

Book Reviews

A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: by Anthony and Miriam Hanson. The Christian Students' Library, No. 29. Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1963. Pp. 229. Price Rs.4.00.

The authors have brought to their task both a wealth of Biblical study, including recent findings of archaeology, and a rich background of experience as missionaries in South India. They were formerly on the staff of the United Theological College, Bangalore. So it is that the Indian reader will find in this book what he can find nowhere else in such a happy combination—namely, a scholarly commentary on one of the most difficult books of the Bible together with constant relatedness to the Indian scene.

In the introduction the authors write about the relation between God's word and the scientific techniques of studying an ancient book. They tell of the sources of Genesis, as commonly understood by scholars, designating them as the *Older Narrative*, the *Northern Narrative* and the *Priestly Narrative*. Evidence in support of this theory of sources (i.e. of the four-document hypothesis of the Pentateuch or Hexateuch with the designations J, E, D, P) are given in an appendix. The authors explain how Genesis became the battleground of a century-old conflict between science and religion, and come to the conclusion that there need be no real conflict between the two today. If there is conflict, 'it is usually because either the Christian or the scientist is out of date'.

The commentary embodies the text of the Revised Standard Version, followed by comments as needed. The comments often include references to the original Hebrew and to other versions. A very interesting original translation is given of the difficult Blessing of Jacob in chapter 49. The comments, whether brief or extended, are made with such clarity that the Indian student should never be at a loss to grasp the meaning of the authors.

Within the commentary, the authors make constant reference to the hypothetical sources, that is, to the *Older Narrative*, *Northern Narrative* and *Priestly Narrative*, explaining many problems by reference to the differing points of view of these sources. In this way the reader is given insight into the way in which a modern scientific historian views an ancient book.

The authors are very conscious of the need of viewing the Old Testament in the light of the New, so they frequently relate

the stories and events of Genesis to the use of them made in the New Testament. Thus the dream of Jacob (Gen. 28) is related in a very meaningful way to the promise made by Christ to Nathanael (John 1:43-51). Sub-Christian elements which make for practical problems among both Christians and non-Christians in India are treated with historical perspective and insight of essentials. Thus the bloody revenge taken on the Shechemites by Jacob's sons evokes the comment: 'As more and more Christians become literate and able to read the Bible for themselves, the danger will grow that they will accept the morality of the earlier parts of the Old Testament as good enough for them. This makes it all the more necessary that we should firmly grasp the Christian attitude toward the Old Testament, and impress it upon our people again and again that the ultimate standard by which we are to judge the Old Testament is Christ' (p. 166).

As a reviewer I have read this commentary with admiration for its scholarship (far exceeding my own), its clarity of style, and its constructive manner of handling the exegetical, theological and scientific problems which make Genesis one of the most difficult books in the Bible. However, every reviewer has his own slant on some matters. So, for my part, I think that, in their reconciliation of the message of Genesis with modern science, the authors could have profitably said something about the fundamental tension that exists between the postulates of religion and science, a tension that must have existed in some form in Biblical times as it does in our own, even when we are up to date in science.

I am also surprised at the statement: 'The Name (i.e. Lord) never occurs in the New Testament and Our Lord apparently never used it. He addresses God as "Abba, Father". This means that Christians should normally follow the example of their Lord, and use His name for God rather than the Old Testament name.' Bearing in mind that the Greek of the New Testament follows the Septuagint in rendering 'Yahweh' as 'Lord', one can find several occurrences in any concordance where Jesus addresses or speaks of God as 'Lord'.

I wonder whether the view of Genesis as 'the language of parable and poetry' does sufficient justice to the historical propensity of the Biblical writers, even though their history may have been very primitive according to modern standards.

A bibliography would have added to the usefulness of the book. Also, since there is constant reference to the hypothetical sources of Genesis, an appendix detailing the extent of these sources in each chapter would have been helpful. This need came to my attention in the story of Joseph, where I found that, while this commentary attributes Ch. 52:29-38 to the *Older Narrative* (i.e. J document), Simpson in the *Interpreter's Bible* and others attribute it to the *Northern Narrative* (i.e. E document).

The book is very well printed, with very few typographical mistakes—I recall only two.

