

## Reviews

Hugh Martin (ed.), *The Baptist Hymn Book Companion*. 465 pp. 27s. 6d. The Psalms and Hymns Trust.

Elsewhere in this issue there is full review of the *The Baptist Hymn Book*.<sup>1</sup> This *Companion* appeared at the same time, consisting of 43 pages of introductory material and 427 pages of notes on the hymns and tunes.

The editor writes on the making of the hymn book, listing the reasons why one third of the hymns from the present book have been omitted. The reasons seem good though much of their force is taken away by the admission in the following paragraph that God can use poor hymns as he can use poor sermons and therefore some of these "poor" hymns have been retained; one wonders then on what grounds the good reasons laid down were sometimes ignored! A further set of reasons is then given for the addition of new hymns. The fact that they have included more evangelistic hymns will please some; that they have included more metrical psalms will please others; that they have included more objective and doctrinal hymns, and more translations of the ancient hymns of the Church is surely a good move whether it pleases anybody or not.

Stephen F. Winward's contribution, "How to Make the Best Use of the Hymn Book," and A. Ewart Rusbridge's "Congregational Singing" are the most practical and generally useful of the remaining chapters. Both could profitably be printed as off-prints and distributed to every member of every congregation. The first contains words of wisdom for congregations, for those who conduct worship and for those who wish to use the book for private devotion; the second has some useful points on congregational hymn singing and some even more useful ones on psalm singing. It is to be hoped that the words of encouragement on the latter point will bear fruit. The other chapters deal with "Hymnody in the Christian Church" (J. Ithel Jones), "Baptists and their Hymns" (E. A. Payne) and a list of Baptist authors, translators and composers represented in the *Hymn Book*.

The Notes give a biographical sketch of the author the first time one of his hymns is used, a comment on variations and versions together with reasons for the particular one selected, and a note on the tune, its composer and where the tune first appeared. All this is a most useful compendium of information and material, though how much it will be used will depend on the extent to which people want to dig behind the hymns they sing. It is a pity that the sections of the *Hymn Book* are not more clearly discernible in the *Companion*.

A. GILMORE

<sup>1</sup> See pages 277-284.

Normal Goodall, *The Ecumenical Movement*. 240 pp. 18s. Oxford University Press.

The literature about the ecumenical movement is growing fast, as is natural, but there is a distinct place for this book, written in the light of long and intimate knowledge, including sixteen years on the staff of organizations involved. A highly informative and perceptive survey, it is written, as the author says, "for the growing number of men and women who have heard a little about these things and want to know more, and for those who may have had some contact with one part of the movement but would like to see the part within the whole." It is a factual, meaty and documented work, but none the less very readable, with many flashes of wit and insight.

Perhaps the meaning of the ecumenical movement cannot be better summed up than in a couple of sentences drawn from a notable statement, quoted here, presented to the Willingen conference of the International Missionary Council in 1952 by the delegates from "the younger churches." "Division in the Church distorts its witness, frustrates its mission and contradicts its own nature. . . . We believe that in the ecumenical movement God has provided a way of co-operation in witness and service, and also a means for the removal of much that mars such witness and service."

Goodall gives us an outline of the history, sketches of some of the leading personalities, a survey of its far-reaching concerns, an account of its structure, and a frank appraisal of its difficulties, problems and opponents. The implications of the newly accomplished integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches are examined. The Faith and Order movement and the baffling problems of Christian unity are discussed, with a clear statement of what is and is not the function of the W.C.C. in this field, not a super-church, not a propagandist for any scheme of reunion, only an instrument ready to hand for the churches to use as they themselves determine. The stirring story of Christian Aid is told again. The possible effects of the admission of the Russian Orthodox Church are discussed, and there is a frank examination of the nature of the "evangelical," so-called, opposition to the movement, including the activities of the egregious Carl McIntyre. A valuable feature is the reprint of certain key documents, like the statement quoted above and the moving 'Affirmation' of the Edinburgh Conference of 1937. It is a book both for reading and for reference.

I would commend it cordially, not least to critics in our own midst who still cherish misgivings. It will remove many misconceptions and reveal the ecumenical movement by its fruits as a notable stirring of the Spirit of God in the Church of our generation. I like the quotation from the diary of High Church Archbishop

Garbett: "These meetings are changing my outlook in regard to the Free Churches. I forget we belong to different churches and I am conscious only of our common Christianity." Many a Free Churchman could say the same thing, the other way round.

Coming from its author this is inevitably up-to-date and accurately informed. I have noted only one error. Lucy Gardner, the remarkable woman who was secretary of the great COPEC Conference of 1924, was a Quaker, not an Anglican.

HUGH MARTIN

Ten pamphlets on Faith and Christian Living. 3s. each.  
Independent Press.

In writing the epistle to the Romans Paul talks about the "renewal of the mind." This epistle was obviously written to believers, so that in Paul's opinion the transformation of the mind is not something that automatically follows conversion. We can imagine people in the Church at Rome having been transformed in heart for some time but as yet still showing little evidence of being different in their thinking from those who were round about them.

If that was true in Paul's day it is by no means confined to his day. Today we are called upon to use our minds to harmonise our thoughts with the Gospel and our conduct with our faith. We are slowly beginning to realise that it is through the renewing of the mind that we shall be able to discern the will of God more clearly. What a blessing it is that we have books to aid us in the use of our intellect!

Just such a series has recently been published by the Youth and Education Department of the Congregational Church.

Six of the booklets have the title *What we Believe*. The headings are; "The Christian Doctrine of God"; "Worship"; "The Bible"; "The Church in History"; "Belonging to the Church"; and "The Sacraments."

They are intended to help not only the young people themselves but the leaders of youth groups.

The Committee are to be congratulated for they have realised that the questions which puzzle young people are mostly matters of theology.

In "The Christian Doctrine of God," Principal John Huxtable reminds us in the "Foreword" that there is a point beyond which the theologian would distort his subject by further simplification and he calls upon his readers to accept the "obligation to make an effort to think." What he has said of this booklet could well be said of the whole series.

No. 4 in this series deserves special mention, "The Church in

History." This is a brilliant piece of writing. Here we have a panoramic view of the History of the Church from the end of New Testament times to the World Council of Churches in 1948. The writer will convince all who read this book on two important issues; first, that the history of the Church is a fascinating story; second, that some knowledge of it is vital to an appreciation of the present situation.

Not all the booklets reach the same height. The one on "Worship" is by far the most disappointing in the series. The impression is given that worship is something that we initiate rather than something in which it is our privilege to join.

A second series is entitled *The Christian Way*, two of which are to hand "Life is a Trust," dealing with Stewardship, and "Christian Discrimination." These are more obviously written for young people. One wonders why the publishers did not see fit to extend the "What We Believe" series so that these two aspects of the Christian Life were dealt with from the theological point of view. The other two titles in preparation are "Saying Our Prayers" and "Reading the Bible."

These booklets invite a comparison with the Ter-Jubilee Booklets published by the Baptist Union, which have the same aim in view.

The Ter-Jubilee booklets are much more attractively produced. In an age when the covers of all the books which young people read are colourful and impressive, when commercial artists are being commissioned to design the fly-leaves of theological works this is important. The Independent Press has shown singular lack of imagination.

But it is not the covers but the material that is vital. Dr. Champion has "observed that a denomination which neglects its theology was like a man who neglects his house"; we live, he suggests, in "a theological slum." So many of the Ter-Jubilee booklets are concerned with techniques (of evangelism; of men's work; or women's work; of advertising and finance) and not with essential theology. In this respect the leaders of youth groups, indeed Church discussion groups will find the Congregational series much more valuable.

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