

BOOK REVIEWS

Interpreting the Gospels, by R. C. Briggs. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 188 pages. \$4.50.

This volume should be a welcomed addition for many students and pastors. Seeking to give an introduction to the historical-critical methodology being utilized in contemporary biblical studies, Dr. Briggs, Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, provides a useful tool for the novice. He presents "a brief, analytical description of the basic tools. . . necessary for meaningful interpretation of the New Testament," specifically with reference to the Synoptics, and indicates "some implications of the use of these tools. . . ."

After the problems in biblical interpretation are pointed out in chapter one, the remaining eight chapters deal with these biblical problems. Though presented in a summary fashion, they are well-defined, and the reader is introduced to the thoughts of individual scholars; in addition he is given an overall view. The conclusions in most of the chapters provide a good review as the student tries to outline the problem in his own mind.

A brief bibliography is also given in each chapter which should be helpful, though it is generally inadequate for the conservative, who would like some evidence of consideration. (But since the author writes off the relevancy of modern conservatism in biblical studies, one should not expect representative books among the suggestions for additional reading.)

A simple listing of the eight problems considered demonstrates the possible utility of the book:

1. The problem of the text: textual criticism
2. The problem of the sources: source criticism
3. The problem of oral tradition: form criticism
4. The problem of authorship: redaction criticism
5. The problem of the canon: the Bible
6. The problem of history: Jesus of history or Christ of faith
7. The problem of interpretation: the function of biblical language
8. The problems of unity and authority: the Scriptures.

Dr. Briggs's work should be appreciated by the nonspecialist for whom he writes. But it should be understood that it is only an introduction and that it is written from a perspective that is quite unacceptable to

conservative scholarship. Some categorical statements are disturbing because they gloss over the fact that they are not “assured results” of investigation, nor are they completely agreed upon by scholarship in general (e.g., “Insofar as can be determined, no book in the New Testament can be attributed to one of the original disciples”). However, these observations do not negate the positive contribution made to the discerning reader.

William B. Coker

Liberal Protestantism, edited and introduced by Bernard M. G. Reardon. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968. 244 pages. \$6.75.

This volume is one in a series edited by Henry Chadwick and entitled “A Library of Modern Religious Thought,” a new series of reprinted writings of particular theological and historical importance. These writings are selected from works published in the past three centuries which are no longer readily accessible but which are related to issues of current interest.

The author, lecturer in divinity at the University of New Castle-upon-Tyne, presents in this volume a wide range of extracts from nineteenth and early twentieth century theologians. He opens with a long introduction in which he sets forth his understanding of the main characteristics of Liberal Protestantism; as well, he indicates certain views of liberalism’s representatives.

He notes in his introduction that, whereas Liberal Protestantism is by no means a closed system of doctrine and whereas it has never formulated a confession, it can best be determined by a study of its historical emergence and progress. He notes particularly the influence of Kant, Schleiermacher, Ritschl (and the Ritschlian school represented by Herrmann, Kaftan, and Harnack) and also treats Liberal Protestantism in France, Britain and America. The introduction (sixty-five pages) is then followed by source readings from representative Liberal Protestant authors.

The worth of the volume is increased by the incisive comment regarding the weaknesses of “liberal” theology (many of which are the burden of the complaints leveled at Liberalism by its wayward child, Neo-orthodoxy). The fundamental case against Liberalism has been the tendency to remove the necessary “offense” of the Gospel. (As H. Richard Niebuhr put it: “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgement through the ministrations of a Christ without

a cross.”) In short, Liberalism is criticized for its *reduction* of Christianity to a set of moral principles, presented in a way both academic and bourgeois. Liberalism, in its desire to remove the wall between the “sacred” and the “secular,” too often identified the secular with the sacred.

It is curious that no selections from such men as Ernest Troeltsch, Hastings Rashdall, A. C. McGiffert, Walter Rauschenbusch or Harry Emerson Fosdick appear. Yet, the selection of readings which does appear contains a helpful cross section of liberal authors, and is an aid in understanding the best in this influential theological tradition.

Kenneth Cain Kinghorn

Nobody Wanted War, by Ralph K. White. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1968. 340 pages. \$5.95.

This volume by the Professor of Psychology at George Washington University is an outgrowth of an article published in the *Journal of Social Issues*, 1966, and also of a two-month study tour in Vietnam during the summer of 1967. It is a relatively objective and scientific approach to the problem of the current struggle in Vietnam, with special reference to the motivation behind the United States' involvement in the struggle. Among the most effective features of the book is the author's ability to project himself into the thinking of the other person and to analyze with considerable objectivity the reasons for the other's perspective. The author endeavors throughout the volume to see the issues, not as black and white oversimplifications, but as involved and complex.