My closing word must be one of much appreciation for a very useful addition to the Christian Students' Library, all the more so because of the unusual difficulties which attend a commentary on the Book of Genesis. Every Indian student of the Bible will profit by owning a copy.

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Hindu Maṭha Varalaru (The Story of Hinduism): by D. Rajarigam. Pp. 204. Rs.2.10.

Parisutha Aaviyanavar (The Holy Spirit): by L. Easter Raj. Pp. 143. Re.1.75.

Ebesier Nirubam-vilakkam (A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians): by Rev. W. B. Harris. Pp. 90. 75 nP.

India Thiruchabai Thondar (Servants of the Indian Church): by Vimala Manuel. Pp. 96. 75 nP.

The first two books are the productions of the Tamil Theological Literature Committee and are primarily meant for Serampore L.Th. students, while the latter two are for catechists and church-workers. These are issued by the Tamilnad Theological College for the C.S.I. Tamil Theological Series.

These books, as well as other books in these two series, are a clear proof that the Tamil church is well served as far as Tamil theological literature is concerned.

Principal Rajarigam is a Tamil *Vidwan* as well as a scholar in non-Christian religions. His book is not only a story of Hinduism but a miniature history of India as well. He traces the history of Hinduism right from the Indus civilization, that is, from about 3000 B.C., down to modern times. He makes the story interesting by giving pen-pictures of famous Indian religious leaders, like Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Guru Nanak, Dayanand Saraswati, Arabindo Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi, President Radhakrishnan and a host of others. He writes in chaste Tamil, though he uses a number of technical terms not in common use. We wonder whether on this subject, since Farquhar's *Primer of Hinduism*, any other book has appeared by a Christian writer, either in English or in Tamil, equally scholarly and equally interesting. Though he has learnt Hinduism from Hindu sources—which is as it should be—he has applied a Christian mind for an evaluation of Hindu religion. Hence the most valuable chapter in the book is his comparison of Hindu and Christian ideas. We welcome this book as an ex-

cellent contribution to the study of Hinduism from the Christian point of view.

The book on the Holy Spirit is by Rev. L. Easter Raj (so called because he was born on Easter Day). He, too, like Principal Rajarigam, is an M.Th. of Serampore University and has had experience in teaching Christian theology and in pastoral work. He expounds the doctrine of the Holy Spirit from various aspects. First he makes a factual study in the Old Testament, New Testament, Church history, and even a comparative review of non-Christian religions. He devotes a chapter to the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, and another chapter to the Holy Spirit in Christian life.

The author has made good use of books in English, of which he gives an exhaustive bibliography, but this book is not a mere repetition of other people's views. He has digested the original sources and made them his own. He writes in simple yet cultured style and makes it easy reading. We trust that not only theological students for whom this and other books in the series are meant will read them, but lay people also will be profited by a study of them.

Rev. W. B. Harris' commentary on 'Ephesians' is well written. He is a New Testament scholar but he keeps his scholarship in the background without troubling his readers of a lesser academic grade with too many critical problems. He gives a straightforward explanation of the text, his main object being that his readers should have a grasp of the essential message of the book. He gives a brief introduction, just enough for the understanding of the epistle. In the beginning of each section he gives a summary of that section. The most valuable part of the epistle is at the end of the book, one chapter dealing with the message of the epistle in general and another chapter with the message in particular to the Indian Church. He is up to date enough to make use of the version of the New English Bible for throwing light on difficult verses in the epistle.

The last book under review is by a lady writer who has given a bird's-eye view of Indian Church history down to the end of the eighteenth century. This is the first part. Evidently the second part will follow later, dealing with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has made the history interesting by giving graphic sketches of leading missionaries of the period, starting from the Apostle Thomas himself down to Christian Frederick Schwartz. Others include Pantanaeus, St. Francis Xavier, Robert de Nobili, Joseph Beschi and Bartholomew Ziegenbalg. Hence the modest title of book, 'The Servants of the Indian Church'.

The book is written in such a fascinating manner that even children could read it with profit.

THOMAS SITTHER

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Living Springs : by Olive Wyon. S.C.M. Press.

