

Book Reviews

Best Sermons 1949-50, by S. Paul Butler,
New York: Harper and Brothers,
1949. 325 pages. \$3.00.

After a two-year interval another collection of "Best Sermons" makes its appearance. Here are fifty-two sermons, the remnant of a careful screening, by a committee of experts, of 6,585 recently-preached messages. For insight into the temper and style of contemporary preaching this harvest from Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish preachers is probably unsurpassed. The ecumenicity of the volume is immediately apparent from the table of contents, which includes such names as Robert James McCracken, Halford Luccock, Fulton J. Sheen, John Baillie, Gerald Kennedy, Clovis Chappell, James Stewart, Walter Maier, Rabbi Leo Jung, Paul Scherer, Canon Marcus Knight, Father C. C. Martindale, and others. As in former editions, the editor evidently assumes that the production of "best" sermons is almost exclusively the work of those men who hold high official position in their respective church bodies. Although any preacher may submit sermons for consideration, in the light of editorial practice the odds seem certainly to be against "just any preacher" receiving inclusion in this book. Not for this editorial policy alone, but because the quality of a number of the sermons in each edition has not been high on several counts, this reviewer, with others in the past, has protested the use of the title "Best Sermons." In the introduction to this edition, the editor writes that when he carefully considered giving up the controversial title, "denominational or critical leaders" urged him to retain it. Unquestionably, the search for good sermons covered an enormous territory. It is doubtful if ever a similar search has been as extensive as this one.

Samplings from such a wealth of sermonic materials might well be labeled "best". But not when many of them are included by virtue of ministerial prestige or popularity. Merit alone should be the determining factor. "Representative Sermons" would probably be a more accurate title, if a less appealing one.

The messages are in general timely, thought-provoking, and spiritually challenging. Preachers will find in them a wealth of homiletical ideas. They are especially rich in insights into the emotional, social, and religious needs of our day. For this reason, they constitute an interesting commentary on the contemporary scene. Although many faiths are represented, the central ideas of the sermon will probably be palatable to all, for no sermon thought to be critical of any religion by word or inference is included.

The tenor of the book suggests that the shallow inspirational variety of preaching one has met with all too frequently, is on the decline; that the pulpit is acquiring an awareness long overdue of the spiritual poverty of man. The plight of the masses following two wars seems to be generating a spirit of high seriousness among the clergy. Grateful as we are for this development, it is unfortunate that the force of these sermons is spent in the main on an effort to bring about a new social order. It is a conviction with some of us that the much-longed-for social change can take place only when a spiritually-alert ministry subordinates man's relationship to man to his relationship to God. These sermons continue to emphasize Christian doing at the expense of Christian being. In a volume of this nature one longs for a greater emphasis on the evangelical message of the New Testament.

The value of the collection is enhanced by grouping the sermons according to subject matter, by including brief sketches of the preachers' lives, and by adding a topical index of ideas and illustrations.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

The Gospel of Redemption, by Walter Thomas Conner. Nashville: Broadman Press. 369 pages. \$3.00.

This attractively bound volume is a "revision and enlargement" of an earlier work by the same author entitled, *A System of Christian Doctrine*. The author, described by the publishers as "possibly our greatest living theologian," has been for some thirty years a teacher of systematic theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His other books include such titles as *Revelation and God* and *The Faith of the New Testament*. He is a holder of several degrees from Baptist schools including a B. D. from Rochester Theological Seminary and a Ph. D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This volume appears to be intended for use as a text book for students of theology.

The book does not cover the doctrine of God but is limited to the doctrines of sin, salvation, and the last things. The treatment is that of a systematized Biblical theology. The viewpoint is that of evangelical Protestant Christianity generally in modified Calvinistic tradition. The strongest points appear to be in the practical aspects of the Christian life. Speculation is rarely indulged in. Little concern is shown for analysis of problems, nor for historical developments, nor for extra-canonical source materials. The viewpoint is mature and the common sense is often allowed to determine a judgment. With regard to the origin of sin, for example, the realistic theory of Augustine is declared to be absurd and the alleged covenant with Adam as the Federal Head of the race is regarded as having originated in Holland rather than in Eden. The Bible is usually treated as an unitary book and problems of historical and literary criticism are seldom reflected.

The style of the writer is simple and lucid. The sentence structure is extremely clear, most of the ideas being expressed in simple declaratory sentences. For this reason the author may be more readily imagined as lecturing to a class than as bending over a typewriter. The pages are not incumbered with documentation. Quotations are exceedingly rare and the few references to other books are mostly to the older studies in the conservative tradition.

