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BOOK REVIEWS

INTRODUCTION TO THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD. By Raymond F. Surburg. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1975. 197 pages. \$8.95.

A student of the Sacred Scriptures, whether pastor or layman, will happily find many works which set the various books of the Bible in their historical and cultural context. Indeed, there are so many introductory works of a high quality that the prospective buyer may have real difficulty selecting the most helpful volume for his purposes.

If, however, that same student would embark upon an exploration of the four centuries which separate the Old Testament from the New Testament and would want a working knowledge of the history and literature of that period, he would encounter real problems. Until now, he would have found that the treatments of this period either said too much or too little. On the one hand, he would have found some very technical and exhaustive works which would have left him afloat in a sea of facts. On the other hand, he would have come across many brief paragraphs and allusions which only touched on one aspect or another of the intertestamental period.

An excellent volume to fill this lacuna in theological literature has now been supplied by Dr. Raymond F. Surburg's *Introduction to the Intertestamental Period*. The greatest contribution of this work, and it is certainly a significant one, is the author's ability to steer a middle course between the aforementioned extremes. It is no small achievement to organize the varied and seemingly limitless data of the intertestamental world into a readily apprehensible landscape which provides an adequate view to the reader. This study does precisely this under three headings: "The Historical Background," "The Religious Background," and "Jewish Literature of the Intertestamental Period."

Dr. Surburg's overview of the historical background concisely portrays for the reader the various powers which held sway in ancient Israel. The Persian period about which we know so little; the sparkling, but short-lived career of Alexander the Great; the succession of ruling families—Ptolemies, Seleucids, Maccabees, and Hasmoneans—are described and placed in their historical context.

The discussion of the religious background includes important material on the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Qumran Sectaries, and the Zealots. Further valuable data is included on the actual theological trends of this period. Of special interest in this section is the author's treatment of the belief in the Messiah as it was exhibited during the intertestamental period.

The concluding section provides a most helpful survey of the literature of this period. When one is introduced to the Septuagint, the Qumran scrolls, the Apocrypha, the many Pseudepigrapha, and the related literature such as Philo and Josephus, one must marvel at the vast amount of literary activity. Perhaps Protestants are even less aware of this wealth of background material than Roman Catholics. This thorough, yet readable, chapter should go far toward correcting that blind spot.

With the exception of the misspelled "authorities" on page 15, the editors have done a fine job and are to be commended.

We hope that many a pastor and many a layman will buy this book and benefit from its mature scholarship.

Dean O. Wenthe

THE BIBLE SPEAKS AGAIN. A GUIDE FROM HOLLAND. With a foreward by William Barclay. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1972. 224 pages.

This is a translation by Annebeth Mackie of the Dutch *Klare Wijn: Rekenschap over geschiedenis, geheim en gezag van de Bijbel*, published in Holland in 1967. This report—written by Prof. J. de Graaf, chairman; Dr. T. Dokter, secretary; Prof. Dr. H. Jonker; Dr. B. Klein; the Rev. S. Meijers; Prof. Dr. K. H. Miskotte; and Dr. Th. C. Frederickse—was adopted by the General Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church in November 1966.

The Dutch church instructed this committee to produce *A Guide* because of the problem of widespread ignorance of the Bible to which more than superficial attention is being paid. Despite the fact that the Bible is appearing in new translations, this circumstance in itself is not sufficient to overcome the ignorance and the misconceptions abroad about the Bible. It was the conviction of the Netherlands Church "that unless something was said about the nature of the Bible and the background from which it came, and unless questions of inspiration, authority and criticism were formally tackled, the new translations could be even more misleading than the old."

The Dutch commission worked for six years, and in March 1967 their work was finally published. The report turned out to be very much in demand, for in the first week ten thousand copies were sold, and ever since its publication there has been a demand for this guide.

The Netherlands Reformed Church supported this report and proceeded to give it the title of "Clear Wine," a Dutch phrase meaning "plain speaking." Augsburg Publishing House, in its characterization of the book on the back cover of this translation, claims that "as a sign of the thorough thinking which is so characteristic of the Dutch theological scene, the present book deserves to stand alongside of the Roman Catholic 'Dutch Catechism.'" *The Bible Speaks Again* and the Catholic *Dutch Catechism* have a number of presuppositions and attitudes in common, for both have espoused some of the radical conclusions of form and redaction criticism, which therefore means that in these two volumes there are significant and important departures from traditional Calvinism and traditional historic Roman Catholicism respectively.