As a result of his two-month stay in Vietnam, his conclusion is that there are three groups among the South Vietnamese—the small minority who are definitely and ardently pro-Communist, the small minority who are just as definitely anti-Communist, and the large majority between who prefer peace and are less concerned about the political ideologies and the type of government under which they live. Professor White also analyzes the conflict from the standpoint of “militant Americans,” “non-militant Americans,” and the “onlookers.”

While drawing upon his background for psychological behavior patterns, the author reasons that in both animals and men, success is an important factor in subsequent behavior patterns. Thus, an aggressor who encounters easy success is encouraged to seek more of the same. Conversely, an aggressor who is defeated learns to change his behavior pattern and cease aggression. The author applies this principle both to Communists

and Americans. His conclusion is that the stalemate which now exists in Vietnam is good in that it will discourage Communists from the hope of easy victories through aggression, and keep Americans from easily thinking that intervention pays off. In this analysis the author seeks to be non-partisan, although his sympathies show through on nearly every page.

In an appendix he moves from diagnosis to prescription and recommends the adoption by the United States and the Allies of the policy of a large-scale holding operation, the withdrawing of scattered forces to areas in South Vietnam which are dominantly anti-Communist, and the need of remaining there indefinitely to discourage further Communist takeover. This is a policy advocated by General Gavin, Walter Lippmann, George Kennan and others who do not envision military victory and yet are unwilling to settle for unconditional surrender. In spite of the author's attempt to be objective and factual, this bias is frequently seen, not so much in an unwillingness to see more than one side, but after admitting facts on both sides, in a slight distortion of the evidence in line with his bias. This is a danger to which everyone is subject and from which this author in spite of his attempt at scientific objectivity is far from free.

George A. Turner

All the Holy Days and Holidays, or Sermons on all National and Religious Memorial Days, by Herbert Lockyer. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968. 283 pages. \$4.95.

Herbert Lockyer is famous for his "All" series (*All the Prayers of the Bible, All the Miracles of the Bible, et. al.*). This volume may be added to the minister's collection of special-day volumes. There are sermons for thirty-eight days, along with poetry, prayers, and information about festival origins. He even has materials on April Fool's Day, vacation days, and the opening of an evangelistic crusade. Sermons are replete with scriptural materials.

Donald E. Demaray

The Deeds of Christ, by Harold A. Bosley. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 176 pages. \$3.50.

Since 1962 Harold A. Bosley has served as senior minister of Christ United Methodist Church, New York City. Prior to this he was in turn minister at First Methodist Church, Evanston, Illinois, Dean of the

Divinity School at Duke University, and pastor of Mount Vernon Place Methodist Church, Baltimore.

This is the last of a series of three volumes which present an in-depth study of Jesus Christ. The first in the series was entitled *The Mind of Christ*. The second was *The Character of Christ*.

In this work the author deals with Christ as a pragmatist, a philosopher of action. Each chapter begins with a specific deed of Christ listed in the gospels and then proceeds to examine the motive, intention, and spirit of the deed. The chapter titles are actually a biography of Jesus in general outline. The purpose of the book is to see Jesus Christ in areas of significant action, to catch something of the incarnate purpose of His life, to sense the vigor, the determination, and the unfailing compassion of that life. The author calls upon Christians to share in and to manifest the love of God as revealed through the actions of Jesus Christ.

The book is filled with illuminating and challenging spiritual insights. For the most part even the social action emphasis of the author is not offensive to the more conservative reader. However, to this reviewer there are at least two unfortunate references in areas of theological significance. The author too easily rejects the healing miracles of Jesus (pp. 66, 67). Then there is the patronizing remark that only the grace of God can keep a person from ending up as a conservative (p. 96).

Frank Bateman Stanger

A Short Life of Christ, by Everett F. Harrison. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. 288 pages. \$5.95.

Today's scholars seem reluctant to write a full-length life of Christ comparable, for example, to Edersheim's classic *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. The reason for this is in part the vast accumulation of materials made available by recent research. The present volume is a treatment of Christ's life that concerns itself mainly with chief events as they appear in a commonly accepted sequence. A few chapter titles are included independent of chronological considerations, such as those on the teaching, the miracles, and the character of Christ.

It is the author's conviction that the Christ encountered today by believing individuals is identical with the Christ who confronted man in history. Dr. Harrison is realistic in facing problems related to the text, and he is especially sensitive to problems raised by modern thought. The

refreshing feature of these short studies is a richness of spiritual insight in the context of a scholarly approach. The volume will yield substantial support in preparing a series of sermons on events in the life of Christ such as His birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, crucifixion, and resurrection. Here is provocative and helpful reading for preacher and layman alike.

