

Book Reviews

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: An Introduction and Commentary. By JOYCE G. BALDWIN. Tyndale Press, 1972. Pp. 253. Price: Cloth £1.20; paper 95p.

The Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries put 'the primary emphasis on exegesis'. Critical issues are not avoided, but Miss Baldwin argues her own conservative position. Haggai was an old man who had seen the first temple, his book 'was edited early, possibly before 500 B.C.', and 'he and Zechariah together moulded the thinking of those who edited the books of Chronicles' (p. 30). Malachi was the personal name of the prophet and Mal. 4:4-6 is likely to be from his own hand (pp. 211f.—and not pp. 221f. as stated on p. 221). Here the author seems to presuppose that more importance attaches to a book of which the author is known. This is an assumption which many would question.

Following the work of P. Lamarche (*Zacharie IX—XIV*, Paris, 1961) a chiasmic arrangement is found also in Zech. 1-8. Zech. 9-14 is classified as 'prophetic-apocalyptic' and has much in common in phraseology, style and thought to the 'apocalyptic vision' of Zech. 1-8. Zech. 9:13 does not fix the collection in the Greek period, but 'Javan' here refers to 'distant, unknown peoples' and the context is eschatological. No precise historical reference is intended in Zech. 9:1-8, but past events are used to typify the future capitulation of every proud city to the Lord (p. 158). The chiasmic structure which is characteristic of Zech. 1-8 shows that either the prophet was the editor of Zech. 9-14 or that the editor built on his style. Miss Baldwin thus attempts to bring out the meaning of Zechariah as 'an artistic whole with an over-all plan and unity of message' (p. 70). This is an interesting approach which demands close study.

In the introductions there are helpful sections on the message of Haggai and Malachi, and there are Additional Notes on subjects like 'Zechariah's horses' and 'The burden of the word of the Lord'. The verse by verse commentary is full of useful information, but is sometimes a little unbalanced. Is it really necessary to devote a whole paragraph to the inconclusive Syriac dating of Zech. 1:1? The author cannot resist the occasional expository remark, as in Mal. 1:13 where 'the Christian has much less cause to be bored with worship' (p. 230), and sometimes dogmatic presuppositions control the exegesis. This is the case in Hag. 2:10-14. Here two interpretations are combined; the uncleanness applied both to the temple 'which stood like a corpse in the midst' and to the people whose 'every offering was itself defiled' (p. 51). 'For Israel there was no known remedy. The only hope lay in free acceptance by God, and the promised blessing

(verse 19) implies that such acceptance was granted' (p. 51). This may be legitimate exposition, but exegesis should take note of the positive attitude of the prophet towards the temple, upon which the right ordering of community life and receipt of blessing depended in that situation.

No single English translation is followed, and the author follows closely the Hebrew Massoretic text. Rearrangements of the text like the NEB's reading of Zech. 13:7-9 after Zech. 11:7 are rejected, and emendation is only rarely allowed. 'Flesh' is acceptable for the 'remainder' in Mal. 2:15 for example, but unlike the NEB's 'flesh and spirit' which describes woman, the author finds reference to the union of man and woman. Sometimes the textual evidence is presented in a confusing way as in Mal. 2:12 where it is not made clear that the 'witness' of the RSV involves a slight change in the Hebrew.

In any commentary for 'the student of the Bible' (p. 5) it is always difficult to know how much knowledge may be assumed. Miss Baldwin has some uncertainty. She explains what the 'Septuagint' is (p. 83), but not the 'Massoretic text', and refers to the scroll from Murabba'at as 'the earliest known Hebrew manuscript of Haggai' (p. 32) without giving its date. References to the works of other scholars are given only when necessary to guide the reader through the various theories, but it would have been helpful to have a bibliography arranged as a guide to further reading. The footnotes are frequently inconsistent; sometimes the publisher is given and not the place of publication, and in the list of abbreviations both are omitted. On p. 45 the volume of G. von Rad's *Old Testament Theology* is not specified. The works of H.-M. Lutz (*Jahwe, Jerusalem und die Völker. Zur Vorgeschichte von Sach 12:1-8 und 14:1-5*. Neukirchener Verlag, 1968) and M. Saeb (*Sacharja 9-14*. Neukirchener Verlag, 1969) presumably appeared too late for consideration.

