

Reviews.

Mennonites in Europe, by John Horsch. Pp. 416, two dollars. 610, Walnut Avenue, Scottdale, Pa., U.S.A.

Anabaptists have been hardly known to Englishmen, except as meteors extinguished in 1536, an idea unfortunately revived by Richard Heath fifty years ago, under Baptist auspices. This episode is here dismissed in eight pages, whereas forty full-page illustrations from Switzerland, Strassburg, Belfort, Antwerp, the Netherlands, Danzig, Elbing, and Russia show where to look for a people with a history of four centuries. They caught attention at Zurich in 1525, and a German atlas shows that within thirty years the Swiss Brethren were prominent also at St. Gall, Berne, Basel, with outposts at Augsburg, Strassburg, down the Danube and in the highlands of Moravia; while from Bonn to Rotterdam and along the coast by Emden, Hamburg, Lübeck even to the mouth of the Vistula, a second group was strongly organized. Students of the Parker Society volumes could indeed know how English exiles regarded them in the days of the Tudors, otherwise they were little but a name, a bad name. Only within this century did A. H. Newman write a coherent story in English, then a Dutch Mennonite contributed three pages to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. At last a full-length story is available from a German who went to America in 1888 to escape military training, which has been anti-Christian in the eyes of nearly all Mennonites.

They took their rise in Switzerland, and nearly won Zwingli, who however adopted the principle of a State-church, and therefore applied to them the old method of prison or death. Their first great contribution was that in 1527 they had a meeting at a village just across the Rhine, and put out a Brotherly Agreement of Some Children of God, on some points they had been considering. It advocated Believers' Baptism, After-care and discipline, Strict Communion, Pacifism, a Ministry, refusal of Civil Office, and of all Swearing. Soon afterwards there was a curious contact with English Reformers, for Froschauer of Zurich, who printed the first Bible in English for Coverdale, had been invited by the Lichtensteins to make Nikolsburg a publishing centre, and here he worked for Balthasar Hubmaier. They were continually persecuted, and though executions ceased in 1614, milder methods drove them to search for toleration in the Palatinate, where our King James' daughter was Electress, and in Bohemia where her husband was a winter-king. This volume

has a long and interesting account of their misfortunes, their industry, their steadfastness, their refusal to adopt the views of Socinus, which were so welcome in Poland.

Leeuwarden, the capital of Friesland, was the centre of a parallel movement, headed by two brothers, Obbe Philips a surgeon, and Dirck a Franciscan friar; their activity began in 1533. Dirck soon won Menno Simons, and these two worked all along the north coast evangelising, till Dirck settled as Bishop at Schottland near Danzig. Inland there was less success, due largely to the Elector of Saxony, who was persuaded by Luther and Melancthon to carry out the Edict of Speyer and persecute. Thus at the castle of Wartburg, where Luther began his translation of the Bible, a Mennonite prisoner was transferred from Eisenach to die in a dungeon. Another leader was Leonard Bouriens, an educator, ordained bishop in 1551 at Emden by Menno, and ranging on the coast and the islands. He kept a record of baptisms, which seem to have been reserved now for the bishops, after converts had been taught by ordinary members. In 31 years of itineration through 142 places, he baptised 10,378 converts before he died at Hoorn. Horsch gives no list of bishops, but if all were like the sixteen he mentions, it is no wonder there were great accessions. Bishop Brixius of Groningen led other Mennonite scholars in translating a Dutch Bible printed at Emden in 1560, reissued thirty times that century, besides many Testaments.

Persecution died down, ending in Holland with 1574. Before John Fox issued his Book of Martyrs, the Mennonites had published their Offer des Heeren, so-called because they regarded the martyrs as offering their bodies willing sacrifices. It was often augmented and revised, and last century part of it was translated and issued by our Hanserd Knollys Society, with many of the hymns in which they delighted. Bishop Cornelis of Dortrecht called a Mennonite conference there in 1632, when fifty-two Flemish and Friesian ministers agreed to a Confession he drafted, so well approved that it was translated into French and German, then into English by 1712, and it is still current in America. Three years later, bishop Schabalje of Alkmaar published *The Wandering Soul*, which contained an epitome of history from the creation till A.D. 109; this is far the most widely circulated of all their books, quite 53 editions known in Dutch, German and English, the latest being in 1919 from the House which sends out the present volume.