This is a short book covering an immense amount of ground, but the reliability of the author we already know from her two earlier S.C.M. books, *The Altar Fire* and *The School of Prayer*. Also Dr. Olive Wyon, having strong links with both the Presbyterian and the Anglican Churches, is in an unusually strong position to interpret sensitively movements of the Spirit which in recent years have influenced Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed and others.

Beginning at Assisi—where so much began when Francis lost his heart to Christ—she introduces us to a number of communities of Christians which have sprung up latterly in Britain and Europe. To show that these groups of Christians are very far from being concerned with some newfangled idea, we begin with a chapter on the 'Meaning of Monasticism' and an excellent chapter it is. From this one finds that the Holy Spirit has always in Christian history been calling some Christians, in every situation, to this specific way of loving God and witnessing to the Gospel—the way of shared obedience in community.

These living springs of renewal and revival come from deep down, from far back, but we would be very wrong to imagine that the communities of which she speaks are interested primarily in restoring something. It is not the past which they are reviving but the present and the future. This is equally true when we meet the Anglicans of Lee Abbey or St. Julian's, the Reformed (Presbyterian) of the Taizé community in France, the Lutherans of the Sisters of Mary in Darmstadt, Germany, or the Roman Catholics of the Secular Institutes. It is *today* and the modern world *today*, how Christian lay people may be spiritually trained *today*, and God in all this *today* that matters.

This re-birth of community life in the West cuts right across denominational barriers; there is nothing particularly Roman about it, nor can Evangelicals claim it for theirs. Christians of every type find themselves impelled towards this life together with Christ and it is one of the exciting things of Christian existence to find another group with the same concerns of heart and mind, with a great urge to love God more, and, for His sake, the world more; a Presbyterian may meet a 'high' Anglican but in a flash he knows he is related. Both have been given the same calling by the Spirit.

These groups, as Dr. Wyon takes one on a visit to them, seem, naturally and increasingly, to find themselves praying for unity among Christians, and, as important, discovering a greater measure of given unity despite so many barriers across the centuries. Their members seem all to agree that God demands far, far more than a mediocre Christian witness, a little love for Him, and a superficial relationship to the Church. Prayer—again and again it is prayer which catches fire in a group, action follows, and before they know where they are, they want to pray more deeply.

The last chapter, 'New Patterns of Christian Living', makes fascinating reading. It speaks very much to us Christians in India today, as does also the rest of the book. How badly the Church needs to be made young again; and it will surely happen when we stand right within the revolutionary happenings of our country as Christ's men and women pledged first of all to love and obey Him, and as a part of this to love our neighbours by sharing the Gospel with them. Members of all these communities which we visit with Dr. Wyon agree that the Christian way can never be 'business as usual'. God demands a stepping out into the unknown with that infectious gaiety which He always gives to those who forget themselves—and go.

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Preaching and Congregation: by J. J. Von Allmen. English translation by B. L. Nicholas. Lutterworth Press, London, 1962. Price 7s. 6d.

The nature of the Christian ministry and the tasks associated with it are such that they need re-interpretation from time to time in terms of the changing situations as well as the unchanging Gospel of Jesus Christ. Those called to the ministry also need to be constantly reminded of what their high calling means.

The book under review is specifically about the ministry of preaching. The author describes his work as belonging to the field of practical theology. But it is a sound theological exposition of the meaning of preaching. What he has to say is clearly presented in the form of a number of theses. There are important theological affirmations. 'Preaching makes present the Word which God pronounced to the world in sending His Son to live, act, die and conquer among us.' 'Christian preaching cannot be understood apart from the doctrine of the Trinity.' 'Preaching has Christological significance.' 'The incarnation is the archetypal process of God's work and his process appears again in preaching.' There is also an excellent chapter on the preparation of the sermon. It is described as part of the spiritual life of the pastor. It is in, with and for the Church that the sermon should be prepared. Many valuable practical hints are also included in this chapter.

