

Book Reviews

James D. Robertson, Ph.D., Book Review Editor

Baker's Dictionary of Theology, by E. F. Harrison, et al. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960. 566 pages. \$8.95.

Here, in 874 articles, conservative writers define Biblical terms of theological and ecclesiastical significance, including those terms peculiar to the theology of our time. The editor-in-chief, Dr. E. F. Harrison, is professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. His associate is Dr. G. W. Bromiley, formerly rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Edinburgh, and more recently, professor of Church History at Fuller. Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, editor of *Christianity Today*, served as consulting editor of the work. The 138 contributors, comprised of men from countries all over the world, are noted for their sound evangelical thought and unswerving loyalty to the Word of God. The serious-minded student will find in this compact volume a valuable fund of information on "Dead Sea Scrolls," "Neo-orthodoxy," "New Testament Criticism," "Christian Year," "Biblical Interpretation," and a host of other topics. The articles are geared particularly toward acquainting the reader with the tension points in theological discussion today.

James D. Robertson

The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching, by Robert H. Mounce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960. 168 pages. \$3.50.

This book has to do with the *kerygma*--the proclamation of the Gospel which the first ambassadors of Christ preached to the world of their day. It makes clear what that proclamation was, and shows how it runs through all the New Testament. Among chapter headings are these: The Preaching of Jesus and the Twelve, Preaching in the Early Church, The Apostolic Proclamation, Clues to a pre-Pauline Kerygma,

and Questioning the Origins of the Primitive Proclamation. A final chapter gathers together the significant findings on the question, "What has true Christian preaching ever been?"

Preaching, it is asserted, is Revelation. It is nothing less than the self-disclosure of God Himself, who revealed Himself in redemptive activity which reached its climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and whose historic self-disclosure, transcending the barriers of time, is an ever-present reality. The preacher is the mediator of God to man. "As he speaks, somehow his words become the Divine Words" (p. 7). It is this reviewer's conviction that the contemporary pulpit needs a generous inoculation of this truth, earlier expressed by P. T. Forsyth, that "Revelation is the self-bestowal of the living God...God in the act of imparting Himself to living souls" (*Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, p. 10). But this Revelation cannot take place in a vacuum. It is incomplete without the response of faith. Preaching, then, is "the medium through which God contemporizes His historic self-disclosure and offers man the opportunity to respond in faith" (p. 153). Without preaching, God's mighty acts remain historic. Preaching contemporizes the past and moves man to response in faith. How this is done defies explanation. Mounce sees preaching not as an adjunct to the saving activity of God in Christ. It is, rather, a part of that activity itself. "The proclamation of the Cross is itself the continuance, or extension in time, of that very redemptive act" (pp. 153, 154). Since in revelation it is God Himself who is communicated and not just information about Him, preaching in a real sense is sacramental. It mediates the presence of God. In the end, the ultimate test of the genuineness of preaching is, Does it actually convey the saving action of God? Unless this happens, the sermon is not preaching.

James D. Robertson

Backgrounds to Dispensationalism, by Clarence B. Bass. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960. 184 pages. \$3.50.

In this book, Professor Clarence B. Bass of Bethel Theological Seminary offers a critique of dispensationalism in its historical setting. In a brief biographical note in the "Introduction" the author states that he "was reared in the dispen-

sational system" (p. 9), that throughout his college and seminary career he was under the impression that dispensationalism and premillennialism were synonymous. It was during a doctoral program that he began to see clearly the basic hermeneutical pattern of interpretation in dispensationalism which he now regards as broadly divergent from that of the historic faith. This volume is an outgrowth of his intensive and exhaustive research into primary and secondary sources upon the subject.

The author states that his purpose "is not to construct a case against dispensationalism, but dispassionately and objectively to seek to determine the historical genesis of this system of thought, which has had such an effect upon the church, and to analyze its implications for contemporary church life" (p. 8). He writes especially that the pastor-dispensationalist might better understand the system. In so doing, however, he declares forcefully his reasons for rejecting the dispensationalist's interpretation.

