

# Book Reviews

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

*Paul Tillich and the Christian Message*, by George A. Tavad. New York: Scribner's, 1962. 176 pages. \$3.95.

Paul Tillich is now the most influential theologian of the western world. Many who are not in agreement with Tillich, and some who are even ignorant of his writings, reflect his influence in their diction. No one alert to mid-century Protestant thought can afford to ignore this philosopher-theologian. In this slender volume Tillich's Christology and related themes are subjected to description and criticism. One seldom encounters a more objective and constructive appraisal of a contemporary theologian than is exhibited here. Tavad, a Roman Catholic professor of theology in Pittsburgh, is not only a close student of Tillich but a specialist in Protestant theology. Again and again he examines thoroughly some facet of Tillichan doctrine, points out its deficiencies and then attempts to salvage something constructively relevant to both Catholic and Protestant concerns in theology.

Tillich is a mediating theologian *par-excellence*. He seeks to bridge the gap between liberalism and orthodoxy, humanism and theism, materialism and idealism, the nineteenth century and the twentieth, and between philosophy and theology.

Tavad presents first a concise and helpful chapter on Tillich, the thinker. Basic in Tillich's theology is a concern with ontology--with the theory of being, of existence. In his thought is brought together modern existential philosophy and Lutheran theology. As a result, he stands virtually alone in the contemporary scene. It is this uniqueness, this obscurity, which causes intellectuals to be so intrigued by this theologian.

Another basic element in Tillich's thought is his concern with the New Being, which he defines as a revelation of the Unconditional in the man Christ Jesus. Tillich's theology is basically Christological. His doctrine of the New Being, Tavad feels, is too experience-centered, too subjective, too

humanistic (p. 27). The subjective quality of Tillich's "faith" is criticized again by our author as lacking an objective frame of reference--commitment to what? While he deals with important words like "Unconditioned, Ultimate, Absolute," he leaves one in the dark as to what these terms mean. Because he is an existentialist Tillich is content to leave the matter of objective reality a question. Like many neo-orthodox theologians, Tillich places emphasis on "faith" but he never makes quite clear on what this faith is to be based. Whereas in Paul faith is distinct from the object of faith (Christ) and from the means of faith (Scripture), in Tillich "subject and object in faith disappears" (p. 32). The act of faith and the object of faith blend into one in a sort of philosophical mysticism. Tavard correctly suspects that this subjective quest for "faith" is common to many philosophies and has no distinctly Christian content at all (p. 38). "The notion of faith, the notion of original sin, the notion of revelation have been stripped by Tillich of their specifically Christian elements and made into universal philosophical concepts," concludes Tavard (p. 51).

Tillich believes that biblical history is unimportant, that "Christianity is mythical" (p. 111). He also believes that Christianity is neither moral nor immoral; ethical standards are relative and subjective. His Christology appears to be a revival of the ancient heresy of Docetism, the denial that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Still Tavard finds something helpful in Tillich's view of Jesus as "Eternal Godmanhood" and suggests that in the biblical emphasis on Jesus as Son of Man we may find an improvement over the Chalcedon formula of Christology in terms of two "natures." Most Protestants can agree with Tavard's incisive analyses and criticism.

George A. Turner

*Land of Eldorado*, by Sante Uberto Barbieri. New York: Friendship Press, 1961. 161 pages. \$2.95.

Mr. Barbieri writes with a rich knowledge of Latin American history and with keen insight into the revolutionary changes that are taking place at the present time. Born in Italy, he early moved to Brazil and has spent most of his life in Latin America. As a bishop of The Methodist Church in Argentina,

he has earned the name "bishop in shirtsleeves." Besides his duties as pastor, professor, journalist, and ecumenical leader, he has written more than twenty books in Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and English.

This book is a comprehensive summary of the history of Latin America as it relates to the spiritual and sociological needs of the countries. Present problems are seen in the light of the coming of the Spanish explorers, their greed for gold, the superficial "Christianizing" of the land, the destruction of the ancient civilizations, the subjugation of the Indians, the rise of the Latin aristocracy, and the Catholic domination. To maintain the status quo and to permit maximum exploitation of the people, the Indians were kept ignorant deliberately and Protestantism was generally excluded from the lands. Problems of transportation and communication also contributed to the isolation and fragmentation of the lands to the south.

The fight for improvement and self-government often found the people taking sides against the church. But the coming of the Bible had a salutary effect. It helped materially to banish illiteracy and proved a fruitful source of all that was constructive in society. It laid a solid foundation for the coming of Protestant Christianity and brought unity out of the diversified thrust of denominationalism.

