

Reviews.

Introduction to the Old Testament, by Aage Bentzen. Vol. I *Canon and Text of the Old Testament, and the Forms of Old Testament Literature*, 24s.; Vol. II. *The Books of the Old Testament*, 33s. 6d. (G. E. C. Gad, Copenhagen; Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford.)

These volumes are a translation and revision by the author of the Danish original published in 1941. The first word of the review should clearly be one of appreciation to Professor Bentzen for making available to English readers such an important contribution to Old Testament Studies. A great deal of work in this field has been carried on in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, but only a small part of that work is known among English-speaking scholars. Some has been published in English, French or German, but inevitably the greater part of scholarly discussion is carried on in one or other of the Scandinavian languages. The publication of these volumes may be an incentive to students to acquire a working knowledge of, say, Swedish!

That the English is not always idiomatic is to be expected; it does not lessen our gratitude. "Massoretical" for "Massoretic" will cause no difficulty. But the term "Fairy Tale" as applied to some of the O.T. stories, e.g. that of Jephthah, is inappropriate. Neither is it suitable to "the speaking serpent" Genesis iii, the "speaking ass" Num. xxii, and the "helpful animal" of the book of Jonah. But such difficulties can readily be overcome.

Vol. I begins with a valuable discussion of the Canon of the Old Testament, distinguishing the Jewish Canon—our Hebrew O.T., and the Christian—the Septuagint as we know it. Then follows a discussion of the Text, containing a valuable summary of the most recent investigations, numerous references to Kahle's "The Cairo Geniza 1947" (Schweich Lectures for 1941), and a brief description of the various ancient translations. If at times the reader would have wished for a more extended treatment of particular points, he is referred to the standard works on the subject.

The third section of the book is particularly valuable for the English reader. It is devoted to a consideration of the Forms of the literature, Poetry and Prose, i.e. Form criticism of the Old Testament. This occupies some two thirds of Vol. I. In this

section is gathered together the results of great deal of patient work by many scholars beginning with Hermann Gunkel. The many types of oral tradition and literature are discussed in some detail—various kinds of song, poem, psalm, liturgy, proverb, oracle, legend, "fairy tale," myth, etc. These are the forms that lie behind the O.T. literature, the oral and literary conventions by means of which prophet, priest and sage presented the word of the Lord. It is here, especially, that the English student will be grateful for the summary of the work of Scholars in the Scandinavian countries. Whether we accept the particular classification or not, this section is full of suggestiveness. It deserves and will receive the most careful study. At times one may feel that patient scholarship might have been allied with keener sensitiveness. Is the Psalmist really *reproaching* his God in e.g. Psalms 22 vv. 5-7; 44 vv. 1-10; 74 vv. 12ff? (Vol. I. p. 157). It is surely improbable that these poems were so understood when they were used in the cultus of the post-exilic age. Is it not more likely that we have here a genuine struggle within the soul of man? He cannot abandon (or is firmly held fast by) his faith and yet is acutely aware of the challenge to his faith presented by the world in which he lives. It is to be noted that the challenge is taken into the faith, and that is how genuine faith is deepened and enriched. In other words, have we not here an illustration of the valid and the invalid use of Form criticism. It is undoubtedly necessary for the Biblical scholar to recognise these "types"; but that is not enough. He must see the parts in relation to the whole, or recognise the use that is made of these "types" by Israel's men of faith. Thus Jeremiah bitterly reproaches God, *Jer.* xv. 18 xx. 7, but this is part of the larger faith of the prophet.

There can be no doubt about the importance of this kind of analysis which recognises the "types," an extension of our understanding of the oral and literary conventions of the Hebrews. It is thus that we can recognise the astonishing use made of them by the O.T. writers and speakers. A fine illustration of this may be found in the use made by *Amos* v. 2 of the "mourning song" as a powerful "word" for Israel. Space forbids further discussion on this section, except to say that its importance can hardly be over-emphasised.

