

Reviews.

Reformed Dogmatics, by Heinrich Heppe. English translation by G. T. Thomson. (721 pp. Allen and Unwin, 50s. net.)

Here is a phenomenon if not a portent. It runs to 721 pages and costs fifty shillings, and is just a book of theology. It is a translation from the German, and the German edition itself had already been revised by a second hand. That a man was ready to translate it into English, and that a firm was willing to publish the translation, is another indication that theology is once more in the picture; in fact better evidence of the revived interest in theology could hardly be found. Reformed Dogmatics means the dogmatics of that section of the Christian Church which took its rise from Zwingli and Calvin, so that the book is evidence also of the revived interest in the Reformers and part of the movement known as Neo-Calvinism. We have had lately most welcome publications of Calvin's works and books dealing with Calvin and Calvinism. Now we have this marrow volume summarising the position of Calvin's followers, those men, mainly on the continent, who after Calvin expounded and to some extent developed his theology. The translation of such a volume could scarcely have been done anywhere but in Scotland, and the translator, Dr. G. T. Thomson, of Edinburgh University, has put the whole English theological world in his debt.

The work is by Heinrich Heppe and appeared first in 1861. It was later revised by Ernst Bizer and it is this Bizer that is here translated. Now Heppe's intention in the first place was to expound the orthodox system of doctrine in the Reformed Church faithfully and without addition. He laid his hand on all the written sources he could find, quoted the relevant passages of each under its proper heading, pointed out the differences and then indicated what he thought was the true view of the Reformed Church as a whole. The book is thus a mapping out of the whole field of theology with quotations from all the leading writers of the school under each head. It begins with natural and revealed religion, goes on through all the scale, and ends with glorification. The translator writes: "I know from experience that Heppe can work wonders in theological students. He is not only instructive. To an age fed on the husks of human enlightenment and today craving for the true light of direct revelation, Heppe is manna and that in plenty." Well, there is certainly plenty. Though the book for most of us would be a book of reference

rather than one to read right through, yet how well informed indeed would anyone be who steadily worked at it from cover to cover. It might conceivably be used as a punishment for unruly theological students though in the end it would surely, like Cowper's clouds, break in blessing on their heads.

The mere headings of the chapters are instructive. Let any minister look down the list and note the great themes of Christian orthodoxy—that in itself would be a revelation to many. Then let him also note the differences in emphasis between their system of theology and our own more scrappy views. Also let him note some emphases of ours which their system lacked. Perhaps the chief value, however, for the ordinary man would be in the careful reading of any one theme. I have a feeling, having read a number of chapters carefully and looked through others, that I would not care now either to talk or write on any one aspect of Christian doctrine without first looking to see what these old Dogmatists had to say about it. That is true of every doctrine, but it is especially true of the sacraments and the church. There is much in the reformer theology that helps to explain some things in our Baptist view. Why for instance has the word "regeneration" almost completely dropped out of our vocabulary when we talk about Baptism. It looks as though in our horror of baptism regeneration we had entirely forgotten that baptism is after all, if not the means of regeneration, at least the symbol and the seal of it. This is just one illustration of how this old theology corrects our partial views.

The book has a foreword by Barth who confesses that at a critical time in his development he came across it to his great profit, though he also finds reasons for criticism. Enough has been said to show that we have here a great book made available to us. All theological libraries will need it. For a long time theological professors will refer to it and it will stimulate a good deal of research. The educational world owes a big debt to both translator and publisher.

ARTHUR DAKIN.

The Growth of the Old Testament, by H. H. Rowley. (Hutchinson. 7s. 6d. net.)

A slender volume of some 180 pages which sets itself the weighty task of asking how the books of the Old Testament came into existence and how they became canonical. The precise authorship of these books is not established, since "we do not know the authorship of a single book of the Old Testament in

the form in which it now stands," the original material having been taken up by another writer and set in the form in which we now have it.