In the Protestant Dutch study the professors and pastors who wrote this *Guide* have dealt with such important questions as these: How much in the Bible can still be believed? How relevant is the Bible today? How is the Bible to be employed properly? Is it possible for the Bible still to speak to modern man? The misuse of the Bible in the past and in the present is the concern of this hermeneutical study.

The Dutch study guide is organized around four major topics:

I. "The Bible in Christianity";

- II. "The Bible Must Speak for Itself";
- III. "The Bible and Its Key Secrets"; and
- IV. "The Bible Today."

The authors of the *Guide* have adopted the rationalistic views of higher criticism that began around 1750 and have been with the Protestant churches for about 200 years. The Mosaic origin of Deuteronomy is rejected and the typical higher critical position advanced (p. 57). In the chapter setting forth the use of the Bible during the last 1900 years, not only have these Dutch theologians criticized what is believed to have been misunderstanding of the Scriptures, but both directly and indirectly the authors set forth their own faulty methods of Biblical interpretation.

The Bible is no longer for these writers the inspired and inerrant Word of God. The Bible contains errors, mistakes, inaccuracies, and contradictions. The orthodox doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible, held both by Calvinists and Lutherans, is evaluated and the result is stated as follows:

Nevertheless, it must be said that the starting-point and the character of this theology have created many difficulties for later generations, causing much damage both in the church and in the pastoral field, because they imposed a yoke on hearts and minds which could and should have been avoided. A reaction was bound to follow. We shall read about this in the next section (p. 35).

Orthodox theology is faulted in that it held that the authority of the Bible consisted in this, that the Biblical books were inspired by God. Many of the radical positions on the nature of the Bible and isagogical questions once rejected and fought against by former members of the Dutch church are now unabashedly accepted and defended. The dubious documentary hypothesis, the theory of many Isaiahs, the newer views about the origins of the Gospels are now promoted. Gunkel's views about sagas and myths are advocated. Form and redaction criticisms, their pre-suppositions and the outworkings of the methodologies based on such assumptions, are accepted.

An example of this type of thinking may be seen from the following statement:

Can and should this word [i.e., "saga"] also be used in connection with some parts of the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament? The stories of the patriarchs, the miracles that took place during the conquest of Canaan, the figure of Samson, the miracle stories of Elisha and the curious adventures of Daniel: does the significance of these stories for our faith diminish if we apply the word saga to them? Is it necessary to prove at all costs that such episodes 'really happened,' and should we in any case believe this? If not, what is the right and honest way out of these difficulties? (pp. 55-56).

Not only are mythological elements to be found in the Old Testament but they are also allegedly found in the Gospels. The Dutch *Guide* thus asserts: "By mythological elements are meant those images of heaven and earth, angels and devils, good and evil, gods and Satan, which form the framework in which pagan myths take place. It is generally admitted by scholars that the biblical story of salvation can definitely not be called

a myth. But is it not obvious that the Bible makes use of a mythological framework? Should such images as a three-storied universe, angels, Satan, dragons, be considered as the contents of the biblical message, or as the form out of which we have to free that message?" (p. 56).

The Dutch theologians who composed this so-called *Guide From Holland* are opposed to the use of the proof-text method for supporting individual doctrines and devote a number of pages to contending that "truth" is not so much concerned with the ascertainment of factuality and the correspondence of a statement with reality as it is with "faith." This allows for mistakes and errors and contradictions in the Bible, a position accepted by this hermeneutical guide from Holland. The strange thing, however, about the Dutch study is that it constantly bases its wrong views and its criticism of traditional Calvinistic and Lutheran hermeneutics upon individual Bible passages and pericopes. On pages 221-224 all Scripture passages employed are conveniently listed.

The views popularized by Von Hofmann and Wright that revelation has taken place mainly through mighty acts of God are placed in opposition to the traditional position that God has mainly spoken and is speaking through His inscripturated revelation. The report states: "Once we have grasped that the real point of the Bible is a history—indicated in the Name as a coherent totality of acts of that God who remains true to himself—then we also reach a point high enough to get a view of two concepts used in theology, namely those of inspiration and the canon of the Scripture" (p. 106). While it is true that the Judaeo-Christian religion is intimately tied up with history, that God did act through mighty deeds and that the individual Biblical books originated at various times in the centuries both before and after the birth of Christ, yet the fact that Biblical religion is intimately tied up with history does not warrant ignoring the fact that now we have a definitive, objective Word from God which is to be studied and proclaimed. It is through the Holy Scriptures, the inspired and canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, that the Holy Spirit brings about repentance through the Law and fosters faith in the Savior Jesus Christ through the Gospel.

