

## Reviews

S. L. Greenslade (ed.): *The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*. 590 pp. 45s. Cambridge University Press.

This important book will take its place quickly as a standard work about the Bible. In the comprehensiveness of its conception and the authority of its scholarship, in the practical quality and positive spirit which pervades it, in the excellence of its production and the comparative reasonableness of its price, it constitutes a major service to students of our day and generation. I use "students" here in no narrow sense. Many outside colleges are going to find this a delight to possess and use.

The list of chapter headings which follows will give some idea of the quantity of ground covered; the names of the contributors will speak for the quality. The Bible in the Reformation (R. H. Bainton); Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries (Basil Hall); English Versions, 1525-1611 (S. L. Greenslade); The Religion of Protestants (Norman Sykes); The Bible in the Roman Catholic Church from Trent to the Present Day (F. J. Crehan); The Criticism and Theological Use of the Bible 1700-1950 (W. Neil); The Rise of Modern Biblical Scholarship and Recent Discussion of the Authority of the Bible (Alan Richardson); English Versions since 1611 (L. A. Weigle); The Bible and the Missionary (Eric Fenn); The Printed Bible (M. H. Black). Thirteen scholars contribute to the two chapters covering Continental versions before and after 1600.

R. H. Bainton surveys the answers given by the Reformers to various questions confronting them when they had rejected the authority of Rome and the chapter gains a good deal from the fact that he pays due attention not only to the "classic" reformers but also to the Anabaptists. Chapter 2 could have become a dull catalogue but comes alive in the hands of Basil Hall. Under "Biblical Humanism and its resources" he tells of the scholars' struggles to forge the necessary tools for Biblical study and we are reminded how easy it is to take for granted the array of grammars and lexical aids which we have at hand today! In the section on "Annotations and Commentaries" he states his conviction that the study of the history of Protestant and Roman exegesis has more light to shed on the age of the Reformation than have polemical studies and that, along with the renewal of biblical theology, it is going to change some interpretations not only of the Reformation but also of the

patristic and Middle Ages. Protestants will find much to interest them in the contribution of F. J. Crehan, the well-known Jesuit scholar. His chapter reflects the newer Roman attitude to the Bible without perhaps making it fully clear how the necessary adjustments of mind have been made.

That the Bible still has a unique authority for us in the 20th century does not alter the fact that the 19th century brought a revolution in our understanding of its nature and in exegetical methods. For a summary of what has been going on in the last 150-200 years it would not be easy to improve on the chapters by Neil and Richardson. Richardson's would assist anyone seeking to orientate himself in relation to modern Biblical study. It is an excellent survey, first, of the rise of modern Biblical scholarship and of the new principle of exegesis which it brought. Dr. Richardson shows how the old allegorism and the old literalism were both understandable prior to the 19th century revolution in historical method and were both, alike, outdated by it. The conservative reaction which followed that revolution is sympathetically if searchingly examined. The second half of the chapter traces modern discussion of the question of revelation through the dialectical theology of Barth and existentialist theology of Bultmann and concludes with an illuminating survey of contemporary trends. The only unhelpful aspect of the discussion is what I can only call a contribution to the confusion of terms. "Liberal" (theologically speaking) should surely now be retained for the "Liberal Protestantism" of yesterday (Harnack and others) and not used generally to cover all who accept the principles of historical criticism and exegesis?

There is a marvellous generosity about this book. Having completed its broadly conceived programme it cannot leave the reader without (i) an epilogue of 43 pages by the editor dealing with such matters as the Bible's influence, circulation, and use in public and private worship, (ii) two appendices covering aids to the study of the Bible, (iii) a thorough bibliography, and (iv) a collection of 48 illustrative plates, with brief notes on each. One can but salute gratefully all concerned in its publication, not least the editor to whom it must owe much of its excellence. It was originally intended as the first of two volumes but apparently the project has grown and there is to be a whole series designed to cover the history of the Bible.

G. W. RUSLING

Owen Chadwick: *The Reformation*. 463 pp. 7s. 6d.

