

Book Reviews

Modern Christian Revolutionaries, edited by Donald Attwater. New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1947. 390 pp. \$4.00.

For some years it has been fashionable to analyze a number of those individuals who have been vocal in their criticism of modern society. Most of these criticisms have been levelled in the name of Christianity, and have sought to show the thinness of the veneer with which our so-called Christian society is covered. Attwater has brought together a series of five 'criticisms of the critics'—summaries by careful students of the writings and pronouncements of the men who have been profound irritants to the complacent in our time.

The five men under study are: Søren Kierkegaard, Eric Gill, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, Charles Freer Andrews, and Nicholas Berdyaev. As the editor points out in his Introduction, "This is a very mixed bag. Nobody could agree completely with the distinguishing ideas of all of them none could share all their views and enthusiasms: but everybody can learn, and learn much, from each of them." (ix).

The selection of Kierkegaard for first place among the entries is understandable. The analysis of his life, presented by M. S. Channing-Pearce, contains most of the conventional biographical material concerning this interesting Dane, plus a well-chosen survey of those of his works which bear his criticisms of the superficial Christianity of his day, notably his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, his *Training in Christianity by Anti-Climactus*, and his *Stages*. This section affords a splendid survey of the theological objections which S. K. brought forward against his time. One could wish for an additional analysis of his philosophical insights, especially as contained in his *Either/Or*. Admirable is Channing-Pearce's

avoidance of the childish tendency to magnify Kierkegaard's importance to the point where he who does not devote large time to his thought is dubbed a theological and philosophical boor!

The editor himself provides the survey of the thought of Eric Gill, the son of an English sectarian minister. Gill, a convert to Roman Catholicism, stands as the critic of a dehumanized society, of socialist utopianism, and of current religious architecture. The genius of the man lay in his many-sidedness; his sensitiveness to social abuses, his ability as a moralist, his devoutness as a Catholic, his independence as a writer, and his skill as an artist and architect. He was an apologist for the sanctity of the individual, in a society of power-dislocations. His was a voice of justifiable alarm: we are not yet able to assess the soundness of his diagnosis of our cultural ills, or to deny that the trend of our day is in the direction of a form of society in which "man's intelligence will wither away in highbrow snobbery or mob vulgarity." (p. 228)

The surveys of Chesterton and Andrews deal with men who are in some respects opposites: The first is generally well-known, chiefly through his journalism, while the second exerted the force of his protest in British colonial affairs. Chesterton worked chiefly through his pen, Andrews chiefly through his personal contacts. Both surveys have their value; this reviewer feels that that of Andrews is the better written of the two. The former wrestled with the difficult relationship between freedom and the socio-political order, and found the answer in Socialism. The latter wrestled with the relationships posed by the Indian nation, and sought to effect a settlement upon a basis remarkably like that suggested by St. Francis of Assisi.

Evgueny Lampert's analysis of the life

and thought of Berdyaev serves to acquaint the reader with this man, little known to most of us because of the linguistic barrier and the style of his writings. This discussion is informing to those who would understand the background for the upheaval in Russia—notably its background in Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. The discussion deals largely with the philosophical wrestlings of Berdyaev, particularly as they relate to his proposed social order known as *personalistic Socialism*. His criticisms of the current Soviet regime, and his hope for the future, are well worth at least the time which reading this survey requires.

One would not want a steady diet of the type of material found in *Modern Christian Revolutionaries*. At the same time, realism demands that the Christian, and particularly the Christian minister, come to grips with the problems to which these men call attention. For a compact survey of such question, Attwater's volume is to be recommended.

HAROLD B. KUHN,
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Psychology for Pastor and People, by John Sutherland Bonnell. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948. 225 pp. \$2.50.

The upsurge of interest in counseling as part of the work of the alert pastor has produced a large number of volumes in the past decade, some highly valuable, some of less worth. A number of them have embodied valuable insights, but have included points of view, and deductions based upon them, which made them offensive to ministers of evangelical convictions. Here is a volume which avoids this latter tendency, and which puts into reasonable compass the more sober and tried insights of religious psychiatry.

