

Reviews

Karl Barth, *Theology and Church*. 358 pp. 37s. 6d. S.C.M. Press

This volume is the sixth in a small series which the S.C.M. Press is issuing as *The Preacher's Library*; the series has the excellent aim of helping "preachers in the basic problems of their task of proclaiming the Christian Gospel under modern conditions."

Will this book, consisting of twelve lectures delivered by Barth between 1920 and 1926 and an introduction by Prof. T. F. Torrance, achieve this aim? Any preacher who reads it must be prepared for some hard thinking; but would not much preaching be stronger if it derived from harder thinking? Some will make the judgment that much of the material is too academic to help the preacher, and this probably is a true judgment about Barth's discussions of the theological positions of Schleiermacher, Feuerbach and Wilhelm Herrmann, who was Barth's teacher in Marburg.

Yet careful reading of these lectures takes one beyond the academic to fundamental questions about the nature of religion, and that must always be the concern of the preacher.

The introduction by Professor T. F. Torrance, occupying 54 pages, is a valuable addition to the book; after a short description of Barth's development, the purpose of the introduction is stated to be not an exposition of Barth's mature theology, but an attempt "to reveal the context in which it is to be understood, to show the direction in which it has moved, and to indicate the great concerns in connection with which it has been elaborated." The introduction then discusses the themes of theology and culture, theology and the church, theology and secular knowledge.

In 1918 Barth published his *Commentary on Romans*. Not everyone will agree with Prof. Torrance's assertion that "Karl Barth is the greatest theological genius that has appeared on the scene for centuries," but few could deny that the *Commentary on Romans* initiated a new era in Protestant theology, or that Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, which began to be published in 1940, constitute a major contribution, perhaps the outstanding contribution, to theology in the 20th century. Barth may prove to be as significant as Aquinas or Calvin.

The importance of the present book is that it gathers writings from Barth's formative period after his *Commentary*, and before he began his *Dogmatics*. In these lectures he is wrestling with concepts of revelation, of the Word of God, of the nature of Christ, of the

function and authority of the church. In all this he is concerned about the Christian task of witness. What is it that the preacher has to communicate? What does the church bear witness to?

To such questions Protestants and Catholics offer different answers. In two important essays Barth formulates his thought over against the Catholic position. Barth insists that Protestants and Catholics must take one another seriously, and be prepared to enter into true conversation: "In the Christian Church there is truly a Master and a Lord"; so that if Protestants claim to be a church, to be in the church of which Christ is Lord "We are in the same room with the church which calls itself the Roman Catholic Church." Protestants and Catholics, who differ so much, obey the same Lord and are in the same "church-room." Once we come to this realization we know that the Roman Church, by its very existence, addresses questions to Protestants to which we should listen. Barth tries to listen and understand, even though he is not able to accept; indeed, he expresses evangelical conceptions of grace and faith with clarity and force. I find this essay a significant illustration of true ecumenical conversation.

In view of much modern discussion, I turned expectantly to the essay on *The Concept of the Church*. I found many sentences to reflect upon. "The Church is the place and instrument of the grace of God." "The splendour of the church can consist only in its hearing in poverty the Word of the eternally rich God, and making that Word heard by men." "By the fact that Christ took his cross upon himself, and became obedient unto death, the Church has been shown its position and nature." "The Church is holy so long as it obeys, not so far as it commands."

The word obedience can be applied to theology as well as to the church. ". . . theology consists essentially in the concrete obedience to concrete authority." This, of course, raises questions about the source and nature of authority, and about the nature and place of obedience. It is in regard to such questions that Barth's strong emphasis upon the authority of what is given by God, of the revealed Word of God which is Jesus Christ is made. Theology with its human discussions, formulations, intellectual propositions, must always seek to be in obedience to the Word, and this obedience implies the activity of service. "Such service to the Word is pre-eminently the purpose of the church, and it is also the purpose of theology in its specific place in the Church"; for theology serves the revelation when it serves the preaching.

In this book Barth the preacher becomes Barth the theologian, pondering deeply profound questions. Out of those years of strenuous discussion has come a theology which may serve Christian preaching everywhere, and so serve the Divine Word.

L. G. CHAMPION

Edmund Flood, *No Small Plan*. 118 pp. 14s. Denton, Longman and Todd.

This book is difficult to summarise because it is already, in a sense, a summary, endeavouring to outline the plan of God in history. It is a plan of friendship. God, the source of all that exists, uses his power for the benefit of man, to bring him into a close relationship with Himself. The result is a wholly new way of life. "We can, if we wish, take part in a development by which our manhood, like Christ's, is perfected by an unimaginable intimacy with God."