In pursuing his task, Professor Bass first sets forth the distinguishing features of dispensationalism while at the same time pointing out the ways in which the system departs from the views that have characterized historic premillennialism. He then traces the development of the thought and practice of John Nelson Darby through the rise of the Plymouth Brethren movement, giving special attention to Darby's doctrines of the church and eschatology. It was Darby, a rather controversial religious leader in England during the nineteenth century, who formulated the main features of dispensationalism. As a system of Biblical interpretation patterned after Darby's thought, dispensationalism was extensively popularized by the Scofield Bible.

Bass regards the basic features of dispensationalism as being rooted in its hermeneutical principle of interpretation, in a chronology of events which it has devised, and in a tendency to be separatistic in spirit and practice (pp. 18, 19).

While favoring the literal interpretation of the Bible, Bass rejects the rigid application of an exact literal interpretation of dispensationalists which involves them in some extreme views. "Logically carried out, this principle involves the dispensationalist in these extremes: all Israel (presumably every Israelite) will be saved; the boundaries of the land given in the promise to Abraham will literally be restored during

the millennium; Christ will return to a literal, theocratic, political kingdom on earth with a government patterned after existing national governments, with David as his regent; Christ will sit on a physical throne in the city of Jerusalem, in the state of Israel; the beast, Antichrist, and other persons mentioned in Revelation, will literally appear; a city will actually descend from heaven, in which God will have an eternal throne, and from which will flow the river of life--all of which are inherent in the system of contemporary dispensationalism" (pp. 150, 151). Such a system of hermeneutics which insists that *all* prophecy must be interpreted with absolute literalism is committed to forced exegesis, says the author.

The most profound implication of dispensationalism for Bass is in its tendency to separatism. "The sum total of all its doctrines tends to make it a separatist, withdrawn, inclusive theology" (p. 153). It is the author's conclusion that "any theological system which causes a part of the church to withdraw from the larger fellowship in Christ and, by isolationism and separatism, to default its role, is wrong" (p. 154). The result is to default in the church's responsibility to the culture in which it finds itself. "The mission of the church to the world is to reflect the ethics and ideals of Jesus, through personal salvation, into the culture of society so that that culture may be changed" (p. 148). While the author's conclusion states a proper generalization as a warning against a too hasty and too easy fragmentation in the church, it would have been well to observe that there have been times in the history of the church when, through great burden and travail of spirit, conscientious men have had to conclude that it was better to be divided by truth than to be united by error. Martin Luther and the Reformation are historical witnesses to this fact.

One of the helpful features of this book is a very comprehensive and carefully classified bibliography, covering pages 159 to 177. The book is a valuable contribution in the area of eschatological studies. It will serve as a healthful corrective in contemporary theological thought, particularly in conservatism.

William M. Arnett

and Brothers, 1960. xii plus 178 pages. \$3.50.

This book, by a professor in Biblical Seminary in New York, is something of a companion volume to E. A. Nida's *God's Word in Man's Language* (Harper, 1952). Whereas Nida's book dealt with translation of the Bible into many languages, Beegle deals specifically with translation of the Bible into English.

Help in answering many questions concerning English translations of the Bible will be found here. The author deals with the question of the ancient Greek and Hebrew manuscripts upon which our knowledge of the Bible is based, and why new English translations must be made from time to time. With regard to the latter point, Beegle deals with changes which the English language has undergone, more accurate meanings which have been found for Greek and Hebrew Biblical words, the problem of two or more possible meanings for a word, differences in the ancient manuscripts, and matters of style and accuracy in translating. He also discusses the use of forms such as "thou" for "you," the use of italics in the King James and some other versions, the sacred name "Jehovah," and other matters involved in the English Bible. Eight pages of significant photographs add to the informative value of this work.

It is worth emphasizing that Dr. Beegle has written his book primarily for people with no professional training in the matters which the book discusses. As such, it should fill a very helpful place in enabling ordinary people to understand the background of the Bible, which after all is a Greek and Hebrew book, our English versions being only rather recent translations.

J. Harold Greenlee

Billy Graham, *Revivalist in A Secular Age*, by William G. McLoughlin, Jr. New York: The Ronald Press, 1960. 270 pages. \$4.50.