It is not easy to find anything original in the work, although in a book of theology that is conceivably a virtue. The strongest part of the book is on the practical and experiential side of the Christian life. This element in the book serves to authenticate the description of the author as of a "gracious personality" and of a "genuinely Christian Spirit." His "greatness" therefore, is to be sought in the lucidity with which the main conceptions of evangelical theologians are presented, the judiciousness of the viewpoints and conclusions adopted, and the forthright attempt to catch the truly Christian perspective. An awareness of sociological orientation is manifested as in the emphasis on the social solidarity of the race and upon a wholesome balance between the gospel and its social implications. The volume serves well as an introduction to Theology and as an organized presentation of the modern conservative evangelical viewpoint. The method is didactic rather than apologetic or polemic. It is a guide to the neophyte rather than an argument for the skeptic or a corrective for the heretic. The format is rather well done, and the printing, while not meticulous, is clear. Some things are a bit mystifying, such as the spelling "indexes" in the Preface, a reminder that "perfection is no trifle."

GEORGE A. TURNER

Youth Asks About Religion 100 Questions and Answers, Jack Finegan. New York: Association Press, 1949. 192 pp. \$2.00.

A few years ago, Haddam House took over the interests that led to the publication of the Hazen Books on Religion with the

intention of channeling these interests in the direction primarily of students and employed young people. It has already sponsored the publication of several volumes, among them Nichols' *Primer for Protestants*, Nelson's *Young Laymen - - Young Church*, and Bennett's *Christianity and Communism*. The present publication is another addition to the series. Jack Finegan is already well known to preachers through his archaeological treatise, *Light from the Ancient Past*. Formerly Director of Religious Activities and Head of the Department of Religious Education at Iowa State College, he is well qualified to write on adolescent religious problems.

Because *Youth Asks About Religion* tries to answer the one hundred basic questions on religion that are thought to be asked most frequently by young people it is a book of natural human interest. The old-fashioned question and answer technique is still attractive to young and old; it is especially so to youth, whose judgments are still immature and who live in an age demanding quick, ready-made answers to questions. This little volume, however, proves more thought-provoking than dogmatic. For this reason it will interest much the adult mind. The language is of course non-technical. The questions arranged in psychological order, and grouped under twelve main headings, are rather exciting for young people: (e. g.) Is science the enemy of religion? Should I be a "Fundamentalist" or a "Liberal"? What is Truth? Why is the world beautiful? What is the goal of evolution? Did the Bible history truly take place? What is Neo-Orthodoxy? What will Heaven be like?

Even seasoned pastors, who must likewise face the frank, honest questions asked by our young people, should find here occasional insights to help them in time of need—notwithstanding for some of us the objectionable liberal Christianity of the book. After perusing the questions in the section dealing with "Jesus Christ", one wonders if the deity of Christ is no longer an issue with modern youth. The answers here are not concerned with Christology.

J. D. ROBERTSON

The Authority of the Old Testament, by A. G. Hebert. London: Faber and Faber, 1947. 326 pages. \$3.50.

This is another volume dealing with the ever-present problem of the religious authority of the Bible. It is an attempt to find this authority for our faith in the Scriptures and at the same time hold on to the essential conclusions of higher destructive criticism. The author's conclusion to literary problems is definitely liberal throughout, although he is not humanistic in these conclusions. This covers such matters as the Modified Documentary Hypothesis, Canonization, the Deuteronomic Reform, etc.

However, the author is not classifiable as a thorough-going liberal on theological issues. Here he is decidedly conservative. He is attempting to conserve the authoritativeness of the Holy Scriptures for us. Because of this he criticizes the liberals for throwing out the baby with the bath in their critical studies, and he demands that the unique revelation of God through the Bible and through Christ be again stressed and given our endorsement.

One emphasis in the book is important, and that is the author's insistence that wherever this revelation comes in contact with historical occurrences, then it must stand the light of critical scrutiny, and must be found to be truthful. For example, Hebert says that if it could be established that there were no Exodus, then the covenant which God made with Israel at that time could be seriously doubted, and if this is doubted then the covenant relationship to which Israel continually appealed was without fact. This would be very serious for our faith in the Kingdom of God, which started, not with Christ, but with the covenant made with Israel. The same would be true concerning the Resurrection. Following the argument of Paul, the author concludes that if one could establish there were no historical resurrection of the body of Christ, then our faith in Him would be erroneous.

On the other hand, since the Virgin Birth has never been made a condition for

our faith in the sense that the Resurrection has, it wouldn't matter too much to our faith should those accounts of the birth of Christ be found to be fabricated. The axe-head floating would not be seriously missed should it be accepted as fiction. And so forth.

The reviewer admires Hebert's attempt to show that the Bible is both a human book, written by imperfect men, and yet at the same time God's revealed word to man. The present reviewer is inclined to agree. But he cannot accept many of the liberal conclusions, especially in the field of literary criticism, which Dr. Hebert propounds, simply because such positions are far from proved; rather, many of them stand on very thin evidence. This would include the book's conclusion on the JEPD theory, the Josiah reform, the acceptance of the Canon, etc. The present reviewer cannot accept as conclusive certain theological positions of the volume which are typically Neo-Orthodox.

