

Reviews

Worship in the Early Church by Ralph P. Martin. London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 144 pp., 13s. 6d. *The Reformation of our Worship* by Stephen F. Winward. London. Carey Kingsgate Press, 126 pp., 21s.

In 1962-63 *The Life of Faith* published a weekly Bible study on the subject "Worship: Personal and Public". The headings for the three "terms" were: (1) Worship in the Old Testament. (2) Worship in the Early Church. (3) Worship in our own day. Ralph Martin, the author of the second section, has revised, expanded and published his notes under the same title. Perhaps (3) above explains the remark in the introduction "Little attempt is made to apply the results of our investigation to present day needs". This is a great lack in this carefully documented study.

The Whitley Lectures delivered in Cardiff and Oxford by Stephen Winward are published under the title *The Reformation of our Worship*. This book has been awaited by many with interest. The comment made above cannot be made here for "In the concluding part of each Chapter an attempt will be made to apply the biblical insights and lessons from Church history to the worship of our Churches today" (p. 10).

In some ways these books can be contrasted. The first, Martin's, impresses us with the reading that the author has done. The footnotes show the wide theological study and the biblical texts show the extensive research carried out. The book is designed to provoke the reader to involve himself in deeper study and will prove a useful handbook to this end. The second book impresses us with the detailed thinking that the author has done working out in practice the implications of his researches. It is designed to provoke the reader to action and will prove a useful handbook to this end. One book is for the Church member who is interested in learning what "the New Testament teaches concerning the Worship in the Early Church". The other book is primarily (though not exclusively) for ministers who have the weighty responsibility of leading the People of God into the rich experience of corporate worship in all its fullness.

Having examined the Jewish inheritance of the New Testament Martin deals in successive chapters with Hymns; The Creeds; The Ministry of the Word; Stewardship; The Sacraments of Baptism (two chapters), and the Lord's Supper (two chapters); later developments of Christian Worship, in the New Testament.

Nowhere in this book do we find any suggestion that the Church

is concerned with the world. The representative character of worship where the Church offers the worship which the world does not offer—the priestly element in worship—is missing. Even in the chapters on Baptism there is no mention of “Go ye therefore”. This is Christ’s charge to every baptized person and to the whole Church. All the activities of corporate worship lead into the worship of everyday life where all the baptized are called to be spent as a living sacrifice. The Early Church was far more concerned with life than Martin suggests.

Winward’s book is an appeal for “Total Worship”. Total in the sense that the whole man is involved, not only his ears but also his eyes, and “therefore symbols will be used”. “A symbol is not necessarily an object, it may be an action”; not only his voice but his body and therefore he will stand at the offering (p. 68) and kneel at prayer (p. 107). But also “Total Worship” in the sense that the whole of the community is involved and not only the minister. “As in reading, preaching and singing so also in praying and offering, gifted laymen can contribute to the common act of worship” (p. 112).

This is a book which will not only help ministers in the ordering of public worship but also one which, one would hope, will become required reading for a few years to come for anyone entering the Christian ministry.

D. D. BLACK

The Greeks and the Gospel by J. B. Skemp. London. Carey Kingsgate Press, 123 pp., 25s.

How fortunate were the audiences who were privileged to hear these W. T. Whitley lectures delivered! It must have been an unforgettable experience for even in cold print Professor Skemp’s words are exciting. He has made a memorable protest against the tendency, which goes back to the Reformation period and has been particularly pronounced in recent years, to regard any Hellenistic elements in Christian thinking as an adulteration of the pristine faith.

He argues very ably that many of the “Greek” ideas discussed in theological circles are not characteristic. The Greeks of whom the theologian talks are not the “flesh and blood inhabitants of the Graeco-Roman world” that he has come to know in his classical studies. We might well retort that we should not be guilty of some of the naïve errors the author condemns: we should never dream of ignoring the mystery cults and the Epicureans—or even the pre-Socratic despairing attitude—in a treatment of the Greek view of what lies on the other side of the grave or of the funeral pyre. Yet enough remains of the charges to make us ashamed of our glib clichés and, after reading Professor Skemp’s account of the Socratic

and Platonic doctrine of man and immortality, we shall be much more cautious about what we say and write about the Greeks.

