

BOOK REVIEWS

If Man Is to Live, by Beverly Madison Currin. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 174 pages. \$3.50.

The author, rector of Christ Episcopal Church, Pensacola, Florida, previously served as Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. Luke and St. Paul in Charleston, South Carolina. He received his Doctor of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia.

It is Dr. Currin's thesis that an understanding of the Atonement is the very heart of Christianity. His firm restatement of this distinctive doctrine of the Christian faith opens the way to a new and wider perspective on the meaning of the death of Jesus Christ.

In the Prologue the author declares that the Crucifixion was not a bad thing which happened to a good man; it was the actual event through which God transformed the world and through which He is able to transform the entire universe.

The author gives a three-dimensional approach to the subject. He looks first at the actual event of the Crucifixion as recorded in the Scriptures and deals with such questions as: Did Jesus have to die? What caused Jesus' death? Part Two, a study of the interpretation Paul placed on the Crucifixion, describes the reality of the event as causative in the transforming spiritual experiences of that apostle. The author furnishes a convincing discussion of the fact that for Paul the Crucifixion of Christ was the event through which God effected deliverance for man—deliverance from sin and deliverance to life. An illuminating discussion of the effects of the Atonement is presented through a word study: "redemption" speaks of an enslaved man set free; "justification," of a guilty man acquitted; "reconciliation," of an alienated child restored to parental favor.

The final part of the book applies the Crucifixion and Resurrection to the individual life. Two questions are faced frankly: Why be a Christian? What can Christ do for me? The answer is to be found in the transforming power of Christ in one's life, the creation of "the colony of heaven" on earth, and in the sharing in the resurrection power. The book closes with an insistent appeal. The Crucifixion must be spiritually experienced if the resurrection is to be experienced. The purpose of life

is not death, but resurrection. It is time for Christians to begin living as resurrected Christians. The best place to begin is where we are, and the best time to begin is now!

In this age of so-called “secular theology,” here is a refreshing book for those who are convinced of the validity of divine revelation and who believe increasingly in a Christo-centric soteriology.

Frank Bateman Stanger

Exposition of Isaiah (Vol. I), by H. C. Leupold. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968. 598 pages. \$7.95.

Presented as “a practical commentary that stresses the abiding values of this rich prophetic work,” Leupold’s exposition is a verse-by-verse treatment of Isaiah 1–39. The brief introduction deals, in a rather cursory manner, with the historical background, the personality of the prophet and critical opinion on the history of the text. Leupold is aware of these issues, but, as a conservative, evangelical scholar, he views the critics and their theories critically. He observes, for instance, with considerable justification, that the form-critics usually pay more attention to form than to content. But his handling of critical issues sometimes leaves the reader wondering whether Leupold has dealt adequately with the problems.

A detailed analytical outline of the book of Isaiah (1–39), reflects the author’s grasp of Isaiah’s structure and content. This outline, distributed throughout the exposition, enables the reader to keep perspective by relating the part to the whole. The author’s translation of the Isaiah text is careful and often illuminating, usually reflecting a good understanding of the Hebrew and sound judgment in deciding among alternative renderings. His exegesis of Isaiah 7:14, for example, reflects an adequate grasp of the problems and avoids over-simplification. With good reason he advises restoring “virgin” to the text and “young woman” to the margin. Sometimes the author is content to quote the opinions of several scholars and then make his own decision, rather than to conduct an independent investigation from primary sources. Seldom does Leupold permit himself to indulge in speculations about the fulfillment of eschatological passages; some readers may be disappointed that the relevance of passages is not explored more thoroughly, either in the *exposition* itself or in the *notes* appended to each section.

In general, this is a very serviceable commentary. It lacks the imagination of a G. A. Smith, the linguistic precision of a Delitzsch, or the meticulous detail of an Edward Young; but it does combine erudition, evangelical insight and sound judgment. It may be used with profit by the critical scholar and consulted with confidence by the evangelical in his quest for a better understanding of the message of the "prince of the prophets."