The Bible Speaks Again is useful for showing how the theology of a Dutch Calvinistic Church has been changing and coming closer to Roman Catholicism, but sad to say, it is a poor and faulty guide to the understanding of the Bible.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE HEBREW TEXT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By L. H. Brockington. Oxford and Cambridge University Press, 1973. 269 pages. Cloth. \$14.00.

The New English Bible is described by its publishers as "a fresh and authoritative translation of the Bible into modern English. It is a complete translation from the original tongues, enriched by the most recent biblical scholarship and enlivened by a fluent literary style which is clear, vigorous, and often majestic."

This new translation was begun over twenty years ago and was carried out under the authority of a Joint Committee on which were found represented the major Protestant churches of the British Isles. Representatives from Roman Catholic Church joined the venture as observers during the later stages.

Relative to the Old Testament of *The New English Bible*, the publishers state that on this, the larger part of the Bible, scholars worked for many years and spared no efforts to produce as accurate and intelligent a version as possible. In the 1970 edition of *The New English Bible With the Apocrypha*, Dr. G. R. Driver contributed the "Introduction to the Old Testament," which is primarily devoted to the matter of what kind of text was to be employed and why textual criticism had to be practiced before the work of translation could be attempted. Pages XV-XVIII present the view held by critical scholars and some conservative scholars on the history and reliability of the Hebrew Old Testament text. Driver asserts about the transmitted text:

So much for the Hebrew Old Testament as it lies before us; but it is certain that this does not always represent what was originally written. The translator must often go behind the traditional text to discover the writer's meaning. For this purpose he may have recourse first to the Scrolls; but these cover only a very small part of the Old Testament writings. Secondly he may have recourse to the Samaritan Pentateuch, which though extant only in late manuscripts, the earliest being dated about the eleventh century A.D., may be somewhat earlier than the Scrolls and represents the text of the five books of the Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy) which the Samaritans took with them when they seceded from Judaism. It differs from the traditional text in a considerable number of small and mostly unimportant points (p. xvi).

Another important witness for the Hebrew text of the autographs is the Greek translation, known as the Septuagint. Of it Driver writes: "Clearly it is the work of a number of translators of unequal skill; their meaning is now literal, now paraphrastic, and now interpretative. Not infrequently it contains absurd mistranslations" (p. xvi).

The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament contains the readings adopted by the translators of the New English Bible. These were prepared for publication by L. H. Brockington, Senior Lecturer of Aramaic and Syriac at the University of Oxford. The Massoretic text employed by the British translators was the one printed in R. Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* (3rd edition, 1937). The 269 pages of Brockington's book contains about 3,700 different renderings and readings, which means that compared with the Authorized Version of 1611 and the British Revised Version of 1885 there are that many differences reflected in the translation of *The New English Bible*. Therefore, to understand why the new translation has so many changes it is helpful for scholars to have available the changes adopted by the Old Testament Committee.

A perusal of the readings adopted shows that many, in fact, the majority, are based on the Septuagint, the Peshitta, the Vulgate, occasionally the Jewish Targums, and the Samaritan Pentateuch. Various readings from the fragments and books represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls were adopted. In a number of places the translators transposed clauses and verses and attempted to make the text read as they thought it should have. At times they also resorted to textual emendation, the last resort when a given text makes no sense whatsoever.

The translators seem to reflect the new views on Old Testament

textual criticism which have resulted from the finding of Qumran Hebrew texts that agreed with the Septuagint and Samaritan Pentateuch against the Massoretic text. Three or four different textual traditions are supposed to be represented in the Hebrew manuscripts at Qumran. The result has been the claim that the Massoretic text, which constitutes about ninety-nine per cent of the Hebrew Biblical manuscripts at Qumran, does not reflect the *Urtext*, which now has to be reconstructed from all sources, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Babylonian tradition represented by manuscripts found in the Cairo Geniza and other places, and the pre-Massoretic text found in most Qumranic Biblical manuscripts.

Raymond F. Surburg

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE THROUGH HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY. By Harry M. Orlinsky. KTAV Publishing House, Inc., New York, 1972. 292 pages. Cloth.

Dr. Harry M. Orlinsky of Hebrew-Union Institute of Religion, New York City, in 1954 published a book called *Ancient Israel*, which was printed by the Cornell University Press. It was issued as part of the series, *The Development of Western Civilization: Narrative Essays in the History of Our Tradition from Its Origins in Ancient Israel and Greece to the Present*, a series of which Professor W. Fox was the editor.

In this volume the text of *Ancient Israel* is used on one page, and on the opposite page the texts which would support the assertions and interpretations are given both in Hebrew and in English translation. In addition, many illustrations from archaeological digs are used throughout the book. Charts and maps (twenty-one of them) are also employed to aid the reader to grasp better the meaning of the geographical and historical references with which the Old Testament is replete. The Torah selections are taken from *The Torah, The Five Books of Moses: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Massoretic Text* (1962, second edition), a product of Orlinsky's efforts.

