

## Reviews.

*Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*, by H. Wheeler Robinson (Oxford University Press, 15s.).

It is well known that for a number of years before his death in May, 1945, the late Principal Wheeler Robinson had been planning to round off his life's work by producing a volume on the theology of the Old Testament. The publication under review incorporates the Speaker's Lectures delivered before the University of Oxford from 1942 to 1945, and was designed to serve as an introduction to this major work. As such it deals with the *form* or (to use the alliterative style which took Dr. Robinson's fancy in later years!) the "methods and material" of revelation; and it was the author's intention that the *content* of the revelation should form the theme of the second volume.

The present work falls into seven parts, of which the first three deal with the way in which Nature, Man and History were found to be useful for the purposes of revelation. Part I comprises three chapters, of which the first two are pleasantly descriptive of the Hebrew conception of Nature and its dependence upon God in terms of creation, conservation and ultimate transformation; but unfortunately they lose something of the vitality which they ought to have communicated because they are based upon a somewhat indiscriminate stringing together of passages detached from their context and, what is more, their *Sitz im Leben*, and this is the more strange in that the author recognises the importance of this approach in connection with Part II, i.e. the discussion of God and Man. Chapter iii, on "The Nature Miracles of the Old Testament," begins with a fairly detailed study of the three Hebrew terms which are normally used to denote a "miracle," and concludes with a discussion of the relation of the nature-miracles to history and, in particular, to the Exodus. Here the author seeks to make the point that the mere physical event did not become the religious fact which we know as a "miracle" until it found interpretation as an act of God, just as moral evil does not become the religious fact of "sin" until it is interpreted in terms of one's relation to God. This is attractive so far as it goes; but how far does it go? What guarantee have we that the interpretation is not purely subjective but actually corresponds to reality or is true? This, alas, is a question into which the author does not enter; but that he was alive to it is clear from his reference to what he calls "a ministry of illusion," as discussed in Chapter ii of *Redemption and Revelation* under the title, "The Ministry of Error."

Part II comprises four chapters, in the first of which the author discusses the thought of both a contrast and an inter-relation between God and Man which finds expression in terms of spirit and flesh, holiness and sin (in both their ritual and their moral aspects), and grace and repentance. This is written with admirable clarity, but is so summary in its treatment that the discussion of the relevant terminology is sometimes almost exasperating (if that is not too unkind a word) in its dogmatic brevity, notably in the case of such important terms as *zedakah* (sic) and *hesed* (sic). In the following chapter, which deals with human nature and its divine control, Dr. Robinson is back in the rich and fertile field of Hebrew psychology which he made so peculiarly his own and tended to so great advantage; and this in turn leads to a discussion of morality and religion, which follows the now customary practice of emphasising the part played by the great eighth-century prophets in defining the moral character of Yahweh. The author rightly points out that "this does not mean that the eighth-century prophets invented the morality, or that they were the first to see moral elements in the divine personality" (p. 80); but when he goes on to claim that the "two outstanding moral qualities of *mishpat* and *hesed* carry us back to the Hebrew clans of nomadic times" (p. 85), the present writer cannot but protest that this represents a one-sided emphasis which fails to pay due regard to the Canaanite strand in Israelite language and thought. Chapter vii, on "Human Destiny," completes the argument of Part II; and this too covers familiar ground in its discussion of Sheol (which is rightly regarded as by no means a late importation from Babylonia), and in its reference to an emergent anticipation of a life beyond death which was based upon faith in an inviolable fellowship with God. Accordingly the author brings this section to an end with a discussion of the meaning of "faith," making the point which recurs time and again throughout this section and indeed forms the basic principle of the book, i.e. that "the unit of revelation is not the event but the interpreted event" (p. 69), and that the response of faith on the part of man is a necessary factor in the process. In view of the importance thus attached to the subjective element in the revelatory act this discussion of the meaning of faith is strangely brief and can scarcely be said to do justice to the theme, and one is left here (as elsewhere in the book) with a tragic sense that the distinguished author was aware of a race against time.