What seems to disturb the writer most is the conviction that the Greeks are being robbed of their rightful place by the encroachments of the Semitist and the prejudices of the Biblical theologian. This he argues with exuberant zest and a mischievous sense of humour. What sort of Biblical Theology is it which can ignore half the Biblical evidence? "The danger of so many outlines of biblical theology offered to us today is that . . . they assume that the language in which God's dealing with man is expressed is essentially Hebrew, even where it is accidentally Greek. These interpreters concede that it was not necessary for a Gentile convert to be circumcized, but they imply that he had to be Hebraized if he was to belong to the Christian Church". Professor Skemp offers numerous examples of Greek influence including "It is hard to kick against the goads" and the famous line from Menander. He points out that the word *ecclesia*, though in Christian usage it owes much to the Semitic background, carried for many "Greek" Christians the overtone of its "normal, secular meaning, a new and truer citizen assembly than any upon earth", a statement which could be supported by a number of New Testament passages. "Boldness" in the very presence of God is a Greek conception. His invocation of the vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel seems much more questionable and his remark about *logos* is no real argument: if *logos* is understood as having an exclusively Hebrew meaning, the statement "the word became flesh" still has tremendous significance, even if, as he says, it loses much of its challenge. The reader will find fascinating the way in which the writer shows that church government in which every believer participates responsibly is an inheritance from Greek political awareness, and the argument that the election of Matthias and the story of the Council of Jerusalem reveal Greek influence at least in some of the churches Luke knew. Limitations the Greeks had, but the cross that was "folly" to them was also a "stumbling block" to Jews.

This salutary and challenging reminder of the claims of the Greeks could have come at no more opportune moment. One can only hope that it will be widely read and its influence great.

IVOR BUSE

Religion at Oxford and Cambridge by V. H. H. Green. London. S.C.M. Press, 392 pp., 42s.

Guide books can be exasperating things. Some hurry over the ground so rapidly that one is left with little but superficial impressions. Others are so crowded with detail that the reader is overwhelmed by the sheer mass of names, dates and places and gives up in despair. But this guide book to Religion at Oxford and Cam-

bridge in the period from 1160 to 1960 is remarkable for the success with which it avoids these extremes and combines both detail and perspective in an unusually satisfying whole.

The field is large and rich as must needs be the case when 800 years of history are being surveyed even though its boundaries are limited to Oxford and Cambridge. It is also ill-lit and crowded with incidents and personalities whose relationships to one another and to the total pattern are hard to assess. But these facts serve to emphasize the consummate skill with which Dr. Green steers the reader to his journey's end. I leave it to the trained historian to discuss the technical qualities of the book, but I shall be much surprised if the verdict there too is not one of gratitude for a piece of high scholarship whose judgments are at once cool and critical yet informed by an understanding sympathy and humour that every reader can appreciate.

The book naturally raises the question, "what precisely does one mean by Religion at Oxford and Cambridge?" I think it was Father Tyrrell who once described Dogma as "the hard integument of lies necessary to protect the truth", and I suppose that in such great and ancient institutions as the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge a similar principle applies. Dr. Green's picture of institutional religion through the centuries is often sombre and at times appalling in its evidence of pride and obscurantism, sloth and sensualism. But over and again the hard outer crust is broken and the hidden fires of genuine Christian piety reveal their presence and their power. The author deals appropriately with each in its turn and some of his most interesting chapters are those in which he summarises the successive movements of the Spirit of God in Oxford and Cambridge which took shape in the activities of the Puritans and the Evangelicals and the Methodists, the Tractarians and the rest. He has also included some less well known materials, and one reader at least is grateful for his sympathetic study of one of the most distinguished of the former Rectors of Lincoln, Mark Pattison, whose early promise as a friend of J. H. Newman and R. W. Church so signally failed of fulfilment.

If I may offer one or two comments in closing, they bear mainly—as is perhaps natural—upon Dr. Green's treatment of the more recent stages of his survey. But first, may I say how much I wish that he had been able when dealing with the post-Restoration period, to look over the frontiers of his subject, and comment, however briefly, upon the effect of excluding Dissenters from Oxford and Cambridge. On the one hand he illustrates abundantly the stubborn resistances to change which characterised the institution. But the tragedy of this would have been made still more patent if the author had referred even in passing to the remarkable record of the "dissenting academies" in the same period—remem-

bering, for example, that it was to one such that the famous Bishop Butler owed his early training.

I wonder, too, whether Dr. Green has done justice to the creative influences released within Oxford and Cambridge by the admission of Dissenters. He gives many examples of the new societies that were formed and he obviously welcomes the positive contribution that they made, but I miss the full recognition of the fact that a whole new generation of Christian leaders grew up in Oxford and Cambridge in the early years of this century to whom the rigid denominational distinctions of former days ceased to matter. The great Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 was the first overt evidence of this. But the leaders had been working long before this and the peculiar nature of life at Oxford and Cambridge served to deepen and enlarge its power. One further factor should also be recognized, namely the great influence exercised by such outstanding Christian leaders as Andrew Fairbairn, Vernon Bartlet, W. B. Selbie and H. Wheeler Robinson at Oxford, and John Skinner, John Oman and P. T. Forsyth at Cambridge. There are so many insignificant figures in Dr. Green's portrait gallery that a place might have been found surely for some whose claim to recognition has a surer foundation.