The eighteenth century was for most nations and churches a season of decline. From this the Mennonites were rescued by the Tsarina Catherine II, who badly wanted colonists, and offered each family a quarter of a square mile as a gift, free

of taxes for ten years. Over two hundred families accepted, and settled in a province fitly named Ekaterinoslav, not far from that Kharkov which has figured lately on our daily maps. It was these Mennonites who reclaimed this district, and made the Ukraine into a wide granary. Their story is fascinating, how they repeatedly claimed their right of home rule, kept on their use of German, supported a mission to Java and Sumatra, whose headquarters was at Amsterdam. When civil war in Russia broke out in 1918, it was a sore test for pacifists, and with the Bolshevik rule another mass migration began. In the Kiel Canal, as Baptists went to our congress at Stockholm, we passed a shipload of Mennonites on their way to the land of the free. They had already shown their readiness to give national service, as foresters or under the Red Cross, and as their predecessors in 1861 had faced the same problems, we may soon find in a companion volume how Mennonites in the United States, Canada and Paraguay are entering on a new phase of their career.

Horsch has pointed out the leading doctrines and practices, discussing them at length. Whether for information, for principles, for cheapness, this volume is worthy of all attention and study.

W. T. WHITLEY.

The Baptist View of the Church and Ministry, by A. Dakin, (Kingsgate Press, 1s. 6d.)

This book deals with problems which are in the forefront of Christian thinking to-day. The widespread feeling that Christian organisations are on the whole outmoded and irrelevant compels Christians to give thought to the nature and function of the church. Changes are occurring within many Christian organisations and the shaping of these changes calls for an understanding of the principles which have made the organisations; as Dr. Dakin remarks on p. 6 " . . . the problem of Baptist statesmanship at the moment is to adapt our organisation to the new conditions in such a way that by the adaptation our essential principles will be, not negated, but further elucidated and advanced."

The purpose of the book is to "stimulate thought and discussion"; it is offered "not in any sense as an authoritative word, but for consideration and discussion." The book fulfills this purpose admirably. It is a provocative as well as an informative book. The principles set forth are clearly grasped and clearly expressed in concise statements. No careful reader can fail to understand Dr. Dakin's positions; such clarity makes an excellent beginning for thought and discussion.

Many readers will appreciate those sections of the book which offer descriptions of the organisation and practices of Baptist churches. These sections are excellent. A careful study of Dr. Dakin's descriptions of a church meeting, pp. 21-24, or of Baptist worship, pp. 28-35, will impart to many attached to our churches a richer meaning as they share in these acts. The statement on p. 28 concerning the evangelical experience underlying Baptist worship—"In it (our worship) there is, first, the continued effort to appreciate ever more fully what God has done for us in Christ, and then, secondly, to appropriate ever more fully the benefits and blessings of it."—could itself be expanded into a book. The valuable feature of these sections of the book is that they are interwoven with other sections setting out the Baptist conceptions of church and ministry so that common practices in worship and organisation are seen to be the outward expression of deep rooted convictions.

It is in his elucidation of Baptist principles that Dr. Dakin is most provoking. Here controversy is inevitable! Some of this controversy will be aroused by the brevity of the book, a feature which we appreciate in busy days but which causes omissions. The most serious omission is that of an adequate exposition of the New Testament basis of Baptist principles. The book contains only four references by chapter and verse to the New Testament, and in addition there are a few unspecified quotations. Many passages assume the New Testament background but it would be helpful to have a careful exposition of the New Testament evidence regarding the nature and function of the Church and ministry. This is all the more desirable because our Baptist position was formulated from an intense study of the Bible and, as Dr. Dakin himself remarks: "The Bible indeed is the one bit of furniture indispensable in a Baptist chapel." p. 28. The necessity for this New Testament basis reveals itself when we consider more fully Dr. Dakin's conception of (a) the church and (b) the ministry.

(a) THE CHURCH.

The discussion on the church begins with an indication of the threefold use of the word "church" in the New Testament p. 7. Some references here would be illuminating! The definition of the third of these usages does not seem to be sufficiently exact. We are told p. 7 that "a church is a company of Christians with the Lord in the midst," and this seems to be interpreted as the individual congregation. Throughout the book when the word church is spelt with a small "c" it appears to denote the local congregation. But is this strictly the New Testament sense of the word? Such phrases as "the Church of God which is at

Corinth" suggests that the word refers to all the congregations in one locality; and the fact that Ephesians was apparently a circular letter supports this. The parallel to-day then is not so much with the individual congregation as with the small district association. There is a strong emphasis in the New Testament upon the fellowship of the churches. The well known phrase "the communion of the Holy Spirit" indicated not merely the individual believer's communion with God but also the new fellowship created by the energy of the Spirit among the believers. This conception was seized upon by our Baptist forefathers, for in the early days of Baptists the association played a prominent part and many ministers and churches were eager to develop the wider fellowship. It is to be doubted then whether so strong an emphasis upon the individual congregation can be maintained either on New Testament evidence or upon Baptist tradition.