The plan is brought to focus in the Passover, the Last Supper and the Eucharist. At the Passover, with its sacrifice, commemoration of the Rescue and Covenant, and its meal, men were bound with God in the closest ties of friendship. The Last Supper differs from the Passover, as the New Testament differs from the Old, in that Jesus added "a new sight on God and how He acted with men." God was now acting through His Son to bring man to the Father. In Him this friendship was now offered. In the words over the bread and wine, Jesus made known, not only that somehow he became present in them, but especially as the Servant who made possible, by his death, a deeper intimacy with God—the new covenant in His Blood.

The continuation of this Salvation-History is the Eucharist, where God's plan is still at work, bringing us into fellowship with Himself through the action of Christ. This third section of the book was, for the present reviewer, by far the most interesting. It is a potted history of the Mass, pointing out what is essential and what is not. The five actions are clearly pointed out with a helpful commentary on each. All else leads up to the Eucharist, or simply confirms it. Here Christ is brought to present existence and as we join with Him in a movement to the Father (sacrifice) the plan of God is effected in us today. The final action, the Communion, only confirms that we are linked into a common unity and share the intimate companionship of Christ.

As you will have gathered, the author is a Roman Catholic. It is all the more delightful therefore to feel at home on so many of his pages. Here is the Biblical Scholarship for which we look, and we are not unduly surprised by such features as the special treatment of Peter (p. 29^f) and the shabby treatment of preaching (p. 59)—or is it? There are some tantalizingly brief, though suggestive, references to "Real Presence," "Sacrifice" and "Transubstantiation." The third bears comparison with a chapter of Leenhardt's in *Essays on the Lord's Supper*.

The author is not uncritical of the present shape of the Mass and makes a plea for simple, direct and meaningful words and actions. This makes it surprising that he considers "that we no longer share in the same large piece of bread" as a not very serious loss. The

Mass must speak to us of the plan of God and make it effective for us today. We pride ourselves in more simple ways of worship that are easily understood, but we know that we too must learn this lesson. The liturgy must adequately express what God is doing. Our "orders of service," as deformed as the Mass though in different ways, so often do not.

It is not clear for whom this book is intended. There are notes at the back for the specialist, but it is written for that unknown quantity, the general reader. The writing is fresh, though sometimes the argument is difficult to follow. But the ecumenically minded, anxious to grow in common understanding, will be helped and pleasantly surprised. More's the pity that 117 pages between paper covers cost 14s.

M. H. TAYLOR

R. P. Martin (ed.), *Vox Evangelica*, Biblical and Historical Essays. 75 pp. 6s. Epworth Press.

This first volume of essays by members of the Faculty of the London Bible College sets a good standard. H. C. Oakley's contribution on "The Greek and Roman Background of the New Testament" is a useful study with references to a number of N.T. passages. The political and religious environment of the first century Christians is sketched in some detail. But the Jewish element in the N.T. background cannot be ignored; not only because of its importance, but also because it cannot be dissociated from the Greek and Roman elements. To this extent the theme of the essay is something of an abstraction. The second essay by L. C. Allen deals with Isaiah 53 : 11. Following Professors G. R. Driver and D. Winton Thomas he translates the fifth word in the verse "by his submission," in place of the more familiar rendering "by his knowledge." Thomas has also suggested the same translation of this word in Daniel 12 : 4, and Mr. Allen sees in this another link between the thought of the book of Daniel and the Servant Songs. Allen then links Romans 5 : 19 with these O.T. passages and so finds yet another bit of evidence of the N.T. interpretation of the mission of Christ in terms of the Suffering Servant.

The third essays is contributed by the Editor on "The Composition of I Peter in Recent Study." Mr. Martin makes a careful summary of the attempts to find the Sitz-im-Leben of the epistle. He accepts the hypothesis that 1 : 3-4 : 11 is a baptismal address (or two addresses) but rejects the view of F. L. Cross that it is a liturgical document. He is rightly critical of Bultmann's attempt to reconstruct an early confession of faith from 3 : 18-22, and maintains that I Peter as a whole is a genuine letter.

Dr. Guthrie gives a good survey of the changing attitude towards

the idea of Pseudepigrapha in the New Testament from Luther's day to our own. The author's attitude is conservative, but not dogmatic. His essay, however, is somewhat inconclusive; as a discussion, however good, on the possibility of N.T. Pseudepigrapha cannot be based only on comparative external evidence, but must deal with the internal evidence of the documents in question. We hope Dr. Guthrie will undertake this further investigation with the same regard for objectivity of judgment as is revealed in this article.

The last essay on "A Nineteenth-Century Nestorius" by H. H. Rowdon is a revealing account of the persecution for heresy of B. W. Newton by another "Brother," J. N. Darby, from which the reviewer learned much. If this essay is more informative than edifying, this is not the fault of the author. Altogether here is excellent value for 6s., although the essays deserve a better binding.