On the other hand, conservatives can read it with great profit. No book has pointed up the problem of authority in the light of the past century of criticism as well as has this volume. It should make conservatives blush with shame to see how far we have allowed certain Bible Schools to stamp the conservative school in the minds of such men as Dr. Hebert. For example, he asserts that all conservatives hold to a theory of 'verbal' inspiration. He goes on to say that conservatives believe that it is as important to believe in the traditional authorship of Bible books as it is to believe in the contents of the books. I for one am sorry that we have allowed this impression to exist in the minds of liberals. No wonder they feel that conservatives are "unintelligent". We ought to read this volume to see how the liberals appraise us, and how we must appraise the liberals. You will be helped with the frank criticisms of both schools by this volume. And you will be pleased with the high regard he has for the Bible as containing the revelation of God to men.

ROBERT P. SHULER, JR.

The Effective City Church, by Murray H. Leiffer. New York. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949. 232 pages. \$2.75.

This book is the product of the author's twenty-five years' study of urban sociology and church administration.

Its announced purpose is to acquaint the reader with the pattern of city growth, the influence of urbanization on church and people, and methods which the church may use to reach and provide for people in a variety of city communities. Here are discussions on the part the city plays in the religious life of men and women, and illuminating descriptions of "cities within cities", such as the down-town business section, stable communities, areas of transition and underprivilege, and the more progressive suburban areas. Characteristic problems of the city church are carefully diagnosed, among them the church program and the need of the people, the development and utilization of Christian leadership, neglected community groups, the use of building resources, and the matter of finance. A special section devoted to city, regional, and church planning discusses Protestant strategy for the expanding city and denominational tactics for city and suburban churches.

Appendices provide for classifying communities, instructions for religious census takers, and tools and techniques for chart making.

Written in lucid concise style, this book should find a place in the library of city pastors, church workers, and progressive Christian laymen.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

The Vatican In World Politics, by Avro Manhattan. New York: Gaer Associates, 1949. 444 pages. \$3.75.

The increasing activity of the Roman Catholic Church in the affairs of politics has stimulated the investigation of the attitude of the Holy See to those institutions which we in America have long taken for granted, and for the preservation of which we have been led into two global conflicts.

This volume, written by one who has spent much of his time in Europe, seeks to trace in an objective manner the rôle of the Vatican in the affairs of the chief nations of the West. He bases his work, not only upon the standard historical sources for European diplomatic affairs, but also upon many documents which have become available to those outside the inner sanctum of political intrigue only since the end of World War II.

The thesis of the work is, that the logic of the Roman Church demands that it behave actively in the social, political and economic affairs of all nations, particularly of those in which its followers are significantly numerous. The Vatican is, of course, the political arm of the religious institution; the Pope thus exercises a dual rôle: as a religious leader, and as a politician-diplomat. In the latter capacity, he faces the problem of carrying out his mandates *qua* religious leader in a world which is increasingly non-religious. One overall objective determines Vatican policy, namely, that of furthering the dominion of the Roman Church in the world.

The major problems with which the Pope has been forced to deal since 1870, and the ways in which he has handled these problems, are set forth in the three chapters, entitled respectively: "Spain, the Catholic Church and the Civil War," "Italy, the Vatican and Fascism" and "Germany, the Vatican and Hitler." These are scarcely pleasant reading, with their repeated instances of intrigue, temporary dealings of the Vatican with even those forces hostile to religion, and, more important still, its penchant for authoritarian governments with which it can establish Concordats. The American reader must recognize, at the outset that he is not a European, and that he is inclined to be idealistic in his outlook upon diplomacy, and that hence he may misunderstand the whole problem. This volume breathes the cynicism which is part of European international relations—and as such might be taken to offer some measure of excuse for the methods of the Vatican, in that it is no worse than the prevailing tone of Con-

tinental diplomacy. The author presents his material, however, in such a manner as to cause the spiritually sensitive to wonder why the claimed-representative of Christ on earth should be willing to advance the interests of the Church by a resort to such methods.

The record is virtually a theme-and-variations. The rise of liberal governments threatens the political and temporal power of the Roman pontiff, and the numerical and cultural strength of the Roman Church. Political liberalism is immediately equated with secularism, then with anarchism, then with socialism. In such lands as the Pope found it possible, he encouraged, by the wealth of means at his disposal, the rise of authoritarian régimes, securing in exchange for the influence which he as head of the Church could bring to bear upon the populace, the maximum of privileges for Catholicism. In each case, save that of Spain, the dictators shortly found that two totalitarianisms could not live amicably side by side, and hence clashed with the Vatican. Protests were raised against, especially the Nazi régime—not because it violated human decency and trampled under foot every human right, but because it threatened the entrenched power of the Vatican.