The latter part of the book discusses the progress of Protestant Christianity in Latin America, the spiritual task yet to be accomplished, the need for greater unity within Protestantism, and the great urgency of the unfinished task for the spiritual, economic, and social needs of the people.

The book is unusually rich and informative, whether or not one shares the author's passion for church union. Individuals and study groups need not only the facts but the challenge of this great world at our doorstep. Neglect is tragedy for them and peril for us.

Wilber T. Dayton

*The Apostle Paul: Christ's Supreme Trophy*, by Roland Q. Leavell. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963. 128 pages. \$2.95.

Dr. Leavell, distinguished Baptist pastor, administrator and educator, has brought the line of Paul's biographers down to

our own day in a work which is probably the best since James Stalker wrote his work upon the same subject. This author would scarcely make special claim to originality in this biography; his objective is rather to make the work of St. Paul intelligible and appealing. The volume is intended to be used as a study guide, and to this purpose the author has begun each of his eight chapters with an outline, and concluded each with a set of questions designed to stimulate further research into the New Testament records.

The style of the work is easy, at times colloquial. Interpretations follow, in general, the conventional ones, there being an occasional one which suggests rather clearly the author's preference for congregational form of church government and for adult baptism. Dr. Leavell makes it clear that he is fascinated by his subject, and still more significant, that he is aware of the crucial significance for the work of St. Paul for subsequent Christian history. The tone of the work is both evangelical and evangelistic; its content makes St. Paul to be a man among men, a man in whose steps one may still walk with challenge and inspiration. It would make an especially valuable guide for a Bible class or youth study group.

Harold B. Kuhn

*The Ministry of the Spirit*, Selected Writings of Roland Allen, Edited by David M. Paton. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962. 208 pages. \$2.00.

This paperback consists of selected writings of an Anglican clergyman who was born in 1868 and whose active ministry continued till 1940. After a career in China as a missionary of the Anglican Church, Roland Allen for reasons of health returned to England where he spent most of his working life lecturing, writing, and traveling in behalf of Christian missions.

The present volume grows out of his concern with the Book of Acts and the work of the Spirit in Christian missions. The volume reflects the writer's concern that today's Christians experience the life of the Spirit as did the New Testament Christians. The temptation is to think of the Holy Spirit as merely a vague influence hovering over men's lives. The

author emphasizes the fact that the Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ and that He comes into the lives of all who seek Him in a very definite and epochal way. He writes in the conviction that if the filling of the Spirit were more widely experienced it would work a revolution in contemporary Christianity.

His style of writing is direct and pungent. He is skillful in contrasting contemporary Christianity with apostolic Christianity. His passion is to help his fellow Christian, and especially the Christian missionary, rediscover what the early Christians experienced and shared. His insights have remarkable relevance to the modern ecumenical movement.

The volume reflects a combination of those qualities which belong to the mystic, the prophet, and the church statesman. At times the prophetic element causes him to rebel at contemporary religious institutions. No one can read this book without being benefited by it, whether from the standpoint of personal involvement or professional competence, or both.

George A. Turner

*The Rationality of Faith*, by Carl Michalson. New York: Scribner's, 1963. 160 pages. \$3.50.

There have been historically a number of methods by which the relation between faith and scientific reason has been understood. One of the most tempting has been, of course, the method by which the two were declared to represent two separate levels of reality. From the times of Kant to the present, this has been a favorite technique. Professor Michalson has given a slightly new turn to this method in that he has formulated the dichotomy in his own way. Basically, his approach is as follows: he sees two structures in reality, that of nature, and that of history. Nature, he tells us, is that structure of reality which is "exterior to and silent about man" (p. 26). History is that structure which is "interior to and vocal about man" (p. 27).

In the first of these, meaning as such is not present, since meaning can only be present where man transcends his environing structure. In the second of these, meaning emerges since it is only in terms of the existence of states of consciousness that reality may be said to be significant. In the elaboration of this thesis, our author attempts a bold redefinition of such

Christian categories as "creation," "resurrection," and "eschatology." In this treatment, it goes without saying that the dualism of natural :: supernatural vanishes; the two realms of nature and history include all that is, and the supernatural is entirely subsumed under the rubric of meaning or interpretation.

Presumably theology is itself the unravelling of the meaning of history. Its task seems, to this author, to be that of exploring the dialectical relation between subject and object in history. Thus the words of our author, "Christian faith is of the structure of history" (p. 104). Christian truth is thus not to be regarded as something once-for-all given to man or to the Christian Church.