The commentary, which takes little for granted and gives evidence for positions adopted on critical issues, is to be recommended as a useful guide for the Indian B. D. student. The thoroughness of the exegesis and background information also make the work one that should be assimilated by any who would venture to preach on these prophets. Miss Baldwin brings out the message of the three books effectively and in the case of Zechariah the reader will appreciate how it came to be one of the most frequently quoted books in the New Testament.

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Metanoia, Faith, Covenant: A Study in Pauline Theology. By J. Pathrapankal, C. M. I. Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore, 1971. Pp. 327. Price: cloth Rs. 17, paper Rs. 14.

In the introductory chapter of his book the author rightly emphasises the importance of its subject matter. The concepts of *Metanoia*, Faith and Covenant, form an inalienable part of New Testament thinking. Their interpretation greatly influence our understanding of the New Testament message.

The author lays the foundation in the first part of his book which contains a philological and thematic study of the concepts. The terms *Metanoia* and *Pistis* are traced from Old Testament precedents through their New Testament (and occasionally early Christian) usage. An attempt is made to depart from purely logical or 'content' definitions and to place the meaning of the terms in the total context of a secular and religious situation, of philosophical and cultural development, and of society building.

The author maintains that, within the struggle for self-expression of the early Christian community, Paul successfully elaborated a theological synthesis of these most fundamental terms. A progressive analysis of this theological framework is the content matter of the second part of his study. Five consecutive chapters deal with: an evaluation of *Metanoia* in the discourses and epistles of Paul; the thematic union of the Christ event and the new covenant in Pauline theology; Paul's understanding of Christian faith as a turning towards Christ; the function of baptism in the realisation of *metanoia*; and the significance of *metanoia* and faith in the new covenant.

The main thesis of the book concerns the new understanding of *metanoia* and faith in the theology of Paul. While Paul holds on to basic Old Testament concepts, such as the necessity of return and the key-position of the covenant, he has re-interpreted them in the light of the Christ event. Faith means for him accepting the new covenant and turning totally to Christ. Because of the unwanted connotations of the Rabbinic term *Metanoia*, Paul prefers to use a different term when speaking of the conversion to Christ. Not only the Gentiles, but the Jews also need a 'return' from their Old Testament formalism to their being recreated in Christ.

The value of this research study lies in its endeavour to come to a synthetic understanding of St. Paul's thought. The tendency to specialize in research often results in localised conclusions. The vastness and intricacy of modern biblical studies tend to keep specialists within the strictly defined boundaries of their own specialization. In this study, the author has frequently had to cut through such reserved areas. This usually entails the taking of sides in matters debated by specialists. I am thinking of such highly specialized and controversial areas as the Pauline origin of the Epistles, Old Testament covenantal conceptology, the role of the early community in defining Christian faith, the relationship between Hebrew and Greek terminology, and secular hermeneutics. The author quite skilfully traverses these areas, being firm in his conclusions while prudent in his

expression and thereby probably escaping the wrath of 'specialists' for blundering into their domain.

In the wake of Vatican II, ecumenism has become popular. It should be remembered, however, that lasting and profound results can only come about by an exchange on the level of thought and theology. Fr. Pathrapankal's book will contribute to the ecumenical dialogue by the way in which it integrates both Catholic and Protestant insights. Books of this nature can form the substance of that new common theology that will effectively unite all Christian communities in the future.

We congratulate Dharmaram College on this publication also on account of its exceptionally good presentation. The artful cover, the layout of the pages, the pleasant print and the accuracy of editing contrast happily with so many other Indian publications. The care taken in preparing the table of contents, and the scripture and subject indexes, also contribute to the worthy presentation of the book. We hope that Dharmaram College may produce many more of such valuable and presentable publications.