Not only did the Vatican assist Franco, Mussolini and Hitler in their rise to power, but it utilized its own political 'statesmen' in smaller countries to assist the dictators in assimilating these unfortunate states into their ill-begotten empires. In Poland it was Cardinal Hlond; in Austria it was Cardinal Innitzer; in Czechoslovakia, it was Mgr. Hlinka. All of this is woven together in the distressing spectacle of the diplomacy of the Vatican during World War II, where expediency was the only rule, and the fear of Russia the major determining motive. Every *volte face* upon the part of the hierarchy was made, not in regard for considerations of humanity, but as a result of the double-cross of the dictators, or the dwindling of their fortunes.

The embarrassments of the Vatican, notably in connection with the Russo-German pact of 1939 and the entry of France

into the war against Germany, must have seemed discouraging in the light of the growing hopelessness of the tangled maze of events which heralded the collapse of the Third Reich. Yet even in this, our author sees another characteristic of the Vatican, namely that of making a virtue of necessity, or in any event, of making the best of a bad bargain.

The Chapter under title, "The Vatican and the United States" should be required reading for both minister and layman who would see in the past the pattern of things to come. The reserve and objectivity with which this chapter, as indeed the entire book, is written commends it to the thoughtful. The Roman Church views our land, not only as the last important solvent nation in the world, but the only nation sufficiently powerful to perform the military chore involved in the Vatican's long-range crusade against the Communist ideology. This chapter is disturbing—disturbing especially in the light of the manner in which the Church applies the rule of expediency in her treatment of the American Catholic clergy, and in view of her Janus-faced attitude toward American democracy. The author appeals to the annals of the past in support of his prophetic thesis: that "the spirit that moves the Catholic Church makes it a ruthless and persistent enemy of our century and of all that individuals and nations are laboring and sweating to attain." (page 417)

In all this, the author himself seems to this reviewer in danger of making much too little of the Red menace to our culture—of too easily evaluating Communism in terms of what it claims *on paper* to be, rather than seeing it as a rival totalitarianism. His evaluation of the supposed religious freedom in the U.S.S.R. seems, in the light of all which can be learned, rather naive. The appearance of the Orthodox Church in Russian affairs is one thing: the granting of anything resembling what *we* mean by religious freedom is quite another. Likewise, in his treatment of the Spanish Civil War, Manhattan seems to have a blind spot for the manner in which Communist intrigue contributed to the whole

affair, and the way in which Russia used the fray, chiefly through volunteers from the pink fringe of liberal intellectuals, as a full-dress rehearsal for the coming struggle.

The book poses several problems: first, need the anti-clericalist fall into the error of being either anti-religious or at least tolerant of anti-religious fanaticism? Again, what can the human spirit expect from *any* totalitarianism? And, is there any way of adjudicating the conflicting claims of Christ and Caesar? Certainly the manner in which the Roman Church has bungled the matter of exerting her influence in the social and moral matters of the Western world ought to force a socially-minded Protestantism to explore the words of her Lord, "My kingdom is not of this world."

HAROLD B. KUHN

Existentialist Philosophies, by Emmanuel Mounier. New York: Macmillan, 1949. 142 pages. \$3.00.

The subtitle of the volume, *An Introduction* suggests the character of the present work, which seeks to acquaint the reader with an entire philosophical tradition rather than to expound some specific phase of the movement which has become something of a craze in the post-war world. Mounier seeks the origin of Existentialism in classical thought, and believes that he finds it in Socrates, with his opposition to the earlier Greek cosmology, and in the Stoics with their summons to "the real encounter with life." The Historical Outline with which this book begins contains "The Existentialist Tree", the composition of which might easily be the subject of some debate. The trunk consists, of course, of Kierkegaard, supported at the base by the thought of Pascal and de Biran.

Mounier sees the trunk as divided (or dividing) into two major branches, the atheistic and the Christian. Nietzsche gave to the nineteenth century a merciless jolt, and set one group of the philosophical rebels—rebels that is, against the philosophy of essence—toward the newer and atheistic

Stoicism. The Phenomenological School seems to our author the mediator of the trend toward an existentialism with a general slant in the direction of the Christian tradition.

Existentialism in general may be viewed in two ways: as a decadent movement in which all the canons of classical philosophy are abandoned, with the net result of a loss of the sense of Being and a hopeless and morbid subjectivism; or as a revival of something which almost the whole of modern philosophy has submerged. Mounier looks with favor upon the latter interpretation, suggesting that since Kant, philosophy has been so largely concerned with epistemology that it has neglected the deeper problems which reside in the thinker himself. This reached, of course, its *reductio ad absurdum* in Hegel, who interestingly enough was the irritant whose work called forth the chorus of existentialist outcries. In the development of this motif, our author places heavy significance upon the work of Heidegger, and latterly, upon that of Gabriel Marcel.

With reference to the contemporary varieties of Existentialism, Mounier sees a common pattern of concerns as more basic than their several ontologies, among the most important of which are: the contingency of the human being, the importance of reason, the 'bounding-leap' of the human being, the instability of the human being, the estrangement of man in the universe, conclusive-finality and the imminence of death, the solitude of existence, and the concept of nothingness. The dramatic quality of the existentialist treatment of these themes is becoming well known. But within the movement under consideration, there are a few voices who reject the morbid exhibitionism into which the Sartrean school has fallen, and who in the name of at least a quasi-Christian interpretation of human life seek to bring out of Kierkegaard an ontology of disciplined hope. At the cutting edge of this movement is Gabriel Marcel.

