

## Reviews.

*Modern Theories of the Atonement*, by Thomas Hywel Hughes, M.A., D.Litt., D.D. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 15s.)

In this posthumously published work the author gathers up and presents what is plainly the fruit of many years of extensive reading and thinking upon this theme. The method he has chosen is to summarize and comment briefly upon the views held by some thirty or more theologians, and he has arranged them in various categories according to the main features of their respective doctrines. Thus, the views of P. T. Forsyth, H. R. Mackintosh, Dr. J. Scott Lidgett and V. F. Storr are classified under the heading of "The Satisfaction Theories." R. W. Dale James Denney, J. K. Mozley and Lewis Edwards are cited in support of the "Penal Theories." The "Ethical Satisfaction Theories" are represented by the work of McLeod Campbell, R. C. Moberly and A. E. Garvie; the "Moral Influence Theory" by Hastings Rashdall, Dr. R. S. Franks and Miall Edwards . . . And so on, until in the penultimate chapter, brief references are made to "Some Other Representative Thinkers," among whom Canon Grensted, Principal Sydney Cave, the Bishop of Oxford and Dr. W. R. Maltby are named, with many others. (The classification of some of the writers mentioned strikes one at times as a little odd, and Dr. Hughes himself seems to have been somewhat embarrassed at including Dr. Wheeler Robinson merely under "Attempts at Re-Statement.") The whole is rounded off by a final chapter in which the author outlines his own constructive view.

The method of treatment is admirably designed for any reader who may want to have within a brief compass a survey of recent thought upon the subject of the Atonement. As such Dr. Hughes's book is a remarkable example of condensation, and should prove a useful supplement to the standard histories. It offers an introduction to the writers mentioned, which both puts the reader in touch with the main outlines of their thought, and compels a further acquaintance with them if full justice is to be done to them. To say this, however, is only to recall the fact that no summary can be at best more than a skeleton. One must go to the writer himself to get the real power and significance of his thought.

The most interesting part of the book for the general reader will probably be the last chapter, and not a few will regret that the author did not develop his own constructive statement at greater length. In particular one would have been glad to have his reflections upon those further aspects of the doctrine which engaged the attention of the late Professor O. C. Quick in his book *The Gospel of the New World*, which must have been published just too late for inclusion in this survey. As Dr. Hughes rightly remarks: "Many of the theories we have examined, as well as numerous suggestions offered in the effort to rectify their weaknesses, are at fault, not in being untrue, but rather in being inadequate (p. 308)." His own exposition makes no pretence at being exhaustive, but it does show how the development of thought about the Atonement has tended both to amplify and to correct earlier theories. The most challenging feature of Dr. Hughes's statement is the thought that, as he puts it, God's effort at Atonement "was an attempt to rectify a situation in which He felt himself implicated, and so find solace for His moral sense (p. 318)." The implications of this idea are far-reaching, as are also those suggested by the analogies which Dr. Hughes cites from the laws of physics and biology. It is to be regretted that his death has now deprived us of the fuller treatment which these ideas seem to need.

In any reprint, certain errors which have been noted call for correction, e.g. *Positive Preaching and Modern Mind* (p. 38n); "he comes perilously near" (p. 53); "for this reason it has been suggested" (p. 196); "we treat sin as a matter of personal relations and as effecting the affectional bond" (p. 313).

R. L. CHILD.

The valuable article on Bewdley Baptists by the Rev. A. J. Klaiber, B.D., which appeared in our July issue, has been issued as a pamphlet by the Carey Kingsgate Press (Price 1s. net). We hope it will thus achieve an even wider circulation and stimulate further study of Worcestershire Baptist life.

*Christianity and Fear*, by Oscar Pfister. (George Allen & Unwin, 30s.).

