

Book Reviews

James D. Robertson, Ph.D., Book Review Editor

The Editorial Committee is delighted to present in this issue a review of a volume by one of its members, Dr. James D. Robertson. This volume, *Handbook of Preaching Resources from English Literature*, has recently been published by The Macmillan Company. Dr. Robertson is Professor of Preaching at Asbury Theological Seminary, and has been a member of the Editorial Committee of this Journal since its inception.

Dr. Robertson's new volume represents the end-product of many years of research, some of which he has done in the libraries of his native Scotland. He combines in a unique sense the qualities of a dedicated theological professor with those of the seasoned literary critic. This significant volume offers to the reading public a systematically arranged thesaurus of "the best that is preachable" in the literature of the English language.

Robert M. Grant, *The Earliest Lives of Jesus*, New York: Harpers, 1961. 134 pages. \$3.50.

In this slender but well-documented volume, Professor Grant explores the lives of Jesus known and studied by the early Christians. After brief description of the differences between the four canonical Gospels, he notices the attitude toward them recorded in writings of the early Fathers. He draws parallels between the historical and literary criticism of pagan authorities and shows how such criticism was directed concerning the Gospels. In many cases, methods employed in a criticism of classical sources are applied quite naturally to research in Christian origins. His special interest lies with Origen and his method of scriptural interpretation.

Of particular interest to this writer is the review of Origen's work on the fourth Gospel. This Gospel, with its spiritual interpretation of historical events, was something especially congenial to the temperament and training of Origen. He was fond of going beyond the historical record to the spiritual meaning which he discovered or thought he discovered latent. He considered Paul and John superior in insight to other writers of the New Testament.

In this work Professor Grant takes issue with current pre-suppositions that are widely held. One is the view familiar to exponents of Neo-orthodoxy, that the faith of the early Christians was not based upon historical evidence. This position Grant finds untenable; rather he finds that faith is not based on prior faith nor "events simply as events," but upon historical records as in I Corinthians 15 where Paul bases his faith in the resurrection upon ascertainable facts. In the second place he doubts the widespread assumption that literary and historical criticism are recent innovations. He finds the ancient writers were also concerned with origins. To the patristic writers the matter of distinguishing between history and legend was of major importance, and they were far from naive in the methods by which they pursued these ends.

George A. Turner

Our Knowledge of God, by John Baillie. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. 263 pages. \$1.45.

The Irony of American History, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952. 174 pages. \$1.25.

The Lord's Prayer, by E. F. Scott. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. 126 pages. \$1.25.

These three paper-backs are reprints of well-known works of other days, made available as Nos. SL 58 and SL 59 of Scribner's *Library Books* series. Dr. Baillie's volume, first published about twenty years ago, is an exploration of the manner in which God becomes known to man through moral experience and moral confrontation. It is a penetrating analysis of the several historic modes by which men have sought to demonstrate the existence of a Divine Being, and ends with the conclusion that rational arguments are compelling only when they lift into prominence our own human limitations,

weaknesses and finitude, as screen upon which the reality of God's Being is projected.

Professor Niebuhr's work, *The Irony of American History*, is a disturbing analysis of the antinomies with which our American scene confronts us. Most of the projected plans of our nation's architects have worked out totally otherwise than was expected; and the outcomes have largely been in terms of ironic situations in which illusions and miscalculations are radically qualified. Its strong point is the keen analysis of America's role as a world power, and of the contradictions which her rise to great-power status have revealed.

E. F. Scott's little volume begins with the assumption that the Lord's Prayer is "the primary document, and the only one which comes directly from Jesus himself" (p. v.). The work traces the Synoptic records in which the petition is found, dealing with them in the general fashion of the older New Testament critics. Professor Scott treats, in sequence, the Old Testament background for this form of prayer, the question of the originality of the prayer, the seven petitions comprising the prayer, and its larger significance in the light of the overall objectives of the Gospel *kerygma*.