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Evolution in Religion: A Study of Sri Aurobindo and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: by R. C. Zaehner. Oxford University Press, 1971. Pp. 121. Price: Rs. 33.

India has been celebrating the birth centenary of Sri Aurobindo this year, and a spate of books on his life and thought have come out on this occasion. Professor Zaehner's book thus happens to have seen the light of day at an appropriate time and may be regarded as a Christian contribution to the appraisal of Sri Aurobindo's teaching. *Evolution in Religion* is based on three Westcott Lectures delivered by the Spalding Professor at St Stephen's College, Delhi, Bishop's College, Calcutta, and Christian College, Tambaram. To these is added a lecture to the Faculty of Philosophy of Madras University, delivered at the invitation of Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, which forms the final chapter of the book.

The first chapter is entitled 'Religions and Religion', and deals with the teaching of Aurobindo and de Chardin on mysticism. What after all does mysticism teach us? Zaehner answers, 'it teaches us that all things are one in God who is the centre on to which all 'centres' converge'. Its earliest formulation, perhaps, is from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (2.5.15):

'Just as the spokes of a wheel are fixed together on to the hub and felly so are all contingent beings, all gods, all worlds, all vital breaths and all these selves fixed together in this Self'.

This wholly admirable quotation from the Upanishad pinpoints the main theme consistently emphasised both by Aurobindo and Teilhard.

We in this country tend to eulogize Sri Aurobindo. He is regarded as a *Mahā-yogi* and a great *rishi*. Zaehner has, perhaps, righted the balance by reminding us of the contribution of the West in the making of Aurobindo. He was sent to England when he was seven and educated at St Paul's School in London, and King's College, Cambridge, proving himself a classical scholar of note. He was thoroughly steeped in the classical humanism of his time: by upbringing he was an English gentleman. This, however, did not prevent him from becoming interested in socialism, an interest he was never wholly to lose, since he saw in socialism the germs of a more just society. It was on his return to India that he discovered the Hindu religion and Vedanta. He could not accept the Vedanta in its classical non-dualist formulation, for in England he had come to believe in the theory of evolution. 'If the One were totally static and unfractionable, as Śankara taught, then there could be no room for evolution or development of any kind. This could not be. Rather, the One, though absolutely self-sufficient, must also be the source of multiplicity and not only of change, but of progressive evolutionary change'. (p. 10).

Aurobindo's 'Integral Yoga', which sought to discover the immortal within, and to harmonize the total human being with that immortal core, was a clear break from the traditional Sankhya-Yoga system which made the sharpest distinction between spirit and matter. However, Aurobindo found justification for his dynamic interpretation of Hinduism within the Vedas, Gita and Upanishads, as Teilhard found the basis of his mystical teaching in certain writings of St Paul and St John. Indeed Teilhard's early education had been in science, and he was even more 'obsessed' with the idea of Evolution and by advances in scientific and technological knowledge than was Aurobindo.

Yet, despite the differences between the two men, they share a common view of the universe. First, Spirit takes precedence over matter. Secondly, it follows that Spirit must always have been in matter in a rudimentary form. Thirdly, evolution is a progressive unification, an ever-increasing spiritualization, of matter. Fourthly, the goal of evolution must be the integration of matter in a final harmony and its convergence on a centre of attraction which is supramental and divine. Fifthly, the only conceivable agent of such a convergence is a 'yet unfound law of love'. Both men were profoundly dissatisfied with their own religions, and sought to reconstruct them in an evolutionary mould.

I must refrain from further summarizing Zaehner's chapter, and merely point out some striking and new ideas in it. So far as my knowledge goes, Zaehner is the first scholar to draw our attention to R. M. Bucke's book, *Cosmic Consciousness* (New York, 1901). This book describes and explains some of the experiences which Teilhard and Aurobindo went through.

Secondly, Teilhard's warning that all mysticism is not the same is to be noted. According to him, Eastern (Hindu) mysticism stresses

that the supreme reality is the material *source* of all things, while Christian mysticism teaches that the supreme Reality (God or Christ) is the *goal* of all things, and should be meditated upon as such (pp. 18-23).

