

Concordia Theological Monthly



F E B R U A R Y • 1 9 5 0

BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.

THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE. By Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. Edited by Samuel G. Craig. With an Introduction by Cornelius Van Til. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia. 1949. 442 pages. \$3.75.

Conservative Bible students who received their theological training in the nineties of the past century, or in the first decades of the present century, remember with grateful hearts the name Benjamin B. Warfield, distinguished teacher and author, who was professor of systematic theology in Princeton Theological Seminary from 1886 until the year of his death in 1921. From his pen flowed a constant stream of scholarly articles and books in defense of Biblical truth and conservative Christianity sufficient to fill ten large volumes.

Professor Warfield lived in the era when negative Biblical criticism was fearfully attacking the traditional theology of the Church. In all those years he remained unshaken in his conviction that the Scriptures are the infallible Word of God, and he frequently gave expression to that conviction. Eight of his most scholarly essays on this subject are offered in the present volume. Those of us who remember our first contacts with Dr. Warfield's articles as we discovered them in Hastings' *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* and in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* can't help congratulating the publishers for making these essays available to the present generation and reviving the honored name — Benjamin B. Warfield.

Dr. Warfield did not live to see the day when the Theology of Crisis and other movements in Protestant thought made their impact on current theological thinking. Had he lived to see our day, he would have, without question, exposed their basic fallacies. To offset this gap between 1921, when Dr. Warfield died, and our day, Dr. Van Til, author of *The New Modernism*, an appraisal of the theology of Barth and Brunner, has supplied a lengthy introduction in which he meets the opponents of orthodoxy with their own weapons — philosophic reasonings. One appreciates his penetrating analysis, but one questions the validity of some of his conclusions. Dr. Warfield would have, we are certain, wielded the Sword of God's Spirit rather than the frail lance of the human mind and would have been chiefly concerned in demonstrating at what points present-day opponents of orthodoxy violate the clear Word of God.

The essays bear the impress of the author's Calvinistic approach to Scripture. But there is so much of value in these essays that a careful reading of them will prove a blessed adventure. PAUL M. BRETSCHER

JESUS. By Martin Dibelius. Translated by Charles B. Hedrick and Frederick C. Grant. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 160 pages, 5½ × 8. \$2.50.

When before November 11, 1947, the date of the death of Martin Dibelius, scholars of renown in Germany were enumerated anywhere, the name of this man was sure to be included. He was regarded one of the chief ornaments of the University of Heidelberg, where he taught in the New Testament Department. Works from his pen that have made him widely known are the *Commentary on James* in Meyer's series (1920), *From Tradition to Gospel* (1935), *Gospel Criticism and Christology* (1935), *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament and Early Christian Literature* (1936), *The Sermon on the Mount* (lectures delivered here in America in 1937 and published 1940), and *The Message of Jesus Christ* (1939). In the latter year appeared, too, the work which here lies before us in an excellent English translation. Dibelius, who was 64 years old when he died, his health undermined by the privations of the war era, was an immensely learned and versatile man; besides, he possessed rare powers of presentation. He is probably best known as an exponent of the new form of criticism based on what is called *Formgeschichte*. In addition to the books of his which *ex professo* deal with this type of research, his work on the Sermon on the Mount and the present volume will serve as an excellent introduction to this method of treating the Gospel material. It may interest the readers to know that he was a cousin of the prominent Bishop Dibelius of Berlin, who visited our country in 1948.

This book on Jesus consists of ten chapters having these headings respectively: 1. Jesus in History; 2. The Sources; 3. People, Land, Descent; 4. The Movement Among the Masses; 5. The Kingdom of God; 6. The Signs of the Kingdom; 7. The Son of Man; 8. Man's Status Before God; 9. The Opposing Forces; 10. Faith and Unfaith. A bibliography, an index of subjects, and an index of passages conclude the little volume. The Table of Contents sounds innocent enough and might create the impression that merely another Life of Christ is submitted. But one does not have to read far to notice that the work is characterized by an extremely negative, skeptical tendency. Form criticism comes with its heavy tread, and one fair flower after the other in the garden of the Evangelists is crushed. Let me endeavor to give the reader an idea of Dibelius' views and methods.