Part III treats of "God and History" and opens with a peculiarly interesting and original chapter on "Time and Eternity," which involves a close and detailed study of the relevant terminology and thus stands in somewhat marked contrast

with the comparatively cursory treatment of the terminology associated with Chapter iv, i.e. on the characteristic inter-relations of God and Man, and the foregoing discussion of the meaning of faith. This is followed by a chapter on "The Prophetic Interpretation of History," which is valuable for its attempted summary of the general pattern of interpretation which may be discerned in the work of the great prophets of the eighth to sixth centuries, but leaves the reviewer once again with a sense of frustration on finding that the basic question as to the validity of their interpretation has been left on one side, and is only partly met by the author's later chapter (xiv) on "The Theological Validity of Prophecy." The concluding chapters of this section, i.e. on "The Day of Yahweh" and "The Election of Israel," are amongst the best in the book and, especially in the latter case, will repay careful reading.

In Parts IV-VI the author passes from his discussion of the divine side in the act of revelation, or rather (and the distinction is important) from his discussion of the material discovered to be useful for this purpose, to what he calls the interpretative process on the part of man as this takes place through the differing functions of priest, prophet and "wise man". On the whole these chapters are admirable for their clarity and conciseness, and as they follow familiar lines do not call for special comment except in so far as they reveal the writer to be fighting something of a rearguard action in defence of the "orthodox" critical reconstruction of the history of the religion of Israel which is associated with the names of Graf, Kuenen and Wellhausen.

Part VII brings the book to a close with a brief discussion of the response of the psalmists to the divine revelation which is too slight and summary, and pays too little heed to the extraordinary diversity of the Psalter to be altogether satisfactory, and a final chapter which by contrast is excellent in its summary of the conclusions to be drawn from the argument of the book as a whole. With real penetration the author exposes the claims made on behalf of both Church and Bible to be an external guarantor of the authority of revelation by showing that each has its roots in some form of intuition which involves the response of faith and so renders unjustifiable any claim to complete objectivity. In short, the principle which recurs again and again throughout the book is here expounded at length, i.e. that there is a subjective as well as an objective factor in revelation, and that the revelatory act is to be found in the resulting unitive process. In the reviewer's opinion this is sound, but it is difficult to escape the impression that in his anxiety to do justice to the subjective element the writer has done less than justice to the objective factor, and that in part this is due to a concentration

upon events and their interpretation to the neglect of ideals and their realisation. It is significant that in his discussion of the priest, prophet and "wise man" as the media of revelation it is only the prophet who is thought deserving of a chapter on the validity of his function!

The volume has much in common with the early work which has made Dr. Robinson's name familiar to theological students for more than a generation, i.e. *The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament*; and like this (but unlike some of his later publications!) it makes easy reading. The reason for this, of course, is that in the main it is purely descriptive; and at this stage of the work which the author had in mind the deeper philosophical problems with which one is ultimately concerned did not arise. To be sure he gives us some indication of the way in which these problems were to be tackled, and fortunately we are able to supplement this with his earlier works, especially *Redemption and Revelation*. Nevertheless one cannot but close the book with a profound sense of tragedy that we should be robbed of the leadership of so incisive a thinker in the field of Biblical study, still robust in mind if not in body, at a time when so many younger thinkers are succumbing to the temptation to pay lip service to the findings of literary criticism and then virtually to ignore them in the interest of a return to the Scholastics or the Reformers.

A warm expression of thanks is due to the Rev. L. H. Brockington and the Rev. E. A. Payne for the promptitude and the care with which they have seen this important work through the Press and thus made it available to an eagerly expectant public.

AUBREY R. JOHNSON.

*The Re-Discovery of the Old Testament*, by H. H. Rowley (James Clarke and Co., 10s. 6d.).

"If these pages," writes Professor Rowley, "can help any reader to a fuller apprehension of the religious meaning of this wonderful Book (the Old Testament) they will have fulfilled their purpose." It may be said at once, that that purpose has been fulfilled. All who read this book carefully and receptively will rejoice that the book was written and will be grateful to the writer. It is a book for which many have been waiting, and will meet a need that has been frequently expressed by ministers, preachers, teachers in Sunday schools and day schools, and a great many thoughtful people in the churches. While the patient work of scholars in many fields of study has brought to the student of the Old Testament a new reverence for those Scriptures,

it has, perhaps inevitably, created in the minds of many a feeling of uncertainty. This has caused some uncritically to repudiate the work of scholarship in a mistaken fear that their reverence for the Scriptures would be shaken thereby. Others, seeing "the fence about the Law" broken down, have mistaken the fence for the Law, with the result that the Old Testament has been practically ignored in Christian devotion. The result has been, in both cases, an impoverishment of Christian experience and an imperfect apprehension of the New Testament. It is good, therefore, to have a book which will guide us in our approach to the Old Testament and help to expound it.

