
Book Reviews

Psychology Gone Awry, by Mark P. Cosgrove, Ph.D. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979. 160 pp.

The author, assistant professor of Psychology at Taylor University, focuses on three world views: the naturalistic, the humanistic, and the transpersonal. In contrast to these three views, which are inadequate to deal with the human situation, Christian theism is proposed as the only adequate alternative. "We need a world view to encompass all the data we find in psychology . . . to explain the origin and nature of physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of man, as well as human nobility and irrationality," declares the author.

The textual approach of the work is the standard rehearsal of each world view from premise, to interpretation, to implication. Each view is funneled through the categories of "Nature of Reality," "Nature of Man," "Nature of Human Problems," "Nature of Solutions to Problems." There is ample sprinkling of references to B.F. Skinner and Francis Schaeffer.

The treatment is simple. It is superficial in the sense that it deals in broad, bold strokes and not in depth. It lends itself to young readers in the field. It is well organized. The author states his personal convictions at the close in favor of Christian theism as "the most defensive world view available to psychology." The closing statement of the book is the author's thesis: "If psychology is to develop and become effective in the lives of people, psychologists cannot continue to ignore the world view of Christian theism."

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Commentary on Colossians and Philemon, by H. Dermot McDonald. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1980. 200 pp. \$11.95.

This is the fourth volume in the Theta series and fully maintains the high standard of the earlier books. The author has a solid background of research and teaching in London, and has been welcomed in Canada and the United States as a competent interpreter of the Bible and theology. Throughout this book he is the

true theologian who has the grammarian's preparation.

The outline and contents preview anticipate strength and maturity. Colossians is unveiled with doctrinal, polemical, personal and practical exposition. Likewise Philemon is shown in its detail verse by verse to be a tract for the times, and the foregleam of redemptive transformation in world society.

We are not disappointed when sampling the many areas of truth discussed by the commentator. Gnosticism is given full inquiry and when the interpretations are weighed, there emerge rich hermeneutics concerning the person and work of our Lord. The themes of pre-eminence, creation and redemption, fullness and cosmic significance are treated admirably. Paul's prayer for the church is rich in exegesis, as are other details. Utilizing various translations and exegeting from the Greek text, McDonald shows both skill and insight in focusing upon the major issues of these books.

Beginning always with the verse by verse arrangement, there is careful exegesis followed by meticulous exposition. Doctrines are declared with practical aim and rounded off by homiletical suggestion. All this is to say to the busy pastor and theological student that here is a rich treasury of truth suggesting, challenging, probing, searching. Our age faces heresies similar to those of Colossae.

McDonald may not be the mature Bishop J.B. Lightfoot of another generation, or an Alexander McLaren, but he combines the grammarian's skill of the former with the preaching insight of the latter. In a word, this book, as relevant commentary, is outstanding in its special service to those who teach and preach.

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Piety and the Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, Benjamin Warfield, by W. Andrew Hofferker. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981. 167 pp. paperback, \$5.95.

Historians of Christian doctrine identify "Princeton theology" as the attempt on the part of Calvinist theologians to maintain Calvinistic theology and experience in America during the 19th century and the opening decades of the 20th century. Principle among the spokesmen for Princeton theology were Archibald

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Alexander (a pastor), Charles Hodge (a theologian), and Benjamin B. Warfield (an apologist).

It is not always realized that these champions of Calvinistic orthodoxy were very much interested in religious experience. This book maintains that the subject of religious experience was as integral to the writings of the Princetonian theologians as were strictly doctrinal issues. The author, professor of religion at Grove City College, maintains that religious experience is as important for understanding Princeton theology as any theological topic. Hoffecker laments what he perceives to be a serious neglect of the study of the personal piety of these men. He seeks to correct the false impression that Alexander, Hodge, and Warfield allowed a stress on doctrine to eclipse the subject of religious experience and that they effected an artificial compartmentalization of their beliefs and personal religious experiences. The author insists that their intention was to maintain a balance between the intellectual and the affective elements in the Christian faith.

The author's task is complicated by the fact that it was a common tendency of the Princeton men to maintain a reticence to talk about their religious experiences. Yet, the biographies and extant journals of Alexander and Hodge provide invaluable material on the experiential aspect of their lives. In the case of Warfield no known biographies, diaries, or journals exist. Still, as in the case with Alexander and Hodge, some helpful material from outside sources witness to the general character of Warfield's religious experience.

It seems that the Princeton theology of religious experience resulted from a reaction to two approaches which erred in opposite directions: On the one hand, Princeton theology rejected a stress solely on the role that the cognitive powers play in the act of faith. Princeton theology alleged that those who over-stressed intellectual assent failed to make proper place for the subjective state of the believing individual. (Deism, speculative philosophy, Roman Catholicism, and some Presbyterians fell into this trap.) On the other hand, Princeton theology rejected the subjectivism of those who depreciated objective content of the gospel. These persons, it is alleged, failed to make room for the use of the mind in apprehending the foundations of Christian experience. (The revivalists, Schleiermacher, the Quakers, and certain mystics are cited.) The Princeton theologians sought a *via media* between these two extremes.

