

Reviews

Action in the Liturgy: Essential and Unessential, by Walter Lowrie. (Philosophical Library, New York, \$4.75.)

In this book, completed in 1946, Professor Walter Lowrie, who is well known to English readers for his translations of Kierkegaard's works, has gathered together a number of addresses delivered to various audiences over a period of years on the subject of the Eucharist. He divides his material into two main parts entitled respectively "Essential Action in the Liturgy" and "Important Non-Essentials." In the former, the author, after discussing the setting of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament, considers various aspects of the Sacrifice of the Mass as that theme is unfolded in the Liturgy. This is followed by a treatment of various elements in the Action of the Liturgy such as the reading of Scripture, the Sermon, the Offertory, the Eucharistic Prayer and the Proclamation of the Gospel. Part I ends with a discussion of the themes of Sacrifice, the Breaking of Bread, Early Communion and Catholic Action. In Part II the subjects discussed are, as the author's title indicates, of lesser import. They cover such things as the position of the altar, the type of vestments used, the practice of genuflection, the methods of prayer, and so on. The text is supported by a Select Bibliography, a Glossary of Liturgical Terms, an Index and six plates depicting a variety of liturgical illustrations from early Christian art.

The book, although somewhat discursive and repetitive in its treatment, as the Preface frankly admits, is obviously the fruit of long experience and of ripe, scholarly reflection upon the relevant themes. Its eirenical temper will commend it even to readers who may be unsympathetic to the Catholic background from which it springs.

The Free Churches and the State, by Ernest A. Payne. (Carey Kingsgate Press, Ltd., 9d.)

This lecture, delivered to the Congregational Union at its Annual Assembly in 1952, bears the characteristic marks of Dr. Payne's clarity of thought and power of expression. After a rapid but pregnant survey of the history of the relations of Church and State from the earliest days, the author touches briefly on some of the issues involved. He begins with Freedom of Conscience in matters of religion, and shows how this idea finds expression in the assertion of the need for freeing the Church

from State control, as also in the rejection of the idea of a National Church. The latter principle does not, in Dr. Payne's opinion, necessarily involve the refusal by the Churches of all State help as offered, for example, in connection with hospital chaplaincies, etc. Nor does it relieve the Christian Church of the duty of offering counsel to the State upon religious and moral issues. But the basis of their relationship must always be the final responsibility of both Church and State to the authority of God. The lecturer does not think that the present is an opportune time to press for the disestablishment of the Church of England, but he warns the Free Churches of the great importance of the issues involved in this question, especially in the light of modern tensions and the need for setting their own house in order. In any reprint, the omission of the word "essay" in Note 3 on page 15 should be repaired.

R. L. CHILD.

The Man of Sorrows, by Marcus L. Loane. (Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 7s. 6d.)

This is a careful study of the incidents which crowded the brief hours of our Lord's life from His entrance into Gethsemane after the Last Supper up to the end of His trial before Caiaphas. The approach to the Gospel narratives is based for the most part on the Biblical Scholarship of 50 years ago. But it compels us once again to ponder the Scriptures, and brings us face to face with the suffering, majestic Son of Man. The failure of the disciples and the malice of His enemies throw into deeper relief the goodness and greatness of our Lord. It is a devotional study of the best kind—simple, sincere, scriptural.

God's Planning for Mankind, by W. Eric Hodgson. (Independent Press, Ltd., 4s.)

That church is fortunate whose minister gives them week-night addresses of the quality evident in this collection of seven Lenten studies. The author deals with the nature of God and the nature of man, of the divine purpose of redemption through the reconciling work of Christ, and of the divine power which can overcome frustrating evil. His writing is interesting and lucid, with much to feed the mind as well as the heart. Not least helpful are the apt Scripture passages which head each chapter and the abundant and well-chosen Scripture quotations embedded in the addresses. It is a helpful book to give to a thoughtful young Christian.

FRANK BUFFARD.

If Thou Criest after Knowledge, by Sir Aylmer Firebrace. (Allen & Unwin, 25s.)