The qualities which distinguish this book are, honesty, balanced judgment, lucidity, and reverence. There are many elements in the Old Testament which perplex the untrained student, e.g. the variant traditions, the presence of lower ethical and spiritual ideas alongside the loftier ones, doctrines such as that of election of which present-day thought is impatient. These perplexities are honestly and helpfully faced. The balanced judgment is particularly noticeable in the two chapters which discuss the bearing of archeological discovery on the Old Testament. They display a moderateness which might be commended both to those who would try to "prove" the truth of the Old Testament from Archeology and to those who would dismiss from the Old Testament anything which conflicts with archeological hypothesis. The rapidly increasing knowledge of the four millennia B.C. serve but to make clear the distinctive contribution of the Hebrew and Jewish religion. Lucidity of expression is a welcome aspect of this book; the argument is clear and clearly expressed. There are a few rare exceptions to this, e.g. the beginning of the second paragraph on p. 59, where the double negative would have been more cogently and correctly expressed by the simple statement "The Old Testament writers believed that religion and history were related." But in general, the lucidity of expression is an indication of the author's clarity of thought and mastery of his subject.

Above all, the book is a religious book in the best sense of the word. Only a man of wide scholarship could so well have surveyed the field of Old Testament study; but the scholarship is servant to a reverence for Him Who has revealed Himself in the history and life of Israel. Chapters iv and xi, "The Meaning" and "The Goal of History" have a special relevance to our own day. Chapters viii and ix, "The Revelation of God" and "The Nature, Need and Destiny of Man" awaken in us a new awareness of the inescapable challenge and effective grace of God to man.

A. S. HERBERT.

*The Old Testament Interpretation of History*, by C. R. North.  
(Epworth Press, 1946. 10s. 6d. pp 210 + xv)

Writing in 1940 in *From the Stone Age to Christianity* Professor W. F. Albright predicted a greatly increased interest in the problems of history, partly because of the crisis through which international civilisation was passing, a crisis which urges men to look for some solution to explain the course of events and at the same time give them a basis from which to forecast the future; and partly because of the influence of Professor A. J. Toynbee's great work *A Study of History*, which began to appear in 1934. Just as, for the individual, life is meaningless until we begin to find a pattern in it, so for the historian there is no satisfaction so long as he attempts only to be objective and detached and writes history as a concatenation of happenings. Wheeler Robinson used to tell his students that a historic fact was an event plus its interpretation, and it is the interpretation, enabling the historian to fit the jig-saw pieces into a pattern, that gives meaning and interest to history.

The latest book to justify Albright's prediction comes from Professor North, who, from his long service to the Society for Old Testament Study, is perhaps one of the best known of British Old Testament scholars. The book is in the Fernley-Hartley series of lectures—a series through which the Methodist Church, with enterprise and generosity Baptists might emulate, encourages Biblical scholarship. The book contains an excellent survey of the history and literature of the Old Testament. Five chapters are then devoted to an interpretation of the philosophy of history behind the works of the Prophets, Deuteronomists, Priests, and Eschatologists. Chapter 8 discusses the meaning of the Christian claim that God is revealed in history, and that history is itself revelation. The book closes with two chapters discussing the beliefs, so fundamental to the Old Testament, that God chose Israel as his servant and Zion as his city.