Following this beginning the book sets out the principle of the gathered church in a brief but adequate chapter. Perhaps the time-honoured title "Independent", which is no longer well understood and often much misunderstood, could have been elucidated instead of mentioned; especially since this has been so well done by Daniel Jenkins in his book on "The Nature of Catholicity." All this suggests that Baptist folk will have to do some thinking about the *nature* of the church, and that is equally true of the *function* of the church. On this theme Dr. Dakin's positions raise many questions. He makes the striking—and timely!—contrast between the church as the body of Christ, *i.e.*, as the instrument of God's purpose, which is the popular conception, and as the bride of Christ *i.e.* as the fellowship created by God for His glory (pp. 11-12). He is undoubtedly right in saying that the latter conception "would bring the Church, as such, more into the focus of our thought instead of leaving it on the periphery; it would fasten our loyalty under God more closely to it; and make the building up of the Church itself more definitely the grand aim of our Christian strategy"; and he asks the pertinent question ". . . does it mean that we have unconsciously secularised the idea of the Church?" p. 11. Here it must be noted that he is speaking of the Church as the whole fellowship of believers in all ages, in time and in eternity. This at once raises the question of the relationship of the Church to the Kingdom of God, a question which may be outside the scope of the book but cannot be ignored. The Roman Catholic Church equates the Kingdom of God with the church, though with a meaning to the word church different from that of this book. Is this the Baptist position? Is this the New Testament position? If we cannot make this equation how are the two related, and what is the

function of the church in regard to the Kingdom? Can we also accept the statement that the Church is the grand aim of Christian strategy? If we maintain the word church in its absolute sense the aim seems too distant to be effective in practice: if we allow it to degenerate, as it would in the minds of many, to Christian organisations the aim is not big enough; and in any case, it seems to place a limitation where the Christian conscience has been turning away from limitation. In the closing sentence of his book Dr. Dakin himself turns to the idea of the Kingdom: "The one consideration of importance is, What is best for the Kingdom of God." Some further definition of the place of the Church in the eternal purpose would seem to be indicated, and all this suggests that we have to see the Church both as the fellowship created by God for His glory and as the instrument whereby He continues His redemptive work in the world.

(b) THE MINISTRY.

From his conception of the church Dr. Dakin works out his conception of the ministry, for, as he remarks on p. 41 "The theory of the ministry among Baptists must of necessity accord with their idea of the church out of which it springs." It will be felt by many that the strong emphasis upon the individual congregation in the first part of the book leads in the second part to a position difficult to maintain; viz. that a Baptist minister is one in charge of a Baptist church. Once again an exposition of the New Testament would be useful. Admittedly the ministry of the New Testament church was in process of formation, but a study of it is significant in revealing what conceptions of the ministry were in the mind of the Apostles. One outstanding feature of the New Testament ministry is that on the whole it belonged to the whole church. Elders and bishops seem to have been more restricted in their activity and to have confined themselves to one locality though not to one congregation; but other ministries *e.g.* apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers were apparently ministries of the whole church. Once again our Baptist tradition seems more in line with the New Testament position than with that which Dr. Dakin emphasises, for men like Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall, though pastors of one congregation, obviously belonged to the whole Baptist community and strove to serve the whole community.

But we must not be misled by what is after all a comparatively unimportant matter *i.e.* who has the right to the title of "Baptist minister", and ignore the important conception which Dr. Dakin will present. For his main contention is that the ministry is not an order separated from others in the church but is a mode of serving the church. Since all members possess

the gift of grace all are equipped, all have the responsibility of ministering; thus there are varieties of ministries as different members exercise their different talents. ". . . we are trying to define the word 'minister' in such a way as to make it clear that it designates an office in the church and not an 'order' based on unique endowment." p. 46. What makes a man a minister is the Divine call to serve the church in this way and the recognition of such a call by the church. Such a man is a minister of the Gospel. His ministry may be exercised in many places and in many ways, and for each of these there is an appropriate term. The term we use for one who exercises his ministry in a Baptist church is "Baptist minister". The significance of all these statements is their denial that the ministry is a special order endowed with special grace not given to others. Here an exposition of the New Testament would be particularly valuable, and would largely support this position. In his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans C. H. Dodd remarks p. 195 ". . . Paul made no such hard and fast distinction between clerical and lay ministries as later emerged in the church. His point is that whatever special talent a member of the Church may possess is a gift of the grace of God. . . and gives no claim to dignity or pre-eminence in the community, but marks out that individual for a particular line of service, to which he must devote himself." R. Newton Flew in his careful study of the New Testament church in the book *Jesus and His Church* makes the same point, as one saying will illustrate p. 256 ". . . the ministers exercise powers and functions which are inherent in the Church. But no one ministry is singled out as alone constituting the Ecclesia." We may also note how Dr. Newton Flew's emphasis that the New Testament ministry was dependent upon the Word of God and was created by it is echoed by Dr. Dakin on p. 49, in his important discussion of the authority of the ministry: "The authority of the minister in his church is chiefly spiritual. His authority rests on the Gospel." If Dr. Dakin is right in asserting, as he does on p. 19 that Baptists stand against sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism—and he surely is!—then he is stating the logical conclusion of that position, and this upon sound New Testament evidence. His book would be valuable for this reason alone, though other reasons have also been suggested for its undoubted value, that it calls us away from the priestly conception of the ministry and towards the example of our Master who claiming to belong to no special order was content to say "I am among you as he that doth serve."

