

BOOK REVIEWS

The New American Bible, translated by members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, sponsored by Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1970. \$4.95 (Paperback).

This long awaited translation of the Bible is successor to the Confraternity Version published in 1965 by the Guild Press. This present volume, an annotated edition, includes an essay on divine revelation by Pope Paul delivered in 1965, a helpful glossary of Biblical terms, a concise survey of Bible geography and four outline maps. Brief introductions to each book of the Bible differ from those in the older Confraternity Version.

The editors are less conservative than in the Confraternity Version: the latter for example, indicated that there was no agreement among scholars as to the time of the composition of Deuteronomy, but *The New American Bible* declares that the book of Deuteronomy was written after the Israelites had been resident of the Holy Land for centuries. Translators and editors of *The New American Bible* are unequivocally committed to the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis of historical criticism. The four principal sources of the Pentateuch (J,E,P,D) are named without, however, denying the role of Moses in the historical development of the material, even though he was not the author as such. The book of Deuteronomy is assumed to be the preaching of the Levites of the Northern Kingdom before its fall in 721 B.C. and that it played a decisive role in the reforms under King Josiah. The books of Esther, Tobit, and Judith are said to be religious novels.

A liberal viewpoint is reflected in the translation as well as in the comments. The older versions mention the "spirit of God" or the "breath of God" hovering over primitive chaos (Genesis 1:2). In this version it is "a mighty wind." The translators find three sources interwoven in the story of the flood and they untangle the different strands in the fabric. These sources are said to go back to the ancient Mesopotamian story of the great flood as preserved in the Gilgamesh epic.

The order of books in the Bible is similar to that of the Knox translation, the Confraternity version, and Jerusalem Bible in that Tobit and Judith follow Nehemiah. It differs from Knox and Confraternity and agrees with the Jerusalem version in placing Maccabees after

Esther rather than after Malachi. As with the Jerusalem Bible, the additions to Esther, from the Apocrypha, are included in the book of Esther and designated by letters.

The translation itself is often a bit more concise than either the Confraternity or the Jerusalem versions, or the Knox version. In this respect it is probably superior to these earlier versions. The result is a style less involved than the King James Version and other older, more literal, translations. This makes for easier reading and sometimes for greater clarity. Often the notations are very helpful in clarifying the text, sometimes by exegetical data; sometimes from historical and literary data which illuminate ambiguous texts. Sometimes the notations clarify linguistic phenomena which the translation itself obscures. Thus, John 7:8, "going up" is an allusion, not to Jesus going to Jerusalem, but rather to his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension.

The exceptionally few printing errors will doubtless be corrected in subsequent editions (in Jeremiah 4:30 where "spurn" becomes "sprun"; in Genesis 27:34 Jacob put sackcloth on his "lions" rather than on his "loins"; one of the quotation marks seems to be missing in Psalm 48:3).

The translators manage to accept historical and literary criticism without jeopardizing basic doctrines of the Catholic church. Thus, a two-fold meaning is found in Isaiah 7:14, one fulfilled in the birth of King Hezekiah, and the other the Immanuel born to the "mother of God."

On the whole, this is a welcomed edition to the number of modern versions of Scriptures which make Bible reading more exciting and often provide clarity in obscure passages.

George A. Turner

Classics in Chinese Philosophy, by Wade Beskin (ed.). New York: Philosophical Library, 1972. 737 pages. \$20.00

The subtitle of this work, "From Mo Tzu to Mao Tse-Tung" indicates its scope. Underlying the work is the editor's desire to trace the possible thread or threads which serve to give continuity to the thought of China. Of particular interest to him—and to us—is the relationship between the Classical past of the Chinese nation and the

turbulent period through which it is now passing. Thus the arrangement of the many classical passages has in mind the possible relation of traditional thought, especially of Confucius, upon developments of our decade.

The materials are arranged chronologically, and the sectional divisions are prefaced by brief statements giving what is known of the lives of the several authors, and offering assistance with the lexical problems involved in the bringing of ancient works written in a pictorial type of language into modern translation. An abundance of footnotes gives further assistance at the point of translation.

The volume lacks an analytical index, containing only one by authors. It is readable, well arranged, and brings the reader down to date with a seventy-page excerpt from the writings of Chairman Mao. It is to be regretted that the volume carries a price of twenty dollars; this may be a barrier to a larger circulation, which it deserves.

Harold B. Kuhn

The Gospel According to St. John. The New International Commentary, by Leon Morris. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971. xi, 936 pages.