It seems that Teilhard has in mind the absolutistic-negativistic view (*Yāgyavalkya-Śankara* type) of Hindu thought, and is contrasting it with the theistic-personalistic view of Christianity. But matters are not quite so simple and clear-cut, for the Hindu scriptures contain theistic and personalistic teachings also. Has not Professor Zaehner said elsewhere that Śankara represents 'only forty per cent of Hinduism'? Teilhard should not have ignored the remaining sixty per cent of Eastern mysticism.

The question is often asked as to what should be our relationship with the material world. The medieval Indian thought that matter is evil and must be renounced. Probably the medieval European thought the same. But in modern times religious thinkers like Teilhard and Aurobindo teach that the material world is not to be shunned: rather it is to be used for a divine purpose.

II

The second chapter, 'A World in Travail', begins with a discussion of the sociological ideas of the two thinkers.

It is a truism to say that we are living in a time of trouble. But are the distressing events of our times, these wars, stresses and frustrations, in reality the birth-pangs of a new and better world? Teilhard and Aurobindo, against all the evidence to the contrary, believed that the spirit of man is really on the verge of a breakthrough to a higher form of spiritual being and living.

Aurobindo had once been a revolutionary, and remained intensely interested in the political developments of his time. He held that Communism is not an evil thing. It is a necessary, even if painful stage in man's onward march to the Divine. The ideal of Marx and Engels was this: that the dictatorship of the proletariat was to give way to a free society in which the state would wither away. Aurobindo saw clearly that this ideal cannot be achieved. Men are egoists. Hence no socialist state machine would let go its prey or allow itself to be abolished without a struggle. How then is the human race to emerge from this vicious condition? There is only one answer: a deeper brotherhood, a yet unbound law of love, is the only sure foundation possible for perfect social evolution, no other can replace it. But love is more assiduously preached in pulpit, but avoided in practice. There is a terrible confession about this failure of love by Teilhard himself (pp. 43f). Most of us would feel that it is true of us too, for we know that we have been unable to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Aurobindo and Teilhard predict that supernatural power is about to descend from above. It will transform human nature, and will carry mankind to the spiritual pinnacle. Be that as it may, the earth is still full of strife and hatred, discord and greed (p. 53).

I have only one criticism to make of this otherwise good chapter. Zaehner suggests that Aurobindo could not keep up his optimism to the end (p. 27). 'Was it not a sign of an *inner despair* that Aurobindo retreated into himself during the last twenty years of his life? "Heaven we have possessed", he had said, "but not the earth"; but *despite the theoretical dynamism* of his philosophy which was to have transformed Hinduism, when he died he had still not succeeded in making "heaven and earth equal and one"' (pp. 33 f., my italics). The idea that Aurobindo could not retain his optimism to the end and became disillusioned and disgusted with the world runs like a refrain in Zaehner's book.

Zaehner's expression, 'despite the theoretical dynamism of Aurobindo's philosophy' would seem to mean that Aurobindo does not teach a philosophy of despair. There is no room in his teaching for pessimism and loss of hope. Zaehner can mean only that the 'inner despair' can be inferred from the fact of Aurobindo's retirement. But the disciples of Aurobindo have always put an opposite interpretation. According to them, the Master retired to engage himself more fully in bringing the supramental on the earth! Ordinary people like myself think that his retirement was for the purpose of practising Yoga and meditation. During the period of meditation and retirement Aurobindo was able to draw more than 700 people from all over the world to Pondicherry Ashram. Could this be done by a despairing, disillusioned man? Then we have evidence that Aurobindo wrote numberless letters counselling not to give way to despair during those difficult days of the World War. Further, will a disillusioned man write a spiritual epic like *Savitri*? Indeed this perception of despair may be dismissed as an illusion.