George A. Turner

The Zondervan Topical Bible, edited by Eduard Viening. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969. 1114 pages. \$9.95.

In this "summary of the Holy Scriptures" the content of the Bible follows a topical rather than an alphabetical arrangement. For instance, more than three closely-knit double-column pages, devoted to the topic "man", gather appropriate Scripture verses under such sub-headings as these: Duty of, Equality of, Ignorance of, State of (after the fall). Where practicable, major topics are thus subdivided. In all, there are 21,000 topics and sub-topics with more than 100,000 Scripture verses including their references, the whole carefully cross-referenced. The work is not only a topical reference Bible but it includes also definitions or summary treatments of all persons, places, and events in the Bible. The chain references enable the student to pursue a given subject throughout the entire Bible, and the significant texts are printed in full. It is the hope of the publishers that this reference volume will stimulate interest in the study of the Bible. "The need for biblical preaching has never been more urgent—this and future generations need to hear God's word speaking to the great issues of our time" (Preface).

James D. Robertson

Learning to Live, by Walter Russell Bowie. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 299 pages. \$4.95.

This is a beautifully written, intensely interesting autobiography of one of America's prominent churchmen, whose active ministry spanned

most of the first seven decades of the twentieth century. Walter Russell Bowie has had a manifold and versatile Christian ministry as pastor, editor, theological school professor, and author.

When does a person have the right to publish an autobiography? The author faces this question frankly at the beginning of the book. His answer provides the underlying motif of the entire volume: "if the book can open out upon scenes and people and the crowded drama of our human relationships which go beyond a mere personal story." This is the personal story of how Walter Russell Bowie learned to live. (He confesses with William James that at the end of his life he is "just beginning to be fit to live.")

The author learned to live through "the influences from many other lives which have flowed into him." Over and over he asserts that "the relationships which any of us have had with those we know and love are what make life meaningful at last." Throughout the book he speaks of the influence of loved ones, and particularly his wife, of teachers, parishioners, ministerial colleagues, academic colleagues, and the great minds of all the centuries.

He learned to live through his education, which he prized deeply. He learned to live through a total dedication to his God-given tasks. He learned to live through his involvement with people and society. He learned to live through the great Christian affirmations. The closing chapter of the book is a presentation of "the things I am sure of."

For the Christian this is an inspiring narrative of a fellow Christian's pilgrimage with God through life. For the minister this is a book filled with meaningful insights out of the heart and experience of a fellow minister. For the prophet of social action, here is the story of one who combined social yearnings with "the enthusiasm for old-fashioned Christian religion." For the historian, here is a valuable interpretation of an important period in the history of Christian Churches in the United States. Altogether this is a fascinating and uplifting autobiography.

Frank Bateman Stanger

The Wind of the Spirit, by James S. Stewart. Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1969. 191 pages. \$3.75.

This remarkable volume has already been printed more than once in the British Isles (Hodder and Stoughton), and will no doubt go through

many impressions in the course of its career. *The Wind of the Spirit* is a masterpiece of authentic spirituality and homiletical genius.

Here are some of this reader's impressions:

Stewart's sermons reflect his familiarity with all forms of classic English literature.

They are highly inspiring because highly divine in content. They make wide use of adjectives—a practice risky for most writers, but indispensable to the Stewart style.

In them the Gospel is alive, relevant, and contemporary.

Victory over suffering is the great theme of all Stewart's sermons. Victory is demonstrated beyond question in Christ. Stewart believes in realistic supernatural resources. These only can keep us in this terribly wicked world—keep us encouraged, strengthened, and morally right.

Homiletically, the sermons are masterpieces of organization and construction. Introductions paint realistic pictures of man's dilemma; bodies of sermons point out Gospel answers to man's dilemma; conclusions lift one above the dilemma.