Stephen Neill: *A History of Christian Missions*. 622 pp. 10s. 6d.

Penguin Books.

These are the third and sixth volumes respectively in the Pelican History of the Church. The general editor has himself written the

very lively account of the reformation, including within the volume one hundred pages on the counter-reformation and a concluding section on the effect of the reformation on the domestic affairs of the church. The prehistory of the period is set out in the first chapter which effectively disposes of the popular notion that the reformation began with Luther and that this came about solely because the church was too bad to continue unpurged. The great figures of the period are portrayed adequately for the most part, though Knox and the politically significant figure of Charles V might have been drawn a little more fully. The radicals are given a chapter to themselves and here the influence of modern scholarship is clearly discernible, although to see John Smyth roundly called an English Anabaptist will make some ask, The Separatist I know and the Se-Baptist I know, but who is this? Inevitably compression leads occasionally to obscurity but the wide use of *ipsisima verba* of representative writers of the times is an excellent feature of the book. The three maps showing the growth of Protestantism would have been more useful if a smaller area had been drawn to a larger scale. The counter-reformation is properly set in a world-wide context as distinct from European. In this section occurs one of the rare statements that at least needs qualification. Of the persecuted faithful in Japan in the seventeenth century we read (p. 342), "In recorded Christian history no destruction of a church has been more spectacular or calamitous." But there were the Muslims in Syria, Egypt and North Africa in the seventh and eighth centuries. Such criticisms, however, are, in the end, of small consequence. This study is a worthy contribution in its own right and as the historical watershed of this series is doubly welcome.

For a reason not immediately apparent this series closes with a conspectus of missionary activity by the church. If by definition Christianity is mission, though there have been times when the church has been untrue to her Lord, it is inevitable that this last volume should reproduce some material given in the first five. Accepting this, however, we can be grateful that Stephen Neill was asked to write this survey, for no more competent author for such a theme could be found. This is a notable achievement by any reckoning. The book is unequally divided with the story up to the eighteenth century given in 240 pages. In spite of far flung missionary activity of those years by Roman, Orthodox and Protestant, Neill concludes: "In 1800 it was still by no means certain that Christianity would be successful in turning itself into a universal religion." (p. 243.) The final chapter, however, opens with the assertion that now "... for the first time there is in the world a universal religion, and that the Christian religion." (p. 559.) How this came about is a story well—often movingly—told. The account is liberally sprinkled with the names of missionaries in all the

continents, but justice is not always done to their colleagues at home. It is surprising, for example, that Max Warren's name appears only in a footnote, and then as an author! Contemporary issues are also examined. Today's task is two-fold. Because, for all their zeal, nineteenth century missionaries and their societies had an inadequate doctrine of the church we now have an unhappy dichotomy between church and mission which for theological and practical reasons must be resolved. Secondly, Stephen Neill says the emergence of the Pentecostalist churches and their missions is "the most startling phenomena of the church history of the twentieth century." (p. 459.) The great historic churches could learn lessons here that will help them move forward again. Are we too proud or too inflexible to learn? Or both? The last chapter sees Africa and, less surprisingly, Latin America, as the most promising areas for further advance, with the anxiety for Europe's condition relieved only by some evidence of penitence in its churches.

We now await the publication of the first two volumes of this Pelican History in the hope that they will maintain this standard.

DOUGLAS C. SPARKES

Jacques de Senarclens: *Heirs of the Reformation*. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 343 pp. 37s. 6d. S.C.M.

T. F. Torrance in his Foreword is right to draw attention to the "brilliance and freshness" of this book. Whether analysing the malaise of the church or delineating the cure, Dr. de Senarclens is clearly master of the diverse materials he handles.

