

Book Reviews

The History and Religion of Israel: by G. W. Anderson (M.A., D.D.). Oxford University Press, 1966. 12 mo. Pp. 210. Price 15s.

This book is the first of the Old Testament series in the New Clarendon Bible, taking the place of the corresponding volume by Dr. W. L. Wardle in the original series. As the author explains, this new volume differs from the old in two important respects. It treats the history and religion of Israel together instead of separately, and it carries the narrative down to the Maccabean Revolt instead of stopping at Ezra.

Taking the book as a whole the reader cannot but be impressed with the thoroughness of the scholarship. Although no bibliography in the full sense is given, there is an abundance of scriptural references with a scriptural and a general index, so that it is easy to find the Biblical basis for any statement which is based on the Biblical sources. In the case of matters based on extra-Biblical sources, the discerning reader will readily recognize that the author is at home with the latest discoveries in the field of archaeology and the studies in ancient culture and religion. Reference is made to a few definitive works such as the reader might have access to in any good library.

The author has taken the approach of 'Biblical theology' in contrast to the erstwhile 'liberal school' of Biblical interpretation. This is all to the good, for it sets the faith of Israel in its proper perspective among other elements of history and culture that go to make up the phenomenon of ancient Israel. Thus the history of Israel is treated as intimately related to its faith. Israel's history and her religion, says the author, are inseparable.

The introduction includes a section on sources and their transmission. The author takes the view that there are three main blocks of narrative material relative to the task of historical reconstruction, namely, the Tetrateuch, in which J, E and P are interwoven; the Deuteronomistic history and the Chronicler's history. As to archaeological data, the author says that 'probably its greatest services to Old Testament study are to provide us with a clearer framework of international history in which to set the history of Israel, and to help us recapture the atmosphere of the world in which ancient Israel lived its life'.

Aware of different theories about the value of the stories of the patriarchs, the author affirms that they are of historical

importance at the very least because they embody Israel's own understanding of her remote past. No single interpretative principle can satisfactorily be applied to all the stories. Some probably are stories of representative individuals who are centres of a sense of corporate personality, some centre around sanctuaries, some call for a collective or tribal interpretation.

The significance of the exodus from Egypt is that this theme was of prime importance for the national and religious self-consciousness of Israel, even though the historical details offer problems. The author concludes that the conquest under Joshua most likely took place toward the end of the thirteenth century and the exodus earlier in the same century (1200 and 1250 B.C. respectively). The descent into Egypt took place during the Hyksos period or otherwise possibly during the reign of the heretic Pharaoh Ikhnaton.

The author rejects the notion that the religion of Moses was dependent on the monotheism of Pharaoh Ikhnaton. He finds more reason to see some influence from the Midjanites or Kenites. Yahweh's nature is that he reveals himself by what he does. His relationship to Israel was that he, not they, had chosen them and established a covenant with them. The idea of the covenant is not a superimposition of later writers on the ancient stories, as some have supposed, for there are parallels in the Hittite culture as far back as the fifteenth century B.C. The Ten Commandments, in terser form, were probably of Mosaic origin.

The Israelite confederacy during the period of settlement is designated, in accordance with current usage, as an amphictyony, but the author is careful to indicate the degree to which the term is applicable. The prime task of the judges was to be the human agents of Yahweh's deliverance of his people. Their leadership was charismatic, local and temporary.

The religion of Canaan presented a sharp challenge to the faith which the Israelites brought with them. Its cult was no mere formalism but concerned with the realities of life. By recital of myth and dramatic symbolism the ordered harmony of nature and the life of the community were maintained. In marked contrast was the historical character of Israel's faith. Both assimilation and rejection took place. The author presents an illuminating sketch of Canaanite religion and refers to the way in which Israel adapted places, objects, times and persons to her own historical faith.

The author discusses the functions of the priesthood in pre-exilic times as the giving of oracles, instruction in the law, and altar service. The teaching office was probably far greater than is commonly supposed. In the origins of the prophetic movement the author notes its gregarious character, its ecstatic element, and its relationship to the cult and sanctuaries. The last aspect, often overlooked, receives special attention. In both prophetic and cultic practice the conception of the creative

or destructive power inherent in certain words and actions is evident. Prophecy in Israel is set against the background of similar expressions of religion among other peoples, but the distinctive feature of Israel's prophets was their faith in Yahweh 'the Saviour God who brought Israel out of Egypt. This remained central.

The author reviews the great prophets of the latter part of the eighth century—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. He rejects the idea that they represent a wholly new type of prophecy, pointing out their debt to the past and their continuity with earlier prophecy. The author views the Isaianic passages about a righteous king (7:10-17; 9:2-7; 11:1-9) as originating from the prophet. As to the first, 'Isaiah predicts the birth of a prince as a confirmation of Yahweh's promises to the Davidic dynasty and of His presence with His people (Immanuel = God with us)'.

In his summary of the life and message of Jeremiah the author defines the nature of the prophet's 'individualism', not as an abstract principle, but as related to his experience of failure and isolation which drove him back upon Yahweh. He represented the end of an age but pointed to a new age in which 'there could be a new understanding of the common life of the people of Yahweh and of the place of the individual in it'.