The author of this book has done notable service in the Navy and London Fire Brigade, and was Chief of the Fire Staff at the Home Office in the newly-formed National Fire Service. He dedicates his book "To mankind seeking a way out of its troubles." The way out is revealed to be Christian Science. We are presented with "an outline of the scientific system of metaphysics as found in the Bible," an interpretation of Jesus by this method, and a doctrine of man and the universe. The student of Church History will find in this volume opportunity for testing his ability to identify heresies springing from ancient times; here in happy juxtaposition are Gnosticism, Sabellianism, Monarchianism, Montanism (only that Mrs. Eddy takes the place of Montanus and his lady friends), Pantheism and an allegorism in Biblical exposition that would have filled Origen with wonder, love and praise. There is a genuine Docetism in the interpretation of Jesus (who did not really die) and even a species of Demiurge in the guise of an impersonal "carnal mind" that was responsible for this material universe. It is a pity that a man of such wide experience of public service should have allowed himself to be beguiled into this fantastic wonderland and there to take up his abode. For any who desire to have a first hand exposition of so-called Christian Science this book may be commended, but it will require no little patience to finish it.

The Fibres of Faith, by A. Norman Rowland. (Independent Press, 10s. 6d.)

This work consists of a paper earlier issued by the author on "The Tension between Religion and Science," followed by two longer treatises, one endeavouring to found an apologetic for the Christian Faith on a sympathetic understanding of the Universe, the other presenting a fresh interpretation of the miracles of Jesus from the standpoint gained in this way. The book is clearly the product of a good deal of reading, and the writer preserves his own individuality, even at times reflecting his admiration for the poetic intuition by expressing himself in poetic vein. He has a gift for arresting statement, as when he affirms that the book of science is in two volumes: "The first (covering hypothesis and experiment up to about 1910) might be entitled *Miracle is Lost in Matter*. The title of its successor should be *Matter is Lost in Miracle*." As to miracles themselves, Mr. Rowland prefers to think of them as the repetition by Jesus of His Father's works,

rather than as due to the suspension of natural laws. Miracle "was not meant to provide a certificate of deity for Christ Jesus with phenomena that broke the continuity of creation. It was rather intended to picture the inevitable radiation of a personality who gave Himself with the understanding and loving obedience of a Son to perfect God's creative work in physical nature by continuing it within the nature that is human." Few will read this book without profit. We hope for it a wide circulation.

G. R. BEASLEY-MURRAY.

Christian Faith and the Scientific Attitude, by W. A. Whitehouse.
(Oliver & Boyd, 12s. 6d.)

The Reader in Divinity in the University of Durham, who is a Cambridge mathematician and Oxford (Barthian) theologian here sets himself the task of probing such questions as whether a scientist has reason to mistrust Christian thinking, whether, on the other hand, Christians should mistrust scientific thinking, what authority the Bible can have for a man who respects the authority of science and whether the God and Father of Jesus Christ can be thought of as Lord and Creator of the universe now revealed by science. To these and other kindred questions Mr. Whitehouse addresses himself with thorough knowledge, with understanding lucidity and candour, and the result is a readable, highly interesting and competent book. He upholds the main contentions of the scientist, and declares that to live without scientific wisdom would be folly, perhaps even sin; scientists have set a standard of intellectual honesty and the scientific attitude may well be a liberating gift of God. On the other hand Mr. Whitehouse expounds the chief dogmas of the Church in a way which is intended to be at once true to the Bible and less irritating to the scientist than some expositions which have been put forward, declaring that the authority at the root of "Church thinking" is the reality of God and His self-revelation. He is concerned to show that Christian thinking is as intellectually honest as scientific thinking. Of course part of the problem is that the Church faces not only the real scientist whose reverence for truth has something genuinely noble about it, but also the ordinary person who has become so gadget-minded and accords to "science" as unquestioning and irrational a devotion as the most superstitious worshipper of idols gives to objects of wood and stone. These camp-followers of science probably represent a bigger problem than the true scientist who, at any rate, is in quest of reality. To those who are concerned about the whole issue of science and Christianity this helpful volume may be commended.