James D. Robertson

The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments, by F. Gavin. Reprint. New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1969. 120 pages. \$6.95.

A great debt is due to Ktav Publishing House for making available through its scholarly reprint program many of the old classics which have long been out of print. This particular work by F. Gavin, past professor of Ecclesiastical History at The General Theological Seminary in New York, is his Chapman Lectures (London) of 1927.

In these lectures, which are excellently documented with Talmudic and Mishnaic texts, Gavin contends for Jewish antecedents of the Christian sacraments on the basis of precedents discoverable in Rabbinic Judaism. In the first lecture he deals with Judaism and Sacramentalism. Recognizing that many scholars argue as does Bousset, that "the Jewish Church as a whole knew nothing of sacraments, if by Sacrament we mean a sacred transaction in which the believer comes to share in a supernatural gift of grace through material channels," Gavin insists that the argument is fallacious. It is true that explicit theological definitions and formulations are not found in Judaism, but this is characteristic of the "creedlessness" of Judaism. The failure of anyone to successfully write a historical theology of Judaism ought to be significant to the perceptive student. Moreover, the question is not whether the Christian definition of sacrament is Jewish, but whether the essential factors in the definition are in Judaism. Gavin concedes that the former is un-Jewish, but demonstrates the latter in Jewish practices and usages, concluding that "There is nothing inherently improbable in assuming that Judaism furnished the materials for Christian sacramentalism."

The second lecture deals with the Jewish proselyte and the Christian convert, with emphasis on the sacrament of baptism. To most Christians, Jewish proselytism would be closely associated with the baptism in Judaism, relating to the immersion-bath for purification.

A late first century debate questioned whether baptism or circumcision is the essential rite of initiation into Judaism. Gavin demonstrates that there is no need to look farther than contemporary Rabbinic Judaism “for the interpretation of early Christian belief and practice in regard to Baptism.”

The third lecture compares the Jewish “Berakha” (thanksgiving-blessing) and the Christian Eucharist and observes many parallels between the two. The Christian sacrament, more related to the Jewish custom of the Common Meal of Fellowship on the Sabbath eve than to the Passover, was determined by Jewish precedents, usages and ideas. However, this is not to say that the Christian Eucharist is fully explained by Judaism. Its form is Jewish, but its theological content is Christian, determined by the Christology of the Early Church.

Gavin concludes that “two factors explain sacramentalism—Judaism and Jesus.” Borrowing heavily from its Judaic heritage, the Church developed the sacraments in the light of her Lord. When we recognize this truth, we will more perceptively understand “the unique evaluation of the Person, Place and Office of our Lord.”

Examination of this volume will convince the reader that it was worthy of being reprinted. Gavin reminds us of the wealth of Rabbinic materials overlooked by a host of Christian students who seek to explain the Christian Church and its sacraments without reference to contemporary Judaism from which it sprang. “Again and again emerge the sure tokens of an indebtedness to Judaism, immeasurably transmuted in meaning by His Power who was Jesus the Jew.”

William B. Coker

The Macmillan Bible Atlas, by Y. Aharoni and M. Avi-yonah. New York and London: Macmillan, 1968. 183 pages, plus appendices. \$14.95.

The New Israel Atlas, by Zev Vilnay. Jerusalem, Israel: University's Press, December, 1969 or January, 1970. \$130.00.

A major publishing venture in Jerusalem, on the twentieth anniversary of Israel's becoming a state, is the appearance of these two definitive atlases. *The Macmillan Atlas* is the more comprehensive. One of Israel's leading archaeologists, Professor Aharoni, of the Hebrew University, prepared the section dealing with the Old Testament. His colleague, Professor Avi-yonah, was responsible for the remainder of the volume

(maps 172-264). The Macmillan volume was published earlier (1964) in Jerusalem but the material of the current volume is all new. *The Macmillan Atlas* features monochromatic maps with accompanying terse explanations and the citation of major prime sources. The maps are relatively uncluttered and yet sufficiently detailed to be of use for close study. The maps embrace a multitude of subjects including an introductory section on the geography and archaeology of Palestine from the Ancient to the Roman periods. Then, in greater detail the Canaanite period is covered, with maps which feature battle campaigns. This section is followed by texts and maps dealing with Israel's conquest and settlement, the monarchy, the Post-Exilic period up to the Bar Kokaba Revolt, and the reign of Hadrian.