One is impelled to put the question, What, then, is the meaning of all the hue and cry of the philosophy of existence?

Against what frightful wrong has it been called up? Mounier will reply, that it represents a protest against every philosophy, whether idealistic or naturalistic, which impersonalizes or depersonalizes man. It lifts its voice to assert that the 'nothingness' of human essence is a meaningful and crucial nothingness, from which emerges a disciplined dignity, that of freedom.

It is the quality of a good book that it should raise questions. This reviewer would like to pose the following: first, does not the author too easily make of Marcel a Christian philosopher? Second, is not Mounier's interpretation of Christianity as 'existential' reached upon the basis of *one* element in Christianity? Third, what redemptive concepts need to be brought into current Existentialism, if it is to be saved from its bizarre and baroque tendencies? Fourth, can these be found within the existentialist pattern of concepts, or must they be injected from a transcendental realm of truth, a realm to which none of the dialectic of Existentialism can afford an access?

HAROLD B. KUHN

Faith and History, A Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History, by Reinhold Niebuhr. New York, Scribner's, 1949. 257 pages. \$3.50.

The ambiguities which mark finite temporal existence make for a margin of significant and serious error in the charting of history; Dr. Niebuhr brings his theological insights to bear upon what he calls the "Modern Conception of History" in a manner which not only analyzes the perplexities of our age, but also seeks to point to some ground of reassurance upon which the modern man may rest after his long voyage of misunderstanding himself. This he does in a volume which is probably the most readable of all those which he has released in the past two decades.

The Christian view of history, says Niebuhr, has two major rivals in the culture of the Western world, (1) that interpretation which grows out of Greek classicism; and (2) the 'modern approach' which

finds redemption of man and his society as a necessary accompaniment of the historical process. The former identified the flux of history with the processes of nature, and found 'redemption' only in a transcendence of the historical process. The latter assumed that that historical change is unilinear, and that growth must necessarily redeem from ills and errors. The Christian view is intended to correct the other views; against the classical view, it contends that history combines destiny and freedom; again the classical view, it maintains that freedom is ambiguous, and that a philosophy of history resting solely upon the limitless possibilities in the extension of human power leaves out of accounting the degree to which man is a child of nature.

As usual, Niebuhr explores the problem of the degree to which evil can be eliminated within the limits and conditions of finite existence. He challenges the view that man may become master of the historical process, and offers as an alternative the option of faith. In the light of what he considers to be evangelical faith, he criticizes all false utopians, especially the Marxists, the Protestant Theocrats, and the Roman Church. Of interest to our readers, especially, is his critique of the so-called "soft utopians" of whom he names the Anabaptists, Mennonites, Quakers, and (by indirection) the Perfectionists of the Arminian type. These he charges with being unrealistic, of seeking individual perfection at the expense of social responsibility, of tending toward pharisaic self-righteousness, and of an evasive sentimentality. He sees the soft utopians as less dangerous to society than the hard utopians, of whom the Marxists are the outstanding type. At the same time they are relying upon some of the erroneous conceptions of the modern view of history, and thus in time of international crisis may find themselves on the wrong side of the encounter.

It follows that Niebuhr, in common with the Dialectical Theologians, has an anti-perfectionist bias; this enables him to see certain latent weaknesses in, for example, the historical Wesleyan movement which

would escape the notice of those within the tradition. In this connection, it is interesting that in this volume he has moved beyond his position in this matter expressed in *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, where he seemed to rule out entirely the possibility of inward renewal of the life of the individual through repentance and faith. This does not mean that "the new beginning for every individual man" will remove the ambiguities from his temporal existence, any more than the renewals in the several forms of the collective existence of man will lift the race above the fragmentary aspects of the life of the race in history. Niebuhr never comes squarely to grips with the question of whether an individual, here and now, may be made perfect in love whereby the *Agape* becomes not only the norm, but also the principle which informs his life.

In his chapter "Beyond Law and Relativity," he relates the principle of love to the structure of justice in society, pointing out the numberless possibilities for contradiction inherent in the life of the "man of faith" in a mixed or immoral society. At the same time, our author opposes any and all types of defeatism with respect to the possibilities of justice in human society.

The foregoing paragraphs will impress the reader with at least one thing, namely, that *Faith and History* is a powerful volume, grappling manfully with issues of greatest moment to the Christian Church of our time. It is indispensable to the person who will "discern the signs of the times."