R. L. CHILD

The Communication of the Christian Faith. (Ed.) L. G. Champion. Privately published. 139 pp. 17s. 6d.

This is a searching and challenging book. Edited by Dr. Champion and written by former students of Bristol College during the Presidency of Dr. Dakin, with one essay by Dr. Henton Davies, his former tutorial colleague, it is a timely and appropriate tribute to Dr. Dakin on his 80th birthday. "Timely" as a worthy contribution to the major problem confronting the Church today, of arousing our people from their apparent apathy to the Gospel, and of awakening the Church to see the relevance of its existence and message to the circumstances of our modern life. "Appropriate" in that Dr. Dakin made these his main emphases in his long ministry of teaching and preaching.

There are four sections of the book. The first entitled "The Faith to be communicated", expounds the Word of God as revealed authoritatively in the Old and New Testaments, demanding loving and loyal response from the people, as showing the one way of life designed by God for both the individual and the total community. The development in the concept of the Gospel is next traced from its Scriptural source, through the creeds and theological teachings of the Church in former times, to an assessment of the evangelical faith as received, held, and expounded by Christian scholars today.

Section II outlines four outstanding Baptist contributions to the

communication of the Faith, theologically and missionary by Andrew Fuller; socially and politically by John Clifford, and methods of popular appeal through literature by John Bunyan, and through preaching by Spurgeon.

The five essays in Section III contain many valuable suggestions as to ways and means of getting the Gospel across to our largely pagan population today, through understanding preaching, enlightened pastoral care and concern, through broadcasting, television, journalism, films and books, and stresses the urgent necessity for all Christians to demonstrate the relevance of the Gospel to the daily life of the individual, and its applicability to the total world situation. This demands Christian unity, fuller cooperation of the churches, better preparation of leaders and church members, and more practical ways of contributing to the promotion of justice, freedom and peace among the peoples of the world.

In a final essay Dr. Champion emphasises the need for the Church, through the quality of its inner life, and outward expression as the Body of Christ, to apply the Gospel expounded by Christ as the RULE and LAW of "the Kingdom of God". Each of the contributors writes from intimate knowledge and experience and this enhances the value of a very important book.

H. R. WILLIAMSON.

Vera Brittain: *The Rebel Passion*. 240 pp. 35s. George Allen and Unwin.

At the outbreak of the First World War Christian Pacifists in Britain founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation. The fiftieth anniversary has been commemorated by this survey of kindred movements throughout the world. The International Fellowship came into being in 1919.

The method adopted is to give brief sketches of the foremost Christian Pacifists. Had not the author been one as gifted as Vera Brittain, the material gathered from far and near could scarcely have been made so readable. One is left wishing to know more about these pioneers, yet that is inevitable when the aim has been to say something about the movement in every continent.

Most communions are represented. Baptists are not very prominent in the story but with Harry Emerson Fosdick and Martin Luther King they have their place. In the interesting chapter on "Peace-making experiments before 1914," where reference is made to several non-pacifists, mention is made of J. H. Rushbrook (*sic*) having edited a quarterly magazine, *The Peacemaker*, for the British Council of the Associated British and German Churches.

The book ends on an optimistic note. The rebellious passion "against the organised force of society, against conventional sanc-

tions and accepted gods" (Euripides, as rendered by Gilbert Murray) has made itself felt. The nuclear age has brought new concern and promises to give birth to deeper moral perceptions. It was a conversation with three German physicists which clarified the issue for Martin Niemöller and led to his joining the Fellowship in 1954.

K. C. DYKES.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Darton, Longman & Todd : *One of Great Price; the life of Mother Maria Skobtsova, Martyr of Ravensbruck*, by S. Hackel. 136 pp. 7s. 6d.
The World Mission of the Church, by A. Hastings. 59 pp. 2s.
The Christian Family in the Mid-Twentieth Century, by N. Timms. 64 pp. 2s.
Paul's Life in Christ, by J. Blenkinsopp. 125 pp. 2s.
The Experience of Marriage, by M. Novak. 173 pp. 12s. 6d.
Visible Unity and Tradition, by M. Thurian. 136 pp. 22s. 6d.
- Faber & Faber : *In the service of the Lord: the autobiography of Bishop Otto Dibelius*. 280 pp. 36s.
- Peter Smith : *Life and thought in the ancient world*, by C. Eastwood. 184 pp. 17s. 6d.