Whenever a new series of commentaries comes into being, almost invariably the reading public wants to know about the fourth gospel. Such has been the situation with the New International Commentary (NIC), partly because of the importance of this gospel, but also because it has been known for some time that the assignment had been given to the very able Principal Leon Morris of Melbourne.

Prolegomena for this commentary have been coming from the pen of Principal Morris for more than a decade. In 1960 he gave us *The Dead Sea Scrolls and St. John's Gospel*; in 1964 *The New Testament and the Jewish Lectionaries*; and in 1969 *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*. These have enabled him to limit the amount of space in the present volume that relates to introductory material, with the result that we have more than 800 pages of commentary on the text of the fourth gospel.

Morris' volume follows the well-known format of the NIC series with the printing of the ASV by units and the commentary given verse by verse. Technical material relating to the Greek text and to critical problems is kept in the footnotes which, not infrequently, take up

half the page. This makes the commentary useful for both the trained and untrained interpreter. Nine additional notes on *logos*—what commentary on John could be without this additional note?—the world, the Son of Man, Truth, Believing, the Paraclete, Miracles, the Last Supper and the Passover, the Right of the Jews to inflict the Death Penalty also help the reader to face seriously both the problems and the theology of St. John's gospel. In addition, the reader will find numerous minor 'additional notes' in the footnotes.

The author is deeply indebted to B. F. Westcott, not only in the discussion of authorship where the debt is obvious, but also in the treatment of Johannine themes. (cf. also Morris' Studies, pp. 139-292). This reviewer would like to have seen how Morris would respond to R. E. Brown's five-stage theory of composition. It would be enlightening to have an evangelical's response to a theory which posits the original impetus for this gospel with the son of Zebedee. Morris does not mention the theory.

The commentary proper is a delight to read. One finds here an obvious love for the mood and theology of this gospel. Morris leaves no doubt that this gospel is to be studied by both new-born and mature saint alike. The commentary is incisive and pastoral. At the same time something is lacking in terms of theological integration of the thought and purpose of the writer. This reviewer still looks longingly for an evangelical to give us the theological commentary described by Barth and attempted by Sir Edwyn Hoskyns.

Yet one will admire all that Morris has given us. It cannot but take its place alongside Westcott, Bernard, Barrett, Hoskyns and Brown as one of the great and standard commentaries on the fourth gospel. It could be the stellar attraction in the NIC constellation. A final word ought to be said for the publishers. In these days when book prices are getting out of hand, 936 pages for \$12.50 is a marvelous bargain. In addition, the quality of work is Eerdmans all the way.

Robert W. Lyon

Great Verses Through The Bible, Devotional Commentary, by F. B. Meyer. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972. 469 pages. \$7.95.

In this volume, reprint of an earlier British edition, a widely influential preacher and a prolific writer continues to minister in a

vital way to our spiritual needs. This is a devotional exposition of key verses in the Bible, one passage from each chapter. The merit of the whole is the author's insights into the Word and his ability to present spiritual realities with dynamic, life-giving force. The aims to

aim is to win men to Christ and to lead believers into a closer fellowship with Him. This intimate presentation of the Gospel is something of a classic of the Christian life. The volume will serve admirably for daily meditations (its original purpose). The busy minister will profit from F. B. Meyer's expository comments on a great variety of themes, in which case a topical and textual index would greatly facilitate the usefulness of the book.

James D. Robertson

The Touch of the Spirit, by Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972. 160 pages. \$4.95.

The pastor of the West Memorial Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, distills in these pages his Spirit-filled approach to witnessing. In essence, it is a plea for full and constant commitment to Christ, thereby making available a channel through which the Holy Spirit can do His own work.

Those who are looking for some "quickie" techniques and gimmicks for evangelism will be disappointed in the book, for the author is weary of "flesh-centered" tactics to induce "decision." He believes that "being" comes before "doing." And until the heart of man is thoroughly Christ-centered, he sees no purpose in going through the motions of any program.

Here is a refreshing emphasis indeed. Surely all Asburians should rejoice in this practical application of a doctrine precious to our heritage. Though there may be some technical differences in our interpretation of the Spirit-filled life, the essential reality is there, and that is what matters after all. No student of methodology in contemporary evangelism should miss this little volume.

Robert E. Coleman

The Study of Judaism, by Richard Bavier, et. al. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1972. 229 pages. \$12.50.

It has been said that a truly educated man is the one who knows how to go about discovering information which he does not possess. For such purposes bibliographical tools like the present book are indispensable. The essays in this collection seek to give direction and organization to the study of Judaica, admittedly a most difficult field. They do so without becoming propagandistic or defensive.

