

Book Reviews

The Christian Heritage in America,
by George Hedley. Macmillan,
1947. 172 pages, \$2.00.

This stimulating little book contains a series of chapel addresses which the author delivered before the students of Mill's College. Those who are called upon frequently to make chapel addresses might well study this volume in order to discover how to use historical and doctrinal materials in a fascinating and constructive way, to vivify what is too often a perfunctory and unedifying service.

The author traces the heritage of Christianity from its ancient origins in the Near East and Europe down to the present time. Each chapter deals with a significant church group, noting its contribution to Christianity as a whole. The treatment is sympathetic and understanding. A few samples may serve to show the deeper significance of the book.

He logically begins with the Jews and he shows that all Christians are Jewish in certain fundamentals. The standard pattern of our western Christian world is based upon the Jewish tradition. "The prophets sounded the cry for social justice. The priests asserted the duties of humble reverence. The apocalyptists uttered the declarations of unconquerable faith and the vows of absolute loyalty."

In like manner he assesses the Catholic contribution. While many of us cannot be Catholics intellectually, nevertheless we remain Catholic "in the proud heritage which western Europe has given us. . . . We are Catholic in the permanent framework of our thought and in much of its persisting content. We are Catholic in our vision of one human-wide, human-deep com-

munity of like minded persons."

Lutheranism has bequeathed very definite gifts to us, and in a significant sense we are all Lutherans. These gifts include the absolute right of the individual to be himself; the idea of the priesthood of all believers; and the authority of one's own conscience. And in like manner he sums up the contributions of the Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Quaker, Methodist, and Disciple churches.

The author departs from his usual procedure in the closing chapters by discussing great trends rather than individuals creeds or churches. He gives much emphasis to Fundamentalism and Modernism. He seems to regard the revivalist type of church as most typically fundamental. He estimates that "there are some sixty-eight separate and independent denominations which may be identified as wholly or dominantly of the revivalist type."

The chief weaknesses of the Fundamentalists are, according to him, commercial evangelism, a total disinterest in any present improvement of the social order, their other-worldly and millennial theology, and their antipathy to education. But they do have some strong points. They include the following: they speak in terms which their people understand; there is a pronounced ethical note in their teaching, proclaimed with driving emphasis and urged sharply upon each individual; leaders and members are genuinely sincere, vitally enthusiastic; and they have genuine, personal concern for mankind.

The author is an avowed liberal yet he is alert to its inherent dangers. He sees that the vaunted objectivity of

modernism may lead one to become so undecided as to what is right and wrong that inaction results. A broad tolerance may lead to intellectual and moral casualness. Modernism's concern for human welfare slips too easily into mere sentimentality. He warns against four perils which have so often been conspicuous: casualness, indifference, fogginess and futility.

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God is my Landlord, by Raymond J. Jeffreys. Chicago: The Van Kampen Press (542 S. Dearborn St.), 1947. 158 pages. \$1.50 and \$2.50.

The Christian layman has become the subject of increasing public interest. Another volume has been added to the list of those dealing with the larger question of stewardship and devoted specifically to the matter of tithing. An able journalist has labored diligently to present the six-year experiment of Perry Hayden of Tecumseh, Michigan which has been publicized by *The New York Times*, *The American Magazine*, and *Time Magazine* (and other publications) under the name of "Dynamic Kernels".

Those who have followed the experiment through the Associated Press, or through the columns of a number of religious journals, know that the project began in 1940 with the planting of a cubic inch of wheat, the tithing of the yield, and the replanting, through five more seasons, of the remainder, with a consequent final harvest of 72,150 bushels, a tenth of which was given directly to European relief. These know too that Henry Ford was active in the project during its first four years, and that interest in "Dynamic Kernels" extended far beyond specifically Christian circles.

The volume is interesting from a number of points of view. While dealing with "things and figures" it con-

stantly points away from these to realities of a spiritual order. No reader can doubt that both those involved in the project and the author of the book possessed a devout faith in Divine Providence. There is given, further, a number of insights into the workings of such a vast industrial empire as that of the Fords, and into the thought of Henry Ford himself.

At the center of the entire narrative is the dynamic figure of Perry Hayden, the Quaker miller. He appears consistently as the tireless worker, the daring planner, and the undaunted man of trust. The reader will find a frank telling of the more discouraging features of the project—and there are many. To read of Perry Hayden's faith plus his dogged determination should challenge even the most cautious.

Two figures stand constantly in the background, Elizabeth Hayden, the devoted and practical wife of Perry, and Edward Escolme, the conservative but warm-hearted minister in the Tecumseh Friends Church. Without these neither the project nor the volume would be what they are.