The author's view of Ezekiel is that he lived and worked among the exiles of Babylonia and that the bulk of the material in the book by his name comes from him. In this the author reverts from 'many extreme theories' to the earlier point of view.

In discussing the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah the author rejects a Messianic interpretation related to the king-cult in favour of regarding the servant as primarily a prophetic figure in which the experience of unmerited suffering is interpreted, not only as a problem, but as a vocation.

The author thinks that by the time of Ezra (whether dated 458/7 or 398/7 B.C.) the main components of the Pentateuch had been brought together, so that the law book of Ezra was probably in substance, although not in its final text, the entire Pentateuch. Even at that time it was not thought of as a new law. The dominant element in the completed Pentateuch is the Priestly Code. After a discussion of Ruth, Jonah and the Samaritan Schism, the author goes on to suggest that the words of Daniel's companions to Nebuchadnessar in connection with the burning fiery furnace might well be taken as the confession of faith of the Hasidim in the days of the Maccabean revolt. The book of Daniel comes from this period and displays the main features of apocalyptic.

In the last chapter on 'Nature, Man and God' the author treats of the wisdom teaching as an element of Israelite culture which was rooted in early pre-exilic times. It came to a great flowering in the time of Solomon, who was accorded the role of the wise man *par excellence*. The wisdom writings are 'the documents of Hebrew humanism', but, being written within

the life and religious tradition of Israel, they were associated with the faith of Israel, even though they also had international associations.

This is a very worthwhile book. Teachers of Serampore courses in the Old Testament field have special reason to rejoice in its publication, and students may well give priority to possessing a copy if limited to a choice within the field.

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Mission, Konfession, Kirche. Die Problematik ihrer Integration im 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland (MISSION CONFESSION, CHURCH. THE PROBLEM OF THEIR INTEGRATION IN 19TH CENTURY GERMANY): by Johannes Aagaard. *Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia VII*, C.W.K. Gleerup, Lund, Sweden, 1967. Vols. I and II. Pp. 815. Price S. Kr. 75 (about £5).

This well-written and massive doctoral dissertation presents a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the discussion on Mission and Church in Germany in the last century. In its first part the author describes the theology of mission of *Gustav Warneck*, the central figure in German missiology from 1870 to 1900, and shows that there is a peculiar contrast between his views on Mission and Church in the first and the second volumes of his famous 'Evangelische Missionslehre'. In the first volume Warneck sees no difference between the two; mission is the function of the Church and an integral part of the Church itself. Church is Mission. In the second volume, however, Warneck seems to forget this (according to Aagaard) Biblical concept of Mission altogether. Pragmatic arguments replace the theological reflections and the subject of Mission is no longer the Church, but the societies or the conventicles. The existing churches have no possibility, indeed no right to carry out mission, Warneck says.

The purpose of Aagaard's dissertation is to find the background and the explanation for this inconsistency in Warneck's system. In doing so Aagaard offers an extensive analysis of the different attitudes to the integration of Mission and Church taken by the German missionary societies and mission theologians. He first deals with the period from 1820 to 1836, when Confessionalism became an acute problem in German missions through the formation of the Leipzig Evangelical Missionary Society; and subsequently gives a survey of the discussion which followed this development up to 1860. In this latter part the author presents an enormous amount of material which has so far been ignored or overlooked by German mission historians. The key to the inconsistency in Warneck's 'Missionslehre' is found in the theology which was built around the

Prussian Union of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, Aagaard argues.

Through this work Aagaard, at present a lecturer in missions at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, has placed himself among the leading theologians of mission. The value of his dissertation does not lie in his solution to the Warneckian puzzle, but in the contribution it makes to the current discussion on the integration of Church and Mission. Papers and statements arguing for this integration have been issued by the hundreds from ecumenical meetings in the last decade, but the missionary activity is still carried on by and through societies that are more or less independent of the churches. Although Aagaard is strictly objective in his presentation of the German thinkers, it is obvious that he favours the view which argues for a complete integration—theological and organizational—of Church and Mission. This, of course, is the only logical position for a theologian who regards the organized Church as part of the Gospel itself. The fundamental question is, however, whether Jesus ever wanted the Church—and consequently whether, as Aagaard maintains, the subject as well as the object of mission is the Church.

For Indian readers part II, C, 2 on the 'Anglicanization' of the Lutheran Tranquebar Mission in South India is of special interest. The author gives a brief but excellent survey of this development and shows that the Lutheran indignation at the Anglican take-over in general, and the so-called Rhenius-Affair in Tinnevely in particular, became a very important lever for the Leipzig Evangelical Missionary Society in Germany.

Bangalore

KAJ BAAGO

The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament : by J. A. Thomson. Tyndale Press, London, 1963. Pp. 39. Price 2s.