The church's doctrine of revelation as the starting point of faith is crucial. Here by a very perceptive analysis of the positions adopted by Roman Catholicism and modern Protestantism the author demonstrates his conviction that there has been development along parallel rather than antipathetic lines since both lay store by reason. A premise of the *Summa* is that God may be known by man through the deductive process of reasoning, and man will accept the revelation in Jesus Christ if it can be shown to be reasonable. Protestantism in the eighteenth century attempted to demonstrate that faith and reason are not incompatible and today frankly abandons all in the Christian revelation that offends reason. Thus both the Roman and Protestant attempt to combine nature and grace. This the author finds dangerous as it assumes that man's nature is not wholly corrupt. Reformed theology held that man was utterly hopeless and helpless and that grace alone could save him. The true heirs of the reformation accept the same teaching. A contemporary reformed theology is now outlined, running back through Barth to Calvin. "God, his Word, the Bible, the Holy Spirit and all associated realities . . . will necessarily be against us . . . They provoke our astonishment and hostility . . ." (p. 96.)

Therefore man's reason is incapable of apprehending God. So, too, apologetics is inept, for unbelief can be overcome only by grace, never by argument.

The presupposition upon which the Roman Church builds its Christology, shaped by its Mariology, depends ultimately upon its ecclesiology. Scripture is absorbed in tradition and tradition in the teaching office of the church. Against this "collective consciousness," modern Protestantism has an "individual consciousness" which emphasises not the divine initiative but its effect upon men. Hence the weakness of both Roman and modern Protestant positions is their subjective Christology whilst the evangelical reformed theology demands that objectivity be safeguarded. This in turn depends upon the doctrine of scripture. The author quotes Barth with approval, "To say that Jesus Christ rules the Church is equivalent to saying that Scripture rules the Church." (p. 131). Late in the book some 18 pages are devoted to the author's doctrine of scripture and for the best part a balanced view is maintained, even though it would be difficult to justify the assertion "... every text has its own contribution to make to the true knowledge of the work of God." (p. 295) by reference to some passages in the Song of Songs!

This book, then, is a restatement of Calvinism. As such it fails to preserve man's God-given power of choice. Dr. de Senarclens is embarrassed by this for he is at pains to assert man's freedom (p. 142f.). It is significant, however, that all that is here predicated is of the believer. Unregenerate man is hostile to God and when he is redeemed it is in spite of himself. Not yet can we do justice in one system of thought to God's sovereign grace and man's free will. In this the book must disappoint us but in so much else—notably in the need to hold a dynamic doctrine of the Holy Spirit—this book has so much to teach us.

DOUGLAS C. SPARKES

Eric C. Rust: *Towards a Theological Understanding of History*. 292 pp. 42s. Oxford University Press.

When Dr. John Mackay wrote a chapter on the meaning of history in his *Preface to Christian Theology*, he stated that the concern of thought had shifted from the problem of science and religion to the problem of history and religion. The real battleground of thought lay in his view in the confrontation of history and religion.

Dr. Rust might be described as an embodiment of that statement, for he is a scientist turned theologian, who has written previously on the theology of history, and who now presents us with the fruits of many years of thinking and teaching on this subject.

It is relevant to refer again to Mackay for in the same chapter he remembers himself as a teenager laying aside Dumas in favour of Paul and thrilling to "the romance of the part played by Jesus

Christ in making my personal salvation possible, and in mediating God's cosmic plan," so that "I have been unable to think of my own life or the life of mankind, or the life of the cosmos apart from Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup> It is clear from this book that Dr. Rust thinks and feels the same about Christ. For him, secular history is the story of fallen, sinful man, and the final meaning of history is the redemptive purpose made actual in history through Jesus Christ.

We do not view the creation from the point of view of cosmological speculation, but from a redemptive encounter with Christ, an encounter which also discloses the mysterious corruption which has pervaded our humanity. Providence is nothing neutral, but a power given a content of love. God works always and everywhere as He is revealed in Christ, and "accompanies" all free beings, even in their sin.

The book is in two parts. The first is concerned with the nature of history, and contains a most useful critical survey of other theories of interpretation. Over against naturalistic, humanistic and idealistic systems, Dr. Rust sets the view of a special stream of historical events, which is central to the meaning of all history. Fragments of that meaning may be discerned in the general religious consciousness of men, but salvation history is unique in its view of God as absolute demand and final succour, and in its taking seriously the fact of sin. (There is much emphasis in this book on "the demonic.")

