

Book Reviews

The Christian East : by Nicholas M. Zernov, D.Phil. S.P.C.K. in India, 1956. Pp. 138. Re.1/75.

(Obtainable from S.P.C.K., Post Box 1585, Delhi 6.)

Dr. Nicholas Zernov is a recognized scholar of the Orthodox Church and an interpreter of the Orthodox faith and spirituality generally to the Christians of the Western Tradition. In this book his aim is to help both Christians and non-Christians in India to know more about 'that Eastern tradition of Christianity which is the religion of a large number of people inhabiting Western and Northern Asia and the Eastern half of Europe'. In his introductory chapter the author points out clearly how the history of the Church in India is different from its history in all other nations and maintains that 'only by the joint efforts of the representatives of the Eastern and Western traditions can the true character of the Universal Church be revealed to the seekers after truth among the Indian people.' Further, Christianity in India has a double significance for the Universal Church because (1) India has been the field where the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity have met each other and have been influenced by the Indian cultural climate; (2) Christianity in India, therefore, may act as a mediator in the age long rivalry which has caused such grievous losses to the Church all over the world.

It is with this expectation that the author proceeds (after a chapter devoted to the schism between the Christian East and West) in this book to give a description of the Creed, the Mission, the Doctrine, the Worship and the Life of the Church as understood and experienced by the members of the Eastern Orthodox Church through the centuries. This descriptive narration occupies six readable chapters. After a chapter entitled 'The Orthodox Church of Malabar', the author in a concluding chapter deals with 'The Reintegration of the Church and the Task of Indian Christians'.

This concluding chapter is a challenge to every Christian to recognize in Divided Christendom today the four main interpretations of Christianity—the Oriental (Egypt, Ethiopia, Western and Southern Asia), the Byzantine (Russia and the Balkans), the Roman (Latin peoples) and the Occidental or the Transalpine (the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic races)—which have had different historical developments and each of which shows certain specific characteristics, ecclesiastical, doctrinal and liturgical.

The author is careful to state that 'the Anglican Church occupies a unique position among these diverse interpretations of Christianity, for it combines in its fold those who share both the Roman and the Occidental traditions' and hastens to add that many of its members are also in sympathy with certain trends of Eastern Christianity. Indian Christians who have been victims of Christian divisions in the past, says the author, are now in a position to make an important contribution to the ending of these divisions. But, alas, this is an oversimplification of the ecumenical task of the Indian Church! However, Dr. Zernov sees that in 'the merging of diverse Protestant denominations into one Episcopal Church' the Church of South India has provided the first step towards the reconciliation and reintegration of the Church in India. The second step should be 'the drawing together of the united Episcopal and Reformed Church with the ancient Eastern Churches of India'. The final stage in the great process of reintegration of the Church in India is the task of bringing about the re-union between the Christians of the Papal obedience and the re-united Churches of India. The Indian Christians who are plunged today in the three-fold task—evangelistic, theological and ecumenical—should do well to ponder over what Dr. Zernov calls 'the Reintegration of the Church' which is also a task laid on Indian Christians.

Calcutta

BASIL MANUEL

The Acts of the Apostles: by Harold K. Moulton, M.A. (The Christian Students' Library, No. 12; C.L.S., Post Box 501, Madras 3. Rs.3/75.)

In this commentary Mr. Moulton makes available to the Church some of the fruits of his many years of scholastic endeavour and Christian experience; as we might expect from a teacher, the style is characteristically lucid and simple. His scholarship, both in the New Testament Greek and in the Bible as a whole, has been used to bring out the different shades of meaning in *The Acts of the Apostles*, and has greatly illuminated and enriched our study of it.

Moreover Mr. Moulton's experience as lecturer has enabled him sympathetically to understand the problems that face a student in reading the Acts, and to discuss them on a student's level. His critical and historical approach not only helps to establish the historicity and integrity of the story of Acts, but also brings us nearer to the truth. The chapter analysis given by the author is immensely helpful, and so unfolds the themes of the book that even a casual reader cannot fail to notice them.

The exposition of the early chapters is typical of the author's spiritual discernment, profound scholarship and insight into the meaning of scripture. The birth of the new Israel, her struggle against an environment which did not and could not know what

the Church was, and her weaning from the old Israel, are treated in such a masterly way that an infant Church, such as the Church in India, struggling under similar circumstances and completely misunderstood by those ignorant of the conception of the Church, can take lessons from this, and distinguishing between essentials and non-essentials, can bravely go forward. Mr. Moulton clearly brings out that a living, dynamic Church is characterized by faith and not traditions and rituals, and is guided by the Holy Spirit and not by human reason.

The author makes explicit and reiterates the golden truth that a growing Church is an evangelizing Church. He is very realistic in that he does not overlook the fact that a truly evangelistic Church is of necessity a persecuted Church, but that a persecuted Church is not a Church in despair, but a joyful Church which propagates itself 'from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth'.

The introductory chapters especially those on *The Nature and Purpose of the Book*, and *The Message of the Acts to India* are arresting and open a new angle of approach to Acts as a whole. Because the writer has served the Church in India in many capacities and writes from first-hand knowledge, his analysis of the Indian situation is true and his suggestions realistic. The chapter on *The Message of the Acts to India* is a necessary and timely challenge stimulating the Church to attempt to start living out such implications of the Gospel as the elimination of caste, the practising of Christian fellowship and the eradication of social evils, implications which have either not been seen or if seen have not as yet been fully lived out.