There are perhaps two criticisms that should be made. There is sometimes danger of too dogmatic a statement, especially when the author deals with an idea with which he disagrees: on page 190 he says, "It can not be too strongly insisted that there is *no historical connection* between the Tammuz myth and the Cross and Resurrection of Christ," and then he goes on to say that the higher religion of the Old Testament may be called a sublimation of the myth, which was a *praeparatio evangelica* enabling the gospel of the resurrection to win its way; surely this does constitute some "historical connection." The second criticism applies to much Old Testament writing since Wellhausen. It is the tendency to treat each different section of the Old Testament as presenting a unified attitude and forming part of a

straight line of development. Thought today is, however, moving away from the Hegelian philosophy which lay behind Wellhausen's theories, for modern research seems to require us to think in terms of action and reaction, without the limitation of Hegel's synthesis. Religion does not move by finding the synthesis between two opposites but by the more tortuous way of following the road as it winds from one side to the other. As Donne put it:

On a huge hill,  
Cragged and steep, Truth stands, and he that will  
Reach her, about must, and about must go;  
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so.

There are so many threads and colours, from so many different sources, blended in the tapestry of the Bible giving to it its richness and its universal appeal; we must beware lest, in our desire for what is simple and stereotyped, we look at it through glasses that make us colour-blind.

The book is clearly written and interesting. It will be used with appreciation both by those who are puzzled as to the value of the Old Testament for religion today, and by those who have learned to draw inspiration from the depths of its devotional life. It says many things that cannot be reiterated too often by writers on the Old Testament.

J. N. SCHOFIELD.

*The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience*, by Geoffrey F. Nuttall (Blackwell, 15/-).

It has long been recognised that, in view alike of the intrinsic importance of the subject and of the attention paid to the other elements of the Christian Creed, the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit has received less than justice at the hands of theologians. Dr. Nuttall has now joined the increasing band of scholars who have sought to remedy this neglect, and he is to be warmly congratulated upon the contribution he has here made. His book (approved as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Divinity at Oxford) is distinguished by a precision of scholarship and a range of learning which are as unusual as they are welcome. And it is written, moreover, with a commendable ease and freshness of style. One is inevitably reminded of the earlier work on a similar theme by Dr. Rufus Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in 16th and 17th Centuries*. Dr. Nuttall's particular concern however is with English Puritanism, especially within the years 1640-1660, and notably with the early Quaker Movement. His material is presented "synoptically," for while he recognises that

there would have been a certain advantage in a chronological treatment, he maintains that a logical analysis presents a truer picture of the situation. The main body of his book consists of ten chapters (each of which is prefaced by a summary of the contents) arranged under such headings as: "The Spirit and the Word"; "The Witness of the Spirit"; "The Liberty of the Spirit"; "The Government of the Spirit," and so on. These are preceded by an illuminating historical introduction, and followed by a "Critical Conclusion," three Appendices, a Select Bibliography and an Index of Names. The book is admirably produced, and the whole gives an impressive picture of some of the fresh springs of religious experience opened up by the Reformation, and of the spirit of "independent, sincere, lay 'searching'" which Dr. Nuttall regards as characteristic of the early seventeenth century in England.

One of the main contentions of the book is that the seventeenth century Quakers represent the last and most radical stage of a development whose earlier phases are exhibited in the various forms of "Puritanism." The latter term is here used to describe "a movement towards immediacy in relation to God," which took place both within and outside the Established Church. True, the Quakers themselves repudiated the name of Puritan; but Dr. Nuttall claims that they "repeat, extend, and fuse so much of what is held by the radical, Separatist party within Puritanism that they cannot be denied the name or excluded from consideration." His thesis is supported by such a wealth of evidence drawn from many sources that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he has established his case. At the same time, it must be confessed that his use of the term "development" awakens now and then a sense of uneasiness, as tending to suggest an over-simplification of the issue—as if some kind of natural process were at work of which George Fox and his friends were the inevitable fruit. The author is perhaps not to be held responsible for the sentence on the dust-cover of his book, but it aptly illustrates the danger referred to: "Quakerism . . . here appears in its immediate historical context as largely a *natural* development of radical Puritanism." May a Baptist also confess that he would have welcomed some further evidence for the statement made on page 13 that "The Baptist position falls between the Congregational and the Quaker?" It would be interesting to know whether the judgment that the substitution by Baptists of Believers' baptism for Infant baptism "did much to weaken the sacramental idea" (page 96) is intended to apply to the religious situation in general or only to Baptists.

