
Reviews

WAYS OF WORSHIP: The Report of a Theological Commission of Faith and Order. S. C. M., 21/ net. pp. 356.

This is an important book, a big book, in some ways inevitably a confused and confusing book, but an indispensable book for all students of the contemporary liturgical and devotional scene. Here is richness indeed, a long series of papers on different aspects of Christian worship and devotion by experts from all the leading communions of Christendom. It is the work of a Commission which originated in the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order of 1937, and its immediate purpose is to provide material for discussion by the delegates of the Churches who are to meet this year at Lund in Sweden for the third World Conference. The delegates will be unable to complain of lack of material! The book's usefulness, however, will go far beyond its immediate purpose: it will remain for many years an invaluable storehouse of information for all who, from any angle, are interested in the worship of Christendom or the possibility of any reunion of Christendom. Here and there one wonders to what extent the writers are really representative of their own communions, and one is frequently reminded of the important but constantly neglected fact that our divisions are horizontal as well as vertical. It is not a book to read through; it is not a book which in itself achieves anything; some of its papers are more valuable than others. But when all is said, and in spite of the sheer weariness which is apt to overcome one in the presentation of so many differing outlooks so apparently irreconcilable, the book remains a compilation of unique interest and value.

In some of the papers there is an element of 'wishful thinking', an unconscious or subconscious presentation, in the interests of a possible reunion, of the writer's own Church as other than it is, but on the other hand there are numerous 'realist' correctives to such an attitude. The introductory Report, for instance, does well to remind us that 'Catholic and Orthodox Christians would find it

difficult, if not impossible, to seek union with Churches which allow the use of unfermented grape juice in the celebration of Holy Communion, or are careless about the disposal of elements consecrated but not consumed in that service'.

The first part of the book gives a series of papers on the 'elements of Liturgy'. It provides some surprises. The Roman Catholic essayist admits that the Latin lessons from Holy Scripture are 'certainly an obstacle', and that the translations printed in the popular missals and even the reading of a translation afterwards from the pulpit seem to be insufficient remedies. Father Florovsky, for the Orthodox, claims that the rubrics in the 'Typicon', prescribing the reading of a portion of the New Testament after Vespers, whereby the whole New Testament is covered in the course of the year, are 'obviously a kind of preaching', but goes on to add: 'Unfortunately these rubrics are very seldom followed'! His candour might have been imitated by some of the other writers. Fr. Hebert, for the Anglicans, reminding us that in the early Church the priesthood of all believers found active expression when the people brought to church their gifts of bread and wine as the symbol of the offering of themselves, and presented them at the altar, states that 'in many places to-day attempts are made to find out how this can be revived'! Some of the Lutheran papers make melancholy reading. 'The Holy Supper is celebrated (in Germany) only as a rare appendix, for those few who stay behind "after the church service"''. From Switzerland we get indications of the unhappy tension following on Karl Barth's adoption of Baptist views. Dr W. D. Maxwell's paper on Scottish worship is, as one would expect, most competently done, on familiar lines. He is scarcely justified, however, in the claim that our *Book of Common Order* specifically provides an order for taking the consecrated elements to the sick after the service; although we are aware that, in actual practice, some ministers do use the shortened form (p. 132) for that purpose. Some readers also may wonder just what is 'grotesque' in speaking of the collection as 'the offering'. But these are minor points.

The section on the 'elements' of Liturgy is followed by one on the inner meaning of Word and Sacrament, and in some ways the most valuable and salutary portion of the book comes at the end in a long treatment of 'Liturgy and Devotion'—salutary, because its preoccupation with

'Mariology' reminds us of the difficulties of the ecumenical enterprise. Yet even here there are surprises. Max Thurian of the Reformed Church of France, quotes this: 'All the angels of all the heavens now look only at this place where Mary is, that young girl, to whom, however, nothing has happened but this simple regard of God, cast on her lowliness. This short instance is full of eternity, of an ever-new eternity. There is nothing greater in heaven or on earth. If ever, in the history of the world, something of capital importance has happened, it is indeed this "regard"'. How many readers would realise that the words are Karl Barth's?

JOHN WILSON BAIRD.