This series projected by Scribner's includes a number of contemporary works by such authors as Martin Buber, Nicholas Berdyaev, Rudolf Bultmann, Jacques Maritain and Paul Tillich. It brings the works of these men, most of whom are not in the Evangelical tradition, to the reader at a modest price, and yet with a binding which should be sufficiently durable for ordinary use in a personal library.

Harold B. Kuhn

War and the Christian Conscience, by Paul Ramsey. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1961. 331 pages. \$6.00.

The subtitle of the volume under review, "How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?," suggests that its author undertakes a task which has been by-passed by most modern writers, namely that of stating in contemporary terms the content of the medieval term "a just war." Dr. Ramsey begins with an implicit acceptance of the view that United States military doctrine rests upon the cardinal premise that our nation will not strike an all-out preemptive blow. This means that our

military policy is geared to the proposition that our defense must have two capabilities: first, of absorbing the impact of a first surprise attack, and second, of hitting back with a "second strike" of sufficient power to destroy the aggressor's military structure.

This raises, of course, the question of the manner in which the United States' strategic retaliatory force should be used in the "second strike," and presupposes the necessity for a military establishment which will retain, through the first strike, the power to inflict such a punishing blow upon an aggressor's target system that he will be deterred from striking at all. Professor Ramsey develops the thesis that the only type of "just conduct" of a modern war which is compatible with the Western ethos is one in which strategic retaliatory forces carry out long-range second-strike plans under conditions of *counter - forces* warfare. That is, the second strike should be directed against legitimate military targets, with a specific, studied avoidance of civilian objectives, since it is assumed that civilians are today, from the moral point of view, just as entitled to immunity as they have been through the centuries.

The objectives of such a policy, morally speaking, are these: to mitigate the increase of terror which modern weapon-technology has produced; to avoid needless military action based upon irrational factors such as panic; to insure that, following the conflict, there shall be a maximum possibility for the restoration of justice; and, above all, to safeguard the concern for human personality which Christian *agape* patently demands.

One is amazed at the capability of the author to deal dialectically with the alternatives to his thesis of the legitimacy, under some circumstances, of a war fought for a just cause, with means limited as greatly as humanly possible, affecting destructively only (or chiefly) military areas and targets and under conditions which promise at least an even chance for greater justice in the post-combat settlement than existed at the outbreak of hostilities. Lest it be thought that the volume is an apologia for war, it should be said that Dr. Ramsey is vitally concerned with two things: the short-range avoidance of thermonuclear war, and the longer-range abolition of war itself. Facing the agonizing problems which deterrence by a "balance of terror" brings, he contends that neither deterrence nor warfare can be just if they are accomplished by immoral means.

In the chapter "Two Deep Truths About Modern Warfare" the author makes significant use of Herman Kahn's volume *On Thermonuclear War* (Princeton University Press, 1960). He probes some of the vulnerable spots in Kahn's logic, and is especially sensitive to those areas in which the thinking of the latter is deficient in anticipating *the kind of a world* which would emerge in a post-thermonuclear-war age, and in which Kahn is lacking in consistency in the moral references which he makes in the course of his work.

The final section of this penetrating work surveys, in the light of the earlier discussions, the question of counter-forces warfare, with special reference to Thomas E. Murray's analysis of the "just war" concept in his volume, *Nuclear Policy for War and Peace* (Cleveland & New York, World Publishing Co., 1960). Murray advocates, in brief, a gradual nuclear disarmament, done by stages, and with an interim manufacture of smaller nuclear weapons, and a gearing of our military doctrine to the use of weapons of limited size. Professor Ramsey is quick to spot the problem here: At what point in size can a nuclear device cease to be a legitimate weapon for the conduct of a just war?