L. G. CHAMPION.

The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel, by A. R. Johnson, Ph.D.
(University of Wales Press, 3s. 6d.)

Dr. Johnson is to be congratulated both on his appointment to succeed his old chief, Dr. T. H. Robinson, with whom he has worked for many years, and also on belonging to a University with a Press that recognises the value for research of publishing booklets of this size and kind.

The book continues Dr. Johnson's interest in the cult at the temple at Jerusalem and its intention is "to show that, both in general and particularly as regards the Jerusalem Temple, the prophet originally filled a cultic rôle, of at least equal, if not greater importance" than the priest (p. 6). It is a stimulating, thought-provoking work, inviting criticism; the notes cover a wide range of subjects; and there is a careful discussion of the Hebrew terms. One misses a reference in the first section to R. H. Kennett's pioneer work on the Israelite priesthood in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, January, 1905, and a reference to another Cambridge work—the Cambridge Ancient History—would have perhaps given the author that "contrary case" which it is the scholar's duty to seek if haply he may find: a young nobleman is mentioned in the story of Wen-Amón as prophesying at the altar although not himself a "cultic specialist," and filled only with ad hoc inspiration.

The theory that the cleavage between prophet and priest was not so great as is sometimes thought has been generally accepted for some years, but Dr. Johnson's attempt to generalise this and prove that all prophets were connected with the altar and official cultus cannot be regarded as successful. He makes many assumptions which need proof. Does the fact (p. 25) that it was usual to visit a prophet on a New Moon or Sabbath provide an "obvious cultic association" or simply tell us what happened on workless days? Must a prophet be a "cultic specialist" because he resides in a holy city or is, like Nathan, a court prophet (p. 26)?—surely there are Baptist ministers residing in Canterbury or York whose "prophetic word is never spoken without effect," and yet who may be complete rebels against altar and official cultus; perhaps the same may be true of our Baptist Chaplains to the King! Jeremiah is not necessarily "a vital part of the cultic personnel" (p. 52) because he preached in the temple; would the author assert the same of Jesus for the same reason?

The final case from which he argues is perhaps most susceptible of a different explanation (p. 61). The very fact that so long a genealogical table is given to Jehaziel and that mention is made of the fact that he was a Levite may be intended to show that the case was an unusual one and, like the prophesying of the

elders in Numbers xi. 25ff, the inspiration was ad hoc and worthy of special mention.

We shall look forward to the further publication promised by Dr. Johnson, and thank him for this interesting contribution to the fascinating subject of the relation between prophet and priest in Israel's religion.

J. N. SCHOFIELD.

Shorter Notices.

The Drama of the Cross, by C. Stanley Herbert, B.D.,
(Independent Press, 5s.)

These brief studies of the men and women who as His friends or His enemies were involved in the drama of Christ's Cross have been written by the minister of Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church, Hampstead. They are marked by frequent distinction of phrase, as in the striking chapter headings, by acute psychological and spiritual insight, and by a profoundly religious spirit. Mr. Herbert makes good use of his wide reading, and enriches his pages by many illuminating and beautiful quotations. The book has much suggestive material for the preacher. The slighting reference to oratory on page 45 seems to be out of place since Mr. Churchill stirred Britain with his great speeches at the time of Dunkirk. One or two misprints should be attended to: "cirences" on p. 43 should be "circenses," "J. H. Morrison" on p. 71 should be "G. H. Morrison", and a letter has been missed out of "awakening" on p. 121.

JOHN O. BARRETT.

Our Footing on the Heights, by Geoffrey R. King (The Uplift Press, 2s.)

This unpretentious booklet contains twelve sermons delivered by the Rev. Geoffrey King in East London during the past stressful two or three years. They are well worthy of issue in this more permanent form. Mr. King has gifts as a preacher and evangelist which are bringing him increasing recognition far beyond his own church and denomination. These sermons, printed as delivered, reveal not only his homiletic skill, but also convey to the reader a refreshing impression of eagerness, sincerity and strong faith. Royalties are to be devoted to the fund for the rebuilding of the East London Tabernacle.