It has always been difficult to view revivalism, that distinctly American religious phenomenon, with objectivity. Since the first Great Awakening most people are either in harmony with or hostile to mass evangelism. It is likewise difficult to be objective in appraising the evangelist himself.

Nevertheless, this author seriously attempts to handle his subject with objectivity, and in so doing succeeds better than most men. The author is professor of history and American civilization at Brown University. A graduate of Princeton University, and a Ph.D. from Harvard, he spent a year as a Fulbright scholar, gathering material on the Moody and Sankey revivals. He has to his credit two other historical studies of American evangelists (*Modern Revivalism* and *Billy Sunday*).

The author's main purpose is to place Billy Graham in the historical perspective of American revivals and revivalists. A secondary aim is the evaluation of Graham's message and influence in contemporary culture. As may be expected, his approach is historical and sociological. His study reflects thoroughness in the discovery and use of primary source material. Seldom is his personal involvement or rapport indicated.

The book's opening chapters detail the early background of Billy Graham to the year 1949 when he made national headlines at the Los Angeles tent meeting. Then the great campaigns of the fifties are described and analyzed. The Graham Evangelistic Association began at Minneapolis with one secretary in a one-room office in the fall of 1950. Eight years later it had a staff of two hundred, a four-story office building, electronic business machines, answered 10,000 letters weekly and had 1,250,000 on its mailing list with each staff-member a "dedicated, born-again fundamentalist," a full partner in the "team."

The author believes that Billy Graham reached the pinnacle of his career in 1958 (the New York Crusade) he predicts that for the next twenty years Graham will be busy but less sensational than during the past decade. He is convinced of Graham's sincerity and of the effectiveness of his campaigns. He is less than enthusiastic about the long-range results of the meetings, although cognizant of the effective follow-up procedures. In his estimate of Billy Graham's work he reaches these conclusions: (1) Graham is the "spokesman for the pietistic movement which is challenging the old Protestant church system" and which centers in the National Association of Evangelicals. (2) Graham is also now a spokesman for organized Protestantism which, the author surmises, may effect a working (not a theological) alliance among neofundamentalism, neomodernism, and neo-orthodoxy. (3) Graham

appeals to the comfortable middle-classes of America by urging them to repent and reaffirm their Protestant heritage.

(4) Graham has become the best-known Protestant leader of the world, "a catalyst of theological and ecclesiastical change rather than...a prime mover."

The author is most critical of Billy Graham in the sphere of social relations. Like Reinhold Niebuhr he finds the evangelist too naive in the matter of the application of the Gospel. Graham, he says, knows of no sin which is social in origin and which needs more than individual repentance and reformation to correct. Consequently, the social implications of the Gospel for Graham are limited to charity and efforts in evangelism. Although a titular Democrat, Billy Graham has been in sympathy with Republican ideals and policies much more than with the New Deal Democrats. Author McLoughlin thinks this natural for an evangelical Christian.

Although the author considers himself objective he can hardly be classed as an admirer of Billy Graham or his message. His purpose, however, is to understand Graham rather than debunk him. His study does much to clarify the evangelist in relation to his time. But it betrays a thinly-veiled disparagement of the evangelist's capacity to provide lasting leadership. The reporting is so thorough, however, that the book will be read with interest and profit by critics and admirers alike.

George A. Turner

The Biblical Expositor, *The Living Theme of the Great Book*. 3 Vols. Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, Consulting Editor. Philadelphia: Holman, 1960. \$6.95 each volume.

During the past decade a half-dozen different commentaries on the Bible have appeared, perhaps more than in the five decades previously. This three-volume work is not really a commentary but a running exposition of the Bible books. It is unique in that its contributors are a representative cross-section of evangelical scholarship, both Reformed and Arminian, non-denominational and international in scope. Each book is treated by a different author. Consistency of form is achieved in that each Bible book is prepared by an analytical

outline which governs the treatment of its exposition. The exposition is based upon the natural segments of the Bible books rather than upon chapters; this makes possible the handling of a large amount of Biblical material in a survey fashion, yet gives coherence and perspective. The reader thus senses the movement and unity of the Bible.