It is evident that this is no ordinary work on social ethics: it is massive in its proportions, and meticulous in its detail. One is impressed by several of its smaller features, notably its keen analysis of the problems involved in *any* program of disarmament agreed upon between an open society (such as ours) and a closed society (such as that of the U.S.S.R.); its facing with realism of the possibility of Soviet blackmail, particularly in case of a technological breakthrough; and the tenacious insistence that decisions in these vital areas be made under the constant reminder that God the Lord's demands that nations "do justice and love mercy" have never been abrogated.

War and the Christian Conscience can scarcely be expected to satisfy either the convinced pacifist or the convinced advocate of survival-through-force. Equally-sincere Christians on either side of the dilemma which is posed by the existence of predatory forces apparently unbound by any moral principles recognizable as such, may be perplexed by some of the positions which its author takes. It seems to this reviewer, however, that no thoughtful person can fail to see that Professor Ramsey has furnished the Christian world a lens which it may with profit utilize in the optics-system through which it tries to

view the morally-confused galaxy which is today's political scene.

Harold B. Kuhn

Logotherapy and the Christian Faith, by Donald F. Tweedie, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961. 185 pages. \$3.95.

Few indeed are the Evangelicals who have not at some time or other longed for the appearance of a rationale and a method of psychotherapy which would free itself from Freudian fundamentalism. The subtitle of this present work is, "An Evaluation of Frankl's Existential Approach to Psychotherapy." The author, who is Chairman of the Department of Psychology at Gordon College, has spent time in Vienna in the study of Viktor E. Frankl's alternative to the conventional psychoanalysis, and shares with his readers a careful appraisal of the points of strength, no less than the points of limitation, which mark the Existential Analysis or Logotherapy associated with the name and work of Frankl.

The orientation of the author is that of the convinced Evangelical, who is well aware of the alternative interpretations of man in terms of his physical structure, of his morphological adaptation, or of the primacy of his reason, but who is personally committed to the view of man which is presented in the Judeo-Christian system. Recognizing that the contemporary interest in mental therapy does indicate a movement toward rapprochement of psychology and religion, Professor Tweedie is aware that no real union of interest between psychotherapy and historic Christianity is possible until there is a meeting of minds at the point of the dimensions of human nature.

The close relationship between Dr. Frankl's Logotherapy and the Existential Philosophy finds a careful exploration in Chapters II and III; the author notes that this newer movement in psychotherapy rests, not so much upon any contemporary form of Existentialism, but upon the nineteenth century rootage in Kierkegaard, which Logotherapy and Existentialism have in common. And it is from this rootage that Dr. Frankl's system has developed in a direction other than that of the psychodynamic view of man, advanced with such dogmatic certainty by Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler. According to Dr. Tweedie, Frankl concludes Freud's psychoanalysis under sin at three points; it

has depersonalized man, it has "derealized" man, and it has devaluated his scale of values.

This volume is hardly less critical of Karl Jung's extension of the unconscious, and of his advocacy of the certain existence of the "collective unconscious" upon the basis of the similarities of archetypes found in the dreams and the symbolism of men, however diverse their cultures. Jung's appeal to "God" as one of the archetypal symbols does not seem to our author to justify the claim that Jung takes due account of the spiritual factor in man's life. Logotherapy, on the other hand, is set forth as a system which has its roots in a view of man as having a unique nature, capable of self-transcendence and of the exercise of freedom. In other words, Logotherapy is rooted in an anthropology which recognizes the existence of a genuinely spiritual factor in human personality.

Chapter IV, "Logotherapy and Mental Illness," seeks to investigate the several neurotic patterns and to understand them in terms of a faulty response to the total pattern of human existence, including the dimension of the spiritual. This same emphasis upon the totality of the human pattern marks the discussion in Chapter V of "Logotherapy and Healing." This chapter deals, of course, with such questions as the relationship between the therapist and the patient, the use of shock therapy, and the specific techniques employed in the treatment of the several forms of neurotic patterns.