III

While the first two chapters are heavy meat, difficult to digest, the remaining two ('The Communion of Saints'—'Unity in Diversity: Vedantin and Christian') are comparatively easy reading, and even fascinating. They are, incidentally, a good example of how to carry on the Hindu-Christian dialogue. Here Professor Zaehner applies the categories of thought used by Aurobindo and Teilhard to interpret the Christian doctrines of Creation, Fall, Incarnation and Sacraments. These interpretations may not always be very convincing, but they are always suggestive and thought-provoking. We can indicate here briefly his line of thought on one topic only.

Regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, Zaehner says that it is adequately reflected in the Vedantic formula of *Sacchidānanda*, which may be translated *Being, Consciousness* and *Joy*. *Being* is the Transcendent who is also the Father, the first aspect (=person) of the Trinity. *Consciousness*, Thought, Logos or Rational Principle, represents the second aspect. Finally, 'Substantial Joy' represents the third aspect: i.e. the Holy Spirit. I think the formula works very well so far as the first two aspects are concerned. It is however not so satisfactory for interpreting the Third Person of the Trinity. I must however say that the *Sacchidānanda* formula does make the Christian Trinity more meaningful to me than most other explanations.

Some opinions of Professor Zaehner will appear strange to most of us in this country: at least to those of us who have been brought up in Sri Sankaracharya's tradition. Thus, for example, Zaehner suggests, on the basis of *Gita* 2.63 and 16.2, that Atman can die. This is far-fetched explanation of those verses; besides which, it is the whole tenor of the *Gita* and also of the Upanishads that Atman is immortal. Again, he holds that the personal God, *Vāsudeva*, is higher man and is the support of the Absolute on the basis of one verse in *Gita* (14.27). Such verses, and views based on them, are regarded as 'sectarian' by most Indian scholars. One wonders what happened when the Spalding Professor aired these and other of his personal preferences before Dr Mahadevan and his colleagues at Madras University? Did they politely agree? Was there a heated discussion? Whatever reception they had, Professor Zaehner has every right to hold them: but the arguments supporting them need to be elaborated rather more fully, and rather more 'proof-texts' paraded in their defence.

In conclusion one may say that Zaehner has chosen a difficult topic of study, and has fashioned a lively and fascinating book out of it. His treatment of Aurobindo is on the whole just and fair. We need more such books to encourage dialogue among both Hindus and Christians.

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The Anglican Church in India 1600-1970. By M. E. Gibbs.
I.S.P.C.K. 1972. Pp. 437. Price Rs 40.

During the later '60s, as they approached Church union, Anglicans in India were aware that Miss Gibbs, who had been for many years Professor of History at St John's College, Agra, was engaged in writing what it was hoped would be the definitive history of their Church. She appeared up and down the country, not only at the presidency cities and diocesan centres, but even at quite remote mission stations, consulting records and questioning those who might be able to give her information, taking copious notes. Then she disappeared to Britain to pursue her researches in the archives of the former India Office and the great missionary societies, and we waited expectantly.

It was confidently hoped that her book would be published before we went into Church union. Dr De Mel's Foreword, written while he was still Metropolitan, says as much and indeed the author's Preface is dated as long ago as 6 February 1970, nearly two years before the book finally appeared.

Whatever the difficulties which caused the delay, Miss Gibbs' book is well worth having waited for, and she has put us all in her debt. This volume must certainly replace Bishop Eyre Chatterton's *History of the Church of England in India* as the standard reference book on its subject and an indispensable text book for those who wish to know 'the things God has done through priests, laymen and the

missionary societies of the Church of England in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon since 1600 when Elizabeth I appointed a chaplain to those who came here to trade'.

Miss Gibbs' task was a complex one. In the first place her subject covered not only the India that we know today; it included all four countries which made up the former C.I.P.B.C., all four looking to the Metropolitan at Calcutta as their head. Secondly, the Anglicans were the only Church besides the R. Cs. who had work in every part of the sub-continent. They were not restricted (as with other churches and missions) to particular areas, but were generally diffused throughout India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. Thirdly, there were at least three main streams of Anglican work, each with its own vigorous life—the work of the government chaplains, the work of the missionary agencies, and that of ministering to the considerable body of non-officials, Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians scattered in innumerable towns and colonies engaged in commerce, in planting, in running the railways and in manning the posts and telegraphs, the customs and other government departments. In the early days the first two of these ran side by side, having little to do with each other except when circumstances made it necessary, and each careful to assert its independence of the other. The third grew in importance as the years passed, and by the time Independence came was at least as important as the other two.