This work abounds in challenging insights; it indicates a wide acquaintance with contemporary Continental authors, as well as with the classical thinkers. Its analyses of such questions as the nature of time, the problems inherent in human communication through language, and the problems posed by modern man's anxiety, are stimulating. Certainly Dr. Michalson has set history over against the structures of nature in the grand manner. What may be questioned is, whether his interpretation of Christianity is as compatible with historic Christian faith as he seems to believe.

Harold B. Kuhn

*Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*, by Ned B. Stonehouse. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963. 201 pages. \$4.50.

The Payton Lectures, delivered at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1962, crowned many years of scholarly research in the Gospel origins and gave form to this book, which was published after the author's untimely death. Dr. Stonehouse's last book is both an exposition of a vital and intelligent faith in the Scriptures and a learned analysis of selected problems of Gospel research in the light of the developments of the past century and a half or more.

Four topics are given special emphasis: authorship, order and interdependence, apostolic tradition, and ultimate origin. The authorship of Matthew is treated as of greatest interest and difficulty. Though rejecting the tradition that Matthew was

the first Gospel to be written, Dr. Stonehouse concludes that the testimony of tradition regarding its authorship appears to be marked by clarity and consistency in favor of the apostle whose name it bears. However, since the Gospels themselves are anonymous, the point is made with urgency that tradition alone, when not supported by clear statement of the Scripture itself, is not a sufficient basis for dogma. The final appeal for belief in the inspiration and authority of the Gospels is based not on identification of authors but on the work of the Holy Spirit.

In relation to the order of the Gospels, such great dependence is placed on the arguments of Streeter that the author's conclusions might be said to stand or fall with the disposition of Streeter's "five reasons for maintaining the priority of Mark." Though there is penetration and erudition throughout, the author is perhaps least original here. Yet many will consider the greatest contribution of the book his ability to defend intelligently this widely held priority of Mark and the dependence of Matthew on Mark without relinquishing confidence in the genuineness, authenticity, inspiration, and reliability of the Gospels. Others will think his arguments weak and ill-timed in the light of the recent demonstrations by Farmer, Ludlum, and others of the precarious foundation on which the Marcan hypothesis is built.

The last half of the book is refreshing and edifying in its exposition of the still more fundamental matters of the apostolic transmission and of the ultimate origin of the gospel. Though the views of the scholars are handled with fairness and discernment, emphasis is placed upon the internal evidence of the Gospels themselves that there was no empty gap between the gospel facts and the Gospels. The nexus was the divinely commissioned apostles to whom the task was entrusted of transmitting the message. This transmission was faithfully accomplished before sufficient time elapsed to render it ineffective. Thus the ultimate origin of the Gospels goes back to a relationship with Jesus Christ. The modern debate is traced with skill from Strauss to Bultmann to show how far such hypotheses have departed from the claims of the Gospels themselves and from the self-revealed Christ. Genuine continuity is thus established between Jesus and the Gospel tradition by Jesus' own self-revelation and by the reliable witness of the Gospels to Jesus.

Whether or not one accepts Dr. Stonehouse's view of the priority of Mark, this is a valuable book. It teems with insights

that enlarge one's understanding of Gospel research; it clarifies fundamental issues, and it demonstrates a way through the bewilderment of modern debate to a reasonable faith in the solid Word of God and the Christ whom it proclaims.

Wilber T. Dayton

*A Reasoned Faith*, by John Baillie. New York: Scribner's, 1963. 180 pages. \$3.50.

The nineteenth book to come from the pen of John Baillie, late dean of the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh and chaplain to the Queen in Scotland, is a posthumous publication of twenty-one addresses delivered by the author before his death in 1960. Written over a large number of years, and for a wide variety of occasions, the discourses deal with issues that do not change with time. They were left in their finished form at the time of his death.

In the Foreward Mrs. Baillie sums up the purpose of the volume in these words: "This collection of addresses by my late husband is published in order that those who have read his previous writings can have access to further thoughts of his on the fundamentals of the faith."

The book represents theological preaching at its best. Dr. Baillie is a master in the use of language; his style is beautiful and moving. His preaching foundation is always the truth of Holy Scripture. Unusually creative in his interpretation of Scripture incidents and passages, he is adept at applying these insights to the needs of contemporary man both with reference to man's personal, spiritual needs and to the social dilemmas of our age.

The volume is aptly titled *A Reasoned Faith*. Each of the addresses reveals the mature insights and experience of one who has achieved a satisfying and sound union of reason and faith in the gaining of a higher knowledge and understanding of Christian truth.