The final sections of this work concern themselves primarily with two things: first, the decisive role which the "decisive, constitutive dimension of personality," namely, the spiritual dimension, plays in therapy; and second, the relationship between the major premises of Logotherapy and the ground-principles of historic Christianity. Throughout the discussion Professor Tweedie keeps in mind the factors which the two movements have in common. These are viewed in terms of the valid features of an existential approach to human life, such as man's involvement in objective responsibility, his commitment to moral values, and his accountability to a transcendent God. As one comes to the end of *Logotherapy and the Christian Faith*, he almost dares to hope that Frankl's work may provide a fresh breakthrough in the field of psychotherapy, in which the fatalistic reductionism and the dogmatic illusionism of Freud and his associates may be left behind. Dr. Tweedie has made the Christian world his debtor by his careful and measured

interpretation of a happier movement out of Vienna than that which has for two generations now led the Western World into misunderstanding.

Anne W. Kuhn

Robert M. Grant, *Gnosticism*, New York: Harpers, 1961. 254 pages. \$4.00.

Exciting manuscript discoveries in the lands of the Bible have provided vast stimulus to Biblical research. The better known of these discoveries are the Dead Sea Scrolls found in 1947 and later. Less known and also of great importance are the discoveries in Egypt at Nag Hamedi and Upper Egypt. Many scholars are saying that these discoveries in Egypt rival in importance the Dead Sea Scrolls for Biblical study. These are concerned mainly with Gnosticism, a heresy which was especially prominent and influential in the second century A.D. The danger to the Church from this heresy was as serious as the persecutions from without. Robert Grant of the University of Chicago has rendered a splendid service by fresh editing of non-canonical material and the introduction of newly-discovered finds in this anthology. It is really a source book of heretical writings from the first three centuries of our era. While most of these were written after the New Testament and are influenced by it, the beginnings of them were in many cases present when the New Testament was written; and these trends are often discernible through the writings of the New Testament themselves, as for example, in the case of I John and the epistle of Jude and II Peter in particular. Much of this material was known through the writings of Irenaeus, about 180 A.D. Some of the new sources are rendered into English for the first time. Professor Grant has culled the documents, given them careful editing, and in most cases, fresh translation; he has classified them by date, by topic, and by school. Thus there are fourteen selections from the early Christian period, seven from the second and third centuries, plus various tractates from the schools of Basilides, Isidore, and Valentinus. The most important portion of the Hermetic writings are included also, one of which is relevant to the teaching of the New Birth in the third chapter of John's Gospel.

Of interest from the standpoint of Jesus' interpretation of the Old Testament is the letter of Ptolemaeus to Flora.

Ptolemaeus wrote to his correspondent that Jesus recognized in the Old Testament two levels of revelation: the highest level recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis in which marriage is not to be separated, while the permission of divorce in Deuteronomy is described by Jesus as a concession to man's weakness. While the documents are of primary interest to scholars and specialists, they do have considerable interest to the student of the New Testament who wishes to be informed concerning environmental backgrounds of the early Church.

The book is a very convenient reference book, offering as it does in brief compass the most important documents and a fresh translation with helpful annotations and elaborate documentation of contemporary authorities. Many would never look at the material in Irenaeus nor have it available from contemporary sources were it not for a volume like this.

George A. Turner

Handbook of Preaching Resources from English Literature, by James Douglas Robertson. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962. \$5.00.

Rare indeed is the minister who has not occasionally drawn upon the resources for preaching materials which the general literature of the English language affords. Most of those who have done so have also felt the need for a systematic source containing materials in the literary field outside the limited holdings of their own libraries. Such a source, prepared by a member of the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary, is now being presented to the sizeable segment of our Christian public which senses such a need. The volume represents the end-product of many years of study and compilation, combined with a keen sensitiveness to the needs of the pulpit ministry.