After some interesting observations on the distinction between faith and history the writer's special ideas begin to appear as he examines the sources. The Gospels, especially the synoptic Gospels, present the tradition current in the Church about Jesus at the time of their composition. The various sections of these works must not be regarded as being of equal his-

torical value. How was the Gospel material preserved? We find in these little writings sayings of Jesus that are reported in connection with a certain event, like the coming of the embassy of John the Baptist. Next there are sayings of His that are transmitted without such a setting, merely as words of Jesus, usually gathered in collections like the Sermon on the Mount. That they were preserved is due to the special interest attaching to them for the early Christians, who found in them directives for their faith and life. Now and then sayings may have been ascribed to Jesus that were in reality not spoken by him, but were merely similar to something He had said. To all this material must be added the long narrative parables like that of the Prodigal Son; carefully detailed examination will have to show whether these compositions are preserved in their original or in a slightly altered form. The stories *about* Jesus in the Gospels can be divided into several classes, too. There are, in the first place, stories which helped the early Christians in their mission work, such as the blessing of the little children. They may be called paradigms. Alongside of them one finds stories that have a wealth of picturesque detail, like the narrative of the Gadarene demoniac. Here extraneous material may have been added occasionally. These stories are called tales. In addition the Passion narrative must be mentioned; in its general outline it is trustworthy. The scientific student has to decide what in the Gospels is the old tradition about Jesus, and in this tradition again the earliest layer, as the most reliable, must be sought out. — These few sentences of mine give the reader, I admit, but an imperfect idea of the technique followed in the *formgeschichtliche Schule*. But enough has been said to demonstrate its utterly negative character. It is with such presuppositions that Dibelius approaches the various Gospel accounts and arrives at his conclusions as to what is historical. What results is simply a naturalistic picture of Jesus; the old Rationalists, in spite of their ridiculous methods, could not have done better in their attempts to please human reason. The relationship of the *formgeschichtliche Schule* with the negative critics of 1775 to 1825 is hidden, because the former employs a formidable technique of literary and historical criticism. Ostensibly the adherents of this school follow the methods of true science. It is only when one delves more deeply into their endeavors that it becomes apparent that the actual basis of their work is not science, but highly subjective speculation. Phenomena are interpreted in a certain way, but the candid reader will say that a different interpretation would be just as plausible. One is amazed to see that the view of David Friedrich Strauss, that the Old Testament suggested and shaped much in the tradition about Jesus' career, here has come back to life. With sadness one observes that the message of the Cross with its promise of life through the death of the divine Sin-bearer has entirely disappeared. Dibelius admits that Jesus viewed Himself as the future "Ruler, Messiah, or Redeemer." But what does it mean? The final note of Dibelius is that "again and again from the story of Jesus has come the call for decision" (p. 147). Thank God,

the poor sinner has the Gospel to console him and does not have to rely on *Formgeschichte*.

Apart from initiating the reader into the method of *Formgeschichte*, the book will repay study on account of the many valuable historical observations that are embodied in the discussion. The chapter on "People, Land, Descent" abounds in worth-while information. W. ARNDT

PROGRESS OF DOCTRINE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. By Thomas D. Bernard. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 258 pages, 5½ × 8½. \$2.00. Zondervan Publishing House, 244 pages, 5 × 7½. \$1.75. The Eerdmans edition is a reproduction from the plates of the first American edition published by Gould and Lincoln in 1867. The Zondervan edition, with an introduction by W. B. Smith, is reprinted from the plates of the American Tract Society.