We must confess to some disappointment with Vol. II "Special introduction," which discusses the individual books of the Old Testament. It may be said that there are other and more extensive "Special Introductions," and numerous commentaries on individual books, so that a larger discussion becomes unnecessary. Clearly the Student must use his Driver, Oesterley and Robinson, Eissfeldt and Pfeiffer before he makes use of this

book. The various books of the Old Testament are discussed, with minor variations under the headings: Author, Contents, Date, Composition. Especially valuable are the numerous references to recent discussions in commentaries and articles on the various books, and, as so often, the footnotes and material in small type are of particular importance. Nevertheless one feels a certain inadequacy of treatment, when the book of Isaiah is disposed of in twelve pages, Ezekiel in seven, and the Psalter in six. The book opens with a discussion of the Law, in many ways the most satisfying section. It gives a brief history of the history of Pentateuchal Criticism, beginning with Jean Astruc 1753, discusses the Documentary hypothesis, and criticises some of the over-confident assertions of the religio-historical criticism. In spite of the vigorous criticism to which the Documentary Analysis has been subjected, the main conclusions still stand, although greater attention must be paid to oral traditions. We cannot forbear to quote: "The Pentateuch reminds one of a mediaeval cathedral which by good fortune has escaped the vandalism of rigorous restorations and therefore stands with all its different styles mixed up, so that a very trained eye is needed to discover the original plan. And nevertheless, there is a plan."

The book closes with thirty-two pages devoted to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha regarded as an extension of the third section of the Hebrew Canon, the Writings.

Indices of Names and Quotations referring to both volumes come at the end of volume II. It is a curious fact, perhaps an unconscious compliment, that Dr. Theodore Robinson appears twice in the Name Index, as "Robinson" and as "Robinson T.H."

Once more we must say that whatever criticisms must be offered—and a scholarly work invites criticism—these two volumes will be a necessary part of any Old Testament library. Professor Bentzen has placed us all in his debt, both for the assembling and criticism of material and for making it available for the English reader.

SELY OAK COLLEGES

A. S. HERBERT.

Gospel Parallels: A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels, with alternative readings from the Manuscripts and Non-Canonical Parallels. 1949. (Thos. Nelson & Sons, New York.)

Huck's *Synopse* has long been a familiar tool to students of the New Testament, and in 1936 its German publishers produced an English edition of the Ninth German edition, which

was revised by Professor Hans Lietzmann. In this all the Headings were given in English as well as in German, while the Gospel text was printed in Greek, as in the German edition. Now, however, an edition wholly in English has been prepared for the International Council of Religious Education under the supervision of a Committee of well-known American scholars, in which the text of the Revised Standard Version replaces the Greek text of the New Testament. Hence readers who do not read Greek can have before them the parallel texts of the Synoptic Gospels, and can see their relations with one another.

Already we had the excellent, though little-known, tables of Joseph Smith,¹ of Overdale College, which set out the Scripture references and subjects of the various sections, keeping each of the three Gospels in its present order, but by the skilful use of a variety of types and by cross references indicating their relations with one another. Now, however, the full text is printed in this new edition of Huck, so that the English reader has all the evidence before his eye on a single page. While the minister will doubtless still prefer to use the edition with the Greek text, this should be widely useful to others, teachers and preachers, who will profit by reading together the parallel sections, even though they are not concerned with the intricate problems of literary relations. The sponsors and publishers deserve thanks for this edition, and it is to be hoped that it will be widely used, to the enrichment of the study of the Gospels.

MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY.

H. H. ROWLEY.

Conrad Grebel, The Founder of the Swiss Brethren, by Harold S. Bender. (The Mennonite Historical Society, Goshen, Indiana, \$3.50).