Orlinsky has also interspersed among the Hebrew and English passages more than fifty sections of bibliographical references to books and journal articles of current vintage. Because of the deadline given Orlinsky by the publishers he was not able to update the bibliographies, but one is promised more in a future printing of the book. However, partly to compensate for not updating the bibliography, the author included "Suggestions for Further Reading" and "Selected Bibliography for Teachers and Advanced Readers" (pp. 277-279), and on pages 279-282 he has given a descriptive listing of "Books on Biblical History and Archaeology: 1960-1966," which appeared in *The Jewish Book Annual* (XXV, pp. 176-183).

On the front end-leaf a pottery chart, "The Story of Pottery in Canaan Israel-Palestine," is given, and on the back end-leaf the reader has been supplied with a chronological summary of the ancient Near East and of ancient Israel.

Ancient Israel is interesting because here one can observe how a Jewish liberal scholar, more or less committed to the higher-critical approach, interprets the data of the Old Testament. That God gave the Israelites direct revelations is a concept alien to this book. Men frequently

create their own religious ideas and concepts. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not know Yahweh; each worshipped a local clan god. They were neither monotheists nor polytheists.

According to Orlinsky Israel entered Canaan during the Hyksos rule and it was during the thirteenth century that Israel is supposed to have left Egypt. Regarding the influence of Moses he wrote:

The personality of Moses so dominated Israel's formative years that later centuries came to credit him with the authorship of the Pentateuch. This honor is more than justified in a figurative sense and to some extent in a factual sense as well (p. 40).

Breasted's view that Moses obtained his monotheism from Ikhnaton is rejected.

Orlinsky pits the view of Judges on the conquest of Canaan against that of Joshua. The Biblical version of the Joshuan conquest is, according to Orlinsky, "a collection of miscellaneous fragments of *varying dates* and of *varying reliability* . . . There was a campaign by Joshua which achieved an amazing success in attacking certain key Canaanite royal cities but . . . there was also a long period of struggle for the possession which continued after Joshua's death" (p. 51).

The prophetic movement was the climax of Biblical history. In the prophets the Hebraic spirit reached its climax, especially in the social justice advocated by the prophets. Nothing like the prophetic outburst was again seen by the world; in fact, Orlinsky claims that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were so influenced by the prophetic accents that "over nearly half the land surface of the globe, the consciences of civilized men have spoken with the accents of the prophets" (p. 142).

From a New Testament perspective it must be stated that Orlinsky does not grasp the true nature of the Old Testament message, and many of its important theological aspects are not considered. The belief in a Messiah is depicted as a later development in Judaism.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE EARLY EARTH. By John C. Whitcomb. BHM Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1972. 144 pages. Paper. \$1.50.

THE WORLD THAT PERISHED. By John C. Whitcomb. BHM Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1973. 155 pages. Paper. \$1.95.

Dr. Whitcomb of Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, has previously published books dealing with the early chapters of Genesis, a crucial area in theology today. He has authored *The Origin of the Solar System* and *Solomon to the Exile: Studies in Kings and Chronicles*. With Henry Morris he has co-authored *The Genesis Flood*.

The two volumes under review contain an expansion of views found especially in *The Genesis Flood*. *The Early Earth* is an exposition of the Biblical data contained in Genesis 1 and 2. He defends the literal and historical understanding of the two first chapters of Genesis. Those who interpret Genesis literally, the way Jesus and Paul did, are forced to deal with theistic evolution. Whitcomb rejects both secular evolution and theistic evolution. This does not mean that Whitcomb repudiates the true findings of science, but he does insist that any believer faithful to the

Scriptures must reject theories which clearly contradict the Bible. "And in doing so he opposes the views set forth by some Christians who stumbly try to proceed with one foot on the path of Scripture and the other on the unsure and constantly changing trail of the secular theorist."

Whitcomb has answered effectively the weaknesses of the "Gap Theory or Ruin-Restoration" theory found in *The Old Scofield Reference Bible*. The views of members of the American Scientific Affiliation are discussed and shown to be inadmissible from the viewpoint of sound Biblical hermeneutics.

