

Reviews

The Elements of New Testament Greek.

The Key to the Elements of New Testament Greek. Wenham.
Cambridge University Press. 1965. 268 + 49 pp. 18s. 6d.
and 6s.

There is still a very considerable demand for second-hand copies of H. P. V. Nunn's *Elements of N.T. Greek*. This is a well-deserved tribute particularly in view of other recently published Greek grammars of excellent quality. Now comes Wenham's work based upon that of Nunn, conservative enough to merit the same title, and yet progressive enough to include several daring innovations.

The most outstanding change is the omission of accents except in the very rare instances where ambiguity might arise. This will remove the difficulties which students so often find at this point, and will destroy the quite unnecessary sense of inferiority which those who have never learned the accents seem to feel. Perhaps it ought to be expressed conversely in terms of destroying a superiority! Anyway theological students can never be reminded too often that their language studies are for the sake of the truth which they uncover, and not to foster a pride of erudition, and its realization here may one day spread to other studies also! For much the same reason the classical references and examples are well omitted. They belong to another fruitful branch of learning, but in a N.T. Greek Grammar they can only confuse.

Some may understandably feel that the interests of conciseness have been carried a little too far. For instance they might well feel that future conditional sentences with the *indicative* are common enough not to be ignored for the sake of formulating an easier rule. On the other hand there are a few footnotes which some might think unnecessary, but which are in fact so illuminating as to deserve their place.

The general index is fuller, and the introductory English grammar is greatly improved. Alas, that it needs more than ever today to be included.

The exercises seem to be well chosen, and the revision sections will serve the painstaking student well. There is a key to the

exercises with a note inserted to correct some fifteen or so errors. For the sake of those working on their own, it is good that these have been detected. Students however tend to keep the key by them when they enter a college, and it is to be hoped that there are still a few mistakes remaining, as in the former Nunn. The canon of textual criticism, viz. that community of error points to community of origin, is still an excellent criterion for the teacher who suspects that the key is being put to fuller use than that for which it is intended.

F. S. FITZSIMMONDS

A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain. Vol. I (ed.)
R. Davies and G. Rupp, London, Epworth Press, 1965.
xxxix + 332 pp. 63s.

This recent definitive account of the origins of the Methodist Church is intended to replace the outdated *New History of Methodism* published in 1909, and to retell the story of the movement from the ecumenical perspectives of the present century. It is a composite work, an introductory essay being followed by a chapter on the social and political background, two chapters on John Wesley and one on Charles, four separate studies on the early Methodist people, and a concluding essay on Methodism at the end of the eighteenth century. Inevitably the Wesley enthusiast will find that many of the more recent lines of research seem to have been passed over : even so, modern work on Methodism and romantic literature, on the psychology of the revival and on anti-Methodist propaganda might seem to be of more intrinsic importance than Professor Orcibal's meticulous search for French and Spanish influences on Wesley's thought. Two themes figure prominently throughout the book : the gay, almost abandoned, "optimism of grace" of the early Methodists, and the eclecticism and yet surprising consistency of Wesley the theologian, opportunist though he was in his quest for a satisfactory church order.

In view of the real excellence of the *History*, it would perhaps be churlish to suggest that the Baptist reader may lay it down with some feeling of disappointment. John Walsh's splendid account of the impact of Methodism on the older Dissent which mentions tiny bodies such as the Huntingtonians gives no reference to Dan Taylor's New Connexion of General Baptists, the one movement in Nonconformity which most closely parallels Methodism theologically and organizationally. Again there arises an uneasy suspicion that in the accounts of Wesley's theology of baptism his consistency has been somewhat overstressed. The *Treatise on Baptism* (1756) may have reconciled his belief in baptismal regeneration with his Pauline emphasis on the New Birth, but it represents theological tightrope

walking at its most difficult, and his omission of any reference to regeneration in the American Service Book of 1784 was probably due less to the fact that the Americans would find it "uncongenial" than that Wesley could not reconcile it to his general theological scheme. After 1756 he was both embarrassed by and silent on the subject of baptism, and even more so was the Conference which succeeded him. Did Conference, "the living Wesley", perhaps interpret the founder's mind aright when in the mid-1830s they entitled one of their anti-Tractarian pamphlets "Baptism not Regeneration"?

Such matters must however be left to the specialists and meanwhile Baptists should be inspired to seek for their own denomination a history as up-to-date and comprehensive as this.

IAN SELLERS

Archives and Local History, by F. G. Emmison. London. Methuen. 1966. Pp. xvi, 112, 70 photographs. 30s.