As is intimated in the subtitle: *Bibliographical Essays*, the contents are not primarily lists of books, although these do form a significant part. Rather, in each of six areas experts discuss and analyze what are to their minds the most competent books in each area. The first chapter, "Judaism in New Testament Times," will be very helpful to any who seeks a basic orientation in this subject so important for New Testament interpretation. The chapter on Rabbinic Sources, on the other hand, is primarily an annotated bibliographical list which the uninitiated will find difficult to use. With this restriction, the chapter is an amazingly careful piece of work.

The next three chapters, "Judaism on Christianity: Christianity on Judaism," "Modern Jewish Thought," and "The Contemporary Jewish Community," give concise and incisive information on the shaping and development of Judaism since medieval times. Each of the chapters provides a fine introduction to its topic and each is worth reading even if its bibliographical suggestions are not followed up. The last chapter deals with the central feature of modern Jewish consciousness: the Holocaust, or the experience of the Jews in Central Europe, 1939-1945. This chapter is important because it makes reference to books which seek the origins of the Nazi brand of anti-semitism.

While the average Christian would not use this book enough to justify its rather high purchase price, it certainly ought to be in the libraries of churches and pastors where there is any serious attempt being made to understand the Jewish people and the appropriate Christian response to them.

J. Oswalt

A Theology of the Holy Spirit, by Frederick Dale Bruner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. 390 pages. \$8.95.

This well-documented volume is the outcome of the author's graduate studies at Princeton and a doctorate at the University of Hamburg. Bruner, a United Presbyterian Missionary, is now Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Seminary in the Philippines. His interest in Pentecostalism is more than academic; during his research he faced personally the question, "Did I want a heart knowledge of the Pentecostal gift . . . ?" The resultant theological essay benefits from this dual concern for academic soundness and spiritual certitude.

The study begins with a thorough study of Pentecostalism as a twentieth century phenomenon. He traces its origins to the Evangelical Revival in England. He concludes that historical spiritual life movements are significant to the extent that they influenced John Wesley . . .

“. . . Methodism is the mother of the nineteenth-century American holiness movement which, in turn, bore twentieth-century Pentecostalism . . . Pentecostalism is primitive Methodism's extended incarnation . . . Inheriting Wesley's experiential theology and revivalism's experiential methodology, Pentecostalism went out into an experience-hungry world and found a response" (pp. 37, 39).

Charles G. Finney is credited with being the major human factor in making revivalism the major religion in nineteenth century America. Wesley's theology and Finney's revivalism therefore merged in the American Holiness Movement and subsequently in modern Pentecostalism (p. 42).

Bruner traces, in a relatively objective and thorough manner, the beginnings of the tongues movement from Kansas (1901) to Los Angeles (1906) to North Europe (1909), to South America, and thence to Neo-Pentecostalism in some of the main-line churches today. The charismatic movement today centers at the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship (Los Angeles), the Assemblies of God (Springfield, Missouri) and the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee). The Assemblies prefer Reformation theology and two works of grace, while the Church of God is more in the Arminian-Wesleyan tradition favoring, however, three stages in the quest for perfection.

The author examines the Biblical basis for the doctrines emphasized by the Pentecostals. He finds that as in Wesley and the Holiness Movement, it is not sufficient to receive Christ by faith, that in addition the believer needs to be filled with the Spirit. While the

Holiness Movement *welcomed* spontaneous physical expressions of joy (such as shouting), the Pentecostals *demanded* physical evidence of divine blessing (tongues), (p. 76). Primitive Methodism made *feeling* the witness of the fulness of the Spirit, notes Bruner, while modern Pentecostalism makes *glossolalia* the basis of assurance. Both have similar conditions for the baptism of the Spirit: regeneration, obedience, confession of need, consecration and faith leading to assurance. The chief difference is that Pentecostalism insists that speaking with tongues is the invariable physical evidence of the initial baptism of the Holy Spirit, as a "second work of grace."

After examining the alleged Biblical and historical basis for Pentecostal belief and practice, Bruner undertakes a thorough and critical examination of their validity. In general he rejects as "good works" all conditions other than faith as conditions for receiving all of God's grace. Any terms which modify faith, such as "fulness," he considers worse than useless. He believes any conditions for receiving the fulness of the Spirit are equivalent to the magical incantations of Simon Magus: "both seek beyond faith to get ahold of supernatural powers" (p. 183). All of the "conditions" deemed necessary for this experience—relinquishing known sin, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, seeking with the whole heart—are termed "works," which imperil simple faith alone (*sola fides*). Repeatedly his indebtedness to Luther and to Calvinistic convictions are in evidence. The Spirit's coming, he writes, is "not conditional." Confession of sin and repentance is equated with "works," which only hinder simple faith. Man is passive; it is all of grace. Again and again he belabors Pentecostals for seeking more than Christ's forgiveness at conversion and for insisting that the believer has some responsibility for meeting conditions (repentance, obedience, eagerness and the like).