God is my Landlord is a book which will be variously evaluated. Some will doubtless discount its deeper meaning and consider that it contains little more than the record of "a rather artificial economic experiment, which [proves] nothing more than that wheat reproduces itself plentifully." Others will find it an interesting character study of a dynamic Christian business man. Perhaps many more will agree with the reviewer, that it contains the record of a project which dramatizes a lesson which is altogether too largely forgotten in our day. It has pleased God to choose from time to time those who will do the unusual to call attention to principles which He has embedded in the universe, of which consistent and systematic stewardship is one.

The volume is outstanding for its

photographs, which are numerous and well done, and which make the price slightly above that which is usual for books of this size. The regular cloth bound edition at \$2.50 is produced in paper cover at \$1.50. At either price, this work is worth its cost as an incentive to faith.

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These Words Upon Thy Heart; Scripture and the Christian Response, by Howard Tillman Kuist. Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1947. 189 pages. \$2.50.

This well-bound volume comprises the James Sprunt Lectures for 1946 delivered at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, by the Charles T. Haley Professor of Biblical Theology for the Teaching of English Bible in Princeton Theological Seminary. They are the most complete and authoritative statement in print of the principles and techniques underlying the inductive method of studying the English Bible. The author is a graduate of The Biblical Seminary in New York and of New York University (Ph.D.) and a student at Berlin and Oxford. He enjoyed a singularly distinguished teaching career at Biblical Seminary in New York, Gettysburg Seminary, and Union Seminary in Richmond before going to Princeton. The work is not that of a novice, nor was it published as a bid for recognition; rather it is the fruitage of broad experience, and appears at the zenith of the author's power. The content can be judged from the chapter titles: Scripture and the Common Man, Adventuring in Firsthand Acquaintance, Opening the Eyes of the Understanding, The Form and Power of Holy Scripture, Translating Scripture into Action, and an Appendix, being excerpts from John Ruskin, "The Elements of Drawing."

For some time students of the Eng-

lish Bible have felt the need of a thorough and competent treatment of the inductive method as applied to Bible study. This method of study, pioneered by W. R. Harper and W. W. White, has had many zealous disciples and a few monographs but no comprehensive statement of principles or manual of style. It was largely an oral tradition. Now, after a half century, the inductive or re-creative method has been set forth by the one best qualified to do it. Underlying the whole approach is the conviction that the direct study of Scripture should have a prominent place in the curriculum of a theological seminary, and that Bible study may well be subjected to as strict an intellectual discipline as any other graduate study. The author not only drops hints on Bible study, but aims at nothing less than the transformation of the mental habits of Bible readers. Thus, the volume is not another book about the Bible; it is rather a book about one's approach to the Bible. The reader himself is the center of attention. Instead of the theological approach, the author says, "we have directed attention to its human correlate in the educative process, by seeking an answer to the question, What kind of response does divine revelation require?" The desired response is that which forms responsible Christian character. "We have made it our aim to see how the laws of communication may be profitably employed in making the human response to Scripture effective in Christian thought and action." (p. 156)

Underlying the whole treatment is the assumption that the Bible is an essentially trustworthy revelation of God. To those who are of this conviction the practical emphasis of the book will come with full force. To a large segment of Bible readers, who view it as only man's best thoughts about God, the main thesis will lose much of its significance. The author has chosen wisely, however, in limiting his objec-

tive and even the "free thinker" will find the treatment of method both sound and stimulating.

This volume will not be a best-seller of the week, but it will be read with appreciation for years to come. The style is not facile enough for rapid reading; there is too much to digest to intrigue the indolent or impatient reader, but those who read it once will want to do so again and will keep it handy for further reference. It will be in use after many current "guides" and "introductions" have become outmoded. The book is as significant from the standpoint of pedagogy as it is from that of Bible appreciation. To describe the work as unique and creative is an understatement. The creative part consists chiefly in the gathering, organization, and interpretation of relevant materials. It is not the work of the genius who originates, it is rather the careful, creative work of systematization and translation into workable patterns — of a Melancton who makes available to eager disciples the discoveries of the pioneer.

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A History of Christian Thought, Volume Two, by J. L. Neve and O. W. Heick. Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946. xv, 349 pp. \$3.50.

Dr. J. L. Neve, who taught history and symbolics at Hamma Divinity School from 1919 until 1938, had a vision of preparing *A History of Christian Thought* in two volumes. He did not, however, see his objective realized because of his death in August, 1943 shortly before the publication of the first volume. In the writing of the History, he was assisted by Dr. Otto W. Heick who completed the work. About one third of Volume Two was prepared by Dr. Neve.

Volume One traced the history of Christian thought through the seventeenth century; Volume Two brings

the record to the present. The title of this book is really the *History of Protestant Theology*.