In his concluding assessment of the evidence Dr. Nuttall makes some valuable comments upon the fresh approach to old



problems made possible by the progress of historical disciplines, and the growth of new insights. Amongst these he mentions the validity of the intuitive apprehension of reality, and the importance of the concept of personality. These place us in a more favourable position than our fathers to appreciate the Quakers' insistence upon the immediacy and the universality of the Spirits' presence and activity, while relieving us of the necessity of accepting all that they claimed under these heads. The possibility is thereby opened up of framing a theology more truly expressive of the fulness of the New Testament experiences of God in Christ.

Dr. Nuttall's book is deeply interesting and important for its own sake. But it will also do much to inspire further study of a period of English History whose religious importance for the world it would be difficult to over-rate.

R. L. CHILD.

*William Carey, especially his Missionary Principles*, by Dr. A. H. Oussoren (A. W. Sijthoff's Uitgeversmaatschappij N.V., Leyden, 1945, 16s.).

This is an unusual and significant book, in many ways one of the most remarkable literary products of the war years so far as Baptists are concerned. It consists of an academic dissertation of more than three hundred pages by the minister of the Reformed Church at Middelburg, Holland. Dr. Oussoren is a hero-worshipper of Carey, whom he recognises as "one of the greatest missionaries of the world" (p. 269). The work was completed, he tells us, under war conditions and while he was ministering to a large parish. It was printed, and in English, in 1945.

Let it be said at once that it is a pity it was not possible to get the proofs corrected in England, and some of the inevitable faults of style rectified. Even more is it to be regretted that war conditions prevented Dr. Oussoren from visiting England and familiarising himself with our Baptist tradition before the publication of this work. This would have saved him from a number of minor errors and misunderstandings. We feel this the more because Dr. Oussoren has dealt with his subject so painstakingly and with such sympathy, and because he clearly has a number of important matters to raise, to several of which the biographers of Carey and writers of B.M.S. history have so far given little attention.

The book is in four parts, the first two of which occupy together nearly 250 pages. The first section gives a survey, based on the biographies of J. C. Marshman, George Smith, S. Pearce

Carey and Deaville Walker; much more space is given to the background of the time and to Carey's early years than to the final decades. The second part discusses Carey's missionary principles and those of his contemporaries, special attention being given to the Pietists and the Moravians. A third section of twenty pages attempts a comparison of Carey's principles with those of Zinzendorf and the Moravians. The four final pages set out very summarily the missionary principles of the Dutch Reformed Churches, as adopted by the Synod of Middelburg in 1896, with notes indicating how far Carey and Zinzendorf would have accepted them. There follow four valuable appendices: (1) the full text of the Form of Agreement adopted at Serampore in 1805 (of which a few summary sentences are now often but not very accurately described as the Serampore Covenant), (2) the German text of a letter written by Zinzendorf to a missionary in Madras in 1732 (i.e. prior to the sending out of the first missionaries from Herrnhut) and the instructions prepared for Moravian Missionaries in 1738 (also in German), (3) extracts from the Baptist Confession of 1688, which is similar to that of 1677 and is really a Baptist adaptation of the Westminster Confession, and (4) the German text of the twenty-five rules for missionaries as first issued in 1782 by the Moravian Bishop Spangenberg.

Enough has been said to show that this book brings together much most interesting material and that the careful study of Carey by someone outside the Baptist community may still bring to light new riches, as was the case with the books by George Smith and Deaville Walker.

Dr. Oussoren has clearly made it desirable that Carey's contacts with the Moravians be more closely investigated. He speaks of "his close connection with these brethren in his youth and also when he was in India" (p. 13, cf. p. 131). "He had studied their Periodicals and had without doubt met their missionaries in Northampton" (p. 161). It is true that there was a Moravian congregation in Northampton from the closing years of Doddridge's life; it is also true that Carey produced a copy of the Moravian *Periodical Accounts* at the historic meeting on October 2nd, 1792. There are clear evidences that the founders of the B.M.S. carefully studied Moravian missions and that the Serampore Agreement was based on Moravian practice, with deliberate rejection by Carey of the idea of a "house-father" for the settlement. But did Carey meet Moravian missionaries in Northampton? Perhaps, though it does not appear to us that Dr. Oussoren has himself any definite evidence. He probably also goes beyond the so far established facts in trying closely to link Carey and Bunyan (p. 122). Fuller and Ryland talked

to the young man not about Bunyan but about Jonathan Edwards, who nowhere appears in Dr. Oussoren's pages.