As we read this volume we become convinced that Mr. Moulton as he wrote was caught up in the activity and purpose of the author of the Acts and so was enabled to make it intelligible and relevant to our generation in India.

Tirumaraiyar

C. SELVAMONY

The Text of the Old Testament : An Introduction to Kittel-Kahle's Biblia Hebraica : by Ernst Würthwein, translated by Peter R. Ackroyd. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 1957. Price, 17s. 6d.

'Without textual criticism there can be no understanding of Old Testament religion, and no real Old Testament theology. Everyone who penetrates more deeply into the problems of textual criticism knows that theology and textual criticism are not two separate fields of study, but interdependent, even at the deepest level.'

So wrote P. Volz in 1936, and his words are quoted with approval by Professor Würthwein in his concluding paragraph. The last ten years have made Old Testament textual criticism an even more important and exciting study than it was at the time that

Volz's words were written. The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls containing among other things manuscripts of the book of Isaiah and the greater part of Habbakuk, and the further finds in the same general area of fragments of nearly every book of the Old Testament make all existing treatises on textual criticism out of date. Before these discoveries were made our oldest datable manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament were no older than the ninth or tenth century A.D. Now we have texts of portions of it which go back at least to the first century A.D. and conceivably even two centuries earlier. Nor is it only in the area of the Hebrew text that there have been such fascinating discoveries. Papyrus fragments of the Greek translation have also come to light which also help in extending the range of our knowledge. Much of this newly discovered material is as yet unpublished, and no study of Old Testament textual problems can be at present more than provisional. But it can be said of the volume under review that it makes available to the non-specialist more of the results of this new study than has previously been given.

In estimating the particular contribution of the present volume account should be taken of the sub-title, that it is 'an introduction to Kittel-Kahle's *Biblia Hebraica*', the edition of the Hebrew Bible which is now most widely used. The third edition of this work marks a considerable advance in the study of the Masoretic text, and in order to appreciate its contribution a certain amount of orientation is desirable. This is given in part in the fifteen pages of 'prolegomena' which are placed before the text. But this is clearly inadequate to give the student all that he needs in order to appreciate the many references to manuscripts, editions, and versions found in the text-critical notes. The design of Würthwein's work is to provide a companion volume to Kittel which will enable the student to make an intelligent use of his apparatus. It can therefore be profitably referred to by every student who is reading the Old Testament in Hebrew, and since it is closely coordinated with the edition which the Hebrew student is likely to use, it should be a very helpful aid in Old Testament study.

Some of the special emphases of this work may be briefly mentioned. It gives a readily intelligible account of the development of the Masoretic text, as this has become known especially through the researches of P. Kahle. It also assists the reader in understanding the present position in regard to Septuagint studies, a field in which there is still much work to be done. In regard to the other versions Würthwein's study shows less advance, although it is a useful summary of conclusions which may also be found elsewhere. Its statement of the principles of textual criticism is clear and likely to be of assistance to the beginner. Perhaps its greatest contribution is in reproducing in a series of forty-one plates pages from some of the most important manuscripts and editions. These reproductions are often

clear enough to enable the student to try his hand at reading the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts.

Würthwein's study cannot be the final word on the text of the Old Testament, for only after the newly discovered fragments have been adequately studied and published can we hope to have any definitive account. But for the time being, this volume is a very convenient and useful summary of the data so far as they are now accessible. The use of it by students should help to carry forward the intelligent understanding of the thought of the Old Testament.

Bangalore

M. H. HARRISON

A Faith for the Nations: by Charles W. Forman, Layman's Theological Library, the Westminster Press, Philadelphia. Pp. 94. \$1.00.

Dr. Forman presents before us the world situation today and the need of a common rational faith for real and stable peace and co-operation among the comity of nations. Without this common foundation of faith nations are unable to achieve peaceful co-existence and common good. The apparently growing unity in the world on geographical, social, political and economic fronts demands a fundamental basis of co-operation and mutual understanding. He believes that 'we have come to the point in the world's life when human unity must be established on a firm foundation'. Proximity brought about by the development of means of communication, common interests and points of similarity developed in the scientific age have no doubt contributed to the growth of world unity, but they have, at the same time, been grounds of division and disunity in other respects. Unity which is based on human effort and ingenuity cannot be real unity. 'Real unity can come only by faith in that which is not our own achievement.' Unity has to be sought in the revealed plan of God. The source is not human but divine. It is not the achievement of man but a gift of God in Christ on the Cross. The author presents Christianity (or rather Christ) as 'a faith for the nations' 'in a manner which is not at all arrogant and offensive to the relations between men of various cultures, nations, and faiths'. He does not attempt to impose Christianity upon the nations but the nations are free to accept it as a basis of promoting peace and good will among them.

The writer then answers a very pertinent question why Christianity is the surest foundation of world unity. His analysis of the subject matter and arguments are simple, convincing and challenging. He discusses also why no other faith or religion or even a fusion of the best elements of other religions can serve as a sure foundation of unity. Readers may not agree with him on all points but they will be impressed by the sincerity of effort and clearness of vision. The type of unity the world needs must