The first section is on the Law or Pentateuch. It is characterised by the logic and clarity typical of the author, and sets before the reader the conservatively critical position of modern scholarship. The question of the Graf-Wellhausen view is candidly faced. The reader is reminded that it is only a working hypothesis which can be abandoned, given a more satisfactory view be promulgated, but until then cannot be abandoned with profit.

The next section deals with the Former Prophets. An initial chapter discusses the Hebrew historian and his purpose. Rowley cogently points out that, as with the Pentateuch, so with these historical books, the religious interest is predominant, and must be clearly understood. In the light of this book after book can be weighed and judged.

The Latter Prophets follow, and once again each book is carefully analysed. Fittingly, this section is prefaced by a model statement, right up to date, on the Nature of Prophecy. The author is candid enough to acknowledge that the status of the Hebrew prophet is considerably lessened today as seen in the background of general Semitic prophecy. Nevertheless—and again this is characteristic of H. H. Rowley—he holds that this but serves to bring out the uniqueness of Hebrew prophecy. There is also a pithy treatment of the cultic prophet, ecstasy and prediction, with no problem shirked, the quintessence of more than a score of recent books on the prophetic consciousness.

The Writings naturally follow, with a like treatment of the component volumes. These are headed with a chapter on Hebrew Poetry, with Lowth and Buchanan Gray summarised, again a study in compression. The Wisdom literature is dealt with succinctly, each book so set out that form and essence can readily be grasped. Daniel, as the only apocalyptic book, is given more space than the rest, since its problems are the more weighty. Contrary to many scholars, Rowley feels that the book is a unity with date wholly within the Maccabean period.

A final chapter attempts to deal with the Growth and Fixation of the Canon. Stress is laid on the complexity of the process, a slow and almost imperceptible growth. The reader is wisely warned against the acceptance of any simple and schematic theory.

In short, this book fills a gap long since seen, for it compresses within its slender space the major factors that both conservative and liberal must face. Nothing but good can follow its reading. It will, however, be fired at from two quarters: The

extreme conservative will contest its critical position, moderate though that is, since Rowley is a conservative critic; the extreme critic will fire at it because of its very conservative character. One thing, however, must be clearly noted: Its author asks nothing more than his book be read as candidly and as sincerely as he has written it, and that is fair all round, since he has written it as one who holds tenaciously to the authority of the Scriptures. In a word, it is the *via media* of the best British scholarship of the day on the still vexed problems of the Old Testament.

F. CAWLEY.

The Christian Significance of the Old Testament by A. J. B. Higgins. (Independent Press, Ltd. 8s. 6d.).

This book offers a noteworthy contribution to an important subject. Writing as a Free Churchman, the author expresses concern at the neglect of the Old Testament, the peril of which is illustrated in his opening chapter on Marcion. There ensues a discussion of the difficulties that many feel in regarding the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. The primitive elements in it are here shown to be as indispensable to the Biblical record as the loftier conceptions. Consideration of the Old Testament in the Early Church serves to bring out its Christian significance. The New Testament approach with its spiritual insights, assisted by present-day methods of study, is advocated rather than a return to allegorical interpretation which is but a putting back of the clock and detrimental to the appreciation of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. In the remaining three chapters of the book is contained the author's "constructive contribution" where, applying the method already advocated, he elucidates the Christian significance of the Old Testament by concentrating on the unifying theme of "The Missionary Call to Israel" with "The Response to the Missionary Call" on the part of "The New Israel," made possible only through "Jesus the Messiah." Notwithstanding the extent of the ground covered in relatively so small a compass, this book will be valued for its theological insight and also for its fresh and scholarly treatment. There are useful footnotes for the guidance of the general reader which barely compensate for the absence of a select bibliography. Occasionally textual references are lacking, e.g., the allusion to Jairus' daughter (p. 28), and other more extensive ones to *Ecclesiasticus* and *Wisdom* (p. 75). The significant part of the quotation (p. 33) cited as *Joshua* 10: 13b belongs to v. 14.

E. T. RYDER.

Justice and the Law of Love, by Konrad Braun. (Swarthmore Lecture, 1950). (Geo. Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 3s. 6d. paper, 5s., cloth.)