As the title indicates, this is a handbook, a work to be kept available as a continuing and constant source of information and inspiration. So far as structure goes, the volume consists of some six hundred fifty literary selections, grouped alphabetically under a wide range of relevant topics, chosen carefully and with a view to the enrichment of a comprehensive and balanced ministry. These range from "Adversity" to "Zeal," many of the topics being subdivided. In some cases in which

the quotation is self-explanatory, it is published without comment. Where orientation is indicated, the author has provided, ahead of the quotation, a well-worded and concise introduction, consisting usually of a sentence or two. The arrangement seems to this reviewer to have been dictated throughout by practicality and usability.

But any recitation of the external features of this volume would fall short of that which it deserves by way of review. The features which are most impressive are the following: range of topics covered, the wise selection of the illustrative materials, the breadth of presentation, and the relevance of the materials to the Christian Evangel. There is a complete absence of the forced and the obscure in matters of interpretation. There is an emphasis upon the major central drives of the Christian Faith. Above all, there is a skillful avoidance of the trite, the threadbare, and the shopworn. The minister who makes a discerning use of Dr. Robertson's *Handbook* has every opportunity to avoid the hackneyed quality which so frequently spoils even good sermons.

Here is a work which will not become outdated. There may be literature in the archives of mankind which has not been covered; there may be great literature waiting to be written. But while new resources may be added, Professor Robertson has brought together in this worthy volume a permanent thesaurus of existing materials. Few will be the ministers who will exhaust that which has here been distilled for their use. The work combines a keen exercise of literary criticism, a sheer output of hard work, and a deep sensitivity for the mood of poet and sage. It is not a book to be read and forgotten; it is rather one to be used, year after year. This reviewer predicts that a systematic use of this timely volume will bring continuing fresh and exciting discoveries.

Harold B. Kuhn

Calvin's Commentaries: The Gospel According to St. John, Part One 1-10, by T.H.L. Parker, translator. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, editors. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959. 278 pages. \$4.50.

This volume is the first in a completely new translation into modern English of Calvin's commentaries on the New

Testament. As a third English translation, it corrects the faults of earlier attempts. The style is lucid and forceful, reducing the long Latinized sentences to modern English.

Calvin's commentaries are still basic. They show amazing breadth and depth of comprehension. Calvin is both scholarly and practical throughout. Originality of thought and masterful presentation are made to flow in a facile style.

The common Protestant heritage stands out. After the centuries of controversy over Calvinism, one is surprised to find so little with which to disagree. Having written his *Institutes* to set forth the Protestant faith, Calvin wisely proceeded to expound the Word of God as the bulwark and guide of the faith. The result is truly excellent by any standard that is fair to apply to his time. It is still valuable for all Protestants.

Wilber T. Dayton

Upton Clary Ewing, *The Essene Christ: A Recovery of the Historical Jesus and the Doctrines of Primitive Christianity*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1961. 438 pages. \$5.75.

This volume consists of four books: some introductory matter on the literature of the Bible and of the Dead Sea Scrolls; "The Covenant of Love," a retelling of the Biblical story; a commentary on this "Covenant of Love"; and a recapitulation. The author is versatile, his skills including sculpture, research in ancient religions, and activities in humane and anti-vivisection societies. He is an ardent admirer of Albert Schweitzer. His purpose in writing is primarily to convince all people, but Christians in particular, that the eating of flesh is sin, and that therefore their Bibles need to be revised as well as their dietary habits. The central thrust of the book is that all life is sacred. The four evils which particularly concern the author are war, slavery, the slaughter of animals and the eating of their flesh. The greatest sin, the author believes, is the taking of life, or causing needless suffering to any of God's creatures. In order to defend this thesis the author is compelled to revise the Scriptures rather drastically and to enlist the support of ethics of other religions, including Buddhism and Confucianism, and especially the writings of the Essenes at Qumran. The authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls are especially interesting to this writer

because they rejected the priesthood and the temple sacrifices. They were vegetarians. The author believes that John the Baptist spent his early days among them and that Jesus also was essentially an Essene.