PRAYERS FOR THE CHRISTIAN YEAR. (Second edition, revised and enlarged). Geoffrey Cumberlege: Oxford University Press, 12/6d.

PRAYERS AND SERVICES FOR CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS. By James M. Todd. Geoffrey Cumberlege: Oxford University Press, 8/6d.

The issue of this second, revised and enlarged edition of *Prayers for the Christian Year* will be widely welcomed. There has, within living memory, been a remarkable recovery in Scotland of the observance of the chief Festivals of the Church, and this book will do much to deepen and widen this movement. This second edition, let it be said, is a distinct improvement upon the first. It reads well; the prayers are less heavy and stiff, the range of thought is wider, and a smoother and more pleasant rhythm has been secured. Whether ministers read these prayers in church as they are printed, or simply use them as material to draw upon, they will be deeply grateful for this volume. It is doubtful if any other Communion has produced such an adequate and comprehensive manual, and the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion of the Church of Scotland are to be warmly congratulated on an excellent piece of work.

The services include ancient prayers, hallowed by the devotion of ages, and modern compilations. This is a wise decision. No doubt the older prayers, so far as style is concerned, have the advantage, in their combination of simplicity, brevity and profundity. But beauty of style is not the chief requisite in public prayer; what one might

call 'reality' is equally important. Prayers for use in the sanctuary must express, on the one hand, a sense of the majesty of God and the transcendent truths of the Christian Gospel ; and, on the other hand, a sense of the relevance of these truths to contemporary thought and life, work and suffering. Judged by this standard this prayer-book is rich and suggestive, both in thought and expression. The intercessions are simple and dignified in style, sympathetic in feeling, and comprehensive in range. The confessions and supplications are sometimes less felicitous in wording, and the ruthless eradication of unnecessary adverbs and adjectives would have been an improvement. There are some welcome additions in this new volume,—complete services for each Sunday in Advent and Lent, a service for Christmas Eve, a service of Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas-Tide, and a service of Seven Lessons for Easter Evening.

One omission we should like to see made good in a future edition is the provision of at least a brief prayer or collect for some of the more notable Saints' days. From the evangelical standpoint it is at least as desirable to commemorate S. Paul, S. Peter and S. John, as it is to commemorate S. Andrew. And why not keep the festivals of some of our well-known Scottish saints, such as Ninian, Columba, Mungo, Machar, Drostan, and others locally honoured ?

A disappointing feature of the book is the rigid uniformity in structure and style of the various orders of service. In spite of the liturgical freedom we enjoy, it seems to be assumed that every service must follow a fixed pattern. Is this wise ? A Christmas Eve service, for example, usually attended by a large, mixed congregation, calls for shorter, simpler, more homely prayers. Less formal services give opportunity for the use of simple biddings, directed intercessions with appropriate responses, and intervals of silence. A litany form of intercession might also have been employed, occasionally, with advantage. Church people in Scotland are thought to be hesitant to join in responses ; but perhaps the real reason is that they are so seldom encouraged to do so ! Must we continue to assume that the minister's voice alone should be heard in public prayer ?

This book underlines the value of the observance of the Christian Year, not only in the enrichment of corporate worship, but also in its inspiration for preaching. Both in prayer and in preaching there is a temptation to move within a limited field of thought and feeling. The great

Festivals of the Christian Year recall both minister and people to the wide range of Christian truth,—its comforts and warnings, its assurance and its challenge, its solemn calls to repentance and its great occasions of rejoicing. We are wise if we seek to enter more fully into this rich and ancient heritage. This volume, which is not likely to be outmoded for a very long time, should prove a help and an inspiration not only to our own clergy, but also to those of other communions.

A sign of increasing interest in liturgical worship, within the English Free Churches, is to be found in the second publication noticed in this review: *Prayers and Services for Christian Festivals*. The compiler, a minister of the Congregational Church, intends his book 'to help ministers and lay preachers in their own preparation for leading church worship by offering them examples of the kind of prayers needed on different occasions and by suggesting forms of service that may be found useful. My purpose is not to recommend that our churches should adopt a liturgy, but to make some practical contribution that may enrich their worship of God'.

