

BOOK REVIEWS

A Creed for a Christian Skeptic, by Mary McDermott Shideler. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. 167 pages. \$3.95.

Mrs. Shideler is already well known as the author of *The Theology of Romantic Love*, an important study of the thought of British author Charles Williams, and a shorter essay about Williams in the attractive new series "Contemporary Writers in Christian Perspective" also published by Eerdmans. She lives currently in Iowa where her husband is a professor of Philosophy in the State University of Iowa.

This book, Mrs. Shideler insists, was written "by a layman for laymen" to answer their questions about Christian faith. More specifically, it is a serious work of apologetics aimed particularly at those on the borderline of the Christian community. The term "Christian Skeptic" seems designed primarily to gain the confidence of such inhabitants of the "twilight zone," but at times its referent appears to be rather the committed but thoughtful Christian. The concept is derived from Charles Williams, who is quoted as saying: "There is a great deal of skepticism in believers; and a good deal of belief in non-believers; the only question is where we decide to give our better energy." At any rate, her major target is identified as the "dogmatic spirit—in fundamentalism, liberalism, radicalism, traditionalism, and skepticism itself."

For Mrs. Shideler, the Apostles' Creed is to be used as a "center rather than a wall"—that is, to indicate the orientation of one's thought rather than as a rigid determiner of orthodoxy. She does not claim to provide a normative interpretation of the creed either historically or for today, but rather uses it as a framework on which to hang her various reflections on the validity of Christian faith in today's world. These reflections are grouped into four parts: the Self ("I believe in"); the Other (first article of the creed—God the Father); the Crucial Problem (second article—Jesus Christ) and the Consummation (third article—Holy Spirit). Space allotted to these does not at all follow the structure of the Creed. Mrs. Shideler is decidedly more "theocentric" in her thinking than "Christocentric," devoting much more space to the first article than to the second. The single word "maker" (considered separately from "of heaven and earth") receives far more attention than the expression, "the third day he rose again from the dead."

The author's religious background is not mentioned, but her intellectual affinities are with the urbane literary Anglican tradition exemplified in C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams. Indeed, the dust jacket bills this book as a selection of the Episcopal Book Club. The book consequently reflects both the strengths and weaknesses of that tradition. Much of the book is written in the popular style of C. S. Lewis' apologetics. At several points the argument is by extended analogy—especially when the incarnation is considered.

On the other hand, the book is extremely eclectic, often taking unexpected turns and reflecting a curious blend of theology and philosophy. The theology is generally "conservative," in a broad cultural sense, rather than "evangelical" in the sense of striving to recapture and express biblical thought patterns. The treatment of most articles in the Creed reflects a broad acquaintance with modern theology.

Inasmuch as a book in apologetics is to be valued largely by the response of those for whom it is written, time alone will be the final arbiter of its effectiveness.

Donald W. Dayton

The Gospel of the Life Beyond, by Herbert Lockyer. Westwood, N. J.: Revell, 1967 (reprinted in 1968). 110 pages. \$2.00.

The much-loved lecturer and Bible conference speaker, Herbert Lockyer, has excerpted the Scriptures, as well as the writings of earnest Christians, to see what can be said in reply to the eternal query, "If a man die, shall he live again?" In seven chapters, he surveys the landscape and offers the only reply which has permanently established its place in mankind's thinking as the valid answer.

His view of the "basics" of the question centers in the conviction that the Creator has written the sentiment for eternity in man, and that no system which denies it can have permanent survival value as a competitor for the allegiance of the human heart. The volume is written from a warm-hearted point of view, adheres closely to the clear statements of Scripture, and does not avoid the tough questions. There is a measure of reserve at the point of moot questions which does not imperil the writer's assertions at the points for which our information seems certain and conclusive.

The pastor who finds himself troubled by the questions raised by those in time and occasion of sorrow will find this an exceptionally

helpful manual. The believer who wishes to sight the distant shore toward which we are all sailing will likewise find it a source of encouragement.

Harold B. Kuhn

Victory Through Surrender, by E. Stanley Jones. Nashville: Abingdon, 1966. 128 pages. \$2.75.

The heart of Dr. Jones' message is to be found in this fine little volume. With his arresting style he communicates that the secret of self-realization is self-surrender.