Introductory chapters prepare the way for a drastic rewriting of the Scriptures, which the writer calls the "Fifth Gospel." Here several critical authorities are quoted, to discredit the trustworthiness of the Old and New Testaments. This section of the book consists mainly of quotations from various sources, most of which are critical of the Scriptures, with very little editing done. One cannot but be surprised that a publisher would accept a manuscript in this condition. But the author's point of view is reflected in the quotations he selects, even though there is only occasionally an editorial paragraph found. It is noted on the jacket that the author spent five years in intensive research before writing this book. Obviously this time was far too short to permit him to digest the material that he covered.

The heart of the volume consists of a rewriting of the Old and New Testaments. The language is deliberately archaic so that it reads like the Scriptures. In some instances the author's own phrasing is carried out. Many times Scripture is quoted without acknowledging it as quotation. The author's favorite texts are those which stress a vegetarian diet as Genesis 1:29, 30 and Isaiah 11:6-9; 66:3. In his "Fifth Gospel" the author makes generous use of passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the Manual of Discipline and the Thanksgiving Hymns. He evidences a deep reverence for Christ as an embodiment of love and gentleness. He is particularly interested in Jesus' birth and that of John, together with their early life "in the wilderness," i.e., at Qumran. In John's preaching the Pharisees are condemned for their toleration of animal sacrifices, and the soldiers are condemned for militarism. In composing speeches for Jesus, the author includes words from the New Testament, from the Old Testament, especially the prophets, and from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Fortunately, footnotes help the reader to identify the source of the words attributed to Jesus.

In his "Fifth Gospel" the author makes "many improvements" over the ancient documents. For example, in the wedding at Cana Jesus brought not wine but living water to relieve the thirst of the guests (p. 134). In the prodigal son parable the

grateful father orders not the "fatted calf" to be killed, but the best fruit, grain and honey to be served (p. 139). When Mary came to anoint Christ's feet the Master forbade her, saying that He did not "desire the attentions sought by vain men." When Jesus cleansed the Temple of the money-changers, He admonished them to permit no more the offering of dumb beasts as sacrificial victims. Thus Jesus condemned the slaughter of innocent beasts rather than the commercial aspect of the transactions. The author notes that Mary chose that Jesus should be born in a stable to indicate His relationship with the dumb creatures. He notes also that the time of our Lord's death coincided with that of the slaughter of victims for the Passover Feast. This, he thinks, is providential, indicating Jesus' rapport with the creature.

In the commentary, much attention is given to a description of the Essenes. Here, as in most other sections of the book, the "research" is in secondary sources rather than in the originals. Included in the volume is a description of the inhumane practices of slaughter houses. There is also included a description of carnivorous and herbivorous animals, with the suggestion that the carnivorous beasts are the result of the fall of man. He notes that such animals are much less lovable than the herb eaters.

In his effort to show the evils of the eating of flesh, the author has composed in his "Fifth Gospel" a religion and ethics which is chiefly indebted to portions of the Scripture, to the character of Jesus, to certain types of liberal thought such as the school of Unity, and the writings of Schweitzer; especially to such liberal thoughts as support his main thesis either directly or secondarily by casting doubt on the trustworthiness of the Bible. Paul, who was accused of perverting Christianity out of deference to the practices of Roman paganism, and of condoning the eating of flesh and slavery, is in a measure justified according to the author by the necessity of making his gospel more attractive to pagans. It is unfortunate that in so many instances the author's objectives could be pursued by such unscholarly methods. Perhaps if he had done ten years of research instead of five his presentation would have carried a greater amount of conviction. He apparently feels the need of a God-given exemplification of his thesis and of sacred

Scriptures to substantiate it. Since he found neither in the Bible, he proceeded to recreate Jesus and also the Scriptures.

George A. Turner