

relationship among religions. While in the main his treatment of the topic has been clear, portions of his discussion could be more lucid (and some parts did not appear pertinent). The last two chapters, dealing with "Sensitivity to Varying Rates of Relatability" and "Mutual Openness to Change," were not as clear as the others.

Moreover, it was not clear how he would deal with the question of whether Indians should have both a red Christianity and a red folk religion. The same question applies also to the blacks and to any other ethnic group. Is there no historical individuality for red or black religion as such? Does shared conversion ever lead to conversion to Christianity or only to an improved red religion?

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Routley, Erik. *Exploring the Psalms*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975. 172 pp. Paperback, \$3.25.

Though not intended for scholars, this book puts the results of sound scholarship to work for the layman. On scholarly points the author is usually "safe," having consulted the commentaries of Weiser (1962), Oesterley (1955), and Briggs (1907), but it was his own experience as Lecturer in Church History, Director of Music, and Chaplain to students at Mansfield College, Oxford, and pastor of churches in England and Scotland, that qualified him "to introduce a reader to the psalms as a basis for his devotions and as a door through which he will come to a special kind of understanding of the Old Testament and of our Lord's teaching" (p. 9). The book begins with a thirty-three-page essay, "The Leading Thoughts of the Psalmists," which gives the background of the psalms in OT history (questions of authorship and dating are dealt with only in a general way, assigning most psalms to four "great historic moments" in Israel's history: the exodus, the combined reigns of David and Solomon, and the crises of 722 and 586 B.C.), delineates the main themes dealt with by the psalmists (e.g., God, creation, mankind, covenant, history, worship, life), and stresses the present (Christian) application of these themes. More satisfying and valuable are the following thirteen chapters which form the heart of the book. These chapters (which were originally published in *Crossroads* where they were associated with the thirteen Sundays from Palm Sunday to Trinity III) consist of brief expositions of selected psalms and their salient points gathered around the themes of suffering, victory, covenant, praise, pilgrimage, royalty, nature, care, the city, faith, life's stress, wisdom, and character. Out of the Psalter's 150 psalms, 95 (not 93 as stated on p. 10) are dealt with in this manner, though passing references are made to 17 more. Though most of the familiar and more important psalms are discussed, among those omitted altogether are Psalms 18, 45, 89, and 92. The volume concludes with a practical five-page epilogue, "On Using the Psalms in Worship," and an index of psalms studied.

Routley handles well such problems as sacrifice (pp. 32, 33), imprecation (pp. 49, 68, 69, 144), NT Messianic usage (pp. 51, 112), conceptual borrowing (p. 103), and textual criticism when it takes away a traditional reading (pp. 95, 102). He makes understandable such Hebrew concepts as *Sheol* (pp. 34, 35), the relationship of history to life ("History underpins faith,

faith moves into life, and life in Christ teaches love," p. 55), praise ("... it is not the cheers of a brainwashed, hero-addicted crowd. It is the expression of the joy of a person who knows what redemption is," pp. 76, 77), atonement ("The primitive way was to throw earth over the blood. God's way is to throw love over the sin," p. 77), nature (pp. 101, 102, 108), and wisdom ("... the man who neither thinks so 'spiritually' as to be unrealistic nor is so committed to worldly values as to ignore the rebuke that faith offers to those values," p. 146). Particularly good are his treatments of Pss 22 (and its relationship to both Job and Jesus), 50, 113-118 (the "Hallel"), and 120-134 (the "Songs of Ascent"). Many original insights are offered. Though the Psalter has often been compared to a modern hymnal, Routley's comparison is fresh. His suggestion that the last verse of Pss 41, 72, 89, and 106 probably means no more "than that particular psalm stood at the end of the collection from which it came" (p. 15) is interesting.

On the scholarly level, one might argue with such notions as "*selah*" being a pause for an instrumental interlude (p. 16), dating *any* psalm (or, indeed, even their superscriptions—given the LXX's difficulty in translating them) as late as the Maccabean Age (pp. 26, 75), or the negative view on Davidic authorship ("it is conceivable that one or two of them were," p. 26). From the standpoint of faith and history, one could argue with a view that explains *all* of the exodus events naturalistically (p. 23) or considers Solomon's visit from the Queen of Sheba to be a "symbolic tale" (p. 24). While not wanting to deny the "advanced light" of the NT, some would still not speak of "the difference between what Christianity accepts and what it rejects in the thought of the psalms and indeed of the Old Testament" (p. 28).

Naturally, there cannot be unanimity on matters of interpretation. For instance, this reviewer sees the phenomenon present in the Phoenician votive stelae which combines an acknowledgement of thanks with a thank offering as closer to the background of Ps 116:13 than "the cup of bitterness" of an ordeal (p. 57), and the ancient Near Eastern conception of the council of the gods as a better background to Ps 82 than idolatry (p. 130). The author misses the point of "Lift up your heads, O ye gates" (p. 110) by ignoring the Ugaritic and Canaanite parallels. This reviewer doubts that theoretical atheism can be found in Hebrew thought (p. 147) or that "disembodied spirits" (p. 150) is a Hebrew concept.

A few mistakes may be noted: There were four kings after Josiah, not two (p. 91); the Kadesh of Ps 29 is Syrian Kadesh, not the Sinai Kadesh (p. 104); Jerusalem's artificial aqueduct is *not* referred to in John 5:2 (p. 121). Furthermore, it is confusing to speak of Herod's temple as "the third" (p. 105) when common usage refers to it as the second. On p. 33 the author writes of "seven subsections" of songs about the life of faith, yet appears to discuss in the succeeding pages only four. No typographical errors were noted.

In a book whose approach is as general and schematic as this one is, one could always quarrel with omissions, emphases, etc., but that would be unfair to its strengths. Its conception and execution are good and in comparison to similar books on the market, and in spite of the minor problems noted above, it is to be recommended highly for devotional study—both private and in groups.