The author is pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York; this volume is by no means an amateur's attempt, for he published his volume *Pastoral Psychiatry* some years ago. Out of this

experience, he presents a volume which is appreciative of the contribution which psychiatry can make to the genuinely Christian counselor, and which avoids the oversimplification of the problem which has been the bane of conservative writers in this field.

Bonnell uses case histories without the monotony which so frequently marks such usage. His illustrations avoid wordiness, and indicate a critical selection from a very wide experience. The author is aware that there are some cases which are beyond the reach of ordinary non-technical help, and recognizes that some pathological cases ought to be turned over to professional treatment. At the same time, much more emphasis is laid upon the therapeutic power of prayer and of the Word of God than is usual in a book of this type.

This work combines with rather unusual skill the practical and the theoretical in pastoral counseling. It seeks to remove this art from the mysterious realm of esoteric terms, and to place the emphasis upon a practical diagnosis of spiritual problems. The objective seems to be the person-to-person approach, with the objective of directing the advisee as quickly as possible to the Divine Source of help. In accomplishing this purpose, Bonnell exemplifies in his book that which he advocates as central in the counselor, namely the warm and sympathetic personal attitude.

Possibly the most significant feature of the entire volume is the series of "Principles of Counseling" listed in Chapter X. Here are set forth, in brief paragraph form, forty-four summaries of the basic factors in the work of the spiritual counselor. This list covers the range of such work, and outlines the procedures, the objectives, the limitations, the difficulties, and the perils of this form of ministry. This list bears the unmistakable marks of a maturity of outlook which inspires confidence in the writer.

The last of these enumerated principles gives the keynote of the volume: "The pastor-counselor will remember that above all else he is a Christian minister. His chief reliance, therefore, is not on the prin-

ciples of psychology and psychiatry but on the spiritual power released through faith in God." (p. 189) This outlook is applied consistently throughout the work, giving shape and depth to the exposition of a subject which may be of untold value to the pastor facing the complex world of our day.

Psychology for Pastor and People is valuable, either taken by itself or as a guidebook for use in connection with more detailed volumes, such as those by Holman, May, and Stoltz. The appended Bibliography gives a rather thorough canvass of current literature in the field, arranged by topics. The Pulpit Book Club is to be commended for the choice of this volume as its February Selection.

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Best Sermons, 1947-48, edited by G. Paul Butler. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947. 318 pp. \$2.50.

For insight into the content and style of contemporary preaching this last edition of "Best Sermons" is no doubt as enlightening a volume as can be found. The fifty-two sermons in the book are recognized by the editor and his advisory committees as the most outstanding examples of religious exposition and interpretation found among 6,447 messages recently preached in fifty-three different countries and representing 198 different denominations. Among the contributors are such names as Brunner, Buttrick, John Baillie, Barth, Niemoeller, Fosdick, Weigle, Cardinal Spellman, and Rabbi Cohon. Although most of the sermons are from the pen of widely-known men, a few come from lesser pulpit luminaries.

The messages are in general timely, thought-provoking, and spiritually challenging. Preachers will find them a wealth of homiletical ideas. Although many faiths are represented, the central ideas of the sermons will probably be palatable to all, for no sermon thought to be critical of any

other religion by word or inference is included.

The tenor of the book suggests that the shallow inspirational variety of preaching one has met with all too frequently is on the decline, that the pulpit is acquiring an awareness of the spiritual poverty of man that is long overdue. The plight of the masses following two wars seems to be generating a spirit of high seriousness among our ministers. Grateful as we are for this development, it is unfortunate that the force of these sermons is spent in the main on an effort to bring about a new social order. It seems to some of us that the much-longed-for social change can take place only when an aroused and energetic ministry subordinates man's relationship to man to his relationship to God. These sermons continue to emphasize Christian doing at the expense of Christian being. One looks rather wistfully through these fine sermons for an adequate presentation of the message of a God who can lift men out of their sinful ways.

Generally speaking, the homiletical and literary style of the sermons is what one would expect in a book of this kind. Not a few of the discourses, however, are in default here, a condition which makes one wonder just what constitutes a "best" sermon in the eyes of the editors. At any rate, with no generally-accepted criteria of homiletical excellence, how is one to know precisely what sermons are "best"? The use of the superlative is an unfortunate one. The fact that so large a percentage of the contributors are men who hold key positions in the church at home and abroad makes one wonder what part prestige played in the compilation of the volume.