This admirable and lavishly illustrated handbook is one that ought to be in the hands of any members of the Baptist Historical Society who plan the accurate local histories which this generation requires. Too often Baptist history, when studied at all, has been studied independently of the community in which the congregation arose. It is no adequate reply to assert, however truly, that many otherwise attractive local or regional histories have repaid our neglect with interest, or, when they have mentioned us at all, with misrepresentation.

The author has had many years of experience with local records and is now the Essex County Archivist. His intention has been to produce a book which will both interest and inform those who are absolute beginners in this field as well as those with a little more experience. For both these classes of readers it can be recommended with every confidence.

The book falls into two parts. The first (pp. 1-72) deals with the various types of repositories which the student will discover and the wide variety of classes of records he will find deposited with them. Whilst he has limited his treatment to documents dating from after 1538 he is well aware of the difficulties which can be encountered in trying to decypher even 16th and 17th century handwriting and gives rules for tackling difficult manuscripts (p. 6). Another valuable short section (pp. 18-21) "Visiting a Local Repository", gives advice upon how to prepare for a visit and on how to treat the Archivist (a very necessary section!). The second part of the book (p. 73) gives a wide assortment of transcripts of documents which a researcher may expect to encounter: some of these are illustrated and, again, not only does the reader learn what the originals look

like but also can try his hand at transcribing them, knowing that he has a key supplied.

Mr. Emmison, quite apart from the store of information he himself provides, has a liberal supply of suggestions for further reading in pamphlets, periodicals and books. It can safely be said that anyone contemplating some serious local historical research should obtain this book as his first step: it will serve as an introduction to a wide and fascinating opportunity.

B. R. WHITE

Steps to Christian Unity. Edited by John O'Brien. London. Collins. 1965. 318 pp. 28s.

This is a useful book, and, equally important, it is a readable book. The editor states that it is written specifically for the general reader, and, in my judgment, any thoughtful person who is interested in questions about Christian unity will read it with pleasure and profit.

The issues presented by the contemporary changes in the relations of the churches are discussed by twenty-four Christian leaders. Some familiar Roman Catholic names appear among the contributors, e.g., Hans Kung, Karl Rahner, Cardinal Bea; these are matched by the names of Protestants, e.g., R. McAfee Brown, Karl Barth, Douglas Horton.

All the writers offer contributions marked by lively and penetrating thought. The focal point is the Vatican Council, with the new attitudes which it is promoting, but from this point many wide-ranging issues are raised.

Most of the issues discussed concern the practical steps which can lead to unity, rather than the theological problems which have to be solved. The implicit question is: what can Christians do now? Several writers list the attitudes and activities which Christians everywhere can begin to pursue, e.g., respect for positions different from one's own, acceptance of the sincerity of other Christians, work together for a common good, prayer for one another and with one another. Hans Kung suggests that "it is the duty of theologians in either camp to discover what is worthwhile in the other camp, and what is wrong in their own camp". Karl Barth says that "reconciliation depends on knowing", and he adds: "The more we learn to know each other, the better we shall understand that though there is only one Christian faith, there are several different and quite valid ways of expressing it".

Perhaps the most striking feature of the book is that it could be written at all. Twenty years ago this would not have been possible; now it does not seem remarkable. So rapidly are the relations between the churches changing, and so different is the

spirit among Christians. If more people read this book and begin to act upon its suggestions, more changes will occur.

Among the twenty-four contributors there is no Baptist. That is unfortunate, for there are Baptist writers who could have made a useful contribution. But we can hardly complain, for we have not sent any observer to the Vatican Council, and we look on at the changes, trying not to be involved in them. That is why Baptists especially should read this book.

L. G. CHAMPION

Baptism Today and Tomorrow, by G. R. Beasley-Murray. London. Macmillan. 1966. 172 pp. 21s.

Baptism and Christian Unity, by A. Gilmore. London. Lutterworth. 1966. 105 pp. 18s. 6d.

"My dear Charles, You're thin and I'm fat." So wrote William Temple once to Charles Raven. A similar dialectic is provided by these two Baptist scholars. Beasley-Murray asks the Churches to recognize that there are two baptisms, and that, if infant baptism is to be retained it must be viewed solely as "entry into the Christian Society in the wider sense of the term"; Gilmore invites Baptists to "an acknowledgment of infant baptism as partial and defective, though nevertheless baptism" and to "a similar acknowledgment of the partiality of their own rite as at present practised". He asks us to recognize the co-existence of both forms of baptism (note, not "two baptisms") in the belief that "God is seeking to lead His Church into something richer than our forefathers ever dreamed of".