This is the invaluable message said a thousand ways. "Your self is your heaven or hell now" (p. 8). "I have found only one remedy, for I find only one disease—self at the center, self trying to be God" (p. 14). One cannot get rid of the self by trying: "If your self gets your attention, even a fighting attention, it will get you. You will be a self-preoccupied person and a self-preoccupied person is a self-defeated person" (p. 28).

We must surrender not merely our time, loyalty, trust, service and money, but also *self*. Fears, worries, anxieties, resentments are marginal—*self* is the real problem. Surrender is not elimination of the self. Surrender is given to God who cleanses it and gives it back. He who loses his life to find it has discovered the deepest law of the universe. ". . . you are never so much your own as when you are most his" (p. 33).

Then what dies? The false life, the fake "I." A new man rises from the dead, for "we never live until we have gone to our own funeral" (p. 37). Here Dr. Jones is quite free to be dogmatic. There is *no other way* to self-realization. ". . . I know how life works," he announces, "it works His way. The sum total of reality is behind His way" (p. 45).

But God does not ask us to do something He will not do. "Self-surrender is at the very heart of God and is at the heart of all His attitudes and actions" (p. 51). "When He asks us to surrender ourselves, He is asking us to fulfill the deepest thing in Himself and the deepest thing in us" (p. 51).

"All the problems of human living come out of self-centered living" (p. 52). A psychologist said it's a million to one that the self-centered are unpopular . . . with themselves as well as others. Self-surrender brings meaning to life. Dr. Jones quotes Hammarskjöld who testifies that from the moment of surrender life made sense, not nonsense. The entire thought is summed up on page 57: Jesus "aligned himself with self-giving instead of self-saving."

Donald E. Demaray

The Synoptic Gospels, two vols., by Claude G. Montefiore. (Library of Biblical Studies, ed. by Harry M. Orlinsky.) New York: Ktav Publishing Company, 1968. 411 and 678 pages. \$22.50.

It is highly significant that the Jewish Institute of Religion of Hebrew Union College should undertake the republication of a work on the Synoptic Gospels, even though this work was done by a Jewish scholar. Montefiore hoped for a rapprochement between Liberal Christianity and Reformed Judaism; his monumental work, appearing in 1909, reflected that hope, in that he felt that in his position he could present the figure of Jesus from a neutral point of view.

Published here is the second edition of Montefiore's work as it appeared in 1927. L. H. Silberman has written the Prolegomenon, appearing at the opening of Volume I, in which he sets forth the position, objectives and work-scope of the original author. Montefiore's opinion that Jesus did not really intend to establish a new "religion" underlies much of the work. Jesus appears as a prophet whose major concern was ethical, and whose opposition to the Rabbis of the time was chiefly at the point of the ceremonial law. Thus, the conflict was one of Inward versus Outward; it was in this that Montefiore found the "tragic" element in Jesus' career.

The author's understanding of the person of our Lord is limited by his understanding of Him as a prophet and sage. The accounts of His conception and birth (in Matthew and Luke) are understood in the same light, and Montefiore tends to separate the materials of the Synoptics into two parts: First, those which are of common interest to Jews and Christians; and second, those which are primarily of concern to Christians. The account of our Lord's resurrection is held to spring from an "illusion" which was "God-willed" and which "did as well as a miracle" (II, p. 639).

This reprint brings to the attention of the Christian reading public a work of unquestioned thoroughness which in its time was powerful in the field of New Testament studies. Many will conclude, however, that biblical studies have moved far beyond Montefiore, whose usefulness to our generation falls largely in the area of historical studies, or perhaps better, the history of critical studies.

Harold B. Kuhn

God and Secularity, Vol. III in the series *New Directions in Theology Today*, by John Macquarrie. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967. 157 pages. \$1.95 (paperback).

This book takes God and secularity as the "poles of discussion." The assumption is that the theologian cannot avoid speaking of God nor can he avoid the responsibility of addressing his own world and speaking the language of his own time.

The author feels that the new interest in secularity has arisen in Britain and America among ex-Barthians who are in rebellion against Barth's exaggeration of God's transcendence and his corresponding depreciation of man's "natural" achievements. It is as well a protest against the varieties of Protestantism which have given the impression that the world is evil. Several concerns of the secularists are outlined: (1) A concern for the temporal, as opposed to the eternal, (2) A preoccupation with the "secular" everyday activities of man, as contrasted to the "religious" activities of praying, worshiping, singing hymns, going to retreats, etc., (3) An interest in secular knowledge—the type gained by human endeavor, which is based on the exercise of man's rational faculties and his powers of observation, and (4) A belief that secular man is an autonomous man, contrasted to a being who is dependent upon faith and obedience. The author seeks to relate the concerns of theism with these secular concerns, rejecting any attempts (e.g. van Buren) at a thorough-going reduction of Christianity to pure secularism.