The book is in three parts. Part I., containing prayers for use at regular services, covers the main Festivals of the Christian Year and other special occasions. Many sources have been drawn upon, and prayers both ancient and modern have been adapted and combined with singular success. Part II. has three short Orders for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, which, though brief, are dignified and adequate, and include the main elements in the classical liturgical tradition. Part III. contains services of an experimental nature, being 'essentially offices intended to supplement, not to replace, the regular services of the Church'. Prayers are included for each day in Holy Week; there is a very effective short litany in a service of Easter Praise, and another of a slightly different pattern for Ascension Day. In the service for Epiphany the intercessions and responses are excellent, and show how a congregation can by a very simple method be encouraged to take a fuller share in worship.

The prayers throughout are never slipshod or colloquial, but are written in a dignified, simple rhythm, and achieve real felicity in matching words with thought and feeling. In the reviewer's opinion this book is the best and most satisfying of its kind to come from the pen of a single individual; and it can be warmly commended to all

ministers, of whatever communion, who are concerned to combine dignity, homeliness and a rich variety of approach in the public worship of Almighty God.

Both these books, beautifully produced and most pleasant to handle, are distinguished by the impeccable taste and craftsmanship which we have learned to expect from the Oxford University Press.

NEVILE DAVIDSON.

A MANUAL OF PLAINSONG FOR DIVINE SERVICE :
as edited by H. B. Briggs and W. H. Frere, revised and
enlarged by J. H. Arnold (Novello 1952).

Although plainsong has not yet come into use in Scotland, except for a few hymns wrongly sung owing to the unfortunate notation in the *Revised Church Hymnary*, this book must be of interest to all students of music. Dr Arnold's revision of the Psalter and other musical parts of Divine Service is brilliant in its simplicity, and in fact shows that plainsong chanting is much simpler than Anglican chanting. Thus it is not beyond the competence of any moderately trained choir. We therefore commend this book to the study of ministers and organists, and suggest that selections from it might be used to begin with, and with great effect, as anthems, from time to time. This would create among us a feeling for plainsong, the unsurpassable supplicatory music of the Church.

WILLIAM D. MAXWELL.

THE SHORTER OXFORD BIBLE. Abridged and edited
by Canon G. W. Briggs, Professor G. B. Caird, and
Principal Micklem. Geoffrey Cumberlege : Oxford
University Press, 1951. 7/6d.

It is a tragic fact that the Bible, which has not only moulded our national literature and shaped our character as a people, but is also the foundation of our Christian Faith—the Word of God to us—is rapidly becoming a closed book to multitudes of people. This abridged edition has been devised in the attempt to make the teaching of the Bible more readily accessible to the ordinary reader, and to encourage its regular study.

The book consists of 476 pp. of clear type, beautifully printed, and containing, under a carefully arranged scheme,

the substance of Holy Scripture. The text is paragraphed, without the distraction of versification and columnar arrangement, and each passage bears a suitable heading. Where needed a brief, explanatory, introductory note is added, these being done with great skill and insight, and with a remarkable economy of words.

The selections are arranged in something like their historical setting, and presented throughout against the background of the Church, the People of God, both in the O. T. and the N. T. It is as the record of God's Word to the community of worshipping believers that we are invited to study its message and capture its inspiration for faith. The editors have wisely included selections from the inter-canonical literature in the endeavour to bridge the gap between the O. T. and the N. T., and to make the Gospels more intelligible.

The arrangement of the N. T. selections is extremely well done. The narrative selections from the Gospels are followed by a systematic presentation of the Teaching of Jesus. Then is given the story of the growth of the Church in apostolic times, followed by the Apostolic letters illustrating I. The Christian Way of Life ; and II. the Christian Faith. This last section, with which the book culminates, contains passages from the Epistles grouped around the great phrases of the Apostles' Creed, as the crystallized faith of the Church.

The text used throughout is the A.V., with only occasional substitutions of the R.V., to remove obscurity. *The Shorter Oxford Bible* is intended both for private reading—for which it is admirably suited ; and also for teaching in schools—for which it is indispensable. For this latter purpose a most useful syllabus, graded according to age, is supplied in an appendix.

Every teacher responsible for religious instruction in schools should be in possession of this volume, and ministers in touch with Education Authorities might well bring this book to their notice.

DAVID A. HODGES.