Because this revelation is grounded in history Dr. Rust sees danger in Bultmann divorcing the meaning of the event from the event itself. "The process of demythologising may destroy the creative content in stripping away its form.

After an introduction which summarises the findings of his book *Salvation History*<sup>2</sup> the second part of the book consists of a reconstruction of a theology of history in which the incarnation is central. As his is an historical understanding which takes account of man's sinful state and "demonic bondage" so it is eschatological, but in Christ the eschatological event has taken place. The chronological end may be in the future, but the teleological end is already being actualised in and through Jesus of Nazareth. In His life, death and resurrection He conquers as the representative man in whom all historical existence is potentially redeemed.

Dr. Rust is so led to the conclusion that secular history is both God's and the devil's, and this means for the church (set in the state which has a Christological foundation) an "eschatological tension between the church and the world such that the lordship of Christ over both is affirmed and yet their distinction is maintained."

It is particularly in the affirmation of the lordship of Christ over secular history as over the church, that Dr. Rust reveals himself not only as teacher but as preacher.

This book is the work of a careful teacher, who covers a lot of ground, but always with illumination, and who makes the way easier by convenient summaries of the ground already covered.

It is also the work of a preacher who understands the role of the church in today's life; and the continuing need for the faith that waits for the Saviour whose power enables Him to make all things subject to Himself.

It is well worth reading.

<sup>1</sup> John A. Mackay, *A Preface to Christian Theology*. 1942, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Salvation History: A Biblical Interpretation*. John Knox Press, 1963.

G. D. SAVAGE

Ralph F. Chambers: *The Strict Baptist Chapels of England*.  
Volume IV: The Industrial Midlands. 12s. 6d. Strict Baptist  
Historical Society.

This little volume was obviously a labour of love to its author. It tells, in a plain, unvarnished fashion, the rather sad tale of division (secession) and decline which has been the experience of nearly all these congregations. It cannot fail to be painful even to those who share the author's conception of the Sovereignty of God.

It provides, too, a somewhat bitter-sweet pleasure for the "General Baptist" reader who discovers Andrew Fuller in a new guise, that of the villain of the piece! The author does not gloss over hard facts: he points out that the one Strict Baptist Chapel in Birmingham (p. 7) is "in a far from prosperous condition"; he speaks of those who could say (p. 66), "I will have a chapel of my own"; and of a chapel described as an "architectural gem" he says, "Needless to say, it was not originally erected as a Strict Baptist Chapel." Some readers may be prompted to ponder whether such factors play a part in other stories of decline as well as these.

We welcome this venture, which it is hoped to complete in nine volumes, whilst recognizing that this is in no sense an academic venture and hoping that further publications will dig deeper both theologically and historically.

B. R. WHITE

### BOOKS RECEIVED

R. W. Thomson: *Ministering to the Forces*. 64 pp. 4s. Baptist Union and Congregational Union.

Daniel Jenkins: *The Christian Belief in God*. 266 pp. 25s. Faber and Faber.

Karl Rahner: *Theological Investigations* (Vol. II, *Man in the Church*.) 211 pp. 55s. Darton, Longman and Todd.

- H. H. Rowley : *Men of God*. 306 pp. 42s. Nelson.
- W. D. Davies : *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*. 547 pp. 63s. Cambridge University Press.
- C. H. Dodd : *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*. 454 pp. 55s. Cambridge University Press.
- Max Warren : *Perspective in Mission*. 125 pp. 16s. Hodder and Stoughton.
- D. M. Baillie : *Faith in God*. 308 pp. 30s. Faber.
- Josef Piper : *Belief and Faith*. 106 pp. 21s. Faber.
- D. M. Baillie : *The Theology of the Sacraments and other papers*. 158 pp. 9s. 6d. Faber.
- G. R. Beasley-Murray : *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. 48 pp. 3s. 6d. Oliphants Ltd.

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