

Reviews.

The Theology of Evangelism, by Henry Cook. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 6s.)

What we have in this book are the lectures delivered to the students at Spurgeon's College in December, 1949, on the Louisa Curtis foundation. They were undoubtedly lively and forceful, given in a popular and colloquial style (in some cases too colloquial for the printed page, as when William Carey is said to have "lapped up language after language," p. 17.) There is no doubt that many will be helped and stimulated by these pages. True and important things are frankly and courageously stated, and the sincerity of the author is undoubted and infectious. It must be said, however, that inspiring as the lectures no doubt were to the students to whom they were addressed, this book would have been of more permanent worth had the lectures been made the basis for a more carefully thought out work, rather than printed as they were delivered. As it is the book has definite limitations and seems unlikely to have much influence outside our own denomination. Perhaps that was never intended and should not be expected. But the ambitious title of the book leads the reader to expect more than the author intended to give and so, however useful and helpful it may be, it leaves us with a feeling of being not quite satisfied.

The term "evangelism" is used somewhat differently in different parts of the book, and the definition on page 9 is not in accordance with the use of the term in some other places. The necessary place of the Church in the life of the young convert is rightly emphasised, but too little is said about the necessity of the Church in the work of evangelism itself. It is surely the distinctive fellowship of the Church, and the attitude and actions of its members in all spheres of life, which prove the relevance of the Christian message far more than declaring the Gospel in popular language.

We would, however, express sincere appreciation for the book and hope it will be widely read within our denomination. It will undoubtedly recall those who read it to their primary task as Christian workers and leaders and deepen their zeal to win men and women to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

LESLIE J. MOON.

The Baptists of Berkshire, by Ernest A. Payne. (Carey Kingsgate Press, 6s.)

As old a corporate life as any in the country can be claimed by the Baptists of Berkshire, for as far back as the middle of the seventeenth century churches in Henley, Reading and Abingdon were in association with one another. Next year the Berkshire Association will be celebrating the 300th anniversary of the meeting at Wormsley on 8th October, 1652 of representatives of these churches. Dr. Payne was asked to write something in preparation for this event, and the result is this excellent book. Its author agrees with the late W. T. Whitley that we are now at the stage when the most valuable contribution to the recording of our denomination's story in this land will be in the form of county and regional studies. Wheeler Robinson, W. E. Bloomfield, J. Brown Morgan, C. E. Shipley and John Haslam co-operated in a volume on Yorkshire, W. T. Whitley dealt with Lancashire, Cheshire and Cumberland in addition to his volume on London, A. S. Langley wrote on Birmingham, M. F. Hewett deposited in the Norwich City Library a voluminous manuscript containing the fruit of his researches on Norfolk, while Rev. A. J. Klaiber and Rev. L. A. Fereday have written on Suffolk and Cornwall respectively. Now we have Dr. Payne's valuable work on Berkshire. It is hoped that others will turn to those parts of the country which are still untouched. A great book wants to be written, for instance, on the Baptists of Northamptonshire.

It is a fascinating story which Dr. Payne so skilfully tells and he has unearthed unsuspected riches. We are shown how Baptist witness in this county has been maintained through many vicissitudes—persecution, theological controversy, economic and social changes, religious revival and decline—and in these informative pages we meet the Stennetts, Hintons, Bichenos, Colliers, Clarks and others upon whose loyalty the continuance of that witness has depended. The Baptist radical, John Pendarves, is lifted out of the obscurity into which his memory has lapsed, while to Daniel Turner, one of the most important of the eighteenth century Baptists, whom both Underwood and Whitley in their respective histories unaccountably ignored, considerable attention is rightly given. This is an important book, with some interesting photographs and valuable appendices and which, one hopes, will be widely read. Others beside Berkshire Baptists will find these pages rewarding.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.