Miss Gibbs' subject is therefore both wide and complex, and it is one of the merits of her book that she handles the sheer bulk and diversity of her materials with complete control, never letting the issues get confused and never getting bogged down in a mass of detail. To the many who think vaguely that the history of the Anglican Church in these lands began with the appointment of the first Bishop of Calcutta in 1814 it will come as something of a surprise that the history was at that time already over 200 years old.

The book is divided into four parts. The first, covering those early years before 1814, occupies only 52 pages. Part II: 'Bishops and Missionaries' covers the years 1814 to 1858 and extends from page 55 to page 202. Part III, appropriately entitled 'The Church Takes Root', takes us from 1858 to 1914 in pages 205 to 346. Part IV: 'Independence and Church Union': 1914-1970 ends on page 406, and there is a short Conclusion followed by Appendices, including a comprehensive Bibliography, and a good Index. It is unfortunate that it has been necessary to issue a list of 21 Corrigenda—and I have discovered two mistakes in that list itself! But perhaps it is ungenerous to mention these minor defects in a book which is well and attractively produced and has some good illustrations.

Miss Gibbs has a pleasant, readable style, with a quiet sense of humour which comes out here and there in such comments as that on page 328 about the C.M.S. mission at Agra where 'all seemed to be going well' till someone died 'and in the next few years the English missionaries on the staff were constantly carried away by ill-health or matrimony'.

I was even more impressed by her skill in summing up complicated issues and protracted controversies in a few sentences and by her remarkable gift of penetrating and balanced judgement about such matters. This latter is seen for instance in her handling of the long dispute between the brilliant but very young and inexperienced Bishop R. S. Copleston of Colombo and the firmly entrenched C.M.S. missionaries who resented his over-zealous determination to assert his episcopal authority. She quotes with approval from the Bishop's letter to a church paper when the matter had been settled at a high-power conference in England. In the course of it he asked for the prayers of the Church 'for myself in particular that I may be enabled to resume my work with more wisdom, humility and a deeper sense of prayer', and Miss Gibbs concludes her whole treatment of the matter with the remark that 'the death of Oakley (one of the toughest of the missionaries) in 1886 at the age of seventy-eight removed the strongest impediment in the way of compromise' (pp. 273-5).

Here again is Miss Gibbs' comment on the unusual experiment of appointing Caldwell and Sargent as joint suffragans to the Bishop of Madras, in Tinnevely, one to look after the S.P.G. congregations and the other the C.M.S. 'Quite clearly the time was not ripe in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century for an Indian bishop . . . and such a bishop would have had little real authority, while his appointment might have led to a racial division in the Church, just as objectionable as a caste division. Caldwell and Sargent were good men who fulfilled a need which at that time could have been met in no other way; and when an ideal solution to a problem is impossible, perhaps the next best thing is a solution so obviously imperfect that it is unlikely to become permanent' (page 254).

I will risk one more such quotation in the hope of whetting your appetite still further. 'Sadhu Sundar Singh seemed to some people an example of what the coming Indian Church might be like. Yet he himself considered his calling as a sadhu to be an exceptional one . . . a whole Church of Sundar Singhs would have been impossible; and before accepting him as a typical Indian Christian, it would be well to compare him with the other most famous Indian Christians of his generation, Bishop Azariah of Dornakal, or with Andrew's other Indian friend, Principal Rudra' (page 367).

Enough has been said to indicate what an excellent and readable a book Miss Gibbs has given us. As one who took part in some of the great events covered by the last two chapters, dealing with the period 1930 to 1970, I can point from personal knowledge to three or four small errors of fact, but they are matters of such minor detail that they need not be enumerated here but are best communicated to the author and her publishers.

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