The apparent agreement between Alexander, Hodge, and

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Warfield stands out as remarkable when one remembers the radical shifts on the American theological scene between 1812 (when Alexander assumed his professorship at Princeton) and 1912 (when Warfield died). Hoffecker has written a splendid study of the motif of religious experience in Princeton theology. He shows Alexander, Hodge, and Warfield as classic representatives of those who balanced the doctrinal orthodoxy of Calvinism and practical piety, avoiding the extremes of lifeless orthodoxy and vacant mysticism.

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Heirs Together, by Patricia Gundry. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980. 192 pp.

Patricia Gundry writes from the conviction that “the Bible does not give us rigid rules for marriage or rules we must copy” in the 20th century marriage, but rather presents “principles applicable to all relationships, including marriage” (p. 22), and from it presents “equal marriage” as the model of marriage relationships most compatible with this principle.

The most obvious strengths of Mrs. Gundry’s work are its clear attempts to establish a credible biblical basis for equal marriage and to help the reader understand the roots of contemporary views of marriage in the Church. A sizeable portion of the book is devoted to these two tasks. Mrs. Gundry devotes an entire chapter (5) to a helpful review of sound principles of interpretation and to a survey of the historical development of contemporary views of marriage. Sound exegesis of crucial passages (e.g., Genesis 2:20-24, Ephesians 5:21 ff., I Timothy 2:11-15 and 5:14, Titus 2:3-5, I Peter 3:1-7) and of themes (e.g., headship) are presented. These undergird her treatments of key issues such as home leadership and work roles. Further assets of this book are its candid biographical stance and its forthright approach to hard questions to be faced by anyone attempting to enter or live out equalitarian marriage.

The weaknesses of the work are generally those of any popularization. The summaries of ancient marriage customs, the status of women in the ancient world, and of the development of traditional views of marriage suffer from brevity and at times from the appearance of slightly “loaded” source selection. Mrs. Gundry is not a specialist in ancient literature and is heavily dependent upon

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secondary sources for her estimate of these matters which are critical to her view. But on the whole the work is helpful and well worth careful reading. Scripture and topic indices enhance the usability of the work.

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The Holy Spirit: Friend and Counselor, by Milton S. Agnew. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1980. 138 pp.

This paperback study by Colonel Agnew, former principal of the Salvation Army School for Officers Training, New York City, has added to his earlier books this very useful study of an important doctrine. After dealing with the doctrine of God and Jesus Christ, this author deals with the person and work of the Holy Spirit. He then focuses on “charismatic renewal” in a sympathetic and yet critical manner. By constant reference to the Scripture he shows the strengths and weaknesses of this movement. He concludes that current glossolalia is not the speaking of other *languages*, as reported in the Book of Acts, and that the glossolalia in the Book of Corinthians is not in unknown languages but in unintelligible sounds akin to pagan oracles with which the Corinthian people were certainly acquainted. His treatment of this subject is very relevant and judicious.

He turns his attention to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, quite aware that there are some today who insist that this is an experience which all Christians have at conversion. He points out, on the basis of Scripture, that this *baptism* of the Holy Spirit is distinct from being *born* of the Spirit and is given to those who are believers. He equates the baptism of the Holy Spirit with Wesleyan doctrine, the second work of grace which involves cleansing from indwelling sin and power for effective witness. He then turns to the interaction between the human spirit and the Divine Spirit in a very practical way. Colonel Agnew’s wide experience, not only with the Salvation Army, but with other Christian groups in several continents of the globe, gives his insights a maturity which makes this volume not only readable but extremely useful. It is well worth your time.

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True Prayer, An Invitation to Christian Spirituality, by Kenneth Leech. New York: Harper & Row.

The author is a graduate of King's College, London and Trinity College, Oxford. Now he serves as Rector of St. Matthew's, Bethnal Green.

The author says prayer is a sharing in the divine nature. He quotes St. Gregory of Sinai: "Prayer is God."

One of his best insights is that, "Prayer is the interiorizing of the Incarnation."

He refers to Julian of Norwich in the 14th century as one of the first female theologians. She affirmed the mother nature in Jesus. She says that, "He is truly a Mother as He is a Father, for we owe our being to Him and this is the essence of motherhood."

In the chapter on "Prayer and Holiness" we find evangelical strength. Leech sees holiness coming through the Old Testament and the New. He affirms that, "Christians are called to holiness in life. But holiness is not the same as perfection. There is certainly progress in holiness."

The writer helps us see that in prayer, "God is nearer to us in our own soul, He is the ground in which it stands."

Dr. Leech believes healing is an important aspect of prayer and a spiritual gift. He further challenges our best thinking when he puts prayer and politics together with deep spiritual discernment.

The triumphant chapter at the close is on "Prayer and Progress." He affirms that true Christian prayer is the prayer of the entire Body of Christ.

This book very favorably compares with the most thought-provoking prayer volumes produced in the 20th century.

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