In addition to surveying the field historically, the authors seek to interpret the men and systems considered, and they make no apology for writing from a conservative, Lutheran point of view. Many will be disappointed with the lack of appreciation for the Arminian movement. "The Rationalizing Trait of Arminianism" (p. 32), leading to Deism, Rationalism, Socinianism, and Liberalism, seems to be the chief contribution of the system according to this text. There is no attempt to assess the contribution of Arminianism to American life.

The frank criticism employed throughout the volume may be illustrated by a quotation from the treatment of Barth. The development of Barthian Theology is traced and summarized: then follows the comment: "Like Kant, Barth limits revelation to the sphere of reason; nature and history are meaningless to him. As with Schleiermacher, theology to him is identical with soteriology. With German Idealism he shares the mystical, unhistorical conception of the time-eternity relation. Consequently sin is for him more a sort of fate than personal guilt. . . . At heart he has remained a Reformed theologian: *finitum non est capax infiniti*. This Reformed position is evident everywhere, in his teaching concerning revelation, the Incarnation, the means of grace, and in his inability to distinguish properly between Law and Gospel. With all his emphasis on Luther and Calvin, he comes painfully short of Luther's conception of faith as *fiducia* (trust). His conception of ethics is, as in the case of Kant, coldly formalistic. Not without reason has it been said that Barthianism is a system without an ethics." (p. 178)

The utility of the volume is apparent from the elaborate table of contents, bibliographies at the head of

most of the chapters, a documented text, and a good index which reveals over 1200 men to whom reference is made. The names of these men usually appear in capitals with the dates of their lives wherever they are first introduced or become the principal characters under discussion. Some are only catalogued with the schools of thought to which they belong, though usually each author's important works (with the publication dates) are listed. The large index does not mean that the work is exhaustive for readers will probably find that several of their favorite authors are not considered.

The concise presentation of the main teachings of the major theologians since 1700 makes the book valuable as a brief introduction to the men and their works. The influence of Kant and Hegel, along with other philosophers, receives considerable attention. The succinct feature is probably an element of both strength and weakness, for some will question the possibility of adequately dealing with the contributions of the most important men in a few pages or paragraphs.

In the conclusion of the chapter on "The Twentieth Century" the general point of view of the volume is again seen: "As to the modern emphasis on reason and experience, God is known not by reason, but by revelation, and He is apprehended not by experience, but by faith. True, there is an intellectual element in revelation. Theology cannot disregard the question of truth; but faith is not a system of rational definitions. Likewise, there is an experimental element involved in the act of faith; but this psychological aspect is of subordinate importance. Faith in the New Testament is, as with Luther, never a rational apprehension of a divine object, it is trust in the person of God who is operating in majestic love." (p. 334) This is characteristically Lutheran. The general reader will, however, find much

to appreciate in this volume.

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Things Unshakable, by Paul Stromberg Rees. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947. 153 pages. \$1.50.

From the pastor of a great church comes another volume of great sermons. Few of our readers will need to be told that Dr. Rees is pastor of First Covenant Church in the city of Minneapolis; and this reviewer can scarcely expect any word of his to increase the appreciation with which most of our constituency will receive his book.

Of the features which lend coherence to the volume, one stands out above the many. It is the manner in which the author selects the major contested areas in contemporary life, and then points out the relevance of the Christian Gospel to these areas. One senses that Dr. Rees is in close and continuous touch with the currents which are bearing most strongly upon our modern urban life. And one would need to be biased indeed to fail to appreciate the skill with which he relates to the present scene the "unshakable verities of the Christian message."

Worthy of especial note is the intensely biblical character of the several sermons. The author has long been known for his ability to see in Scripture much that is overlooked by others. In consequence, the messages here printed abound in suggestions which can scarcely fail to enrich the thought and ministry of the reader. Some will, by virtue of the sheer quality of Dr. Rees' sermons, need to guard against the temptation to plagiarize!

The illustrative material, and particularly the selected poetry, is chosen with rare insight and used with discipline. Quite as vivid as the illustrative material is the language in which the sermons are framed. In this

respect, Dr. Rees' sermonic work possesses a quality of finish which must remain to most of us an ideal toward which to strive.

The format of the volume contributes to easy reading. The employment of punctuation and italics are effective to this end, as are also the paragraphing and the use of topic sentences. Add to this a series of appealing titles and you have a book of unusual readability. And yet such comments seem trivial in the light of the excellence of the content and the penetration with which the author strips the subterfuges from the easy-going forms of nominal Christianity, and points the way to the resources of the Living Christ for the modern man.

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The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament, by Norman H. Snaith. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946. 251 pp. \$2.75.