The American Church—of the Protestant heritage, edited by Vergilius Ferm. (Philosophical Library, New York, \$6.)

Twenty-one contributors to this interesting and informative volume describe the chief Protestant denominations in the United States. A historical approach is, in the main, adopted and the European background, American development, the characteristic features of doctrine and polity of each group is outlined and information is given relating to its outstanding pioneers, leaders and theologians, its schools, colleges, journals, headquarters and other matters. Limits of size and space make the treatment necessarily somewhat sketchy but, nevertheless, the whole provides an authoritative and fairly comprehensive account of the main stream of modern American Protestantism which many will be glad to have available and which should serve the editor's purpose of promoting common understanding. The chapter devoted to the Baptists comes from the scholarly pen of Dr. Robert G. Torbet, from whom we learn that the American (i.e. Northern) Convention has one-and-a-half million members, supporting 62 educational institutions, 18 orphanages, 6 hospitals and 22 homes for the aged, while Southern Baptists, with a membership of over seven million, maintain 61 educational establishments, 29 hospitals and 20 orphanages. Negro Baptists number over seven millions—half the Negro population. Smaller Baptist groups exist, of whom not the least interesting are the Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists, representing a diminishing hyper-Calvinism. The chief influence of the Baptists on American life, says Dr. Torbet, has been in the direction of national morality, unsectarian public education, religious liberty, the freedom of the churches from secular control, a spiritual foundation for democracy and their ministry to the common people. Groups having spiritual kinship with the Baptists which find a place in this book are the Mennonites (described by Dr. J. C. Wenger), the Disciples of Christ, the Churches of Christ—both Campbellite—and the Church of the Brethren, which practises trine immersion. This fresh appraisal of the larger Protestant communions of America may be warmly commended, not least because it will minister to what its editor terms "the charity that comes from understanding."

A Companion to the Baptist Church Hymnal (Revised), edited by Hugh Martin. (Psalms and Hymns Trust, 10s. 6d.)

Certainly, as Dr. Martin states in his foreword, greater and more imaginative use could be made of the hymn-book than the average worshipper realises. This new companion to our hymnal

(upon which J. O. Barrett, Frank Buffard, Grey Griffith and J. O. Hagger have collaborated with the editor) undoubtedly meets a need and should make the hymnal more interesting, helpful and enriching in public worship and personal devotions. It provides informative notes on every hymn and its author represented there and, in addition to useful indexes, there are chapters on "Hymnody in the Christian Church" and "Hymns among the Baptists." A comparison with the previous *Handbook to the Baptist Church Hymnal* (pub. 1935) prepared by Carey Bonner and W. T. Whitley shows that notes on composers of tunes have been omitted (for reasons of cost and size) as have also the other book's practical suggestions for hymn-services, etc., and alternative classifications of hymns. In the present volume, however, the notes on hymns and authors are considerably amplified. Much hard work has obviously gone into its preparation and the whole forms a handy, informative and interesting book which if widely circulated—and every church ought to buy a copy or copies for its minister, choirmaster and organist—should stimulate better worship in public and private. It would have made an excellent gift or presentation volume had its jacket been made attractive to the eye. Books need to look—as well as be—worth obtaining.

GRAHAM W. HUGHES.

A More Excellent Way, by L. J. Tizard. (Independent Press, 7s. 6d.)

This is the Lent Book of the Congregational Union for 1953, and it takes the form of an exposition of 1 *Corinthians xiii*, based on Dr. Moffatt's translation. Mr. Tizard's strong point is his interest in, and insight into, human relationships, as his earlier book *Guide to Marriage* showed, so subject and author are well matched in the new book. Mr. Tizard brings to his exposition a knowledge of psychological theory, and through its judicious use he is able to take into account the varied motives behind human behaviour. It is fitting that a book for Lent reading should have a searching and astringent quality, and this one certainly has, especially in the chapters "The Coldness of Charity" and "Envy has no Holidays." The reader who could close this book feeling pleased with himself would be a hard case! Indeed, the author, in his determination to deal honestly with his readers, has perhaps over-emphasised the darker traits in human nature, and insufficiently stressed the positive excellence of the way of love. Mr. Tizard illustrates his theme with many an apt quotation, and his own literary style is both clear and graceful.