While the subjects of the addresses cover a wide gamut of Christian issues, the forceful convictions throbbing through all of them may be summarized in three basic propositions: 1. In order to be both valid and vital, personal spiritual experience must be characterized by reality. 2. All knowledge



is made effective only by the spiritual disciplines which undergird it. 3. Jesus Christ is the only hope of the contemporary world situation.

In general, the book deals with Christian doctrine, personal religious experience and life, the application of the Christian's faith to society, and the Christian's interpretation of history.

The author affirms the Incarnation as the central doctrine of the Christian Faith. He declares that the advent of Christ has cosmic significance; this is truly the post-Christian ("after Christ") era in the history of the world. Not only is Jesus Christ to be recognized as the eternal and sovereign God, but Christianity is the exclusive way of salvation. The resurrection of Christ is a reality, and it is best witnessed to by the Christian's "behaviour and talk."

With regard to personal religious experience, the author affirms these truths: the imperative of absolute honesty as the condition of spiritual reality, the healing power of faith, the energizing presence of the Holy Spirit, and the contribution of love in resolving the tension between the Christian's limited knowledge and his full knowledge.

The social implications of Christianity are emphatically stated: the Christian is indissolubly linked with society--the unity of mankind is a fundamental Christian doctrine; Jesus Christ gave a new dimension to neighborliness; teachings in the home, whatever their content, are helping to shape the society of tomorrow. Because of the cumulative influence of Christ upon society, men cannot escape the confrontation of Christ in all situations. In such confrontation Christ is discovered to be the salutary truth.

Dr. Baillie sees a distinctly Christian philosophy of history. Man's dominion over nature, divinely bestowed, can be fulfilled satisfactorily only within Christian limits. The eternity and sovereignty of Jesus Christ are to be recognized continually. Christ is the Great Contemporary in the life both of individuals and nations.

For academic readers, chapter eleven is a classic. It is entitled "A University Sermon." The author renders the Matthew 10:16 text as "...be ye therefore wise as serpents, and guileless as doves," and concludes the address in these timely words:

You and I have been given the chance of acquiring a degree of knowledge, and a kind of wisdom and

subtlety which is denied to a majority of our fellows. For that great privilege let us give due thanks to God. But what Christ is saying to us in this word which I have tried to expound is that all our knowledge, all our wisdom and all our subtlety, will at best be mere froth and bubble, and at worst will bring our immortal souls to final destruction unless, by bringing them into the service of a childlike simplicity and a plain obedience, we remain at the same time as harmless and guileless as doves.

Here is a compelling book for all Christians. Within its pages is theological talk spiritually edifying, and set forth in language and concepts conducive to ready understanding. Here the minister will find a very high level of preaching; here also a worthy illustration of the manner in which the pulpit can communicate to the pew the basics of Christian truth and experience.

Frank Bateman Stanger

*The System and the Gospel*, A Critique of Paul Tillich, by Kenneth Hamilton. New York: Macmillan, 1963. 247 pages. \$5.00.

This volume by a Protestant professor at United College, Winnipeg, Canada, is a critique of Paul Tillich comparable in many respects to that of the Catholic theologian Tavad. Hamilton subjects Tillich's system of theology to a thorough, objective, and convincing criticism. After weighing the system in the balances he finds it wanting from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. His penetrating analysis discloses the fact that Tillich's philosophical theology has several things in common with such ancient heresies as Docetism, Gnosticism, and Neoplatonism. Tillich's affinity with Docetism is seen in his reluctance to affirm, as does the New Testament, that Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ are one and the same. As Hamilton points out, the system fails to identify unequivocally the Christ of faith with the Jesus of history. Instead, Tillich "has driven a wedge between the eternal Christ...and the man Christ Jesus...."; salvation is suprafactual (p. 161). The Christian Gospel is the raw material out of which the individual must build his personal faith. Tillich's "restitution" theory of

the resurrection of Jesus is that the continuing presence of Jesus, even after His death, was interpreted within the "symbol" of the resurrection. While Paul and the other New Testament writers find the truth of the resurrection to rest upon verifiable data, Tillich would believe that the resurrection is relatively independent of history.

In this critique the basic logos-philosophy of Tillich is exposed and clarified. While his essential thought is Platonic and Hegelian idealism the manner of expression is often the newer philosophy of existentialism. To Tillich, knowledge is more basic than faith. As with the ancient Gnostics so with Tillich: Christianity is less a matter of the history of God's words and acts which we are asked to accept by faith than it is a system of philosophy wedded to religion.