This volume is a careful study of the most significant theological ideas contained in the Old Testament. The author approaches his study by route of the examination of the basic meaning of the Hebrew terms by which these ideas are expressed. Concerning the nature of God, Snaith considers the outstanding Old Testament ideas to be the following: (1) the righteousness of God; (2) God's special regard for Israel; (3) the essential spirituality of God; and (4) the active holiness of God.

Of especial value is the author's method of interpreting the Old Testament by means of its own categories. The application of this technique issues in a careful and extensive analysis of a wide range of passages. Welcome is Snaith's emphasis also upon the disjunction existing between Hebrew and Greek ideas, which comes as a welcome correction to the current attempts to cause the Hebrew prophets

to think in Greek. It is conceivable, however, that some may feel that the author has overemphasized this element.

In reading the volume one must remember that it does not claim to be a comprehensive textbook in Old Testament theology. But no student of that field could afford to miss this valuable contribution to theological literature. The close, careful study of important Hebrew words furnishes the student with an indispensable aid in the understanding of the field of Hebrew thought. In other words, the book is invaluable as a foundation work in the field of Old Testament theology.

Though a Methodist leader in the British Isles, Snaith shows clearly the influence of the Barthian thought. Especially striking is his emphasis upon the covenant idea in the Old Testament.

This book is one of a considerable number of recent volumes which reflect the growing interest in Biblical theology and especially in Old Testament theological studies. This reviewer would rank Snaith's contribution close to the top among the recent books in the field. To the student who wishes something solid and satisfying in Biblical study, and who is prepared to evaluate critically the influence of the Dialectical Theology upon the author, this book is heartily to be recommended.

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World Christianity, Yesterday-Today-Tomorrow, by Henry P. Van Dusen. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1947. 302 pp. \$2.50.

The thesis of this book is: "To an age destined to survive, if at all, as 'one world,' we bring a World Church and the beginnings of a United Church." In support of this thesis, the author finds that the significant developments of the past century are

twofold, expansion and consolidation. Neither are new, for they are basic to the Christian message, both being words of our Lord: "Go ye...and teach all nations" and His prayer, "That they all may be one". The significance of these developments is that the past century only has witnessed the impulses of Christian Missions and Christian Unity being brought into the unity that they held in the intention of Christ. In fact, this is the meaning of ecumenical Christianity; a reality both world wide and united.

Our author sees periodic advances and retreats in his survey of the history of missions which leads him to observe that we may today be standing close to a period of regression. In examining the history of unity he explodes some current myths. He states and proves that History recognizes no such thing as an "undivided church" in apostolic times. He shows further that the great ecumenical councils were neither ecumenical in representing all of Christendom, nor successful in preventing schisms.

World Christianity on the contemporary scene has survived the Global conflict of World War II unbroken and has emerged stronger than ever. Here Dr. Van Dusen reasons "Amidst planetary war, only a world church has proved strong enough to endure". He examines all the areas of testing and finds that "fidelity in witness and effectiveness in action have been in direct ratio to the unity of Christian groups".

In examining the possibilities of the future, our author finds the imperative to Christian unity in two areas, practical expediency, and obligation to the command of Christ. The chapter on the *Authority of the Christian Faith* will be of great interest to those who wish to assess the present place of the theological pendulum in the ecumenical movement. On the question of missions, Dr. Van Dusen places the pendulum as "somewhere between Hocking (*Rethinking Missions*)

and Kraemer (*The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*). Precisely, the question involved, is whether Non-Christian religions as such can be regarded as showing forth divine revelation. The chapter is indicative of the swing-back since the Jerusalem Conference, but is disappointing nevertheless to the conservative.

Still with an eye to the future, the issues of Christian unity are optimistically examined. Dr. Van Dusen finds that there are no differences sufficiently serious to prevent union in the area of what Christians believe concerning God, the world, man, Christ, salvation, immortality (p. 235). The serious obstacle he finds is in the Church's view of itself. In the light of the cross currents of the contemporary theological and philosophical scene, this does seem to be a slight overstatement of the case.

Finally, our author views the future as needing revival and reunion. He traces the present spiritual decline since Moody and Drummond in four generations and sees hope only in revival in unity. He sees neither unity nor revival effective without the other. Thru this dark period yet ahead, Dr. Van Dusen is optimistic that the end is not yet. He sees the community of Christ's church coming to be the community of nations. It is worthy to note that such optimism seems to be characteristic of the ecumenical movement.

In the field where much that has been written rapidly becomes outdated, this book serves the need of presenting in comprehensive survey the past, present and future forces of World Christianity from one who is a leader in the movement. It may well become a text-book in current ecumenics. Although many parts of the book will not be acceptable to the conservative, yet its message to this hour should certainly be seriously considered.

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