

Book Reviews

Books reviewed in THE ASBURY SEMINARIAN may be ordered from the Seminary Bookstore, Wilmore, Kentucky.

The Biblical Faith and Christian Freedom, by Edwin Lewis. Westminster Press, 1953. 224 pages. \$3.50.

The noted Professor emeritus of Drew Theological Seminary and present Professor of Theology at Temple University has gathered some recent lectures on the Bible and faith into an important volume on a subject which is one of keen interest at the present time. It is the same concern which occupied John Knox in *Criticism and Faith* (1952), namely, to define and affirm the faith which survives “the acids of modernity” in the historical criticism of the Bible. The volume embraces the lectures delivered at Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas, in 1952. The fourteen chapters deal with such questions as “the emancipation of the word of God,” “free faith and the Old Testament,” “free faith and the Gospels,” “the Epistles and criticism,” and “free faith and the church.”

The point of view stressed is that the Bible deals not with a God whom men found for themselves but with a God who found men—a God who must reveal himself if he is to be known by man (p. 49). The “central issue” dealt with is the extent to which the Bible is identified with God’s revelation to man. As in other books by Professor Lewis the position is taken that God’s revelation does not become such unless there is a “faith” response on the part of man—the Word of God is in the Bible but it must be subjectively validated. The author accepts most of the conclusions of modern Biblical criticism, particularly the emphases in vogue about a generation ago. At the same time he has been responsive to the newer trends in the direction of Biblical theology, the unity of the Bible, the importance of faith, and the confirmations of Biblical data by archaeology. He is concerned with a vigorous and enlightened “evangelical” faith and seeks to interpret the Bible in a way that will do justice to historical criticism, to intellectual honesty, and to the Christian faith.

At many points the viewpoint is soundly and fervently Christian—much of it reads like an evangelistic sermon. At many other

points positions are taken quite unsatisfactory to the orthodox Christian faith. The viewpoint is in harmony with most "neo-orthodox" interpreters. Thus, the Bible contains both truth and error and even "deliberate historical perversions" (p. 57). Genesis, chapters 1-11, is largely "folklore and legend" (p. 67), man is descended from the brute (p. 68), the stories of the patriarchs are both fact and fiction, and the Gospels do not preserve the actual words of Jesus as the Gettysburg Address preserves the actual words of Lincoln (p. 154). Yet, imbedded even in such a bloody book as Judges with a Samson about as historical as Paul Bunyan is a religious insight recognizable as the true "Word of God" (Jud. 2:11-22). The centrality of Christ is presented much more satisfactorily, yet even here there is circular reasoning—"the gospel is in who he (Jesus) was and what he did . . . totally considered," and yet the New Testament gives no sure clue to what his actual words and deeds were! In short there is a God who revealed himself in word and deed culminating in Jesus Christ as apprehended by man's faith. This combination of revelation and interpreting faith resulted in the Bible in which is embedded fragments of the truth of God. The Bible reader, therefore, can find truth in the Bible, especially if someone like Dr. Lewis is present to separate the truth from error. This volume is designed to provide such guidance.

GEORGE A. TURNER

How to Preach the Word of God With Variety, by Frank T. Littorin. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953. 157 pages. \$2.50.

This slender volume is an attempt to outline the method rather than the message of preaching. The author makes it clear, however, that sermon technique is but the handmaid of sermon content. By preaching the Word with variety, Dr. Littorin means preaching the several types of Bible expository sermons, as for instance, the Bible book sermon, the chapter, the paragraph, the text, and the Bible topic. Anyone who shies away from the work of digging out textual and expository outlines from the Bible will not be likely to take to this treatise. The kinds of messages the author suggests are built only on hours of patient, energetic research, but in the end they should prove highly rewarding for both preacher and people. If the author has his way he will make Bible preachers of all of us.

The numerous outlines illustrating the varieties of expository preaching will be profitable if used suggestively. Occasionally the critical student will come across an outline that is faulty either in form or content or in both. Notwithstanding, here is a stimulating text for the topical preacher who would get out of a rut.