The careful reader will note with appreciation that years of devout study and effective teaching often lie behind insights packed into one terse yet readable paragraph. The conservative reader can consult it in the confidence that it represents, for the most part at least, not an uncritical "biblicism" nor an irresponsible "liberal" tendency, but solid scholarship plus spiritual insight.

For an explanation, however, of "problem passages" the reader will have to depend on the standard commentaries. Indeed, in some instances the exposition is little more than a re-telling of the Biblical narrative. Even in such chapters, however, the reader's interest is sustained, not only by the fidelity to the Biblical material, but also by the occasional flashes of perceptive interpretation or the perspective of a seasoned evangelical scholar.

George A. Turner

Between the Testaments, by Charles F. Pfeiffer. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959. 132 pages. \$2.95.

This is an excellent historical survey of the Persian and Hellenistic periods, dating from the middle of the sixth century B. C. to the death of Herod the Great in 4 B. C. It deals briefly with the close of the Babylonian empire and the beginning of the Roman empire. Two concluding chapters treat "The Origin of Jewish Sects" and the "Rise of the Apocalyptic Literature."

The book is well written and tends to cover the historical scene with broad strokes, yet at the same time giving a clear picture of the movement of events which took place between the Old and the New Testaments. The material is readable and is of such character that the average Bible student can understand and enjoy its significance.

The author is conservative in his dating of Biblical books and persons as they relate to the events which occurred during

this time span. The people involved are Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah. Non-conservative interpretations of how Biblical books are related to the inter-testamental events are not described or alluded to. It is a straightforward conservative presentation without an analysis of alternative views, though the author is no doubt capable of making such an analysis.

G. Herbert Livingston

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, by Ralph P. Martin. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959. 186 pages. \$3.00.

This book is volume 11 of the Tyndale Bible Commentaries, of which R. V. G. Tasker is general editor. In keeping with the general policy of the series, the author has avoided the "extremes of being unduly technical or unhelpfully brief." There is a good introduction of sufficient proportion to answer the important critical questions. In the main body the emphasis is on the exegetical, not the homiletical. The comments are an elaboration of an analytical outline that has first been presented.

Martin studied at Manchester and pastored a Baptist church in England prior to his present position as lecturer in Dogmatic Theology in London Bible College. He brought to his task a sound knowledge of Biblical languages and a disciplined mind. The product is highly readable and remarkably free from bias. It should prove useful to both ministers and laymen who love the truth.

Wilber T. Dayton

Calvin's *Doctrine of the Christian Life*, by Ronald S. Wallace. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959. 349 pages. \$5.00.

This volume is another evidence of the continuing, even re-viving, interest in the works of John Calvin. It is also an indication of an awareness of the need in our day for a clear call to Christian living. The book grew out of a painstaking study of Calvin's *Commentaries*, *Sermons*, and *Institutes*, undertaken to sort out of many tedious and often seemingly con-

tradictory details exactly what the Reformer taught about the Christian life. The final result was presented to the Faculty of Divinity of Edinburgh University for the Ph.D. degree.

Dr. Wallace has served his movement well by setting forth a systematic treatment of the ethical and spiritual implications of the Gospel--implications that not all Christians are aware of as belonging to the Calvinist tradition. Although in this tradition these values do not stand out as prominently as they do in Wesleyan Arminianism, they are there and have often exerted a profound influence. A volume such as this has long been needed to clarify this practical emphasis in Calvinism.

To Calvin's mind, "Christ, in His life, death and resurrection, has brought in the Kingdom of God." His people must express this renewed image and order in their lives. Thus the book includes chapters on "The Sanctification of the Church in Christ," "Dying and Rising with Christ," "The Restoration of True Order," "Nurture and Discipline within the Church," "The Exercise of Faith," and "The Effect and Fruit of Faith."

There is much of value here for Christians of all traditions. And not the least perhaps is the reminder that Wesleyan Arminians should be taking more of a lead in speaking to our generation concerning Christian living, a theme which our tradition surely qualifies us to speak on.

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