The long announced biography of Conrad Grebel, the leader of the group who re-introduced believers' baptism in Zurich in 1525, is at last before us. It is a substantial volume of over three hundred pages, and its appearance is an event for Baptists as well as Mennonites, indeed for all those of the Free Church tradition. Dr. Bender is right in claiming that "the decision of Conrad Grebel to refuse to accept the jurisdiction of the Zurich Council over the Zurich church is one of the high moments of history, for however obscure it was, it marked the beginning of the modern 'free church' movement" (pp. 99-100); and in

¹ Joseph Smith, *Synoptic Tables, showing the Relationship of the First Three Gospels*, 1932. (Berean Press, Birmingham.)

saying that "it is simple duty for modern historians, who have recovered sources, to give Conrad Grebel his rightful place in the history of Anabaptism and of the Christian Church" (p. xiii). This is yet another example of the important contributions that American scholarship is making in the field of Church History. Though books of this kind from the United States are inevitably expensive under present conditions, an effort should be made to see that copies of this one are placed in all Baptist libraries in this country.

The work is the result of long and careful study in Germany and Switzerland, as well as America. It is based on an exhaustive examination of the sources, and it is written with deep sympathy, by one born and brought up among the Mennonite community in Indiana, who has already done much to continue and extend the important historical studies of Anabaptism begun by John Horsch half a century ago. Attention was called to these in the *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. XIII. pp. 29-33.

Dr. Bender confesses that in spite of all his research "Grebel's is not a sharply delineated figure because of the brevity of his career" (p. 214). Born about 1498, he became an enthusiastic follower of Zwingli sometime in 1522 or 1523. The year 1524 was the really decisive one so far as his contribution to the future was concerned. Dr. Bender dates the baptism of Blaurock by Grebel on the night of January 21, 1525. Palm Sunday of that year, when he baptised many hundreds in the river at St. Gall must have been one of the great moments of Grebel's life. He was arrested in October in Grüningen and imprisoned first in the castle there and then in the tower at Zurich. Escaping in March 1526 with his friends Manz and Blaurock, by means of a rope through an unlocked window, Grebel died four or five months later, probably of plague, at Marienfeld in the Oberland.

In the earlier chapters of Dr. Bender's book we are able to get a fairly clear picture of the patrician circles into which Grebel was born and of the unfortunate tension with his father during the young man's student days in Basel, Vienna and Paris. Glarean and Vadian (who became his brother-in-law) were the decisive influences in Grebel's intellectual development into a gifted and eager humanist of the Swiss type. He was a frustrated and unhappy personality until his marriage early in 1522. Very soon after that he must have passed, under Zwingli's influence, through a religious experience which Dr. Bender says "may well be called a conversion" (p. 77). It resulted in a whole-hearted acceptance of the Reformation principle *sola scriptura*. It was this which led as early as the autumn of 1523 to criticism of Zwingli. The latter accepted the authority of the city council, submitting to and waiting upon its decisions. To Grebel and his friends this seemed

treachery to the truth and to what they had learned from their once admired leader. As Grebel later testified: "Zwingli had brought him into the matter and told him much that he was no longer to stand by, but now repudiated."

Dr. Bender examines with care the contacts and possible meetings between Grebel and Carlstadt and M nzer, showing how little reason there is to think that his basic ideas regarding the nature of the Church were derived from the Germans. There was widespread uneasiness in reformed circles about infant baptism. It may be traced in the records regarding Luther, Melancthon and Zwingli. Dr. Bender is of the opinion that "It was Wilhelm Reublin and not Grebel who inaugurated the practical opposition against infant baptism in Zurich" (p. 125), but this was in the negative form of withholding children from baptism. There is no doubt that by the closing months of 1524 Grebel's position was clear. In a petition to the Zurich Council he declared that baptism should only be administered to "one who having been converted through God's word and having changed his heart now henceforth desires to live in newness of life" (quoted by Bender, p. 288). That Grebel was the leader in the critical days at the opening of 1525 seems clear from the fact that Blaurock (according to the account in the Hutterian *Geschichtsbuch*, which probably goes back to the year 1534) "entreated Conrad Grebel for God's sake to baptise him with the right Christian baptism upon the confession of his faith." It would appear that Grebel was less ready in speech than with his pen. Had he lived, his strong and moderate leadership might have saved Swiss Anabaptism from disintegration and he might also have provided some memorable expositions of its principles. On the other hand, had he not died when he did, he would almost certainly have had a martyr's end like his friends Manz, Sattler and Blaurock.

