it by way of psychology, by way of humanism, and by way of naturalistic religion in the modern west and the ancient east. Each of these attempts is carefully set forth and acutely criticised. The lecturer then turns to Barthianism and devotes four chapters to an examination of



its very different answer to the religious problem. This is the real heart of the book. The argument is close and searching. Dr. Urquhart fully appreciates the motives that have led Barth and Brunner to their characteristic emphases. He believes, however, that "revelational authority does not depend upon abruptness, but rather upon harmony and congruence with the rest of our experience," and he points out patiently and persuasively how unsatisfactory are the paradoxes upon which Barthians rely. His intimate knowledge of Indian religion enables him to produce a number of interesting formal parallels between Barth and Sankara. The closing chapters expound a higher Christian humanism based upon the kinship of God and man in the Incarnation. Dr. Urquhart's pages contain many excellent quotations, the fruit of very wide reading, and also many striking observations of his own. War-time difficulties and delays have led to a number of uncorrected printer's errors which should be put right in the second edition which this candid and competent piece of Christian apologetic deserves.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

*Heart in Pilgrimage*, by E. R. Micklem. (Independen Press, 2s.)  
*Worship and Social Progress*, by Wilfred Allott. (Allen and Unwin, 2s. 6d.)

It is an encouraging sign in Free Church life that a good many books on prayer are being issued. Mr. Micklem's little volume is an excellent addition to "The Forward Books." He reminds us that the primary meaning of the verb "to pray" is earnest entreaty, and goes on to do a much-needed work in answering the widespread contemporary notions that petitionary prayer is superfluous, unscientific, or an irreverent attempt to persuade God to change His plans for our personal convenience. It is a merit of Mr. Micklem's argument that he puts petitionary prayer firmly in the setting of worship. In the remaining chapters, Mr. Micklem expounds prayer as fellowship between God and man, as intercession, and deals with the place of corporate prayer. *Heart of Pilgrimage* is an ideal book to put into the hands of thoughtful young people.

Baptist readers will find *Worship and Social Progress* much less to their liking. They cannot but consider the author's analysis of the human situation inadequate, and his understanding of the message of the New Testament gravely defective.

JOHN O. BARRETT.