GEORGE FARR

The Apostolic Fathers. An American Translation by Edgar J. Goodspeed. 18s. 6d. Independent Press.

This is the work of a distinguished scholar who won world renown by his translation of the New Testament and other works of New Testament scholarship, and has now been called to higher service. This is an admirable book. In addition to the translation, which is lively, vigorous and usually accurate, a brief introduction dealing with authorship, date, occasion and purpose prefaces each book. The original Greek editions have been carefully studied and compared, including a papyrus manuscript (the Michigan papyrus) of the Shepherd of Hermas, dated A.D. 250-275 and discovered in 1922. It is the first time this fragment has been included in a collection of the Apostolic Fathers. Dr. Goodspeed has made constant use of its testimony, in Campbell Bonner's fine edition (1934) to correct and improve Lake's text in his *Apostolic Fathers* in the Loeb Classical Library.

The author has also included a translation of the *Doctrina*, which he places first as almost the oldest and certainly the most primitive document in the list. No Greek manuscript of this curious little work has yet come to light, and the two known Latin manuscripts of it or part of it have been mistaken for translations of the *Didache*. Actually, as Dr. Goodspeed convincingly shows, it is the source of the Greek *Didache*, and of the Greek Barnabas, as well as of most of the later documents that have long been regarded as reproducing material from the Greek *Didache*. Evidence for this conclusion is set out in an Appendix.

Thus, this is not merely another translation of the Apostolic Fathers. It is a real contribution to patristic scholarship. There is,

however, no discussion of the controversy now surrounding the date of the Didache. It is simply described as a little church manual prepared, probably in the region of Antioch, toward the middle of the second century.

Dr. Goodspeed himself describes his version as a franker, more modern and unflinching translation than those of his predecessors. He also claims to have made advances at a few points in Greek lexicography. We are inclined to question the accuracy of his translation here and there. For instance, Ignatius, *Ephesians* 18: "My spirit is a humble sacrifice to the cross." The Greek *peripsema tou staurou* means "an offscouring for (lit. of) the cross," and the reference is to I Cor. 4: 13, which is obscured by Goodspeed's translation. Nevertheless on the whole the translation is excellent and reliable.

A. W. ARGYLE

G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England*. 305 pp. 30s. Methuen.

In this discussion of factors which went into the creation of Victorian England one of Dr. Clark's main objectives has been to draw attention to movements and forces which have been hitherto neglected. The result is a book of consuming interest and one which will surely need to be pondered by future writers on this period. The author turns his attention to a variety of themes such as progress and survival, population, industrialization, the changing patterns in society and politics, and in every chapter there are the signs of original reflection on evidence brought out in his own and others' recent research. As an instance of the freshness of mind with which he has gone to the scene of operations one may mention his serious discussion of the drink problem and the temperance movement. Future historians are not going to accept all his conclusions on this or other matters but he has shown convincingly that they will neglect such questions only at the risk of a distorted picture.

It is fitting in this journal to emphasize the interest which the book will have for students of Church history. This is true not just because the longest chapter is devoted to "The Religion of the People" but because Dr. Clark's whole approach is conditioned by his belief that probably in no other century, except the 17th and perhaps the 12th, "did the claims of religion occupy so large a part in the nation's life, or did men speaking in the name of religion contrive to exercise so much power." The effect of this conviction is that we have a highly competent general historian seeking to understand and assess movements of religious life in 19th century England in a way which, so far as I am aware, has not been

attempted by anyone since Halévy. The element of detachment, coupled with a real effort to judge sympathetically and fairly, results in a new look and stimulating comment even on questions which in themselves are familiar ground to Church historians. It is true of course that there are insights and appreciations which can only be gained from within and Free Church readers will feel this at certain points as much as any. They will, for example, question the author's judgment when after several very pertinent remarks on the decline of Nonconformity at the close of the Victorian era, he goes on to say that "probably more than other religious bodies they had drawn their strength from ways of thought and expression which were native to the nineteenth century and were now becoming obsolete." This is on the way to becoming a general comment on the nature of Nonconformity and as such will not stand close scrutiny. There is an error of fact on page 43 for it is not correct that after 1871 all posts and prizes at the older universities were open to Free Churchmen; there are divinity chairs from which they are still debarred, an anomaly in this ecumenical age which surely calls for rectification. But these are details which by no means detract from the fact that there is much for us and other denominations to ponder in this refreshing discussion and Dr. Clark will only rejoice if anything he says stimulates research among people such as ourselves. He is, let it be said, a good friend of research students, including persons to whom he has no direct teaching responsibility. He will have had mixed emotions over the fact that a book which he dedicated to Dr. G. M. Trevelyan came off the press but a few weeks before that great historian's death.

G. W. RUSLING