This book contains the eight lectures delivered by Bernard in 1864 on the Bampton Foundation (established at Oxford University in 1780). Of the 133 volumes comprising the annual lectures the present volume is rated by many as one of the best and undoubtedly will lead to a deeper appreciation of the marvelous unity and divine origin of the New Testament. At first glance the title seems to be misleading, as though the author favored the Ritschlian historical theory, that development of doctrine continues throughout the era of the Christian Church, or that, as A. Harnack held, the Epistles already belong to history of doctrine. This the author rejects in unmistakable terms. (Pp. 36, 37. We read the Eerdmans edition.) To him the progress of doctrine in church history is only a progress of man's apprehension of the truth, not a progress in divine communication (pp. 31—34). The author's basic contention is that the entire New Testament presents the divine plan in beautiful harmony; that the New Testament in the sequence of the chronological writings is merely like the unfolding of a rosebud into full bloom; and that the entire New Testament is the Savior's divine revelation, which, however, dare not be restricted to the words spoken in the flesh. Divine revelation of the New Testament comes to us in 1) the words of Christ spoken with His lips; 2) the words of Christ given through the Spirit. Therefore Christ is to our author both the Source and the Subject of the "progressively revealed" doctrine. The synoptic Gospels present the facts of Christ's life; the Gospel of St. John presents the glory of Christ in a more distinct and articulate manner; the Acts serve as an introduction to the Epistles, in which statements "which might seem of doubtful meaning in the former stage have found a fixed interpretation. Suggestions of thought in the one have become habits of thought in the other. What were only facts there have become doctrines here." (P. 46.) There can be no orderly progress in doctrine unless there is *one* Author (p. 47); in fact, there can be no *doctrine* without *facts*, the *fact* of Christ's death and resurrection is basic for the *doctrine* concerning His death and resurrection. "The facts must be com-

pleted, before they are clearly interpreted and fully applied" (p. 48). The author points out that already in the Gospels Christ goes from the facts to the doctrine, for a comparison of the Synoptics and John shows a wonderful unity and harmony, and at the same time a definite progression. And yet the revelation in the four Gospels is of such a nature that the reader is almost compelled to expect further progress in the revelation, because the Gospel narrative creates the desire for a clear reply to certain questions that have arisen during the reading of the facts. According to the author two things stand out in the Gospels. First, they include the substance of all Christian doctrine, but even in their progression from Mark to John show that they do not bear the character of finality. Second, the Savior Himself indicates that the revelation is to be progressive, for in reaching the highest point of His earthly task He opens a second stage by the promise of further instruction through the Holy Ghost (pp. 79—81). The very form (obscure statements) and method (parables) of Christ's personal teaching and the specific promise of the Holy Spirit prompt us to look forward to a further unfolding of the doctrine. The first step in the second stage of Christ's revelation is recorded in Acts, which links the founding of the Church to the Gospel (p. 103). In a brief resume of the Epistles the author shows that since the facts recorded in the Gospels were either imperfectly grasped or actually perverted or misapplied (p. 157), it becomes necessary to set the truth forth more fully in the Epistles. Thus the author presents the "progress of doctrine" from "the beginning to the end of the New Testament, from the cradle at Bethlehem to the city of God" (p. 224). The book is recommended for careful study. It will prove very suggestive in the preparation for Bible class work.

F. E. MAYER

NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT. REVELATION. By Albert Barnes. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 464 pages, 8×6. \$3.50.

This is the last of the *Barnes Notes* volumes published by the Baker Book House in enlarged type, handy format, and handsome appearance. Students of the Bible who have procured for their library the preceding volumes will no doubt purchase also this final one. It is true: *Barnes' Notes* do not solve the problems of prophecy in the book; but that is something which no commentary does. Nor are the *Notes* to be accepted in their entirety; they, for example, defend the millennialistic conception of Rev. 20:1 ff. But there is in this volume so much helpful comment, so much valuable suggestion and guidance for Christian believers, and so much edifying devotional material that the reader will gratefully use *Barnes* also on Revelation. The reviewer believes that the last book of the New Testament is studied far too little by Lutheran Christians and that, while its place among the *Antilegomena* cannot be denied, it is nevertheless a book so grand that it properly closes the canon, since it presents a *theologia viae* and a *theologia vitae* that are most necessary for God's chil-

dren in this perplexing eschatological age. It is indeed very true what an exegete has said about Revelation: "What we can understand in it, is truly glorious; what is beyond our comprehension, is forever challenging."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BIBLE ENCYCLOPAEDIA AND DICTIONARY, CRITICAL AND EXPOSITORY.