The covenant idea is one of the basic themes of the Bible. In *The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament* the author reminds us that this concept is not something peculiar to the Israelites. They have inherited it from the cultural background of the Ancient Near East. In the first chapter of the book we are given the available Near Eastern treaties with their characteristic features. The second chapter deals with the treaties of the O.T. in the light of the Ancient Near Eastern treaties. A final chapter brings out the significance of the Ancient Near Eastern treaties for O.T. studies, and traces the influence of the Ancient Near East in the worship and covenant pattern of Israel.

The covenants selected from the Ancient Near East are political in character. But the O.T. covenant is essentially religious. The author makes this differentiation and clearly states

how far the light from non-Biblical sources helps us to understand the covenant concept of the O.T. Forgiveness, mercy and favour are peculiar to the O.T. covenant concept. It shows the nature of the suzerain who instituted the covenant in Israel. The high ethical terms such as truth, faithfulness, justice and righteousness also reveal the special features of the Hebrew concept.

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Interpreting the Resurrection: by Neville Clark (S.C.M., 1967. Pp. 128), hard cover, price 9s. 6d.; paper cover, price 3s. 6d.

This book is written definitely for those who move within the Church's sphere of the resurrection faith.

But the organization of the book places a bit of strain on the reader. We are promised that we shall traverse the path of critical exposition (p. 34): 'to build cautiously on the minimum but firm foundation may be the better way to finally sound construction.' But the book till rather a late stage is full of expository imagination based on a *prima facie* handling of the New Testament text. It is this fulfilment of the promise that places a strain—for it proceeds from chapter to chapter—and the promised 'radical conclusion' awaits in suspense till after the chapters on 'According to the Scriptures', 'Between two Worlds', 'Tomorrow is Now' and 'The Last Day'.

Then comes the discussion of the Easter data in Ch. 5 'The Third Day'. Here there is some attempt—not rigorously sustained—to handle the New Testament Easter narratives critically. Matthew (*M*) and Luke (*L*) have some material apart from dependence on Mark (p. 82). But (p. 90): *M* is specially related to early Galilean Christian faith; and *L* is related to the Jerusalem circle of early belief. The author has given no supporting reasons whatever for his view 'that the predominantly theological character of the Fourth Gospel renders it useless as a primary source' (p. 34).

No reasons are given for dismissing (p. 40) the reliability of the predictions of the death and resurrection by Jesus (Mark 8:31, 9:31 and 10:30 f.) Again no reason is given for dismissing (p. 98) the public character of the resurrection *appearances* (i.e. presentations); and, for declaring (p. 99) these to be hallucinations. From modern developments in psychology, precognition cannot be ruled out; whereas hallucination of 12 or 500 brethren at one time is ruled out! Critical handling ought to include textual judiciousness and scientific conceivability. On both scores the book fails us, and assumes that it has undertaken a critical performance because it is merely negative at points!

The thrust of the book is on the whole positive. An epistemological discussion will show he puts too much of an onus on faith (p. 99), whereas the resurrection is historical and metahistorical too. The author says that the strength of the

historical method is that (p. 95) so far it has not disproved the truth of the Christian proclamation of the resurrection of Christ. 'The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation stone of the entire New Testament witness' (p. 44). 'Between these two events (the death of Jesus and the Church's faith) lies some reality which seems to defy definition but demands explanation' (p. 96). It is the impact of the resurrection which has created a fresh faith and a new hope (Acts 17:31). It is this event which has (p. 103) given rise to the Church, created an entirely new literary form of communication called the 'Gospel', and which caused Sunday to be observed as the Lord's Day.

C.I.S.R.S.
Poona

BALWANT A. M. PARADKAR

Gripped By Christ : by S. Estborn. Pp. 80. Price 3s.

Dr. Estborn's book is an excellent study of conversions to Christianity from Hinduism and Islam. It contains short biographies of some important converts. The biographies reveal the strength of Hinduism and Islam in India; the strong faith of many Hindus and Muslims and the difficulties of the converts when they decided to come into the fold of Jesus Christ. They also show how both Hinduism and Islam were found wanting to satisfy the thirst of the converts for God and for communion with Him. This thirst was satisfied by Jesus Christ and His Church. They further show the deep faith of missionaries, and their sincere presentation of Christ to non-Christians.

Chapter nine is a study of some of the important features of conversions. This is an important chapter because it gives valuable clues to those who are keen on evangelistic work. For example, evangelists should present Christ to individuals, above all, when they are between 15 and 25; they must not despair of converting those who are orthodox and strong in their faith, for such succumb easily to the Gospel when the time is ripe; they must learn and know well the religion of those to whom they present the Gospel; they must use all methods possible to present the Gospel, and not limit themselves to one or two.

Chapter ten compares the situation that was available in India when these conversions took place and the situation that is available at present. This chapter gives reasons why at present there are not many individual conversions. Some of the reasons given are the Hindu renaissance, the new nationalism and the secularistic and materialistic attitude of people in modern days. It would have been good if in this chapter the lethargy of the Indian Church and the indifference of individual Christians were also included as important reasons for lack of conversions in modern India. However, this is an excellent book which all missionaries and evangelists should read.

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