The source of the "pacifism" of the Swiss brethren was their study of the New Testament. Dr. Bender is at pains to minimise (perhaps unduly) the influence of Erasmus upon them, but he is no doubt right in arguing that "Erasmian pacifism was primarily humanitarian in character and not theological and biblical" (p. 201).

The volume before us is so full and well documented that it may seem ungenerous to express the wish that it contained a more detailed treatment of the social unrest issuing in the Peasants' Revolt which began with an outbreak near Schaffhausen in the summer of 1524. It is not clear, at any rate to the present writer, that the two movements can be as sharply separated as Dr. Bender believes. Rather fuller references to Balthasar Hubmaier would also have been welcome.

In collaboration with Dr. Ernst Correll, and with the help of material left by the late Dr. Yoder, Dr. Bender hopes later to publish a further volume containing the letters of Conrad Grebel, of which nearly seventy have so far come to light, most of them written to his brother-in-law, Vadian. The present volume should establish Grebel beside Hubmaier, Menno Simons, Smyth and Helwys, among the pioneers of our Baptist faith.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Public Worship of God, by Henry Sloane Coffin. (Independent Press. 8s. 6d.).

A Publisher's Note informs the reader that this book received a great welcome in America, and forecasts a favourable reception for the English edition. Let it be said at once that it is to be hoped this prediction will be justified by events. The contents are not indeed quite what might be expected from the sub-title, "A Source Book for Leaders of Services," for, although the author makes many valuable suggestions about worship-material, his real concern is rather with the right attitude and setting for Public Worship. His over-all plan, as our American friends might say, is to give a succinct but comprehensive account of worship in general, and then to discuss the various acts which make up a particular Service of Public Worship. Thus Dr. Coffin deals in turn with the meaning of worship and its theological foundation, the use of ritual and ceremonial, the offering of prayer and praise, the sacraments of Preaching, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the ministry to Children and finally with the relation of Worship to Church Union. The whole is the ripe fruit of a wise and deeply Christian mind, and constitutes one of the most readable and helpful books for working ministers on this all-important subject which have appeared for many years. Any minister who would give to his people a series of addresses based on the chapters of this book would render them a great service, and would find his own mind and heart enriched at the same time. It should be noted that Dr. Coffin has written for those in the tradition of the Reformed Churches. There is, therefore, as may be expected, at least one point at which a Baptist will wish to add a critical footnote to the text. But broadly speaking the standpoint is that of the "Evangelical Church Catholic" (to use Dr. Carnegie Simpson's phrase), and it should greatly assist Free Churchmen of all types to attain to a more enlightened understanding of the nature of worship, and to a worthier expression of it in practice.

R. L. CHILD.

The Message of Life-Studies in the Epistle of St. John. (The Missionary Message of the New Testament series) by J. Ireland Hasler, B.A. (Carey-Kingsgate Press, Ltd. 5s.).

This is a useful exposition of the leading conceptions of the Epistles of St. John as they bear upon missionary proclamation. The first epistle is, of course, mainly in view, but there are also references to the others (the "Johannine postcards" as Gwilym O. Griffith once called them!). The author writes in a clear and pungent style, and his exposition is well-ordered and helpful. The titles of the first three chapters may give some indication of the kind of themes which are treated: Salvation as Life, The Historical Manifestation of the Life, The God Whose Fellowship is Eternal Life.