Compiled and written by A. R. Fausset. Zondervan Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. No date given (1949?). 753 pages. \$4.95.

This is a reprint of a work published decades ago by the eminent Bible student Dr. Fausset, who is perhaps best known because he was co-author, with Drs. Jamieson and Brown, of the still widely used *Commentary on the Whole Bible*.

Being a reprint from old plates, the book has some defects. The type is very small, and the materials have not been brought up to date. One deplores also that the book does not contain a critical introduction. On the credit side, it may be said that Fausset's work is still in many respects a very useful Bible dictionary. The book bears the impress of the author's fine scholarship and his wide acquaintance with Biblical data. One is particularly grateful that the author does not merely supply information on Biblical names, places, and historical matters, but that he also includes in his work carefully done essays on doctrinal matters such as the Antichrist, Creation, Inspiration, Justification, and Predestination. These essays may still be read with much profit. The articles which this reviewer examined reflect Dr. Fausset's profound reverence for the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

ATLAS OF THE BIBLE LANDS. C. S. Hammond & Company. New York. 32 pages, 9½ × 12½. 50 cents.

In this new atlas one finds, in the first place, 32 colored maps pertaining to the world of the Bible. The last one of them presents Palestine as it is now divided under the terms of the Israeli-Jordanian and Israeli-Egyptian armistice agreements. The other maps, as would be expected, deal with the early history of the world and the Roman Empire. Those pertaining to Palestine are quite detailed. In addition the atlas is richly illustrated. In it are included photographs of scenes and ancient remains in Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Italy, and other countries mentioned in the Bible. Every Bible student will enjoy paging through this little atlas and studying the maps and the pictures. The price is extremely reasonable.

W. ARNDT

GIVING A REASON FOR OUR HOPE. By Carl F. H. Henry. W. A. Wilde Company, Boston. 1949. 96 pages. \$1.50.

Dr. Henry, who has become known as a staunch defender of the Christian faith, offers in this book his answers to many vexing religious questions addressed to him by college, university, and seminary students. A

sampling of these questions includes: Is God simply an imagination of ours? How can I tell whether God exists before my idea of Him? Why did modern theology disregard special revelation? Did Plato and Aristotle agree with any of the ideas of Jesus? Is not the doctrine of the Trinity quite unintelligible, since there are no empirical analogies to it?

The author's replies to these and other questions reveal a sincere endeavor on his part honestly to face up to these questions, a profound understanding of older and modern philosophical views, and a keen sense of what is or is not in accord with Scriptural truth. Our college and university students will derive benefit from carefully reading this book, and our pastors will gather from this book excellent materials to convince the gainsayers.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

THE SEARCH FOR LIFE'S MEANING. By Alfred G. Fisk. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York. 1949. 249 pages. \$3.00.

This is a noble attempt by a well-informed student of philosophy who, incidentally, is also a master of style and diction, to support theism with his version of idealism. As an idealist, Mr. Fisk exposes the inadequacy of materialism to give a satisfying account of the nature of the universe. He then proceeds to show, in brilliantly written chapters, that ours is an ordered, teleological universe, that values have objective reality, that one is therefore compelled to posit a higher being as the cause of this universe, and that this being is a personal being "plus." In his discussion of the problem of evil, the author successfully defends his idealism against "unreasonable" solutions of this problem. He rejects absolute determinism, "proves" the immortality of the soul, and, in a closing chapter, indicates the relevancy of his position for the Christian life. A large number of footnotes which, though appended in the rear, must not be overlooked, provide further explications of many points discussed in the body of the text. A well-prepared index increases the value of the book.

