

the Old Testament witness concerning the theology of mission and the Hebrew missionary activity—he is very interesting. He makes, it is true, too sweeping a set of remarks about the origin of the book of *Lamentations* (Gottwald's work is a corrective here), but after this initial slip he makes a magnificently convincing case for a new exegesis of the Suffering Servant songs. He stresses that Deutero-Isaiah is not primarily concerned with the proving of either monotheism or universalism but with the demonstration of Yahweh's intention to comfort his people; the songs, therefore, are not missionary in outlook. From this he argues that the reference to Israel as 'the light of the nations' is not a call to the Hebrews to evangelize the gentiles but a declaration that when Yahweh grants life to his people they will be a shining testimony to the greatness of their Lord. He also is convinced that Is. 45. 20ff intends the 'survivors of the nations', invited to approach Yahweh, to be understood not, as the *Bible de Jerusalem* assumes, as the gentiles but the Jews of the diaspora. Israel by its very existence attracts the homage and service of the other nations; 'in living by Yahweh the Chosen People lives for mankind'.

This interpretation is evidently open to question, but Martin-Achard has worked out his ideas in a scholarly and lively manner. For him the Old Testament view of Israel is of a mediator between Yahweh and the nations, and in the last days God will assume all men under his manifest rule. Until that time Israel must exist and by existing praise. All missionary activity is reserved to God; 'mission is a theocentric concept in the sense that it is brought into being and put into effect by God Himself and at the same time furthers His glory'.

The function of Israel is to prepare for the last age, the age of the Church. We now have a duty to proclaim God to all men. Here and now we are in the midst of 'realized eschatology'. The Church's ministry is seen as a missionary presence in the midst of mankind and our part in the apostolic activity as dependent on the presence of God in the midst of his people.

It is delightful to find a pastor of the Reformed Church of France arguing against individualistic views of the Christian life. We draw together.

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BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by G. R. Beasley-Murray; Macmillan, 50s.

The work under review 'is intended to offer a Baptist contribution to the discussions on Baptism that are taking place throughout the Christian world' (pp. v-vi). The author has, however, 'striven to interpret the evidence as a Christian scholar and not as a member of a particular confession'. For this reason he leaves-over consideration of infant baptism to the end of the book.

The earlier works of Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future* (1954) and *A Commentary on Mark Thirteen* (1957) were very well received. The present work will, doubtless, be accorded a like welcome. As intended by the writer

himself, it will be well to distinguish clearly between the exegetical portion and the final chapters where he is discussing a problem from the Baptist point of view. His examination of baptism in the New Testament is thorough and satisfactory. The reader is taken through the antecedents of Christian baptism, Old Testament illustrations, Jewish baptisms (including those of Qumran), proselyte baptism and the baptism of John the Baptist. Then each New Testament text bearing on baptism is carefully and fully analysed; varying views on disputed points are expounded and evaluated. The author does not scruple to depart from the accepted interpretation of his own denomination when the texts require it. His work will be particularly useful as a handbook for the exegete and theologian.

A final chapter to the first exegetical section gives a synthesis of the New Testament doctrine on baptism. After some very fine paragraphs on various aspects of New Testament teaching the author comes to consider the question of the necessity of the rite of baptism. There is no question of its being required by a *necessitas medii*—which is the Catholic position. Even the terms *necessitas praecepti* or *necessitas non absoluta sed ordinata* he finds distasteful. Better 'to recognize positively that God has graciously given us sacraments for our good and that it is our part to receive them gratefully' (p. 304). 'The Lord is able to look after the exigencies of life outside the range of the formulas' (p. 302). He finds none of the biblical texts brought forward in defence of the necessity of baptism convincing, least of all Mt. 28. 18-20.

In the question of infant baptism he comes down strongly in favour of the Baptist position. The New Testament texts from which defence of the practice is sought by Jeremias, Cullmann and others are weighed and found wanting. Few Catholic theologians would disagree with him in that: it is one of the questions decided by tradition, not scripture. But his doctrine of faith, and the conjunction of faith and baptism in New Testament texts, leads him to deny the validity of infant baptism. This is surely going beyond the premises. The New Testament conjoins faith and baptism simply because first generation Christians must be made from among adults and the New Testament writings were intended to be read to adults. Baptism is intended to produce 'a new creature' and this God can do in an infant as in an adult.

This debate among Protestants is clear proof of the insufficiency of *Scriptura sola* as a norm of faith or practice, even in fundamental matters. The existence of an authority to determine such questions is implicit in the great mission and baptism commission of Mt. 28. 18-20: 'Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the end of the world'. But, these last chapters apart, this work is a very welcome addition to the literature of New Testament theology. In a future edition two minor misprints could be corrected. On p. 49 for 'ebed read 'ebed and on p. 64 n. 1 for *Mystery* . . . read *Mysticism*.

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