The value of the collection is enhanced by grouping the sermons according to subject matter, by including brief sketches of the preachers' lives, and by adding a topical index of ideas and illustrations. This reviewer used with profit the 1946 edition of "Best Sermons" in his recent course in contemporary preaching.

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God Confronts Man in History, by Henry Sloane Coffin. New York: Scribners, 1947. 154 pp. \$2.50.

The author was called upon to make a world tour, delivering lectures upon the Christian faith under the auspices of the Cook Lectureship. He lectured in the Phillipines, China, Thailand, India and Egypt. His first chapter is devoted to the events of the tour and conditions which he found. His impressions are tersely stated: "The impression of the world's plight is disheartening. But the impression of the Christian church fills one with confidence." The other chapters give the lectures which he delivered to the large audiences in the various countries.

GOD IN HISTORY

Men have an acute sense of living in history. There is a longing for some unifying force which can control the factors of history. The Christian faith is such a force. The Christian view is that despite the sinister appearances, the world never slips entirely out of God's hands. He is always coming into the world. "History is a series of God's arrivals." God is made known in the mighty acts of history. The most luminous act in history is the Self-disclosure in Jesus.

GOD'S SELF DISCLOSURE

God's Self-revelation is complete in Jesus. Yet God has not ceased working and speaking in subsequent centuries. His continuing presence in the church keeps her alive and adaptable, and the Spirit applies the mind of Christ to current situations. God's Self-revelation is both complete and continuing, and yet it will not be fully complete until history has reached its close.

GOD'S REDEMPTIVE WORK

God's redemption is both an act and a process. One becomes a Christian instantaneously, but it takes a long time to christianize the Christian. The christianization of society presents even more difficulties. It is objected that Christianity furnishes an ideal for the individual, but no corresponding ideal for the nation or the econom-

ic order or the fellowship of races. It furnishes no code of ethics or system of doctrines. But if such ideas had been given for first century conditions it would not have fitted ours. "Christ gave not a rigid law, but a living Spirit." In this way He can be Lord of all nations and races in every age.

THE CHURCH

God works through the church for the redemption of individuals and society. Despite much in the church that members may have occasion to deplore, the fact remains that it is spreading faster today than ever before. War proved the indestructibility of the church. Other institutions, the press, schools, universities, labor unions, organizations of business and finance, went down under pressure, but the church was not subdued. The church's main duty is not social reconciliation, but reconciling the world to God. Her most potent and precious gifts come from on high. The church must in this hour look for further comings of God himself, bringing fresh supplies of His grace.

THE GOAL OF HISTORY

The goal of history lies beyond history. Earthly existence is a schooling for that commonwealth which lies beyond history. So the Kingdom of God is both present and future. The Kingdom keeps arriving throughout history, always upsetting, and running counter to natural inclinations. It arrives as a protest as well as a purpose to bring the world into accord with God's will. While history moves from one age to another, Jesus Christ remains surely at the center of our expectations. "He is engaged in all that is being prepared in the occurrences of history and in the achievements of faithful men, which will remain in and mould the eternal commonwealth."

The book is evangelical in tone, and breathes the optimism of a Christian philosophy of history. It is good tonic for jaded spirits and faltering faith confronting a world in confusion.

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Religion in the Twentieth Century, edited by Vergilius Ferm. New York: The Philosophical Library, Inc., 1948. 470 pp. \$5.00.

The past five years or so have witnessed the appearance of a large number of anthologies, covering nearly the whole field of human knowledge, and including many studies in religion. The Philosophical Library has participated in this practice, having issued a number of "Twentieth Century" volumes. Some of these have shared the lack of coherence which is the weakness of anthologies. This is not the case with their newest volume, *Religion in the Twentieth Century*, which includes, in addition to a sizable and well-written Preface by the editor, twenty-seven studies. Each contributing writer was provided in advance with a general prospectus for his guidance. This device has produced a composite work of unusual quality and a fine degree of orderliness.