The author of this book certainly draws our attention to the greatness of responsibility vested in the ministry of the Word. When the ministry as practised in many parts of the Church in India today is reviewed in the light of Dr. Allmen's theses, we cannot help admitting its inadequacy. We do not have enough trained manpower. Nor do we make the right use of the available manpower. The Church should devise means by which the Word of God will be effectively preached in all congregations. In Bangalore an experiment is being made of a monthly session of all those called to the preaching ministry in the C.S.I. at which they

prepare their sermons for the month under the guidance of a trained theologian. This experiment can be commended to other areas, too. The importance of confronting the people with the Word of God in all its power and relevance is such that the Church should give the utmost care, to the effectiveness of the preaching ministry. Dr. Allmen has certainly done a great service to the Church by drawing our attention to the meaning of preaching.

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Guilt and Grace : by Paul Tournier. English translation by Arthur W. Heathcote, assisted by J. J. Henry and P. J. Allcock. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1962. Price 21s.

Tournier conducts a searching study of the problem of guilt as it affects man's total health. In him one would see an harmonious blend of religious insight and depth psychology. Guilt is one of the most potent factors which must be resolved in order to effect the complete cure of man. Therefore it is necessary to understand its immensity and its expanse. There is no area of life in which the problem of guilt may not arise. Very often 'false' guilt—such as a guilt feeling imposed upon a person by social taboos and judgments—covers up the 'true' guilt. The author believes that in reality 'true' guilt is a 'breakdown in man's dependency towards God'. The task of the analyst is made difficult by a camouflaging of the true guilt by the false one, and it may be the very opposite of the true one. The wholeness of man can never be restored by resolving the false guilt alone. Thus a case is established for a closer co-operation of the therapist with the Christian ministry. Different aspects of guilt are emphasized by different schools of psychologists—taboo and Oedipus guilt by the Freudians, inferiority guilt by the Adler school, undermining of self by the Jung school, and refusal to accept others by Martin Buber. What the author is interested in is not a theory of guilt, but guilt as a problem of the whole being. He finds that the Biblical understanding of guilt is superior to any-one-sided view as mentioned above.

The purpose of understanding the problem of guilt is to know how to solve it. It is here that the Christian faith with the therapeutic value of *metanoia*, confession and absolution is found to be a supreme solvent. *Metanoia* is more than a means of cure. It is, in the words of the author, 'a law of life' (p. 213). No one can deny that Dr. Tournier has presented a strong case for the Biblical understanding of guilt and the Christian concept of grace. His approach is strikingly orthodox and refreshingly relevant. Anything less than a religion of grace cannot break the diabolical enslavement of guilt. The acceptance of God's forgiveness is necessary for the solution of guilt. But this should not become a 'rite'

such as in the Roman Catholic Church, or even as a moral demand such as in Protestantism. Repentance must become an experience to establish man in his right relationship with God. This experience of the real guilt is necessary to get rid of the lesser guilt.

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The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians: by Francis Foulkes. Tyn-
dale Press, 1963. Pp. 182.

Here is a welcome addition to the library of earnest students of the Bible. It is neither so brief as to omit important considerations nor so lengthy as to tax the average lay reader. Moreover every effort has been made to avoid unduly technical forms of expression. A knowledge of Greek is not necessary to understand this commentary, though every word of the original tongue quoted is transcribed for the convenience of those who understand that language. Though written from the conservative point of view it does not pass glibly over critical problems, but faces them fairly and squarely, and as such provides a good example of conservative scholarship at its best.

The commentary is based on the text of the Authorized Version. But this text is used only as a working foundation to show why on textual and linguistic grounds some of the later translations are to be preferred. However, once in a while the author shows his partiality towards the King James Version when most of the recent commentators would choose later translations. (For example: III: 11 and IV: 4.)

Since the aim of the author is to write a commentary that will help people to understand the message of this epistle, he does not consider his 'Introduction' as the most important part of this book. But it is here that he marshals his arguments in answer to the theories of some scholars who deny the Pauline authorship of this letter and ascribe to it a much later date. The commentary itself fulfils in a remarkable way the aims of the author, for in it he offers the uncommon combination of profound scholarship and devotional application.

The Epistle to the Ephesians has had a number of outstanding commentaries written by spiritual and intellectual giants. But the merit of this work is that the author has gone carefully through them all and has brought to us the results of his deep thinking over them. The Christian public needs many such books.

R. D. IMMANUEL

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To acknowledge God is to acknowledge my God.

AUSTIN FARRER: *Saving Belief*