Stewart's sensitivity to the world movement of the Holy Spirit is a major feature in making this book the value that it is. See for example the closing sermon on "What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches," He is saying things radical and revolutionary, things utterly in the spirit of the New Testament.

Altogether there is not a finer book of addresses to be found in the current list of sermon books.

Donald E. Demaray

Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict, by A. J. Arberry, General Editor. (Vol. I. Judaism and Christianity) Cambridge: University Press, 1969. 596 pages. \$22.50.

A substantial volume on an important subject in an important area of the world, is this book in which thirteen authors contribute thirteen chapters. Four of the chapters are devoted to Judaism in the Middle East, and the remainder to Christianity. Two chapters deal with Judaism as it is today, both in the world at large and in Israel, and two chapters deal with Oriental Judaism, with a special emphasis upon the Jews of Yemen.

After a survey of Christianity in the Middle East, during the first eighteen centuries, chapters deal specifically with the Orthodox, the

Roman Catholics, the Copts, the Ethiopian churches, plus surveys of the Syrian, Armenian, and Assyrian churches of the Middle East. Two concluding chapters deal with the Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican churches. Pictures and maps add interest and information to the volume. Most of the chapters are dealt with in a matter-of-fact way, giving considerable detail but with a minimum of documentation and footnotes. Although much research is packed into these pages, the authors gained perspective by the judicious handling of the details.

The chief value of this volume is not mainly an assessment of current issues in the Middle East: most of the essays were written before the convulsions of 1967. The value of the book rather is the historical perspective with which existing situations can be viewed.

The history of religion in the Middle East, at least for the last sixteen centuries, is not a happy one. This is particularly true of Christianity, which has been all but eclipsed in most of these areas by the Moslem conquest. Until recently, the history of Judaism has fared even worse. At the present day, even Islam as a world religion is not flourishing in the Middle East. Among the more informative chapters is the one dealing with the Armenian church. The Turks engaged in wholesale genocide of the Armenian nation. The 100,000 survivors remain scattered. The Nestorians of Mesopotamia are even more widely scattered than the Armenians. A somber and melancholy note characterizes even the last chapter, an essay on the Anglican church. It has been so linked with British nationalism that its hold today on the inhabitants of the area is very tenuous.

One striking fact emerges from the study of these different religious communities of the area. All of them seem to have in common a link between church and state. None of them practice a separation of church and state; consequently national rivalries become for the same reason church rivalries. Wars tend to become holy wars. Only Christian missions are in a position to transcend national rivalries and present the claims of Christ without regard for national interests. But even here the newer mission churches encounter indifference or hostility from both Jew and Moslem. Practically the only converts won by the younger missionary churches are from the ranks of the Armenians and the Greek Orthodox. This subject is scarcely dealt with, however, in any of these chapters. Instead they are preoccupied with the problems of history and the posture of the older churches. For those seriously interested in the Holy Land, as the tortured home of three religions, this work of reference is well nigh indispensable.

George Allen Turner

What God Hath Wrought, by Lawrence M. Brings. Minneapolis: T. S. Denison and Co., 1969. 191 pages. \$3.95.

Central Lutheran Church began fifty years ago with twelve men. In 1919 these men and their families rented Central Baptist Church building in the loop of Minneapolis. They hired a minister and launched a \$7,000 budget.

In 1969 this active church has about 6,000 members, a budget of over \$600,000, and dreams of a Central City concept to serve even more effectively in future years. A flexible, changing, serving structure has marked this thriving church. Plans call for a six-block development around the original church structure. Camps on Lake-of-the-Woods and Lake Superior implement the urban ministry.

Preaching to a procession of transients, displaced persons, non-members, floaters, poor, and disillusioned people has called for more than mere words. Pastoral service has focused on non-members. Sometimes visitors comprise nearly half of the congregation.