NOEL LIDDLE

Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God, by George E. Ladd.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 1952. 193 pages. \$3.00.

The recent revival of biblical theology and eschatological studies has been felt afresh in Dr. George Ladd's examination of the "crucial questions" about the kingdom of God. Making no claim to presenting "a systematic or a comprehensive exposition of the New Testament doctrine of the kingdom of God," Ladd endeavors to come to grips with questions inherent in this highly relevant theme.

Having been trained during his college and seminary days in "dispensational premillennialism," Dr. Ladd came to question the "scriptural soundness" of some of the interpretations of dispensationalists and to sense the necessity of facing afresh the exegetical problems incident to the premillennial view. In graduate studies at Boston and Harvard the author "determined to go as deeply as possible into the background of biblical eschatology." Familiarizing himself with relevant literature in English, German, and French, he brought to his task a scholarly equipment.

After *briefly* surveying the eschatological and non-eschatological interpretations of the Scriptures in ancient, medieval, and modern times, Dr. Ladd concludes that "no single interpretation has established itself so firmly as to commend universal recognition" among critical scholars (p. 39). Neither the "consistent eschatology" of Schweitzer, nor the non-eschatological interpretations of the Wellhausenian adherents; neither the "realized eschatology" of Dodd, nor any attempted synthesis or mediating view such as Manson's or Cadoux's, holds the field today.

Among the conservative thinkers four interpretations seek prominence: the *postmillennialism* of Warfield; the *premillennialism* of Zahn, Godet, Alfred and Tregelles; the *dispensationalism* of the Plymouth Brethren movement and of the convinced readers of

the *Scofield Reference Bible*; and the *amillennialism* of Vos and Allis. As for himself, Dr. Ladd has abandoned dispensationalism but feels compelled by Scripture exegesis to maintain a premillennial interpretation.

Recognizing the kingdom as central in Jesus' teaching, Ladd has moved to a position of viewing the kingdom as spiritually present in the lives of Christians but also as something future in an earthly, eschatological, and apocalyptic sense. He acknowledges that the point of departure among the various thinkers usually centers in the meaning given to the expression, "the kingdom of God." Having studied the word for kingdom (*basileia*) (its linguistic significance and its exegetical and theological difficulties), Dr. Ladd formulates a definition of the kingdom which he believes to be the key to the most satisfactory and consistent exegesis of the concept as found in the diverse New Testament passages on the subject. ". . . *the kingdom of God is the sovereign rule of God, manifested in the person and work of Christ, creating a people over whom he reigns, and issuing in a realm or realms in which the power of his reign is realized*" (p. 80).

Viewing the kingdom of God as primarily soteriological, and as both progressively revealed in the New Testament and progressively realized *in* history, not just beyond it, Ladd sets forth a fourfold unfolding of the kingdom: first, in the person and activity of Jesus, the King; secondly, in "salvation" as individually experienced—as righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit—between the Ascension and Parousia; thirdly, in the millennial kingdom of Christ on earth; and fourthly, in the ultimate kingdom of a new heaven and a new earth.

Four basic questions conclude the author's treatment: Was the "kingdom of Heaven" postponed, as dispensationalists claim? How is the Kingdom in Revelation twenty to be interpreted? Is not the whole millennial interpretation Jewish and not Christian? and, Why the silence concerning the millennium in the Gospels and Epistles, if it is a genuinely Christian view?

Ladd's answers, in part, to the questions are these: Nothing was postponed which Jesus' first coming was intended to accomplish; again, all other considerations concerning the future kingdom are subservient to the exegesis of Revelation twenty. Whatever a sound hermeneutics requires of the passage in Revelation, Ladd affirms, will determine one's millennial view. Reducing the possible

interpretations to two, the natural and the spiritual, our author finds the natural interpretation most in accord with sound hermeneutics and the millennial views of the Early Church Fathers.