It goes without saying that an enumeration of religious movements will read differently from a roster of the religions of the world. In this volume, the former grouping is employed. This does not mean that the author has made denominations or sects the basis for inclusion in the work. Rather, he has sought to discover in the religious life of our century the subdivisions of the several living religions which are needed to provide a comprehensive view of each. For example, he includes as representative of Judaism its three chief divisions, Orthodox, Reformed, and Reconstructionist, and as typical of Protestantism, Liberal and Conservative.

In addition to representative divisions, Ferm includes sections on the branches of Christianity which are marked by especial features, such as claims to special revelation, or unusual types of activity which have rendered them centres of enthusiastic adherence. Arrangement is in order of chronological appearance. This places Hinduism at the opening of the volume. Sikhism half-way down the list, and the Ramakrishna Reform within Hinduism in twenty-fifth place.

The editor has added to the value of the book by his page-length biographical notes concerning each writer, placed at the beginning of the chapter, and a selected bibliography at the end of each chapter.

A survey of the articles would be out of place in such a review as this. By way of general observation, let it be said that the purpose of the editor has been to select representative (and usually outstanding) men from the several movements to write the contributions. In the case of chapters on Taoism and Shinto, this has not been possible. The analysts of these have been selected from among scholars whose labors have been with adherents of these faiths. All of this adds up to an able and informative volume.

With respect to Dr. Ferm's Preface, it is noteworthy that he not only indicates the plan and purpose of the work, but also raises the chief problems with which the respective writers must deal. It is a bit surprising to find him making so much of the well-worn motif of *horizontal/vertical*, or the now jaded antithesis between *prophetic* and *priestly* in religion. Many readers will likewise remain unimpressed by his side-tracking of the question "whether one religion is as good as another" by his observation that every religion is plural in itself, and hence that every religious configuration in history must be judged in the light of "whether the vision of the founders and their prophets through the centuries matches those universal ideals which the spirit of God, we must believe, has been proclaiming in the hearts of men of good will everywhere." (p. xiii) Nor will all be persuaded that Ferm is correct in identifying the *prophetic* and the *horizontal* expressions of religion.

With respect to the evaluation of conservatism (especially in Christianity), most of our readers will probably be more inclined to follow Andrew Kerr Rule in his Chapter "Conservative Protestantism" than Vergilius Ferm in his "Preface."

To the reader who can make up his own mind concerning the uniqueness of Christianity, the volume will prove invaluable as a handbook for the study of living religious

systems. Members of the Salvation Army and of Jehovah's Witnesses will be pleased to discover that their movements are of sufficient significance to merit a place in this small encyclopedia. Members of the Society of Friends will be interested in the impartiality with which Howard Haines Brinton describes the "varieties of religious experience" within their fold. Adherents of the major denominations will find incentives to many profitable hours of reading in order to find themselves discussed in this anthology.

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Pillars of Faith, by Nels F. S. Ferre. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948. 125 pp. \$1.50.

Written by the Abbott Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, this volume has as its purpose "the straightforward and solid exposition of the heart of the Christian faith." (p. 9) While *Pillars of Faith* was first written for a lecture series at Texas Christian University and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, it is now offered to the larger public—perhaps for laymen especially—as a statement "in the simplest of terms" of the five central pillars upon which the author believes the Christian faith rests today.

It is Dr. Ferre's conviction that the various authorities which have been successively held through the history of the Christian Church are pillars upon which Christian faith must rest if it is to be stable and strong. According to his view the disciples followed Jesus as their authority during his earthly life, but after he was removed from them the Holy Spirit came to be their counselor and therefore their authority. But the growing need for organization within the body of believers soon led to the "centralizing authority of the Church." Due to abuses of the latter authority, the Protestant Reformation gave rise to another

authority, namely the Bible which became the standard of faith for the Protestant world. But for more than a century a fifth authority has had priority for many within Christendom, namely Reason and Christian experience.