Professor Hamilton's critique is discriminating and not unduly negative. His conclusions are stated moderately but, as the careful reader will note, with clarity and emphasis. Thus the volume renders a distinct service to those who seek to understand better one of the most influential theologians of our time.

George Turner

*The Nature and Destiny of Man*, by Reinhold Niebuhr. 2 vols. New York: Scribners, 1964. 305 pages, Vol. I; 328 pages, Vol. II. \$1.65 per vol.

*Persons and Places: The Background of My Life*, by George Santayana. New York: Scribners, 1964. 262 pages. \$1.45.

*Art and Scholasticism and the Frontiers of Poetry*, by Jacques Maritain. New York: Scribners, 1964. 234 pages. \$1.45.

Charles Scribner's Sons are rendering the theological public a continuing service in their publication of the Scribner Library Series. To date about thirty of the more significant works in Religion and Philosophy have appeared in this economy-priced paperback series. Reinhold Niebuhr's Gifford Lectures have won their place in the thinking of the Western world, and any special comments upon their contents would be redundant. Currency over a period of twenty-three years has not reduced

their importance to the serious student of religious philosophy nor to the one who would understand the perplexity of man in the mid-twentieth century.

George Santayana has been and remains an intriguing character. The product of two worlds, he scarcely fit in either; and it is his very inability to do so which makes his works significant. Two decades ago he, in this volume, lifted the curtain upon many aspects of his life and work, and this biographical study opens up the tantalizing possibilities which "life at the boundary" holds--not indeed in a Tillichan sense, but from the viewpoint of one who internalized his predicament.

Our generation takes little time for aesthetic theory; and the attempt of Jacques Maritain to call attention to the manner in which religious concerns can condition a theory of art merits continuing study. Theology and art have, since the dissolution of the medieval synthesis, pursued relatively independent paths. It cannot be thought that Maritain has succeeded in affording any basis for a reuniting of the aims of the two; but he has at least sought to make the artist and the theologian mutually intelligible.

The Scribner Library is to be commended for the range, the format, and the quality of its publications. It brings to the reader of limited budget a wealth of indispensable tools.

Harold B. Kuhn

*The Holy Spirit of God*, by W. H. Griffith Thomas. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 4th ed., 1963. 303 pages. \$3.00.

This paperback presents the lectures given by Professor Thomas at Princeton University in 1913. They have been published several times and are still worthy of serious attention on the part of earnest Christians. This is a serious and learned study of the doctrine of the Spirit. After a thorough review of the doctrine of the Spirit in the Bible the author follows the doctrine historically through the ancient, medieval, and modern periods of Christian history. Then he takes up different aspects of the Holy Spirit in a topical arrangement--the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of truth; and the relation of the Holy Spirit to the individual, the church, and the world. He then notes the relationship of the Holy Spirit to

contemporary movements in Christian history such as modernism, mysticism, intellectualism, and church growth.

Griffith Thomas wrote from the standpoint of the clergyman in sympathy with the Keswick movement. Hence his interest is not only that of the historian and theologian; it reflects also the enthusiasm of the active Christian mystic. The book is well documented. It has copious quotations, which reflect wide reading and thorough acquaintance with the literature of the subject. An appendix considers points of interest such as the gift of tongues, the laying on of hands, the baptism of the Spirit, and the fullness of the Spirit. It is unfortunate that these aspects were not dwelt upon more at length in the main body of the lectures. But the publishers are to be commended for again making available this useful contribution to a significant facet of Christian theology.

George A. Turner

*Proclaiming the Word*, by Ronald E. Sleeth. New York: Abingdon, 1964. 142 pages. \$2.75.

This little volume stresses as much the *why* of preaching as it does the *what* and the *how*. Related to the author's emphasis on the theological basis of preaching is his concern for biblical sermons. Both emphases reflect the current theological revival, which in turn is inspired by the Reformation doctrine of the Word. Dr. Sleeth sees biblical preaching as the "normal stance for the Protestant pulpit."

The book differs in two respects from others in this field. It attempts to relate the Word to the culture of our day, and it stresses the role of the preacher as God's spokesman. The final chapter calls attention to the value of modern literature as a stethoscope for discovering the pulse of an age. The concerns of the congregation are frequently mirrored in contemporary writings. Referring to Tillich's method of correlation: "The culture raises the questions; the gospel provides the answers," the author sees modern literature as a fruitful example of the kind of interest a preacher may acquire in understanding the cultural milieu. The book will expand the horizons of preachers young and old.

James D. Robertson