HAROLD B. KUHN

The Power of Pentecost, by John R. Rice.
Sword of the Lord Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, 1949. 441 pages. \$3.00

Dr. John R. Rice has been a very prolific writer during our generation, always from the standpoint of the preacher in defense of the fundamentals of faith. Some of his writings have been better than others; this present book is the best. It shows an increasing amount of time spent in its preparation and an awareness of positions other than Dr. Rice's which has been lack-

ing in various degrees in some of his other books.

The chapter titles give indication of the subject matter. They are: "The Lost Secret — Power;" "The Usual Work of the Holy Spirit"; "Jesus, Filled With the Holy Spirit"; "Misunderstood Pentecost"; "Spirit-filled Means Empowered Witnessing"; "Bible Terminology for the Power of Pentecost"; "The Fullness of the Holy Spirit and the Ministry Gifts in the Old Testament and New"; "Speaking with Tongues"; "The Power of Pentecost for Every Christian"; "How to be Filled With the Holy Spirit: Wholehearted Obedience to Christ's Soulwinning Command"; "Prayer — A Condition of Holy Spirit Fullness"; "Why Prevailing, Persistent Praying is Necessary for Holy Spirit Power"; "Do You Really Want to be Spirit-filled?"; "How Great Soul Winners Were Filled With the Holy Spirit"; "Claim Your Blessing". There is also a rather limited Subject Index in the back of the book, along with a complete Scriptural Index.

The thesis of the book is "the fact that the disciples simply waited on God until they were endued with power from on high to be soul-winning witnesses for Him" (78) and the book is one long exhortation for the present-day Christian to do likewise so that the Christian might be prepared to be effective for Christ in the winning of others to Him. Not only is this a very worthy theme for a practical book to Christians but who can say that it is not the crying need of the hour? And the author of the book has a straightforward way of writing so that you will not miss the point he intends to put across. I guarantee that his theme will be constantly reappearing as you read through this book.

The fact that the author of the volume under consideration is within the general Calvinistic tradition ought to be borne in mind. I am sure that Dr. Rice feels that his book is founded on the Scriptures and not on the Scriptures as interpreted by any tradition. Nevertheless, it is evident that he approaches many of Wesley's fondest beliefs with almost no appreciation of what

Wesley meant to teach. This is only natural, since Dr. Rice's reading was done along a line which is not Wesleyan. For this reason the Wesleyans ought to read Dr. Rice and see how the Baptists treat our conception of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Dr. Rice differs from us in his definition of "sin", "sinless perfection", "witness", "eradication". "Adamic perfection," "holiness," and "sanctification". We agree with Dr. Rice that Pentecost brought power to the Christians so that they could effectively witness for Christ. We would be obliged to go farther, however, on the basis of an interpretation of the Scriptures to teach that Pentecost gives more than power. Here Dr. Rice and Wesleyans would find themselves in disagreement. On the other hand, should we accept the definitions of the above terms as Dr. Rice accepts them, we could go no farther than he does. And if he could accept the Wesleyan definitions of the above terms, then the reviewer feels persuaded from the reading of this book that Dr. Rice could put more meaning into Pentecost than only the giving of power to witness.

Now to some personal observations and a more minute appraisal of the volume: (1) Dr. Rice stresses dedication over and over again, and yet is against Pentecost bringing purity. Isn't such dedication a purity of disposition in the heart of the believer and isn't this what is largely meant in many holiness circles? (2) Dr. Rice leaves the impression at times that God causes everything. Surely he cannot seriously mean this, for such is very close to naturalism. (3) Dr. Rice decries the fact that Christians have no power to keep themselves "unspotted from the world" and he pleads that they will be willing to be empowered for godly living, which is again the emphasis on cleansing of motive which the Wesleyans speak so much about as included in Pentecost. (4) Dr. Rice, in his desire to convince Christians of the need of Pentecost, at times leaves the impression that we can duplicate the Apostolic Church, an idea which would have its objectors. (5) Dr. Rice correctly points out that the secret of Methodism was its tarrying for

the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Would to God we could do it again. (6) Christians will be interested in Dr. Rice's explanation of Christ's Baptism with the Holy Spirit. He holds that Jesus was not filled with the Spirit until first He had been baptized and then He had prayed. This took place at the baptism of Christ by John. Can Dr. Rice mean that prior to this Jesus was living without the help of the Holy Spirit? Or is Jesus simply going through the motions for pedagogical reasons? How can Dr. Rice say, "Jesus was now thirty years old. He had lived a perfect, sinless life. He had never grieved the Father, not in one particular. He was blameless. . . ."(61) He is more in keeping with his above theory when he states, "Jesus had so emptied Himself that for thirty years He lived on earth without working a miracle, without healing a leper, or opening blind eyes, or preaching a sermon, or winning a soul!" (67). Apart from all the suppositions in these two quotations, Dr. Rice is toying here with the idea that Jesus didn't become effective until His baptism by John. What evidence is there for this? And can we accept the consequences of such a theory? (7) His argument that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit without being cleansed by that filling since He had no sin to cleanse, and that this is proof that our Pentecost entails no cleansing is very bad logic and worse exegesis. (71) (8) His statement that Jesus never prayed from a divided motive simply overlooks Gethsemane. (75) (9) Dr. Rice seems to believe that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is subsequent to conversion; at least it is an experience peculiar to Christians. (10) I am personally persuaded that the term "witness" can have a wider meaning than simply speaking to others for Christ. What about the witness we do by the purity of our daily walk and acts? Dr. Rice could place more emphasis on this to good advantage. (11) Probably one of the most controversial thoughts in the book is the one where the disciples received the Holy Ghost on the day of Christ's resurrection (When Christ breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost") rather than