In general, the author limits himself to philosophic inquiry and only infrequently impinges on the theological realm. Unfortunately, however, the author, in these few instances, enters far enough afield in theological matters to challenge the theologian. In his attempt to square his philosophical viewpoints with Biblical theology, Mr. Fisk does not do justice to the miracles recorded in Scripture. Allowing, with the author, for faith in religion as the corollary of hypothesis in science, one asks: Why should it be wholly out of order to believe that God who, as the author admits, is the cause of all cosmic laws, has occasionally, at His discretion, suspended these very laws and does so today? Or why should prayer be merely an act of "giving ourselves to God" rather than an appeal to Him for help? The author also fails to point out that Christian theism cannot escape predicating a triune God, that this God is both immanent and transcendent, that He became wholly "anthropomorphic" when the "Logos" became incarnate, that the Christian faith in immortality includes faith in the resurrection of

the body, and that only those who are "in Christ" and live in His fellowship are empowered by the Spirit to respond to God's love toward them. An observation appears to be in place at this point. Whenever philosophy invades the realm of Christian theology, it must adjust itself to it rather than expect that theology will adjust itself to philosophy. One who dares to speak with a degree of authority on both, philosophy and theology, reason and faith, must be aware of three possible approaches: 1) to begin with philosophy, but to allow theology to act as the correcting and complementing teacher of philosophy; 2) to maintain as clean-cut a division between philosophy and theology as this is humanly possible; 3) to make theology subservient to philosophy. One fears that Mr. Fisk chose the third course. He will, therefore, have to anticipate that some readers will regret that he failed to do justice to theology.

But Mr. Fisk's book has decided merits. It is a remarkably clear presentation of its theses, and its quotations from modern scientists and philosophers are numerous and, in some instances, not readily accessible elsewhere. Readers not familiar with fundamental philosophic issues, and with the attitude of modern scientists toward religion, will find this book very useful.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

HIGHWAYS OF PHILOSOPHY. By Merle William Boyer. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. 1949. 352 pages. \$3.50.

This is one of those books which one is tempted to review before reading. From the expressive jacket cover to the last note on page 352: "Type used in this book Body, 12 on 13 and 10 on 10 Garamond Display, Garamond bold," the volume is a thing of beauty and another grand slam of the Muhlenberg Press. A rapid reading of the book confirms one's first impressions. Here is a text in philosophy which ought to appeal to everyone who has the slightest inclination to discover what philosophy is all about. The unique approach to the vast subject, the organization of the materials, and, in particular, Appendix I ("An open forum as a laboratory for philosophy"), in which the author offers for discussion alternative solutions to philosophic problems, all these factors contribute to the readability and usefulness of the book. Mr. Boyer's text, which is designed to help also Christians who day by day face philosophic problems of all kinds, will find many grateful readers in both Christian and non-Christian circles.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

JESUS CHRIST IS ALIVE. By Laurence W. Miller. W. A. Wilde Co., Boston, Mass. 89 pages, 8 × 5½. \$1.50.

THE JESUS PAUL PREACHED. By Perry F. Haines. W. A. Wilde Co., Boston, Mass. 179 pages, 8 × 5½. \$2.00.

These two books discuss Christological subjects of paramount importance from the viewpoint of Christian apologetics. The first, *Jesus Christ Is Alive*, is a clear, well-written, and Scriptural presentation of Christ's resurrection,

showing its absolute certainty, its significance for Christ Himself, as proving His deity and Messiahship, and for the Christian believer, to whom our Lord's resurrection is a pledge of his own resurrection and immortality. We recommend this book wholeheartedly for study especially by Christian laymen.