This volume has its shortcomings, even for Dr. Ladd's colleague on the Fuller faculty, Wilbur M. Smith, author of the "Preface" to the book. Nevertheless, it has forthrightly faced basic problems with which conservative scholarship must grapple if it is to maintain a biblical eschatology, traditionally understood as such, in the face of the Historical-Critical and the Social-Historical Schools of Interpretation. A much larger place could have been given to the bearing of "crisis theology" upon traditional eschatology. As an introduction to a much larger work on the whole field of the New Testament Doctrine of Last Things (which the author is contemplating), this volume deserves a careful reading by all interested in the kingdom of God as present or future or both.

DELBERT R. ROSE

A Faith to Proclaim, by James S. Stewart. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1953. 160 pages. \$2.50.

This book contains the Lyman Beecher Lectures delivered at Yale in 1952. The author exhibits the same originality of thought and expression one finds in *The Strong Name* and *Heralds of God*. Dealing with sermon content rather than sermon technique the lectures call attention to the essential message of Christianity. The themes treated are as follows: "Proclaiming the Incarnation," "Proclaiming Forgiveness," "Proclaiming the Cross," "Proclaiming the Resurrection," and "Proclaiming Christ." Old themes; but one reads Stewart as though he had never heard of these things. In addition to this fresh point of view, the lectures are charged with a strong, virile Christianity. Indeed, not a little of the force of Stewart of Edinburgh lies in his robust, positive testimony to the truth that is in Christ Jesus. The minister, young or old, reading these pages will find himself spiritually and mentally exhilarated.

The lecturer understands his times. He knows men. And he knows how to present the Gospel in the light of contemporary needs. This little volume needs to be read and pondered by every man called to herald the good news of God to our generation.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

Psychology of Pastoral Care, by Paul E. Johnson. Nashville: Abingdon Cokesbury, 1953. 362 pages. \$4.75.

The purpose of this book is to consider the work of the pastor from the standpoint of dynamic, interpersonal psychology. It is written for students, pastors and counselors in other professions who are interested in the work of pastors.

The scope of this work is broad and there are a number of hearty and healthy emphases in it. The author emphasizes that the pastor must be a man who has a genuine love and concern for men. The needs and wants of people are clearly and cogently set forth. The principles of pastoral care, based on the interaction of persons, are applied to basic pastoral situations: personal counseling, marriage counseling, family counseling, the ministry of healing, and the pastoral care of the dying and the bereaved. The author raises some basic questions concerning the philosophical grounds of interpersonal psychology. His assumptions, given tentatively, need to be further examined.

The author makes a significant contribution in his proposal of a new name for pastoral counseling. In avoiding the old and frustrating antithesis between directive and nondirective counseling, Johnson views the pastor's work in this area as *responsive counseling*. In developing this concept, he preserves the values of empathy, understanding, acceptance and good listening that have characterized nondirective counseling; but, on the other hand, he recognizes that in many situations the pastor needs to say more than a nondirective "uh huh." The responsibility for the progress of the interview rests with both the counselee and counselor.

Many evangelical ministers will be impressed with the fact that Johnson fails to consider sin realistically in this volume. Sin is portrayed too largely as maladjustment or a general failure to attain goals. Thus, with a light view of sin, salvation is considered too greatly in terms of psychological adjustment and personal integration. There are other theological concepts such as prayer that are treated too humanistically.

This book, however, has unusual merit for evangelical ministers. The appreciation it demonstrates for people is a good example of healthful pastoral attitudes. It typifies shepherd heartedness in a splendid way.

Sermons and Outlines on the Seven Words, by F. W. Robertson, James Stalker, Charles Simeon, and others. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953. 107 pages. \$1.75.

Seven Simple Sermons on the Saviour's Last Words, by W. Herschel Ford. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953. 89 pages. \$1.50.

This little book is the fifth one of a series being published by Baker entitled, "Minister's Handbook Series." Other previously printed titles are *Sermons and Outlines on the Lord's Supper* and *Sermons and Outlines for Special Occasions*. This one furnishes sermon material for each of the seven words of our Lord on the cross. Such names as Seiss, Ryle, Spurgeon, F. W. Robertson, and James Stalker are represented—names we can hardly afford to neglect. The Baker people are to be commended for giving us this brief yet rich anthology in this very specialized area of "the seven words."