More than twenty years ago in Marburg, the reviewer met an American Quaker who had come to Germany to study the psychology of personality. After a Christmas visit to Zurich he returned full of enthusiasm for a Swiss pastor he had met there, and before long had arranged to study under him. The pastor was Dr. Pfister, who already had a growing reputation as a psychologist and psycho-therapist and whose share in the sharp controversies over the genuineness of some of the claims of Sadhu Sundar Singh had made his name even more widely known. The substantial volume before us was published in Switzerland in 1944. It gathers up the work of nearly forty years and has as its sub-title "A Study in History and in the Psychology and Hygiene of Religion." It is in places repetitive and certain of the points made can be properly appreciated only by reference to their fuller treatment in other writings of Dr. Pfister's, but this book is of great interest and considerable importance, and the translator, W. H. Johnston, is to be warmly thanked for making it available to English readers.

Dr. Pfister's aim is to show by the application of what he calls "depth psychology" and the methods of mental hygiene which he has worked out, why it is there have been so many unattractive aberrations in the history of Christianity, so many savage and uncharitable disputes, so much mutual cruelty. He seeks to show "the necessity of a general concentration of the Christian religion and way of life (and consequently of the whole of dogmatics, ethics and ecclesiastical practice) upon the unity of love through faith and faith through love which was the essence of the teaching of Jesus and of which His life was the pattern." The first 150 pages outline his view of the nature of fear. The central section of 350 pages attempts a historical survey of Judaeo-Christian religion in terms of fear-psychology. The last 150 pages offer what the author regards as the truly Christian solution of the problem of fear. The causes of fear can, in Pfister's view, all be traced to hinderings of the impulse towards love. Jesus, he believes, wanted to liberate the Jews and mankind in general from the domination of fear caused by guilt, of uncharity, of the spirit of compulsion emanating from the Rabbis and the Pharisees, and of the rule of sin. "In a sense every Christian who is cured of the fear caused by guilt and of the resultant neurotic symptoms is converted, so far as the religious experience is concerned, from the Jewish to the Christian faith." This decidedly Marcionite standpoint colours Dr. Pfister's discussion of the New Testament and his survey of Christian history. Paul achieved a brilliant success in

overcoming his personal fears, but was much less successful in his theology and in his practical teaching. Subsequent developments provoke Dr. Pfister's severe criticism. The greater part of Catholic ritual he regards as a collective neurosis. Among the Reformers, Luther is the typical sufferer from fear. This he overcame in part by a return to Paul's doctrine of grace; but his emphasis was on faith rather than on love. Zwingli fares somewhat better at Pfister's hands; he was "a child of the morning and his vocation was to shine." Calvin, on the other hand, "gravely misunderstood the meaning of the divine will"; he may be compared to "a vast volcano, capable of pouring out smoke, lava and ashes and of burying entire regions, but those who have climbed to the summit must marvel at the infinite panorama of beauty they see by the side of wasted black fields." The Swiss Anabaptists receive high praise for their emphasis on Christian charity and their rejection of the doctrines of predestination and reprobation. Though unable to stimulate the highest ardour and zeal, the Enlightenment was closer, in Pfister's view, to the teaching of Jesus than orthodoxy had been. True Christian teaching should aim at the optimum realisation of love. Christianity must be delivered from "its neuroticisation at the hands of neurotic Christians."

Such a summary, while it aims at presenting fairly the main line of the argument, does not do justice to what may be learned from many of the detailed comments on particular persons and events, and from the case histories which Dr. Pfister quotes from his own experience as a psycho-therapist. His psychological approach is no more satisfactory or final than an approach which ignores fear-psychology, but this book deserves careful reading by working ministers as well as by theologians and historians.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, vol. ix, No. 3 (Oct. 1949), contains an interesting account by J. J. Evershed of the Free Christian—formerly the General Baptist—Church, Billingshurst, which was once connected with the Six-Principle Baptists. Rev. G. Bolam continues his account of the Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Ministers of Derbyshire, Notts. and S. Yorks. There are notes on R. M. Montgomery (1869-1948), Thomas Newman (1655-1742) and the Stourbridge Presbyterian (Unitarian) Chapel, while H. L. Short describes the main stages in the evolution of Unitarian church-building.