In spite of his veneration for Carey Dr. Oussoren can be critical, for he remains a strict Calvinist in practice as well as theory. On the question of baptism, he asserts that "the significance of the promises of the Lord to all his people living under the Covenant was not clear to William Carey" (p. 211). "It is a pity that William Carey did not agree with the principles of infant baptism" (p. 267). Had Carey defined more carefully what he meant by a missionary, what should be the relationship between ordained missionaries and those sometimes described as auxiliary-missionaries (doctors, teachers, artisans, etc.), what the attitude of the missionaries should be towards the Committee at home, much later trouble would, in Dr. Oussoren's opinion, have been avoided. In this connection the author might well have given more emphasis to the fact that Carey was a practical pioneer and not a theorist.

Again and again, Dr. Oussoren comes back to the wideness of Carey's vision. He draws attention also to the importance of his work as a translator. His study of the *Enquiry*, the Serampore Agreement, and Carey's letters to his son Jabez and others, leads him to point out that the primary missionary motive for Carey seems to have been obedience to the command of Christ. "He listens to the authority of Holy Scripture, . . . his missionary work is founded on the firm, objective ground of the Word of God" (p. 251). Here, Dr. Oussoren thinks Carey a safer guide than the Pietists who were moved chiefly by compassion. On the other hand, the Moravian insistence on the local church itself as the missionary unit has, in the long run, advantages over Carey's idea of a society working independently. The author here touches issues that are likely to come increasingly to the fore in the next few years.

Among the many interesting minor points are the details Dr. Oussoren gives of the Dutch group who supported Carey and his friends between 1822 and 1836 (pp. 196-199, 217-18).

It remains only to congratulate Dr. Oussoren, to thank him for his work and to express the hope that he will be able to continue his researches into missionary history.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

*Newman the Church Historian: A Study in Christian Personality*, by Frederick Eby (Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1946. \$1.75).

Albert Henry Newman was one of the outstanding Church historians of his day, and the most notable produced by the Baptists of America prior to K. S. Latourette. His gifts won high praise from Harnack any many European scholars, and his major works, though written between forty and fifty years ago, wear well. *The History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* first appeared in 1894, *A History of Anti-paedobaptism to 1609* in 1897 and *A Manual of Church History* in two volumes in 1899 and 1903. The second of these contains what is still the most discriminating and authoritative account of Anabaptism in English. Dr. Eby of the University of Texas, Newman's son-in-law, here provides a welcome biographical volume, based on material first assembled by Dr. O. C. S. Wallace, at one time Newman's pastor in Toronto. The future historian was born in South Carolina in 1852. From 1877-81 he taught at Rochester, New York, where he had been trained and where he had the priceless advantage of access to the library of the famous J. A. W. Neander. Then for twenty years, the most fruitful and probably happiest years of his life, Newman was at Toronto Baptist College which, in 1891, expanded into McMaster University. In 1901, to the surprise of his friends, and, as it would seem, unfortunately, he was persuaded to go to Baylor University, Texas, and remained there in a Southern Baptist stronghold, where culture was "in a pioneer stage" (p. 55), till 1921. After the publication of his *Manual* he appears to have felt that his work as a student and writer was finished. From 1922-27 he was at Mercer University and then for eighteen months back at McMaster. The last four years of his life were spent in retirement at Austin, Texas. Newman was of a shy and serious disposition He was never ordained, but remained to the last a simple hearted Christian believer, deeply respected by his students. This is not a very satisfying or satisfactory biography, but it is certainly well that some record of so distinguished a scholar should have been produced, and there is much that may be learned from it. A useful appraisal of Newman the man and the historian written by Dr. Whitley in 1934 occupies pages 100-102, but it is preceded by the extraordinary statement that "while German and American scholars vigorously pursued the study of Church History, no attention was paid to it in England."

ERNEST A. PAYNE.