“Service to Others” has been the motto during these five decades. Hundreds of organizations have served their day. The cost of church suppers has escalated from 35 cents during the hard years of the depression to \$6 for the Fiftieth Anniversary Banquet.

This book is primarily local history of local people in a local church. But the struggle, the faith, the dedication, the adaptation, and the blessing of God—all these are more than local color, more than local interest.

God is at work where His Church seeks above all else to serve the present age.

Ralph L. Lewis

The Missionary Between the Times, by R. Pierce Beaver. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968. 196 pages. \$5.95.

In recent years, R. Pierce Beaver, Professor of Missions at the University of Chicago Divinity School, has written a number of books on various aspects of the Christian world mission. *The Missionary Between the Times* is the latest, and in many ways the best, contribution he has made in the field.

The author deals with a variety of subjects relating to the missionary task of the Church: the theological imperative of mission,

the nature of the missionary vocation, the hostile environment of modern mission, the frustrations of the missionary and his wife, the nature of dialogue in mission, the importance of indiginity in the young churches, the missionary message, methods of communicating the Gospel, and the relationship of the missionary to the home church.

As the title of the book suggests, Dr. Beaver firmly believes that the missionary of today "stands between the times The ambassador of the gospel now stands between the age of the separate histories of peoples and regions, on the one hand, and of world history, on the other." The world is now one; the mission is one. This is the main reason why the missionary and the Church are facing perplexities, baffling problems, and frustrations. "But this is also why the Christian world mission is now so exciting and full of promise and opportunity."

The reader is impressed by the realistic way in which the author faces the perplexities and frustrations of the present missionary situation. He faces them honestly and courageously, and comes out with a contagious spirit of confidence and optimism. He makes many constructive suggestions to help the missionary become an effective witness to Christ.

Written in a lucid, interesting style, *The Missionary Between the Times* can be read with considerable profit, not only by the full-time career missionary, but by the layman of the Church, for God is calling him to involvement in world-wide mission.

John T. Seamands

Beacon Bible Commentary: Genesis Through Deuteronomy, edited by A. F. Harper. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1969. 630 pages. \$6.95.

This is Volume I of the ten-volume Beacon Bible Commentary. Genesis is treated by G. H. Livingston, of Asbury Theological Seminary; Exodus, by Leo Cox, of Marion College; Leviticus, by President Dennis F. Kinlaw, of Asbury College; Numbers, by L. J. DuBois, of Northwest Nazarene College; and Deuteronomy, by two British authors, Jack Ford and A. R. G. Deasley, both of British Isles Nazarene College, Manchester. All are mature and respected scholars.

The commentary is slanted especially toward the pastor and Sunday school teacher. After an introduction and analytical outline of each book of the Pentateuch, a running commentary on the King James text follows, concluding with a bibliography which includes commentaries, supplemental studies and articles. The text of the Bible is not included except for

the portions being explained. Footnotes often direct the reader to reference sources for further research.

The viewpoint of the contributors is Wesleyan-Arminian. Their prime concern, however, is explaining the Scriptures rather than inculcating a certain creed. Exegetical difficulties are not evaded (e.g., Gen. 6:1-8; Lev. 16; Deut. 24:16) but are dealt with in an informed and a responsible manner. With preachers and teachers in mind, homiletical hints and outlines are included. This volume serves well its stated purpose.

George A. Turner

Existentialism and the New Christianity, by Harry W. Barnitz. New York: Philosophical Library, 1969. 509 pages. \$10.00

This volume is basically an attempt to show the affinity which the existential approach has for the follower of Emanuel Swedenborg—the member of the “New Church” Society. As such, it has but a limited interest for the average reader, since its apologetic base is distinctly parochial.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that some of the analyses of the themes of Existentialism are keen and have value for themselves, apart from the author’s relation of them to Swedenborg’s doctrines. It has thus value as an occasional reference for the one who traces existential theses in the thought of our time.