To be sure the author recognizes these five stages—Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Bible, and Reason and Christian Experience—as a rough characterization of the movement within Christendom, but nevertheless insists that these five authorities have had their successive dominance in history, and must be regarded as the pillars of the Christian faith. "God has never let truth rest on one pillar in history. We have at least five pillars of faith. Yet the foundation itself is always God Himself present within our hearts." (p. 92)

Although Dr. Ferre is the son of a Baptist minister, he sounds a traditionally Methodist note in his treatment of Christian experience. After describing the carnal traits of believers' hearts, he goes on to stress the necessity of "a higher grade of experience" which is to be found in the fulness of the Holy Spirit who produces holiness and perfection within the Christian's life. Too seldom do the trumpets of even the front-line theologians sound the call to holiness and Christian perfection. Dr. Ferre's words at this point are timely and commendable.

Other healthy emphases of the book include the central place of faith and worship in the Christian's life. But the shortcomings of this work which claims to be "the straight-forward and solid exposition of the heart of the Christian faith" must also be considered.

Basic to all other objections, the conservative reader will be mentally distressed by the chapter entitled "Biblical Bedrock." While affirming the Bible to be "the Standard or Faith," which exhibits "the conclusive light of God to men" (pp. 82, 83), Dr. Ferre goes on to write this: "God wants to write new and ever better scriptures, both in life and in books. The Holy Spirit is no ancestor worshiper. God never closed the canon of Scripture. Fearful

men who no longer dared to live in the Spirit froze the records of the past. Thereby we received a steady standard which we needed. Yet even now the Holy Spirit wants to write Gospels . . . Even now there can be letters written to the churches which speak with authority . . ." (p. 96) It is impossible for this reviewer to harmonize the authors claim that the Bible is "the Standard for Faith" which we need, with the insistence that the Holy Spirit wants to write even better scriptures today. If this "steady standard" is the result of the fear of men, then we ought to turn to the Spirit for new and better scriptures. But if we do that, it would be wholly out of place to say, as Dr. Ferr does, that "the Bible exhibits the conclusive light of God to men. Its standard truth has been given once for all." (p. 83) Only a fraction of the Church will accept this professor's view as *the heart* of the Christian faith concerning the Scriptures. Relativism and dynamism seem to underlie the author's whole approach to Christianity.

After reading the book many might still desire to ask the author for a clear answer to such questions as these: Are you a trinitarian or a sabellian? Are you a universalist, or do you believe some men will be lost forever? Does God in wrath punish men, or are men's sufferings merely the outworking of sin's consequences? Were Christ's suffering in death expiatory or exemplary? Is the Church the resurrection body of Christ or was his physical body literally raised from the tomb on that first Easter morning? What is the relation between the historical Jesus and the Godhead? Is the Christian faith so vague that the differing doctrines held by liberalism, neo-orthodoxy and orthodoxy are mere approximations of it and therefore equal room must be made for all brands within the Church? In deciding matters of belief and practice, who is to determine *how much weight* is to rest upon each of the five pillars of authority? How certain can we be, and upon what basis, that the Church will Christianize—"leaven"—the whole social order and realize on earth the will of God? These and other issues, although raised,

are not satisfactorily handled in the *Pillars of Faith*.

The book is worthy of a thoughtful reading, but if today "God wants to write new and ever better scriptures . . . in books," this book is not one of them.

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Miracles: A Preliminary Study, by C. S. Lewis. New York: Macmillan, 1947. 220 pp. \$2.50.

The intriguing Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, has done it again! Already the author of some fifteen volumes, he employs his genial gift for writing in an analysis of naturalism which ends as an apologetic for the fitness of the central miracles of the Christian Faith. The argument is basically metaphysical in character; Lewis possesses a rare gift for making metaphysics palatable.

Two or three themes recur throughout the volume. First: that naturalism is "in the air" these days; second, that there is a basic self-contradiction in the logic of naturalism; and third, that the objectors to Christian supernaturalism act very largely upon the suppressed assumption that miracles are impossible or at least improbable. These are applied in such a manner as to keep the Modern Reader aware that he has naturalism in his blood, and that the emergent 'deity' of the Naturalist accords with his habitual mode of thought.