The second book, *The Jesus Paul Preached*, sets forth Jesus as the pre-existent Son of God, who with the Father created the world, was born of a virgin, became true man to execute the appointed work of redemption, was absolutely sinless, fulfilled the prophecies concerning the promised Messiah, wrought true miracles, was crucified as our High Priest, was raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of the Father. These fundamental doctrines of traditional theology the writer exhibits and defends on the basis of Scripture, which he believes to be God's Word *in toto* and therefore the only source and rule of faith. The reviewer, however, could not agree with a number of statements in the book as, for example, that Jesus actually was buried twice in the same tomb (p. 120 f.), that in John 13:10 He means to say that he who is bathed in His blood needs only to have his feet washed, which pick up the defilement in the daily Christian walk (p. 159), that there is a place in the heart of the earth, called *sheol* and *hades*, into which all spirits went at death prior to Christ's ascension (p. 174), that Paradise first was in hades, but after Christ's ascension is in heaven (p. 176), etc. The writer thus weaves into his otherwise Scriptural exposition speculations that are not taught in the Bible. The book, therefore, must be read with considerable care; it is not always doctrinally sound.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

KIRCHLICHES JAHRBUCH FUER DIE EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IN DEUTSCHLAND 1933—1944. Herausgegeben von Joachim Beckmann. 60.—71. Jahrgang. C. Bertelsmann, Guetersloh. 1948. 533 pages. DM 15.

The last yearbook of the Evangelical Church of Germany appeared in 1932. Further publications of this historical record were impossible since, beginning with 1933, the Evangelical Church of Germany became involved in conflicts with the German Christians and with Nazi authorities and since not long after the outbreak of World War II in 1939 publication of religious literature virtually ceased. The present volume attempts to survey the period 1933—1944. The editor promises that another volume will soon appear covering the years 1945—1948. After that, the yearbook will again appear annually.

This volume, which surveys the trials of the Evangelical Church of Germany in one of the darkest periods of German history, will always be of value to church historians. Here one finds reprints of a large number of documents such as announcements and reports by German evangelical bishops, proclamations by the Third Reich, confessions of faith, and statements dealing with burning theological issues. Here one sees in action great minds which largely determined the course of events in the Evan-

gical Church of Germany, such as Bishops Wurm, Marahrens, Meiser, Sasse, and others. As one reads these documents, one begins to understand what it means to suffer for one's faith, and one thanks God for the courageous testimony which these fearless confessors bore in times when Scriptural and confessional loyalties forbade them to preach revolt against the existing State but also compelled them to declare and publicize in unmistakable language their opposition to every effort by traitors in the Church and by tyrants in the State to suppress the free proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paragraphs in this book dealing with Church-State relationships and with the rights and responsibilities of Christian pastors and congregations have timeless significance. There are, finally, pages in this volume which move one to tears and remind one of the unconquerable faith of Christian martyrs in the first three centuries of our era.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

THE NEW SCHAFF-HERZOG ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Volume I. 500 pages, 9½ × 6½. \$4.50.

This reprint of the standard religious encyclopedia in the English language is to appear in thirteen volumes. The publisher promises a new volume each month until the reprint is completed. Following the reprinting, Volumes XIV and XV are to be added bringing supplementary material. Dr. Lefferts A. Loetscher, Associate Professor of Church History of Princeton Theological Seminary, will be the editor of the supplementary volumes.

Schaff-Herzog has always, and very correctly so, been considered a *sine qua non* for a pastor's library. It has been out of print for a number of years. It is good to know that a new edition will now be on the market and that the encyclopedia will be brought up-to-date by the addition of the supplementary volumes.

LOUIS J. SIECK

THE FORMING OF AN AMERICAN TRADITION. A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism. By Leonard J. Trinterud. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 352 pages. \$6.50.

The author of this book is Associate Professor of Church History at McCormick Theological Seminary. He prepared this volume in preparation of the 250th anniversary of Presbyterianism in the United States. It covers approximately the first hundred years and is divided into two parts. The first is the agony of birth. The second is the shaping of the future and closes with the founding of the General Assembly. The author has made every effort to present a well-documented history of these first hundred years in which he shows well how American Presbyterianism was born. He does not hesitate to tell in detail the controversies through which the Church had to pass. Everyone interested in the history of Presbyterianism must know this excellent book.

W. G. POLACK