Bruner's view of water baptism is more Lutheran or Catholic than Calvinistic; more than a symbol, it is for him the vehicle which bestows Christ's fulness on the participant (p. 263). For him baptism is all-inclusive and nothing specific is to be sought thereafter. He overlooks Romans 6:12 where after identification with Christ in baptism the believer is urged to "reckon himself dead indeed to sin," and II Peter 1:10 where believers are urged to "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure," and to "press on to maturity" (Hebrews 6:1).

In spite of his efforts at thoroughness and relative objectivity, his insistence on faith alone places him, along with B. B. Warfield and others, in viewing a second work of grace as not only superfluous

but actually perverting the gospel of “grace alone.” He rates Pentecostalism, as subversive of the gospel—even as the legalism condemned in the Galatian letter, the asceticism in Colossians, and the self-styled “spirituals” of the Corinthian correspondence.

The essay would be improved if condensed and the many duplications reduced in number. An excellent bibliography is added, reflecting, as do the footnotes, acquaintance with works in German and French as well as English. The purpose of the discussion would have been achieved far more effectively if Bruner had not weakened his case by exaggerating *sola fides*, by emphasizing texts supporting his position while ignoring many which do not, and by minimizing the need of spiritual discipline and aspiration. He stresses the objective nature of faith and ignores the subjective factor implicit in Luther’s emphasis on faith as “trust.” For him a Christian is one who accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour and, consequently, is simultaneously baptized with the Holy Spirit with the acceptance of water baptism. He recognizes no distinction between a “nominal Christian” and one who has experienced the grace of the Lord Jesus, no awareness of James’ distinction between a “dead” faith and one which is verified by “works” (James 2:17). He insists that one should seek Christ and not the Holy Spirit as such, ignoring Jesus’ encouraging his disciples to ask, and His reassurance that the Father gives the Holy Spirit *to those who ask* (Luke 11:13).

Bruner is grossly unfair to Pentecostalism (and the Wesleyan tradition) by insisting that they teach that “the believer is required nothing less than the supreme accomplishment—the removal of sin—and this prior to . . . the full gift of the Holy Spirit” (p. 235). “The believer is responsible for the work of cleansing his heart, for the removal of all conscious sin . . . ; only then will the Holy Spirit be given” (p. 249).

Actually Pentecostals (and Wesleyans) confess the lingering presence of indwelling sinful inclinations which hinder holiness and ask for its removal and replacement by the fulness of the Spirit’s presence and power; they do not presume to remove sin themselves! The Pentecostal message, from which Bruner dissents, is that “in seeking the baptism with the Spirit we should always remember that the first requisite is to be cleansed from all known and conscious sin” (p. 235). This is in accord with Bible messages which read, “If I regard (tolerate, protect) iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me” (Psalm 66:18); “Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (Romans 6:1); “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to . . . cleanse us . . .” (I John 1:9).

Bruner correctly rebukes the Pentecostals for assuming that the sinner seeks Christ and pardon while the believer seeks the Spirit. He correctly insists that every believer who has Christ is born of the Spirit but he incorrectly fails to distinguish between being born of the Spirit (“baptized” by the Spirit into the body of Christ—I Corinthians 12:13) and being filled and empowered by the Spirit (Luke 24:49). He insists that if the believer has Christ and the Spirit there is nothing lacking in his Christian experience. He fails to recognize a distinction between being “in Christ” and being filled with the Spirit although he does acknowledge that the apostles experienced fillings subsequent to Pentecost (p. 214).

He, like Luther, feels compelled to adhere to the concept of being simultaneously a saint and a sinner, hence is not an “evangelical” in the current usage of the term. By his emphasis on the simultaneity of saving faith and water baptism he is at a loss to know how to assess infant baptism, but concludes tentatively that its retention is preferable to the alternatives.

The volume is commendable in that footnotes are located on the relevant pages rather than gathered in the back. The inclusion of primary sources or “documents” adds much to the value of the book. Negatively, the indented portions include both the author’s ideas, of secondary importance, and also quotations from others with only quotation marks to distinguish them. To have the quotations alone in the indented paragraphs would facilitate reading and comprehension.

A more thorough study of glossolalia in the Corinthian and contemporary churches would have enhanced the value of the study. But Bruner is preoccupied with the principal of *sola fides* and other matters are subordinated.

George A. Turner