The vulnerable points in the creed of the naturalist appear to Lewis to be: its reliance upon human reason in spite of an "Everythingism" which logically invalidates reason; its passionate devotion to moral values, while seeking to account for them upon irrational and non-moral grounds; its unwarranted extension (especially backwards) of the validity of the empirical method; and its inability to see that experience cannot prove, in the absolute sense, uniformity. The first half of the work is devoted to the examination of these questions. In the course of this discussion,

Lewis aptly punctures some of the naturalists' arguments for the certainty of their own conclusions; he observes that naïvete is no less common with them than with supernaturalists.

It is obvious that no convincing apologetic could have for its basic argument merely a demonstration that miracles are not inherently impossible. One feels that the work moves into the positive phase with chapter XII, entitled "The Propriety of Miracles." Lewis classifies miracles into three groupings: first, those which center in the Incarnation; second, those having to do with the 'old creation'—that is, miracles which involve the intervention of God in processes usually called 'natural'; and third, the miracles having to do with the New Man and those whom He will bring with Him into glory. His treatment of these respective themes provides the thoughtful Christian with materials by the aid of which he may if he will criticize his naturalism.

One of the outstanding features of the discussion is Lewis' frank recognition of popular misconceptions, and his own personal earlier difficulties with them. The secret of the author's skill in treating the entire subject grows out of his acknowledged spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage, from the level at which he finds his 'Modern Reader' to the place of faith. Nor is he patronizing in his dealing with the common man; Lewis is nearly always ready to step to his side in defense against the scorn of the intellectuals.

It would be unhealthy if such a book as this were so written that no one could or would disagree with any of its parts. At the same time, Evangelicals can read this volume and take heart, that their essential presuppositions are after all capable of scholarly defense. At long last, there comes from one in high place a forthright declaration that the objections of the naturalists to the supposed naïvete of Christians:—as for example, the declaration that Christian Redemption implies an egotism on man's part of man which is inconsistent with newer science, or the cavil based upon the ascension of Christ upward—that these

are cut out of whole philosophical cloth.

Perhaps the reader of this review will have acquired a curiosity to see for himself how such an apologetic can be conducted. He will not be disappointed by the book.

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The Questing Spirit—Religion in the Literature of Our Time selected and edited by Halford E. Luccock and Frances Brentano. New York: Coward-de Cann, Inc., 1947. 717 pp. \$5.00.

The past decade has witnessed a significant change in the attitude of many thinking men and women toward spiritual values. There is mounting evidence that men are becoming hungry for affirmations. Feeling our civilization to be doomed by its own cleverness men are turning, almost despairingly one feels, to re-examine not only the nature of man himself but the foundations on which faith rests. "The Questing Spirit" is abundant testimony to modern man's groping after religious certitude. It has garnered much of the best product of the twentieth century's creative effort to rediscover imperishable values. From a host of American and British writers in all walks of life, the editors have brought together into a 700-page volume such a variety of religious expressions as would indicate that religion is become a major concern of our time. The evidences of soul-quickenings are here presented in the form of short stories (29), drama selections (14), poems (250), and prose affirmations (150). Although the book is neither inspirational nor devotional in its aim, it of course does contain many selections that will strengthen and inspire. Our sincere thanks is due to the editors, who have placed at our disposal an anthology which should prove valuable in helping us to understand the spiritual needs of our time.

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The Light of Faith, by Albert W. Palmer.
New York: Macmillan, 1947. 156 pp.
\$2.00.

This book is written for laymen and as such it makes easy and interesting reading. It is free from the usual maze of theological terms and is contemporary in its outlook. From the Evangelical viewpoint, however, the book is a mixture of wheat and tares.

Most of us would readily concur with the author in his plea for a fresh presentation of "the truths so surely believed among us." He feels that revival is hindered because the Church is 'bogged' with an easy going secularism and a retreat toward theological language and he asks for the presentation of the eternal truth in language readily understood by the lay mind. He follows out this line of thought in his chapters on "The God of Tomorrow" and "What Is Human Personality." We need a revival of a real understanding of the truths concerning God and man. Following this he deals with 'the religion of Jesus'. He bases this on the teachings given in the Lord's prayer. The author is most explicit here on the standards of a practical Christianity showing that Jesus lived, leaving us an example.