Still another slender volume is at hand dealing with our Saviour's last words, this time from the pastor of the First Baptist Church, El Paso, Texas. Dr. Ford is also the author of "God Bless America." These messages are distinctly oral in style, evangelistic in import, the overflow of a heart that loves God and the souls of men. Of value for their practical insights into a timeless theme.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

The Puritan Heritage, by George M. Stephenson. New York: MacMillan, 1952. 282 pages. \$3.50.

Dr. Stephenson has been for many years professor of history at the University of Minnesota. As a writer of American History he has demonstrated his interest in the influence of religion upon the development of American society, as in his *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration*, published in 1932. The years of interest and study in this area manifests itself in the book under review.

The term "Puritan Heritage" seems to be used in a somewhat confusing manner. While Dr. Stephenson places a major emphasis upon the English Puritans who transplanted their faith in the colonial settlements of New England, he seems to include also the

“people of kindred spirit from every land.” Even the transplanted English Puritanism seems to have been much modified before it produced the influences upon American life which he traces throughout the book. Unless the reader bears in mind that it is really “left wing” Protestantism which is under discussion he is apt to feel a sense of intellectual discomfiture while reading.

Dr. Stephenson develops, in a manner unusual to the secular historian, the thesis that it was the Puritan influence which has been influential in the development of those main currents which form our distinctive American heritage. Such diverse religious groups as the Quakers, Methodists, and Unitarians were developed under the Puritan influence. Such apparently unrelated reform movements as the revivals of both the colonial and the national periods, the Anti-Masonry campaign of the middle nineteenth century, the Temperance Movement, and the Crusade for the Abolition of Slavery were all affected by the Puritan impulse. Most Americans are proud of our ability to develop interdenominational organizations for the advancement of God’s Kingdom upon earth. Outstanding among these institutions have been The American Home Missionary Society, The American Tract Society, The American Bible Society, and the American Sunday School Union. Each of these, as Stephenson points out, must give credit for its success to the penetration of Puritanism into the various avenues of American life. A short but enlightening chapter is given to each of these subjects.

Of special interest to this reviewer is the contrast between the development of religious life and freedom in America under the influence of “left wing” Protestantism with that life which was developed under the jurisdiction of the hierarchy of the state-controlled churches of the European Continent. This contrast may be illustrated by a comparison of the European and the American Sabbath, and by looking at the differences in the ministers of the two areas. In his chapter on “The Old World Against the New World” Stephenson says that “emigrants from Europe—from Protestant countries—quickly sensed the difference between pastors in America and in Europe. They found ministers in America democratic and warm-hearted; they sought the sheep, unlike ministers in Europe where the sheep sought the shepherd and were careful to address him by the proper gradation of titles. . . .”

Some weaknesses of the book seem to be the author’s tendency to become so much interested in the development of the theme of

each individual chapter that it is difficult to see just how it ties into the central theme of the book. He has crowded so much factual material into so small a space and has made such sweeping generalizations that there are at times errors in historical detail. These seem to be a result of style rather than a lack of accurate information, however, for the book gives indication of abundant research by the author. The lack of definite footnotes makes it impossible for the reader to check his sources in those places where questions arise.

This book should prove an inspiration to those religiously minded persons who can still see the uplifting influence of a spiritual church upon the development of our American way of life, in spite of the materialistic trend of the age. As Stephenson says in his concluding chapter, "Twentieth-century America appears to have lost the Puritan heritage. A generation whose 'literature' is more akin to the licentiousness of the press which ridiculed the Puritans in England, whose 'movies' revel in the filth of the muckrake, whose radio and television programs serve a fare of vulgarity, and whose mechanism has degraded the superior man and has enhanced the power of the inferior man, is incapable of understanding a religious movement whose appeal is to the 'remnant,' to those who are conscious of the brevity of human life and recognize the spiritual life as one of great reality."

PERCIVAL A. WESCHE