There are frequent references to Indian thought, by way of comparison with Christian teaching. One misses here any mention of Dr. Cave's fine study *Redemption Hindu and Christian*, and of the recent acclamation of Indian mysticism in the books of some of our prominent literary figures. It is unfortunate that Mr. Hasler has not been able to refer to the work of Dr. C. H. Dodd (in various of his books) on such terms as "Propitiation," and it appears that his stimulating commentary on the Johannine epistles in the Moffatt series was not available when this book was written.

There are a number of quotations of which the source is not given (e.g. on pp. 36, 39, 72, 73.) Mr. Hasler, against most recent opinion, takes the view that 2 *John* was addressed to an individual rather than a church. (p.52). The author gives us much that is well worth pondering from his study of the New Testament and from his missionary experience.

D. R. GRIFFITHS.

The Mirror of God, by G. W. Cameron-Price. (Independent Press, Ltd. 6s.).

This book is a brief account of the life and teaching of Jesus, written in the form of a letter from James, Son of Zebedee, to a brother in Rome. It is readable and interesting but inevitably the Master portrayed falls far short of the Jesus of the Gospels. The writer is handicapped by his out-dated idea that the only way to deal with the miraculous is to explain it away. His paraphrases of the New Testament Scriptures are often excellent, but not seldom they rob a passage of its strength and even of its truth. Some of the reconstructions of Gospel incidents are inconsistent with the Scripture records. Imagination has become distortion.

FRANK BUFFARD.

Rumi. Poet and Mystic, 1207-1273, by Reynold A. Nicholson, (George Allen & Unwin. 8s. 6d.).

This is the first volume to be issued of a new series of "Ethical and Religious Classics of the East and West." It consists of selections from the writings of the greatest mystical poet of Persia, translated by the late Professor Nicholson, with a valuable introduction and notes. Nearly forty years ago, in his *Mystics of Islam*, Professor Nicholson drew attention to Moslem asceticism and mysticism, and to the Sufi movement, which seems to have been influenced both by Christianity and Neoplatonism. This attractively produced volume will deepen interest and appreciation. Professor A. J. Arberry, who has edited the work of his teacher and friend, claims that Rumi will prove "a source of inspiration and delight not surpassed by any other poet in the world's literature." That high claim should not be dismissed without a careful reading of this notable anthology.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Pamphlets

- A Tale of Two Centuries: Romsey Baptist Church, 1750-1950* (obtainable from the Church Secretary, 1/-)—a valuable illustrated booklet compiled by the Rev. F. C. M. Perkins. The first pastor was James Fanch (1704-67), the longest ministry that of the Rev. E. F. M. Vokes, and in this church the Rev. F. J. Walkey was baptised. The great-great-grandfather of the Secretary-Designate of the Baptist Union laid the first brick of the present building in 1811 and his grandfather was minister from 1850 to 1855.
- A Short History of the United Free Church, High Street, Tring, 1750-1950*, (obtainable from the Church Secretary, 1/6)—an interesting illustrated record compiled by Mr. Trevor W. Wright. The first chapel was in Frogmore Street and for a few years from 1829 it was ministered in by a Methodist preacher. In 1874 it became a Union Church and soon afterwards Charles Pearce began a ministry which lasted until 1920.
- A Centennial Review of the Jamaica Baptist Union* (obtainable from the Baptist Missionary Society, 1/-)—a useful survey written by the Rev. J. T. Dillon, one of the oldest and most respected Jamaican ministers.
- Our Heritage of Free Prayer* (Independent Press, Ltd., 9d.)—a booklet prepared by the Life and Work Department of the Congregational Union which should prove most valuable both with young people and others.
- After One Hundred and Fifty Years* (obtainable from the Church Secretary, 6d.)—an interesting illustrated booklet, compiled by Mr. T. W. W. Skemp, Church Treasurer, outlining the history of Salem Baptist Church, Bilston. Its ministers have included Rev. W. H. Bonner, father of Rev. Carey Bonner, and the present Principal of New Zealand Baptist College, Rev. Luke Jenkins.