Interest in the delivery and subsequent publication of the annual Swarthmore Lecture extends far beyond the Society of Friends. This year the Lecturer was Konrad Braun, who took as his subject "Justice and the Law of Love." Now a naturalised British subject, Konrad Braun was a Judge in the Berlin Court of Appeal until dismissed by the Nazis Government. After examining the nature and function of justice in human relations generally, the writer proceeds to trace the development of the conception of justice in Hebrew Religion and later in Christianity. Here there is given a penetrating study of the tension between justice and love, with an insistence upon the ultimate supremacy of love. The closing chapters describe the attitude adopted by members of the Society of Friends to social and international problems in terms of "Justice and the Law of Love."

D. G. WYLIE.

The Beginning of the Gospel. A Primer of Christianity, Part I., by T. W. Manson. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, School Edition, 5s.).

Science, History and Faith, by A. Richardson. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, School Edition, 5s.).

It is encouraging that some of our foremost Christian scholars are now producing books designed to assist school-teachers and their pupils to a fuller appreciation of the Christian faith. The latest addition to this welcome flow of books is the series of four short volumes entitled "A Primer of Christianity." At present, two volumes have appeared, the first, entitled *The Beginning of the Gospel*, by T. W. Manson, and the last (described as a supplementary volume), by A. Richardson, Canon of Durham, its title being *Science, History and Faith*.

In the first of these volumes, Professor Manson shows how Christianity actually began in history, and what was the content of its original message. An admirably, clear introduction of twenty-four pages paints the historical background, then follows the main part of the book—a translation of Mark's Gospel, with a running commentary. It is difficult to praise the translation too highly, for it completely recaptures Mark's rough, colloquial, yet exciting style. "Master, doesn't it matter to you that we are at death's door?" (chapter iv., v. 38), "Come along with me, just yourselves, and have a bit of rest" chapter vi, v. 31)—these

examples could be multiplied. There are useful explanatory notes at the beginning of each paragraph, but even more useful are the vivid and thoughtful paragraph headings, for example, that which prefaces chapter ix vv. 38-41 :—"No Closed Shop in the Service of the Kingdom." A short epilogue gives us the main content of the early Christian message as exemplified in the early speeches of *Acts*, then in Paul's epistles, and finally in the Gospel of John.

The other volume is a handbook of Christian apologetics, written with clarity and incisiveness. It begins by staking out a claim for theology to be treated as a science, then works back from the fact of the Church's existence today, to the scientific investigation and explanation of its origin. It goes on to discuss the Person and Work of Christ, the Holy Trinity, Eschatology and the Future Life in lucid terms. The profound and difficult topics of which it treats are enlivened by such vigorous expressions as the following: "Jesus did not call the man in the parable who spent his energies in building larger barns a wicked capitalist; he called him a fool." Another attractive feature is the fine use of quotations—none of them hackneyed—though the most moving and effective one of all, from Pascal's *Pensées*, is left untranslated. There is occasionally some obscurity of expression as in the sentence on page 183: "Christian worship has always adumbrated the coming of the day when every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." And there is a rather irritating repetition of the almost meaningless "of course." But these are very small criticisms against a work of deep thoughtfulness for which Christian teachers will be profoundly thankful.

C. S. BENFIELD.

In the Steps of John Bunyan, by Vera Brittain. (Rich and Cowan. 15s.)

Bunyan Meeting, Bedford, 1650-1950, by H. G. Tibbutt. (Trustees of Bunyan Meeting, Bedford. 5s.)

Three years ago two of our leading publishers issued, almost simultaneously, attractive modern illustrated editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Mr. Arthur Stanley produced a deeply interesting *Beside Bunyan*, drawing material from the lesser known writings as well as the great allegories. It is clear that the tinker-seer still speaks effectively to men and women, and there is a special appropriateness in the appearance this year of a further important addition to the portrayal and understanding of the man. It was probably in 1650 that young Bunyan, then aged twenty-two and already in spiritual distress, heard in a Bedford Street "three

or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God." It proved one of the turning points in his life. The three women were in all probability among the twelve "holy brethren and sisters" who had that same year come together to form a church under the leadership of John Gifford, a church which is now engaged in tercentenary celebrations. It was John Gifford's church which Bunyan himself joined in 1653, and of which from 1672 until his death he was the pastor.