at Pentecost. I believe this is based on a misinterpretation and could not be supported by all the Scriptural references concerning Pentecost. (12) The reason why Dr. Rice does not like Wesleyan teaching on Sanctification is that he thinks that Wesleyans believe in the "eradication" of the "carnal nature." A great deal of defining needs to be done on both of these terms in order to understand the usage they have in many holiness groups. He comes very close to a Wesleyan meaning of "eradication" without knowing it on page 356. (13) Dr. Rice can only see "perfection" to mean "flawlessness" rather than perfection in the realm of intention and motive. (14) His statement that "purified" is "never mentioned in connection with Pentecost in the Bible" should read, "is never mentioned as far as I interpret it in connection with Pentecost in the Bible." Wesleyans find mention of it in connection with Pentecost.

Time forbids that we should continue in this manner. I trust that enough has been said to get you to procure the book and read for yourself. There is much that is very very good in the volume. To give an example in closing, listen to this:

Many Christians talk about consecration. We are for it.

Many Christians talk about separation. We believe in it, that is, in a careful avoidance of worldly things that grieve the Spirit of God and hinder a Christian's testimony.

Christian's speak of the "deeper life". We are for that, too.

Bible teachers often speak about "the crucified life." We believe that every Christian ought to die daily and be crucified with Christ.

Christians speak about holiness. They speak about sanctification. They speak about the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We are for all of these, if you will allow us to mean by these terms what we believe is the Bible meaning for them. But we believe that for any Christian to lay claim to any of these blessings when he is not willing to pay God's price for power to win souls, and is thus a disobedient child of God on the main matter of soul winning, is a sinful disgrace. We believe that Christian's claim is false. We believe that he has missed entirely the great blessing of Pentecost which gives power to win souls.

ROBERT P. SHULER

Treasury of the Christian Faith, An Encyclopedic Handbook of the Range and Witness of Christianity, by Stanley J. Stuber and Thomas Curtis Clark, Association Press, 1949. 832 pages. \$5.00

The matter of this volume underwent two major operations before it assumed its present form. The result of fifteen years' research, the book was first planned to serve as a source of sermon illustrations. Again, its editors decided to produce a three-volume encyclopedia much more elaborate in structure. The second world war, with all its printing difficulties and paper shortages, spoiled the second plan. The three volumes consequently, were reduced to one, the present book. The total mass of materials (which, we are told, occupied a good sized trunk) was carefully screened until only those items thought to be of superlative value remained.

These excerpts, void of sectarian bias, thoroughly ecumenical in value, are drawn from varied theological points of view. Here are men like Moody, Beecher, Brooks, Woodrow Wilson, Niemoeller, Halford Luccock, and Fosdick, each making generous contribution. Chapters are so arranged as to care for every major aspect of the Christian faith. Limitation of chapter arrangements are compensated for by a three-way index, which should greatly facilitate the busy pastor.

While the book will be used most by preachers, it will prove stimulating reading for anyone who seeks fresh insight into the person of Christ, the Atonement, God and man, faith, and a host of other subjects. Its unique value is, of course, its presentation of a comprehensive view of the Christian faith as it is experienced by hundreds of eminent Christian men and women.

A criticism that might be brought against the work is the preponderance of materials from the pen of our contemporaries. It is essential that such books contain a generous sampling of contemporary Christian values, yet a *treasury of the Christian faith* should of necessity draw heavily upon the

writings of the Fathers and other great historic Christian writers and preachers.

JAMES D. ROBERTSON

The Modern Reader's Guide to the Bible, by Harold H. Watts. New York: Harper and Brothers, 524 pages, \$3.75.

Here is another guide to an understanding of the Bible. It is written by a university professor, a teacher of English, and it is slanted toward the college student interested in the Bible as literature. The Church School teacher and the alert layman will also find here an informative source of background material. The author manifests an acquaintance not only with literature and its interpretation but also with the history and sociological complexes of Biblical times. He is able to use his historical and sociological orientation to good advantage in the manual.

This volume, somewhat in the tradition of Fosdick's "Guide," has three main parts—the first surveys the Old Testament, by books and then by topics, the second is a short chapter of the Apocrypha, and the third covers the New Testament. The position of the modern school of historical criticism is taken throughout and the book may thus be subjected to the criticism which has recently been directed against Fosdick's book—that of "old fashioned liberalism" of a generation ago. Considerable interest is manifested in theology, in fact the Gospels are treated from the standpoint of their Christology. The author has revealed considerable literary skill in the manner in which he has worked his way through a vast field without losing perspective or becoming superficial.