In dealing with the life of Jesus the author is confronted with His miracles, Incarnation and Resurrection, and it is here that we as Evangelicals must strongly disagree with his conclusions. He classifies the miracles into three groups:—a) miracles of healing, which, he says, are being repeated today in the hands of medical science; b) miracles of misunderstanding, among which he places the feeding of the five thousand and the changing of water into wine: he feels these never really occurred as miracles but were only the figments of the imagination of a miracle-loving age; c) miracles of legendary misinterpretation due to the credulous unscientific character of first century thought. In this last group are included the stilling of the storm and walking on the sea; these the author believes to have been purely natural phenomena imagined much later to

be miracle. The Incarnation is dealt with very scantily and the author believes it to be a later edition to defend the humanity and deity of Christ. The Resurrection, in his view, is purely a 'spiritual' manifestation and not the historical event which is recorded in the Gospels. Again these records are believed to have been built upon legends rather than eye-witness truth. In the light of these facts, of course, the author challenges any idea of verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures and believes that God's revelation is not so much in the written Word but in the events it records.

However, while we may disagree with some of the paths which the author traverses, we cannot but whole-heartedly affirm his point of conclusion. He paints a true picture of our contemporary world under the name of "Modern Paganism." He describes it as ignoring God, ignoring Jesus and having no sense of sin. He gives many valid arguments as to how and why we have arrived in this condition and then leads to the remedy in his chapter on "Religion in the Personal Life." In uncompromising terms he defines the moral and ethical requirements of a Christian and then shows how they are to be obtained. His emphasis on a 'Personal encounter' with God is a wholesome one although he seems to overlook the necessity of Christ as mediator and atonement for sin.

A very practical chapter follows on the effect of religion on our view of death and immortality. Death becomes a gateway to the glorious beyond and the funeral service is "suffused with the holy light of faith." He closes the book with a series of testimonies under the title of "Some Modern Confessions of Faith." It is interesting to note such notable names as Tolstoy, Lowell, and Professor Knudson numbered among these witnesses.

In all, the book is an interesting summary of the thought of a man who has had wide experience among young people as President of Chicago Theological Seminary and also as a Congregational Pastor.

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Study in Jeremiah, by Howard B. Rand. Haverhill, Mass: Destiny Publishers, 1947. 320 pp. \$3.50.

The author of this volume is convinced but not convincing. This "study" of Jeremiah is a thesis designed to show that Jeremiah was instrumental in transferring the throne of David to the British Isles. All exposition of the prophet of Judah's captivity is treated with this apologetic interest in view.

The method of treatment is a semi-popular exposition of the book of Jeremiah arranged in chapters and topics following the sequence of the text. It is largely narrative rather than analytical in presentation. Few Biblical "authorities" are cited, documentation is lacking, and most citations are the Biblical text itself. Most citations are given from publications of Destiny Publishers. The style is very readable, the format attractive, the workmanship is careful.

The volume is really an extended sermon on the text ". . . to plant and to build" (Jer. 1:10). The argument is that only skepticism prevents Bible students from seeing that since the negative part of Jeremiah's commission was literally fulfilled, there must be a literal fulfillment of the positive part. This plausible position is followed by an attempt to prove by history that Jeremiah did "plant and build" by conveying two daughters of King Zedekiah to Ireland where one wed a king. Thus the Anglo-Saxon peoples are survivors of the "lost" tribes of Israel, the British kings are the sons of David whose throne is to abide forever. Obviously, those who say that the promise of the perpetuity of the Davidic line was fulfilled in Jesus Christ have missed the point according to this view.

The book is dominated by the eschatological motif. The author points out that while Israel was divorced, and while Judah rejected Jesus the Messiah, Benjamin did accept and became "fishers" for the other ten tribes. As a result the Anglo-Saxon-Celtic peoples ("I-Sac-Sons, or Saxons") are "the House of Israel today" (p. 86).

The "calling of the Gentiles", represented by the proclamation of the Gospel throughout the earth, thus occupies a rôle almost secondary in the divine economy. Jeremiah's prophecy of the destruction of Babylon was completely fulfilled only with the destruction of Nazi Germany when the "times of the Gentiles" was ended. The next great event will be the battle of Armageddon caused by Soviet Russia's opposition to the House of Israel (pp. 263f.). The fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant in the New Testament Church, which is so prominent in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is almost eclipsed by this longer eschatological motif (p. 186).