Miss Brittain's gifts as a writer are already well-known. She describes herself as "a Quaker-inclined Anglican married to a Catholic" and those are no disqualifications for choosing as her subject the most typical product of English Nonconformity, for Bunyan cannot be confined in denominational or ecclesiastical labels. Miss Brittain has clearly fallen under his spell, and she has set herself with immense pains to make him live again. The test of any book about Bunyan is whether it sends its readers to his books. It can safely be said that few will be able to read Miss Brittain's pages without turning again to *The Pilgrim's Progress* and also—and this is specially to be welcomed—to *Grace Abounding*. The Bedfordshire background and the history of the times are vividly described. One of the most interesting of the chapters is that on "Bunyan's London." Only occasionally does Miss Brittain give rein to her imagination, as for example in the pages given to the village christening and to her hero's death. Many will feel that these passages are less successful than her factually based pages and her descriptions of the places Bunyan knew. But the total picture is accurate, living and impressive, and we are deeply grateful for it.

Every writer about Bunyan's life has to make a choice on certain delicate issues. Miss Brittain has used the little known Plimpton portrait as her frontispiece and prefers it to the better known pictures by Robert White and Thomas Sadler. She has no doubt that Bunyan was on the Parliamentary side in the Civil War. She has made use of some of the latest documents which have been discovered, and suggests that *The Pilgrim's Progress* was begun during Bunyan's first imprisonment and finished in the County Gaol during his second. Her introductory pages are a valuable survey of some of the new material now available, but she admits that there are still many gaps in our knowledge and that "an adequate study of John Bunyan cannot be made in less than a lifetime."

A few small points might well be corrected in the subsequent printings which we hope will be called for. Edmund Calamy, the elder, should not be described as a non-juror (p. 91). The Levellers and the Diggers are to be distinguished, not equated (p. 98). James Shirley was only seven years old when James I

came to the throne, and his first tragedy was written after Charles I had become King; he can hardly be called an Elizabethan dramatist (p. 103). It was in 1656, not 1655, that James Naylor made his tragic entry into Bristol (p. 160), and we doubt whether even at this distance of time one should say that "there was no essential difference between John Bunyan and George Fox." It is also misleading to place 1849 "at the height of the Evangelical Revival" (p. 408). But these are small points in a crowded canvas brilliantly depicted. Some will feel that in her concluding chapter, "the Relevant Pilgrim," Miss Brittain concentrates rather too much attention upon the outward and too little upon the inward issues. Our final word, however, must be of sincere thanks, both to the authoress and to the publishers, who have enriched the book with fifty excellent illustrations and end-paper maps.

Mr. Tibbutt has set himself a more modest task, but his book may be recommended as a valuable pendant to Miss Brittain's. His is the story of Bunyan Church, from its founding in 1650, down to the present day. Among Bunyan's most famous successors in the pastorate were Joshua Symonds (d. 1788), Thomas Hillyard (d. 1839), John Jukes (d. 1866), during whose ministry the present building was erected and who shared in the direction of the Bedford Theological Seminary, Dr. John Brown, the distinguished biographer of Bunyan and the father of a notable family, Charter Piggott and others still with us. Mr. Tibbutt has prepared a careful record, admirably illustrated, and shows how the influence of a great church has spread out into the villages around Bedford, as well as enriching the town itself. All who are interested in Nonconformist history will be grateful to him and will wish well to those who are the guardians not only of the Bunyan relics but of the Bunyan tradition.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

The Story of the Falmouth Baptists, by L. A. Fereday. (Carey-Kingsgate Press, 3s. 6d.)