SOME RECENT HYMN-BOOKS.

OF the making of hymn-books there is no end, and perhaps that is not surprising. Ideas and fashions are in constant change, a law from which religion is not exempt. The last

fifty years have witnessed a great development of the social and international conscience of the Church, and that must be reflected in its worship. Taste in music alters from age to age and hymn tunes popular in one decade may be despised in another. All of which seems to support the oft-repeated idea that 'each generation requires—or, at least, demands—its own hymn-book'.*

Three important hymn-books have been published in the last two years—*Hymns Ancient and Modern Revised* 1950, the *B. B. C. Hymn-book*, and *Congregational Praise*, both in 1951. As revision seems to be in the air in some quarters, the issue of these books provides an opportunity for some general remarks on their contents.

Most hymn-books are issued by denominations and therefore reflect more or less clearly the tradition of the communion concerned. That is true of two of these hymn-books, but *BBCHB* is not restricted in that way. It is indeed catholic in its choice both of words and of tunes, and is well-balanced so far as the main traditions are concerned. In the other two the denominational tradition is clear, but even so it is being broadened. Thus *CP* includes a number of hymns from liturgical sources which had appeared in the *English Hymnal*, as well as the ferial and festal responses, while *HAMR* has increased the number of hymns by such dissenters as Isaac Watts, now represented by 17 hymns, and Charles Wesley, by 30 hymns. This tendency, always characteristic of the hymn-book, is evidently growing stronger, and there is no doubt that *BBCHB* can and will give a unique service to the Church by broadening the tradition of all the denominations.

One difficulty about this inclusive tendency is that hymn-books become larger, and indeed too large, in an attempt to provide something for everybody. *BBCHB* is the smallest of the three under consideration, with 449 hymns, 30 metrical psalms, 15 Bible paraphrases, and 44 choir settings, this including some 20 hymns duplicated under separate numbers. *HAMR* has 636 hymns, a considerable reduction from the 1916 edition which had 779 hymns, of which 324 are excluded in the revision while 175 new ones are added. *CP* is much more inclusive, having 778 hymns, with an appendix of 27 additional tunes, and a section of 106 canticles, psalms and Scripture passages for chanting, a total not much different from that of the 1916 edition. This is indeed generous provision for all tastes.

* *Congregational Hymnary* (1916), Preface.

Admittedly it is not easy to cut down the number of hymns, and yet pruning, however painful, is, if properly done, usually beneficial in its results.

There is in the hymns themselves an increasing emphasis on the objective rather than the subjective side. This is clearly seen in all three books, perhaps most of all in *BBCHB*. Has the demand for a better selection of hymns of social, national and international interest been met? This is not easy to answer, because the contents are differently arranged. *HAMR* has only a short selection of 'National Hymns', and perhaps is the least successful of the three in this respect. *BBCHB* meets the need more fully in the sections on 'Christian Life and Duty—Towards Man', and *CP* has a group of 51 hymns 'Social and National'. In these there are some valuable new hymns, but there is still need for more pieces dealing with this subject.

As to the music, in all the books there is a blend of old and new, and an attempt has been made to choose the best of both. *BBCHB* and *HAMR* both contain many plainsong tunes, mostly to the Office Hymns, usually providing an alternative tune. The latter prints the plainsong more clearly, with the words between the lines of music. *CP* does not give any plainsong, not even to 'Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle'. All draw largely on the dignified French Church tunes and the Psalters. There are many modern tunes, some being quite dignified, others perhaps not so happy—but time will prove to be the final judge.

The price of the musical editions is of importance. When published, *HAMR* was 9/6, *BBCHB* 12/6, and *CP* is 18/6. The price of the last, even with its 1036 pages, may well tend to limit the sales. Indeed the rapidly increasing costs of publishing may become an argument for reduction in the size of hymn-books.

These books are all excellent in format and attractive in appearance, *CP* being particularly so. But it is the contents that are of greatest importance, and we have here a great wealth of splendid material for the praise of God. These will undoubtedly exercise considerable influence on the future of hymnody, and we must be grateful for the patient and devoted labours expended upon them, and must believe that by them the devotional life of the Church will be deepened and enriched.

JOHN A. LAMB.