Macquarrie observes that secularism is most hostile to any form of the Christian faith which gives the impression of irrelevant religiosity. His central thesis is that "the sharp dichotomy between 'secular' and 'religious' on which so much of the current discussion turns is a false dichotomy" (p. 51). He laments Protestantism's tendency to swing from one extreme to another (e.g. between the extremes of transcendence and immanence, social gospel and personal gospel, etc.). He draws from a number of theologians and adds some of his own insights in an effort to develop his thesis that God and the secular are not mutually exclusive.

The author has a superior grasp of his subject as it relates to recent literature in the area. He includes a helpful appendix in which he presents an annotated bibliography of the books on the subject from 1961-1966. This study is in keeping with the good quality of the other volumes in the series, and may serve to give a helpful introduction to the subject of secularism.

Kenneth Cain Kinghorn

Protest and Politics, by Robert G. Clouse, Robert D. Linder and Richard V. Pierard, editors. Greenwood, S. C.: The Attic Press, 1968. 271 pages. \$5.95.

It is standard procedure in some circles to identify evangelicals with some form of rightist ideology, or to say the least, to assume that they sever their basic faith from their attitudes toward secular institutions and issues. In so doing, so the critique customarily runs, evangelicals assume a stance of unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. This volume, edited by three evangelical laymen, reflects a mood of social criticism and of discriminating attitudes toward social issues, and is informed by a deep desire to avoid this compartmentalized form of faith.

The Introduction lays out the general format, which includes chapters by eleven writers, the first being one entitled, "How Can A Christian Be in Politics?" by Senator Mark O. Hatfield. In a sense, the Senator from Oregon sets the tone for the work. With an incisiveness typical of his thinking, he lays bare the major presuppositions which should guide the Christian citizen, centering in the conviction that man lives "under God" and that he must include in all his thinking and doing the dimension of the divine sovereignty and ultimate disposition of history. The note of the rejection of dogmatic finalism in the Christian's thinking about social and political matters underlies the lectures which follow.

The essays by the ten authors who provide the body of the volume are remarkably balanced in their conclusions and careful in their analyses. The respective writers do not hesitate to identify extremists on either side and to probe the states of mind which guide their behavior, be they Right or Left. Then, too, there is no hesitancy at the point of offering basic social and economic criticisms. Outstanding here is William W. Cuthbertson of William Jewell College, who in his chapter "The Christian, the American Military Establishment, and War" sets our national policies alongside the ethical demands of the Gospel. Without advocating an unconditional pacifism, Dr. Cuthbertson offers an incisive criticism of growing militarism, and sounds a warning with which the thoughtful Christian can scarcely disagree.

Equally perceptive is the essay by Dr. James E. Johnson of Bethel College in St. Paul entitled "The Christian and the Emergence of the Welfare State." In this, Professor Johnson recognizes the complexities of modern life and sets forth a sensitive view of the areas in which the Christian ought to be guided by some inescapable pragmatic factors, instead of adopting a rigidly negative attitude toward society's responsibility for the distressed and disadvantaged in our land.

Specific comments in favor of these three chapters do not indicate a

lack of appreciation for the other eight. In point of fact, this symposium seems to transcend the usual format of such works in that there are really no "weaker" sections. A careful reading, for example, of Earl J. Reeves' chapter, "The Population Explosion and Christian Concern," might prevent among evangelicals a myopic attitude toward family limitation which makes such an attitude largely irrelevant to modern life. Or, an open-minded reading of William W. Adams Jr.'s essay, "Communism, Realism, and Christianity" might forestall an unthinking and iron-clad attitude toward all citizens in communist-dominated lands which is irreconcilable with the mandates of our Lord.

This volume is not written for one who has a closed mind upon any or all of today's pressing social issues. But the evangelical Christian who deeply desires that all areas of his life and thought shall be reduced to submission to "the mind of Christ" will find it high on the list of his required reading.