Harold B. Kuhn

The Broadman Bible Commentary, edited by C. J. Allen. Vol. I. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1969. 472 pages. \$7.50.

The volume is the first of a twelve-volume commentary on the entire Bible, the set to be produced by the Southern Baptists and Broadman Press. Working with the general editor are J. I. Durham, R. L. Honeycutt Jr., J. W. MacGorman, Frank Stagg, W. J. Fallis, J. F. Green and H. P. Colson, several of whom are seminary professors.

This volume is a commentary on Genesis by G. H. Davies and on Exodus by R. L. Honeycutt Jr., respectively. In addition there are general

articles on translation, interpretation, geography, archaeology, Old Testament history and theology, and a chapter on "Contemporary Approaches in Old Testament Study."

The set aims at a balance between exegesis and exposition and, in this volume at least, succeeds. The general treatment of these two Bible books measures up to the editorial aim of avoiding "current theological fads and changing theories" but concerns itself instead "with the deep realities of God's dealings with men." The writers, aware of critical theories concerning biblical scholarships, seek to avoid most technical terms and foreign phrases (*Sitz im Leben*). They use English translations instead. In general the scholars adopt a mediating position with a conservative slant, veering somewhat from the typical fundamentalist approach. For instance, the creation of mankind is attributed to the creative word of God, but it is not indicated whether or not Adam is a specific individual. The discerning reader learns that the author(s) accept the critical positions of men like Driver and von Rad but are reluctant to challenge a literal interpretation of the accounts. The reader without prior knowledge of "higher criticism" can read most of the commentary without suspecting that the historicity of the accounts is often doubted by the authors. This is done by viewing the accounts as stories in which theological interests outweigh the historical and scientific.

Among the commendable features of this volume are the selected bibliographies at the end of each chapter. The general format is effective: the Bible text is given (RSV) in sections and the commentary which follows reflects an adequate acquaintance with the Hebrew text (transliterated), an alertness to contemporary scholarship, and a constructive interpretation and application of the text.

For those looking for an up-to-date, informed, middle-of-the-road commentary, this one has much to commend it.

George A. Turner

Preaching in American History, by De Witte Holland, Editor. Nashville: Abingdon, 1969. 436 pages. \$8.95.

This enlightening volume describes the variable role of American preaching (1693-1967) as it has interacted with the forces of history in helping shape both church and society. Under the editorship of Dr. De Witte Holland of Temple University, the book comprises a series of essays by twenty contributors representing a variety of vocations and

theological backgrounds, each essay dealing with major pulpit issues of the respective periods. Chapter titles are indicative of the broad scope of the text: "Civil War Preaching," "The Rise of Unitarianism," "Preaching on Slavery," "The Social Gospel," "Preaching on War and Peace," "Neo-Orthodoxy and the American Pulpit," "The Ecumenical Movement," "The Radical Right," "Race Relations," and "The Challenge of the Secular." The whole furnishes an illuminating perspective on the singular, often turbulent, role of the American pulpit in the life of the nation.

Historically, sermon themes in the American churches fall roughly into several categories. Among them is a primary concern with the Word of God, an emphasis crossing all denominational lines; concern with a vital personal experience of salvation; enthusiasm for correct doctrine (which bred all kinds of schisms and sectarian splits); concern with personal morality and public order; and involvement in contemporary issues of general controversy (see pp. 29-30).

In some instances, an author's treatment of an issue will seem to reflect his own particular theological bias. Yet in following the discussions of these controversial matters that across the years confronted the American pulpit, one cannot but emerge sharpened in the art of polemic theology.

In an introductory chapter, Harold A. Bosley gives no place to those who decry the relevance of preaching in the contemporary world: "The fact of preaching and the administration of the sacraments is constant and will last as long as the church does, and that is as long as the gospel is to be preached. 'With preaching, Christianity stands or falls' " (p. 34). An extensive bibliography adds significance to the value of the book.

James D. Robertson