The author is critical of both liberals who doubt God's Word and the fundamentalists who spiritualize it. He exhibits a fundamental distrust of "scholars", often with considerable justification. Amazingly enough, however, in his claim to accuracy of interpretation, and in spite of the alleged "volumes" of evidence, he has not cited a single recognized authority in defense of his central thesis. All documentation of debatable points, so far as this reviewer was able to discover, is limited to partisans of his cause. Until he can manifest more scholarly habits himself the author can ill afford to scoff at the "scholars". The book may be read with both interest and profit. The reader will profit much, with reference to Biblical exegesis, by observing how it ought *not* to be done. No one can justly deny the claim of the publishers that this study "reads like a novel."

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The Witness of the Prophets, by Gordon Pratt Baker. Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1948. 213 pp. \$2.25.

This is a good book. Its goodness consists of several factors, chiefly its spiritual insight, historical imagination, felicity of expression, and creative syntheses. The author is a graduate of DePauw and Drew

and pastor of the Methodist Church in Washington Grove, Maryland. The book is not a series of sermons but rather a series of biographical essays. They are characterized by a certain maturity of thought, and an awareness of the groundwork in both Scripture and history, without being pedantic. The chapter titles reflect the freshness and originality of treatment which characterizes the book:

Amos, the moralist; Hosea, the evangelist; Isaiah, the statesman; Habakkuk, the father of speculation; Jeremiah, the poet; Haggai, the realist; Zechariah, the Idealist; Jesus, the Heir of the prophets, the Prince of the prophets, and the Hope of the prophets.

The author's treatment of the prophets is very appreciative. His purpose is to discover their enduring contribution and hence their relevance for our time. The appearance of the book thus provides another evidence of the increased appreciation which modern Protestantism has for the Hebrew prophets. This author is not only concerned with the social message of the prophets, but seems especially concerned to set forth their religious contribution. Distinctive also is the successful attempt to show how Jesus' message and mission is the culmination of their messages.

The style of the book is one of its strong assets. The vivid descriptions bespeak the feelings as well as the thought of one who is able both to project himself into a historical situation and take his readers with him. Always, however, the author's creative imagination is subordinate to the desire to reconstruct truthfully the situation in which the timeless messages were born. He is skilful in showing the connection between the message itself and the cultural matrix in which it was formed.

With insight and with a freshness of expression if not originality of conception this author shows how Jesus extended, integrated, and applied the insights of Amos, Hosea, Habakkuk and others. To Amos' declaration that God will judge man,

Jesus added that man is really his own judge, hence the Pharisees would not tolerate Him. The cross of Jesus, says the author, represents both the reality of man's sin and God's righteousness. "The cross resolutely testifies to the fact that there is no reality more unspeakably terrifying than the reality of hell. . . . Certainly no one can expect God to preserve that soul against its will and in defiance of all the spiritual laws of salvation" (pp. 201ff).

The writer's familiarity with literature adds much to the effectiveness of his presentation. Spiritual truths seen in the Bible are often well illustrated by an appropriate quotation from the poets.

The defects of the book are not serious in view of the author's purpose. This reviewer wishes that there had been a more studious attempt to seize upon the most important truths of the prophetic books. The treatment is too fragmentary. If the picture is to be reconstructed why not include all the *essential* points? Why not give more attention to Amos' reply to the ultimatum of Amaziah? Why the slight attention to Habakkuk's message on living by faith and his determination to rejoice in the Lord regardless of outward conditions? One gets the impression that the author's acquaintance with the prophetic books is too largely mediated through secondary sources. An uncritical acceptance of the interpretations of the "higher critics" is discernible, especially in the religious and literary history of the Old Testament. His Christology is not too distinct, the stress being almost entirely upon Jesus' humanity. Has a "Christian humanism" transformed the interpreter of the prophets into an essayist rather than a reformer? Is insight more important than faith? But, it is a good book; its worth consisting in its penetration, its freshness of presentation, and its readability.

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