Harold B. Kuhn

Jewish Theology, Systematically and Historically Considered, by Kaufmann Kohler; Introduction by J. L. Blau. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1918 and 1968. 505 pages. \$6.00.

When this material was first published in 1918 it was a pioneering work in the theology of Reformed Judaism. Its author was the president of Hebrew Union College, a man who spent his youth in Germany where he was educated in rabbinical schools and in three universities of Germany. There he broke away from the strict orthodoxy of his home and synagogue and embraced the views of higher criticism popularized by Wellhausen. After migrating to the United States he became Rabbi of some of the most distinguished liberal synagogues in the country before accepting the presidency of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. The thirty-page introduction by Mr. Blau constitutes an invaluable updating of Kohler's work. Blau's introduction pictures Kohler as one of the most influential and liberal theologians and historians of his day. His viewpoint was that of the rationalism of the early twentieth century before neo-orthodoxy and the mysticism of Martin Buber made its influence felt. In short, Kohler's view of the Scriptures is essentially the same as that of Christian liberals who rejected everything in the Scriptures that claims to be supernatural. Only the moral law in the Bible was regarded as binding. Dietary laws and regulations concerning ceremonial purity and dress were rejected. Also rejected was Zionism and the idea that Jews are a religious nation. Rather, he called

them a religious community. Kohler's task was to distinguish between views which he felt must be discarded in a scientific age and those which were considered essential for continuation of Judaism as a faith. He had therefore to simultaneously "both assert and deny the finality of the truth of the Jewish faith." Kohler identified the kingdom of God, envisioned by the Christian social gospel theologians, with the Messianic era envisioned by the Jewish prophets. He did not expect a final judgment nor the resurrection of the body, but did believe in the immortality of the soul. The only heaven and hell he expected were to be experienced on earth when the prophetic ideals had been realized. Blau notes that "Kohler's Jewish theology ends as a transcendental and spiritual humanism."

Since Judaism has no creed other than the Scriptures and since orthodox Judaism of Europe was content to repeat the Scripture with the rabbinic interpretations, there was no need for a systematic theology. But Kohler and other liberal rabbis felt the need of determining on what basis Judaism could adapt itself to the twentieth century as a viable faith. So his theology was designed to serve two purposes: to systematize the teaching of the Bible much as Christian theologians had done and second, to enable modern Jews to rationally reconcile their Jewish faith with the negative results of a scientific criticism of the Scriptures. The reformed Judaism which resulted and of which he became a chief exponent, was regarded by orthodox Judaism as apostasy. But Kohler was only doing for Jewish theologians what was being done in Christianity by scholars and clergymen such as Wellhausen, Driver, Enslin, Auer, and Fosdick.

Kohler's presentation of the idea of God in Judaism, the idea of man and the place of Israel in the kingdom of God is so well written and so carefully documented that its reappearance is to be heartily welcomed not only by those interested in Judaism but also by students of the Old Testament. It is an interesting and important parallel to Christian liberalism in its attempt to reconcile science and faith.

George Allen Turner

Great Men and Movements in Israel, by Rudolf Kittel; Translated by Charlotte A. Knoch and C. D. Wright; Prolegomenon by Theodore H. Gaster. (Library of Biblical Studies, ed. by Harry M. Orlinsky.) New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1968. liii, 465 pages.

For some time now scholars and students have had reason to be grateful to Ktav for the republication of many works produced by the

preceding generation and long since out of print. But the reprinting of this book is a story in itself.

That Kittel identified himself along with Carlyle in espousing the "Great Men" theory of history is well known. In his preface to this volume Kittel speaks in no uncertain terms: "A central idea is followed, namely, that with all due deference to the democratic idea, history must be understood as *a purely aristocratic phenomenon*" (p. vii, italics mine). Written during the early 1920's, the book undoubtedly reflects the frustration of the German people: the Epilogue which closes the book is open and frank at that point. That the book and the author contributed to the climate that brought Hitler to power is probably true, but on the other hand the work does not justify the "tract for the times" label given it by Gaster. And whether it deserves to be described as "starkly propagandistic" will probably be left to each reader to decide, but it speaks well of the objectivity of Ktav and the editorial committee that it should choose to make available again a volume which fed the milieu which produced Hitler.