The greatest strength of his treatment appears to be in his historical and sociological background. While neither original nor unique in this respect the book is somewhat distinctive in the insight and clarity with which this perspective is presented. Several chronological charts assist the reader to grasp the historical movement and contemporaneous cultures. Two indices of subjects and texts are valuable. A classified bibliography on the Bible great-

ly enhances the worth of the volume but is arranged as a series of collateral readings for each chapter of the text. The titles given are entirely those of the literary and historical critic. Conservative scholars are conspicuous for their absence. In short the volume is about what one would expect from a college teacher of the Bible as literature. Perhaps most of its buyers will be those taking Bible survey courses in college.

The author makes a strong case for his conviction that American culture, with its doctrine of individual worth, is not "self-evident" at all but is rooted in the Bible. The Bible had so deeply affected the founders of this republic that a theistic interpretation of the universe seemed axiomatic. The declaration of human rights was a natural corollary of the fatherhood and sovereignty of God. The author makes good his contention that whether ours is a theistic or humanistic view a "mastery of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation" is indispensable to a comprehension of American political philosophy and indeed of American civilization.

GEORGE A. TURNER

The Philosophy of Decadentism: A Study of Existentialism, by Norberto Bobbio.
(Tr. by David Moore) New York: Macmillan, 1948. 60 pages. \$1.50.

There has been no lack of critiques of Existentialism; some of the titles of these are as spectacular as the movement which they seek to evaluate. The title under review is not of this type, but is a dead-serious attempt to show that an effete culture may select such a movement as Existentialism as an avenue for the expression of its crisis. The author sees two major ways by which the cultural *impasse* may be met: *decadentism* and *mannerism*. In the former, the crisis is dramatized; in the second, it is evaded by the employment of empty rhetoricisms.

Bobbio, professor of Legal Philosophy in the University of Padua, detests the insincerity of the former. He finds, to his dismay, that literary mannerism and the

"despair" of the Existentialist meet at the level of grandiloquence in an identical cultural experience. What, then, can be said in defense of Existentialism?

Superficially, Existentialism may seem to be equivalent to either Skepticism or Activism. Actually, the intensely subjective quality of anguish on the one hand, and of frustration on the other, forbid either of these equations. The identification of Decadentism with Existentialism seems to our author clear, inasmuch as the self-examination implied in the former brings, not the discovery of the richness thought by the classical Humanist to be there, but a vision of the poverty, ambiguity and anguish which is so obvious to the Existentialist.

The most difficult problem posed by the book is that of the relation of the findings of the "philosophy of anguish" to the common life of man. Since Kierkegaard, the motif of 'singleness' has pervaded those movements of philosophy which exalt existence to the disparagement of essence. Neither Heidegger nor Jaspers could bring man into effective *rapproch* with men in societal life. If Sartre can bring men together in the common life, it is at the level of a decadent literature, whose chief characters are not only of the lowest types, but who flaunt their sins, alternately in the form of agonized inquiry and of cynical exultation.

The most disturbing observation of all is, that the philosophy of Existentialism is but a grotesque form of what exists in our decadent society. Sartre may exaggerate—and intensify—the sickness of our culture. He may, with subtle pride, build a philosophy on the foundation of his own frustrations and those of the disillusioned *maquis*. He may delude his fellows into believing themselves to be gods. Until he can do more, however, than to make men of our day satisfied with a philosophy which is but a reflex of themselves, he has little of importance to say to a world which is seeking a Way.

This volume raises the question of an overall evaluation of the Existentialist philosophy. There is a danger of equating the general movement with the rather bizarre

form which it has assumed under Sartre, and of forgetting that there are more wholesome exponents of the school, even in France. In this connection one remembers such names as Marcel and Mounier, both of whom have found more content in the newer 'realism' than have either Sartre or Gide. The irrationality and atheistic pessimism of Sartre is scarcely to be compared with the outlook of the German *Existenz* philosophers, particularly Jaspers.

At the same time, there is among even theistic existentialists a tendency to place God in some remote place, withdrawn from man and unavailable to man in his loneliness. In removing human life from every abstract scheme, they leave men at loose ends, groping through the mists of contradiction. To such men, has the Christian

message any relevance? Does a message growing out of a *system*, and claiming finality for itself, have a place in *our* kind of a world? Is the Modern Man, with his tentativeness, the embodiment of a vigorous age, with promise of genuine achievement of a faith which is genuine because it refuses to be formulated? Or does this very frame of mind condemn him and his culture as effete?

That the good life is not available upon the basis of historical progress is fairly clear. It is equally evident that mere *system* will not guarantee it. Bobbio does not claim that this latter is true. At the same time, he gives the impression that the cause of the crisis are less complex than they really are.

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