There is a large measure of agreement when they address their fellow Baptists. Indeed, both seem determined to show the ecumenical world that, odd man out though we seem to be, we can hit ourselves pretty hard. Baptist knuckles are rapped on the subject of sacraments. Traditional Baptist statements, so it is claimed, tend to add an "only" or "merely" to the word "symbol". I have no objection to "sacrament", but if I speak still of "ordinance", or "memorial", I must point out that it is not Winston Churchill whom I am obeying or remembering, or whose presence I am realizing. And I think I speak there for many Baptists past and present. On p. 92 Beasley-Murray suggests that the Friends are "in greater danger of losing the Gospel" through "this lack of objective embodiment of the Gospel in the sacraments". Hasn't their neglect of the preaching of the Word something to do with it, as well? On p. 38 Gilmore suggests that Baptists have not been "true to their emphasis on the priority of scripture when they have tended to limit their interpretation of baptism to an act of immersion instead of interpreting fully what 'baptisma' really means in the New Testament". Certainly baptism must be related to the whole range

of ' *Heilsgeschichte* ', and this we are trying to do in every act of Worship. At whatever time of life baptism takes place, we need the rest of our lives (not to mention eternity) to understand what "baptisma" means. As for the New Testament, ' *pace* ' the biblical theologians, the verb (significantly more frequent) and the noun do refer, more often than not, to water baptism.

On rebaptism both agree that Baptists should not press for the baptism of those baptized in infancy who have subsequently come to faith. The rite of initiation cannot be applied to one who became a Christian years before, says Beasley-Murray. Gilmore's reason is quite different. The reception of such Christians involves, for him, "some kind of honest recognition" of their baptism as infants. On p. 80 he goes even further and suggests such recognition, in some cases, even where infant baptism has not been followed by subsequent confession of faith. (Contrast Beasley-Murray, pp. 166ff.)

We must be grateful that these two books have appeared so closely upon each other, presenting a baptismal dialectic from within our own ranks. They will serve as a valuable check on the "mal-administration of baptism" in our own denomination as well as in others. And if ever we are in danger of forgetting the value of believers' baptism we must take a strong dose of Beasley-Murray. This is not to say that Gilmore is any less aware of its value, but, on the burning question of Baptism and Church relationships, he is certainly the more hopeful. Beasley-Murray, on p. 165, and uncomfortably near the end of the book, seems virtually to abandon hope that the Churches will accept (his word is "swallow"—not the happiest choice at this stage) his suggestions regarding infant baptism. Here Gilmore's more recent pastoral experience serves him in good stead and makes him, one feels, at this point, more realistic. The problems, he declares, are not insuperable, but they must be dealt with at once. Those concerned about them must listen carefully to both voices.

W. E. MOORE

Christianity in Education, by F. H. Hilliard *et al.* London. G. Allen & Unwin. 1966. 111 pp. 18s.

Religious Education, 1944-1984, ed. A. Wedderspoon. London. G. Allen & Unwin. 238 pp. 12s. 6d. (paper).

When I was learning to drive I put some questions to a lorry driver but in the end he said apologetically, "Sorry. I can't talk about driving. I can only drive." The trouble with educationists, especially the religious variety, is that they are so unlike lorry drivers. They can talk (how they can talk!) about religious education. But none of them seems able to do it. It isn't only that they aren't sure *how* it should be done; they don't even seem to be agreed about *what* it is. Of course, there are "in" things which

everybody is saying. One is that we must not indoctrinate, but educate. The trouble is that when you seek a clear account of just how indoctrinating differs from not indoctrinating, it is not easy to find. One thing is clear : everybody has been doing it wrong. They have been talking about God to the young, when no one under 14 years of age can understand the concept of God. Presumably religious education means talking to them about something else. But precisely what else ?

The reader will gather that I view a great deal of the ferment about religious education with caution, not to say suspicion. But I cannot withhold praise from these two books. The first covers education in County Schools, Independent Schools and Universities. It contains the Hibbert Lectures for 1964. Dr. F. H. Hilliard, Sir Desmond Lee, Professors W. R. Niblett and Gordon Rupp are the lecturers, and the lectures are urbane, authoritative and wise. The second book contains ten lectures given in London in 1964. Hilliard and Niblett are there again, with H. Loukes, D. Nineham and a number of other authorities. Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Training Colleges, Christian Unity, recent Psychology and Theology—the subject of religious education is related to each most expertly.

It is impossible in a short review to offer a critique because the ground covered is so vast. But there are no better books available for individuals or groups who want a conspectus of the subject. But I do hope that any teacher or minister who reads them will not be overawed or brow-beaten, if he thinks differently. Educational theorists are so vocal at the present time that I do not think it a bad thing for educators to treat what they say with the healthy disrespect with which my lorry driver would have regarded the chatterboxes from the school of motoring.

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