Accompanying the text is a judicious selection of pictures illustrating archaeology, such as ancient pictures, inscriptions and artifacts. Scripture references accompany each map. The *Atlas* is helpful in tying together the historical sequence in the Scriptures and is especially helpful in the inter-Testament period, including the Hasmonian Kingdom. Several pages and maps are devoted to the career of Jesus, the life of Paul, and the spread of the Church in the second century. The material is presented objectively and concisely and offers a valuable supplement to more detailed studies in history and geography.

The New Israel Atlas was written by Israel's best known author of guidebooks of the Holy Land. The Vilnay volume serves as a complement to the other volume rather than a competitor. Nearly half of the *Israel Atlas* is devoted to a description of modern Israel in terms of such things as geology, soils, forests, cities, religious complexion, industrial development and modern settlements. The section dealing with history takes the reader from the conquest of Canaan to the time of the British Mandate. The "struggle for independence" includes the struggles of the emerging state of Israel, culminating in the 1967 War. Also included are documents that are important in the history of the State's formation. The colored maps are effectively drawn and the accompanying text is clear and concise. In both volumes the maps are more numerous than in most atlases and the historical text is correspondingly reduced. But the proximity of map explanation embellished with appropriate pictures and diagrams ties the complicated history and geography together in an effective manner. The Vilnay volume is especially helpful in relation to recent Palestinian struggles between Israel and the Arabs from the Mandate Period to 1967. The author's prime interest is in the State of Israel rather than Palestine history and geography as such. One sentence only is devoted to the career of Jesus and none to the early Christian movement. Although not adequate in the areas of Palestine history and geography in

post-biblical times, the *Atlas* is useful in graphically highlighting the most important crises.

George A. Turner

God Reigns, Expository Studies in the Prophecy of Isaiah, by James Leo Green. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1968. 178 pages. \$4.50.

This book of 178 pages is written by a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Ph.D.) and Professor of Old Testament at Southeastern Seminary. It was written for adult study classes in Baptist Churches and as a text for an extension course in Isaiah. Written primarily for laymen, its language is non-technical; its documentation is not extensive, although it is adequate for the purpose. The author writes from an evangelical perspective and is essentially conservative in tone. Although inclined to agree with his teacher, J. R. Sampey, that the chapters 40-66 are written by someone other than the eighth century prophet, he believes the entire book is Isaiah's in spirit. In the sixteen chapters of his book, the author lifts from the entire Book of Isaiah most of the crucial portions and focuses attention upon the essential ideas. The exposition reflects a wide knowledge of contemporary scholarship and considerable familiarity with relevant literature and conditions in Bible lands. Stress is given to the person and work of the "suffering servant," whom the author identifies, as did Philip the evangelist, with Jesus of the Gospels. A bibliography widely representative of titles adds considerably to the value of this exposition. Although the book was intended for laymen, scholars also will find here some helpful insights, judicious handling of secondary sources, and useful biographical hints, together with a positive evangelistic thrust.

George A. Turner

Post-Christianity in Africa, by G. C. Oosthuizen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. 272 pages. \$7.95.

G. C. Oosthuizen is an internationally acknowledged authority on African indigenous religion. For the past decade he has served as

Professor of Missiology and Ecclesiastical History at Fort Hare University College, South Africa.

In this book Professor Oosthuizen makes a careful and detailed examination of the approximately six thousand religious movements that have grown initially out of the Church and are to be found in many of the independent states on the African continent. He classifies these separatist movements under three main headings: 1) *churches*, in which the Word, Sacraments, Person of Christ, and church discipline are given their rightful place; 2) *Christian sects*, in which the emphasis is upon some peripheral doctrine such as adult baptism or the Sabbath; 3) *nativistic movements*, which have incorporated into their doctrine and practice many elements from animism.

The author sees in these religious movements a reaction against the “white man’s church” with its paternalistic attitude and deep suspicion of indigenous religious expression. He sees the phenomenal growth of these groups as an indictment against the “established churches” for their detachment from the African existential situation, and for their resulting irrelevance in the African context. Independentism, he also feels, is a retreat to the safety of traditional religion and culture in face of the socially disruptive forces of modern industrial civilization.

In addition to providing extensive information concerning the various beliefs and practices of the movements, Oosthuizen subjects these beliefs and practices to careful theological analysis. Among the subjects examined are the relation between the Holy Spirit and the ancestor spirit, baptism and purification rites, how the Old Testament is interpreted in the movements, moral guilt versus social guilt, the use of holy water, and the practice of healing.

The last two chapters of the book are especially helpful, for here the author discusses ways in which the African Church can try to remedy what appears to be a confused and tragic situation. The publication will be of value not only to those who are serving in the African context, but to all engaged in mission in many lands where the “foreignness” of the Church is being called into question and the indigeneity of the younger churches is seen to be of prime importance.

John T. Seamands