This is more than an ordinary local history. As the sub-title indicates it also provides "some account of Cornish Baptist beginnings." It is to be warmly commended. Based on diligent research, written with true literary feeling and skill, and well-illustrated, it fills a gap in our denominational literature and is an important contribution to the necessary task of building up an adequate and worthy series of county and regional histories. One's only fear is lest a paper-covered publication of this kind will neither survive very long nor receive the notice that it merits. Many will learn with surprise how far back Baptist history may

be traced in the extreme west, and how important for denominational development were seventeenth century Cornishmen like John Pendarves, John Carew and Hugh Courtney. The pages on Thomas Tregosse are also of deep interest, as are also those on the Homblowers, the eighteenth century engineers, who were staunch Baptists. The names of Fuller Gooch, Venis Robinson and Evelyn Charlesworth stir more recent memories. Mr. Fereday's own energetic ministry in Falmouth, though interrupted by his chaplaincy service during the war, will be remembered for the erection of the fine new buildings, which should prove a fillip to our witness throughout the whole area.

ERNEST A. PAYNE.

Communism and Christian Faith, by H. Ingli James. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 6s.).

This book was written for ministers and other Christian workers who know little of Marxism but who, with increasing frequency, are being brought into contact with people who have fallen under its influence. The author need not have offered an apology for adding to the existing literature on the subject, for his book is just the sort of guide that many will be glad to get hold of. Three chapters are devoted to an exposition of Marxism and explain its materialism, its view of history, and its ethic; the Introduction deals with Marx himself and is a fine example of condensed biographical writing quite apart from the light it sheds on the system which bears Marx's name. There is ample evidence of the close study which Mr. James has given to the whole subject. Moreover, those who sense that "objectivity" is a vital, but somewhat elusive, quality in discussions of Communism will find that he engenders confidence by the fairness and integrity of his treatment. Unlike some of its critics, he can say the good word for it wherever possible. Unlike some of its Christian patrons he can see how radical must be the judgement on other features. The "Christian Rejoinder" to Communism is set out in the second half of the book. "Marxism is a faith and it can be countered only by a stronger faith, a faith more surely based, more comprehensive, and more reasonable." There are many who abhor Communism because it seems to threaten the world's uneasy peace but are devoid of a faith adequate to match, let alone to outmatch, it. Would that they could read these chapters. Careful study of this book (and it would be an excellent one for study-group purposes) would not only inform the mind; it would convince many that the challenge of Communism requires, as Mr. James says, a twofold response,

repentance and evangelism. The occasional misprint can be forgiven but a repeated one in the heading of chapter six ought to have been spotted; and a departed warrior of the name of Benito must have turned in his grave at the one on page 93 which makes Marx the author of Fascism.

G. W. RUSLING.

The Letters of St. Paul. Translated by Arthur S. Way. (Marshall Morgan and Scott, 7s. 6d.)

The full title is *The Letters of St. Paul to seven churches and three friends, with the letter to the Hebrews.*

Many who now meet this translation for the first time will be grateful to the publishers for having made it generally available once more in this the eighth edition. Way was oppressed by the fact that for many readers the A.V. seemed to make St. Paul tiresomely unconnected and imprecise. He set out, therefore, to convey the meaning and spirit of the original, and to supply the necessary links between thoughts, subjects and arguments, though without resorting to paraphrase. His general success in these fundamental aims is enhanced by certain features of presentation, liturgical passages, for example, being clearly distinguished. No translator obtains unanimous approval for every critical and linguistic decision he has to make, but Way will be found reliable on such issues and peculiarly satisfying in the literary quality and reverent insight which mark his work.

Sons of Freemen, by R. G. Martin. (Religious Education Press, 4s. 6d.).

With young people between fourteen and twenty particularly in mind the author has made it his aim to explain the rise of the Free Churches, the outstanding features in their development, their relationships with one another "and some account of what God has given to our country and to the whole world through their witness and service." The story is told with a vivid use of biographical material and by one who can be proud of his own heritage without forgetting the wider Christian scene. It is a real need that he has attempted to satisfy, for the most ecumenically minded of us would agree that there is plenty of room for Free Church apologetic and not least, of this avowedly popular kind. The book as a whole will do good if it instructs and inspires our teenagers as it is calculated to.

G. W. RUSLING.