The author is best known for his admirable *Biblica Hebraica*. His *magnum opus* was *The History of the Hebrews*, in two volumes, which went through several editions in both German and English between 1882 and 1925. The present volume has arisen out of the labors put into his *History* and is a less technical and popular exposition for the general reader of the author's conviction that the great personalities of Israel produced its history.

The author put himself over against the Wellhausen school which completely dominated German scholarship in the latter part of the nineteenth century and which thus began a return to a more moderate and mediating criticism followed by men such as Albright. Kittel's basic contribution lay in the fact that he argued that the Old Testament needed to be interpreted in terms of the larger historical context of the Near East as opposed to the school identified with Wellhausen, whose reconstruction of the history and religion of Israel was based entirely on a criticism of the biblical texts. In this respect the contribution has been permanent and seminal.

The book is comprised of a series of chapters on the great personalities. Though balance is generally exhibited, it might be noted that 25 pages are given to Moses while 26 pages are given to Jerubbaal-Gideon. On the other hand, the book is characterized by an even treatment with no single period neglected in favor of another. The exposition demonstrates a commitment to the text that has not always been seen in German critical work.

Fortunately the new edition has included a rather extended list of corrections of misspellings—some of which border on the hilarious (e.g.,

“Kettle-wagon” for the German *Kesselwagon*, instead of “throne-chariot”).

Much has been achieved in Old Testament research since the book was first published in 1929. Gaster has given twelve pages of constricted comments to show how much the book is truly dated. Yet for power of exposition and insight the volume is still capable of making a clear contribution. Its republication, even so, may not be applauded so universally as that of Swete’s *Introduction to the Septuagint* (which has not yet been superseded).

Robert W. Lyon

Archaeology and the Ancient Testament, by James L. Kelso. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1968. 208 pages. \$4.95.

Since Professor Kelso has taken an emeritus relationship with Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, where he taught many years, he has authored a number of books. His most recent publication is for laymen, and he hopes to lead them to see the highest truths of Scripture as given in the Old Testament. Briefly, at the end, he endeavors to correlate these truths with New Testament teachings.

Dr. Kelso’s method is to present Old Testament material: stories, laws, worship practices, songs, proverbs, prophetic sermons—and contrast them, item by item, with Canaanite counterparts. He compares the Old Testament material with present-day conditions and theology, seeking to exalt the God of the Bible at all times. The author stresses the Christian interpretation and takes a clear-cut stand on the side of revelational truth as over against a rationalistic view. He feels that biblical scholarship which is grounded in an archaeological understanding is the best, for it “studies the Bible in its setting.”

Dr. Kelso is no stranger to archaeology. During the 1920’s he participated in several “digs” and exploratory trips with W. F. Albright; he has been in charge of several excavations, notably Bethel.

The format of the book follows the sequence of material found in the O. T., starting with the creation and the fall. Either events, persons or worship practices serve as points of emphasis in each chapter.

At no time is the well-written content dull or pedantic. From the title one might expect that each page would be filled with technical notes on artifacts and scripts, but such is not the case. The generalized contributions of archaeology, especially in the area of comparative religion, are

of most interest to the author. There is very little of historical detail and almost no linguistic discussion. Biblical theology serves as the main framework of the book. For spice, the author applies to the contemporary scene insights drawn from the study. The skillful combination of these ingredients makes for good reading by laymen, church school teachers, youth leaders, and pastors. A scholar will want much more than the fare which Dr. Kelso has given, but the book was not written for him. The author has correctly gauged his audience and has presented his thoughts on an understandable level. The book is solidly conservative and well rooted in the Scripture.

G. H. Livingston

Earthly Things, by Olov Hartman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. 235 pages. \$5.95.

This collection of essays is by a pastor of the national church in Sweden, who is also a professor at Upsala University. *Earthly Things* is concerned with stating the Christian message in relation to the needs of modern man, as these needs are reflected in contemporary Western culture. Part I, "Church and Gospel," deals with questions of faith and doubt, life and death, love and forgiveness—all in the context of the Church and the Sacraments. Part II, "The Healing Team," discusses the function of the Church and its ministry as mediator of the forgiving love of God. These essays are in the area of pastoral psychology. Part III, "Church and Culture," explores art and literature, with particular concern for ways in which they may serve the Gospel. By relating evangelical theology with cultural and psychological awareness, the author makes a significant contribution to a more meaningful Christianity.

James D. Robertson