These our Prayers, by N. A. Turner-Smith. (Independent Press, 5s.)

This is a new type of book on prayer. The compiler, at the request of the Life and Work Dept. of the Congregational Union, got into touch with a cross-section of lay folk in Congregational churches and asked them whether they would share with him, for the benefit of others, their experience of prayer. The questions put included enquiries about domestic and business circumstances, opportunities for privacy, and how they dealt with such difficulties as apathy and staleness. The replies have been skilfully used.

Readers may find it useful to know what devotional books have proved helpful to others and will be reminded that it is possible to pray anywhere and at all times. It may be questioned, however, whether it would not have been more helpful to the ordinary reader if Mr. Turner-Smith had not himself been invited to write a book on this subject instead of merely acting as a compiler.

The Intimate Life, by J. Norval Geldenhuys. (Philosophical Library, New York, \$2.75.)

This handbook for engaged and newly married Christians is concerned with sexual relationships. It begins with an excellent discussion on the place of sex in human life, and an appeal to parents to teach their children that "the conception and birth of a child is in itself, something pure and beautiful." Sensible advice for engaged couples follows, and the whole idea of marriage is set in a Christian background. The rest of the book, which is much more controversial, deals with birth control within marriage. The author holds that birth control of some kind is necessary for the best spacing of children. He is critical of artificial methods of control on the ground that they are "unnatural" and that they often rob the marriage partners of much of the spontaneity and joy of the sexual act. He goes on to recommend "periodic abstinence" as the best method, claiming on the basis of recent research in Japan and on the Continent that there is an extensive "safe period" during which conception is most unlikely to occur. This is debatable country, and it is doubtful whether confident assertion is yet justified.

Why not have a Drink—if you're a Christian? by John Murray. (Independent Press, 2s. 6d.)

This is a useful little book to put into the hands of young people in our churches. It is written in a racy style, well suited to the particular class of reader in mind, and is cleverly and humour-

ously illustrated. The author, the Congregational minister in Cambridge, was formerly a journalist, and knows how to do this sort of thing. He is a convert to total abstinence, but there is nothing fanatical in his presentation of his case. It is a pity, and somewhat surprising, that his statistics of the amount spent on drink are not more up-to-date. Mr. Murray would render a service to our churches if he would write a similar book on "Why not Gamble—if you're a Christian?"

JOHN O. BARRETT.

The Reliability of the Gospels, by A. J. B. Higgins. (Independent Press Ltd., 3s.)

This little book is an expansion of two public lectures originally delivered in a London church. It sets out to give in simple form the findings of New Testament scholarship on two main themes: (a) the historicity of the Gospel narrative and (b) the relevance of the Old Testament to the Gospel narrative. The field of reference is confined to the Synoptic Gospels. In the first lecture, Dr. Higgins offers a lucid and helpful discussion of the following points: the nature of the Gospels, the text of the Gospels, the evangelists, the sources at their disposal and their value, the oral period and Form Criticism. In the second lecture, the author gives examples of Jesus' use of the Old Testament, and goes on to discuss "the various Messianic titles which are applied to Him by the New Testament writers (Christ, Son of David, Son of God, the Servant, Son of Man, Lord)," and there is a brief conclusion. The argument is well presented, and the book deserves to be widely read by those who are looking for a concise discussion of the matters in hand.

D. R. GRIFFITHS.

William The Silent. A biography for children. By Bernard Martin. (Independent Press, 6s.)

Reading matter for children is always an important concern for teachers and parents, and never more than today when so much unsuitable literature is available. At the same time the encouragement of a lively interest in the problems of freedom, of speech and belief, in religion and politics, must not be overlooked in the education of tomorrow's citizens. Mr. Martin's biography of the Prince of Orange is a valuable contribution toward meeting these two needs. The story is well-told and will make a strong appeal to children's love of adventure and their ready sympathy for the distressed. It will, moreover, like all good books for children, be enjoyed by their elders.

H. GORDON RENSHAW.