G.W.H.

*Poets, Wise Men and Seers*, by L. C. Latham, 5s. *From Bible to Creed*, by J. K. Mozley, F. J. Sheed, E. C. Rich, E. A. Payne and T. H. Robinson, 6s. (Books iv and vi in the series *The Bible and the Christian Faith*, edited by Dr. C. B. Firth, Ginn & Co., Ltd.).

A Christian schoolmaster recently admitted to me that, while he was uneasy about the time he spent during his Divinity lessons upon the kings of Israel and the purely geographical details of Paul's missionary journeys, he could not see how else to tackle the subject without becoming "controversial." "What else can one do?" he asked. This new series provides an answer. The title itself is significant of its attitude. So is this uncompromising statement by the editor—"The ultimate purpose of the series as a whole is, like that of all Christian writing however insignificant, nothing less than that which the author of the Fourth Gospel set before himself; These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing ye may have life through his name." Those who teach Scripture in schools know that a Divinity lesson can be as secular as any other. Luke's Gospel, treated purely as a "set book" can be as unreligious as Caesar's Gallic Wars, and some Commentaries for Schools seem designed to make it so. All the more welcome, therefore is the present series which, while thoroughly historical in approach, keeps the religious purpose of Bible teaching clearly in view.

The series, when complete, will contain six volumes, designed to meet the need of Grammar School pupils from forms one to six; and with each volume there is a reference book for use by the teacher. Books four and six, with their appropriate reference books, are already available. This review will concentrate on Book Six, *From Bible to Creed*, which is the culmination of the series and of extraordinary interest. It is divided into three sections, each of which comprises a suitable term's work. The first entitled "Some principles of Christian Theology," is an admirably clear account of the great themes of Christian doctrine, by the late Dr. J. K. Mozley. To a remarkable degree he has succeeded in being simple without talking down to his readers. Take, for example, these lucid sentences, expounding the purpose of theology. "Its final purpose is to state truth, the truth about God and the world. If Christianity is not true, people ought not to be Christians. But it is quite impossible to commend it as true to the intelligence of men and women, apart from doctrine and theology." His treatment shows throughout a mature combination of scholarship and Christian devotion.

The second section "Some Christian Churches" is surely unique. For in it three writers, a Roman Catholic, an Anglican,

and a Free Churchman contribute an account of their own ecclesiastical tradition and position. Mr. Sheed writes with clarity and vigour to expound the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church. Canon Rich's treatment of Anglicanism is largely historical—perhaps too much so for clarity—but it has an excellent chapter showing how the three chief sections of Anglicanism, The Catholic, Liberal and Evangelical, emerged, and what they stand for. The Rev. E. A. Payne strikes the happy medium between the historical and dogmatic presentation of the subject by taking the main characteristics of Free Church life and showing how they developed. These words are a fair sample of his treatment, which combines tolerance with conviction—“Each branch of the Church has to ask itself what is its special heritage and trust. What has its history taught it to prize most? . . . Their freedom is what is most dear to Free Churchmen.”

The third section, “Man's response to God,” is the most profound of the three, and is designedly put last, for it raises the question as to what religion ultimately is. Dr. T. H. Robinson covers a wide and interesting field, making valuable use of comparative religion in general and Hebrew religion in particular to explain the fundamental characteristics of the religious attitude. His treatment of the Christian ethic is admirable. What could be a better way of summing up the uniqueness of Christ's attitude to conduct than this—“Pharisaism said Be good and you will get into touch with God. Jesus said Get into touch with God and the closer you are to him the better you will become.”

It should be added that there are thoughtfully planned Bible readings at the beginning of each chapter in all the books, and that the reference books are a mine of interesting and valuable information. They presuppose, as indeed does the venture as a whole, that the teacher is a devoted Christian, eager not simply to expound the Bible, but to offer his pupils Christ.

G. E. BENFIELD.