The World That Perished contains the sequel to the author's contributions in *The Genesis Flood*. All types of uniformitarianism are weighed and found wanting. He espouses Biblical catastrophism as the true answer for the data provided by historical geology. In his summary Whitcomb asks the question, "Why do sincere and scholarly Christians differ so greatly on the Biblical doctrine of the Flood?" His answer: "Is it not because of different starting points? If one *begins* with the complex array of scientific data and current interpretations of these data without a revealed and thus infallible reference, the conclusions will be ultimately self-contradictory. But with God's Word as his guiding light, one can look at the scientific data from a unifying perspective and thus be assured of ultimate satisfaction" (p. 141).

Whitcomb throughout the volume cites many problems which evolutionary geologists are not facing, phenomena which directly contradict their views and raise serious questions as to the reliability for their uniformitarian/evolutionary model of earth history. He claims that "Biblical catastrophism does not claim any particular geologic phenomena in and of itself demonstrates the universal flood. Scientific empiricism was never intended by God to be the direct and essential link to Biblical revelation. To the contrary, Scripture has been given to us to provide us with the light we need for understanding the origin and meaning of our geologic environment." Whitcomb contends that "the geologic data, at best, serve as *circumstantial evidences* for the reality of the Genesis Flood" (p. 144).

Both volumes contain bibliographies that will enable the interested reader to pursue further studies in this important area of Genesis 1-9, whose contents many today wrongly classify as myth, saga, legend, folklore, or whatever term is used to deny the historical character of these nine chapters of Scripture.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE UNITY OF ISAIAH IN THE LIGHT OF STATISTICAL LINGUISTICS. By Yahuda T. Radday. With a Contribution by Dieter Wickmann. Verlag Dr. H. A. Gerstenberg, Hildesheim, 1973. 312 pages. Cloth. 98 Mark.

This is a volume in the series, "*Publication de l'Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes, Section Biblique et Massoretique, Collection Messorah, Serie II, Etudes Quantitatives et Automatisees.*" "The subject of this book may be conveniently compared to a triangle: it borders upon Bible, language, and statistics. Its central problem is a Biblical one, the aspect dealt with is language, and the tool employed for arriving at a solution is statistics. Thus, its innovation lies primarily in making these

three disciplines meet." This opening statement of the preface states the purpose of this doctoral dissertation.

The linguistic approach in this study is not new, because statistics applied to literary documents and to languages has been used for a number of years by linguists and physicists to determine similar issues. Radday claims that his own contribution is that he used their methods for the first time in the Hebrew language and in the Hebrew Bible and added one or two tests of his own (p. v).

How many prophets—one, two, three, four, or more—had a share in the composition of the book of Isaiah? That was the problem Radday decided to solve by the linguistic approach. Chapter I contains a thorough and comprehensive discussion of the various views which Old Testament scholars have advanced on the matters of the authorship and unity of Isaiah. The positions of both the divisionists and the defenders of the unity of Isaiah are given, with Radday leaning to the latter position, even though its proponents are in the minority among scholars.

In chapter II the linguistic arguments employed by those who postulate a plurality of authors as well as the linguistic arguments employed by those who defend Isaiah's unity are presented. It is the thesis of Radday, however, that a new approach for solving the riddle of the book of Isaiah needs to be attempted; this attempt is undertaken by the author in the subsequent chapters of this volume.

The remaining chapters, III-XI, apply statistical linguistics to the language of the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah. Radday examined 17,000 words in Isaiah (of approximately 32,000 syllables and 80,000 phonemes) and another 100,000 words in control texts. Radday's conclusions are as follows: (a) Isaiah is composed of two different parts, i.e., chapters 1-35 and chapters 40-66. (b) The most dissimilar parts are chapters 1-12 and chapters 40-48. Since Isaiah was the author of 1-12, he could not have composed 40-48. (c) Chapters 13-23 can be assigned with a high degree of probability to the writer of chapters 1-12, namely to Isaiah himself. (d) Chapters 49-57 and 58-66 show so many affinities with each other and so few with the rest of Isaiah that they should be attributed to another writer. (e) As to chapters 23-35, the results are inconclusive, but the chapters supposedly belong to the first part of the book.

Here are conclusions that are in disagreement with positions held both by conservative and historical-critical scholars as far as unity and authorship are concerned. Bryan Drake, in an article appearing in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (XCI, pp. 241-242, June 1972), has raised a number of questions that will have to be answered if Radday's conclusions are to be regarded as correct and beyond cavil.

Raymond F. Surburg

HOSEA—The HEART AND HOLINESS OF GOD. By G. Campbell Morgan. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1974. 159 pages. Paper. \$2.45.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. By G. Campbell Morgan. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1974. 126 pages. Paper. \$1.95.

THE ANSWERS OF JESUS TO JOB. By G. Campbell Morgan. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1974. 136 pages. Paper. \$1.95.

These three works are part of the "G. Campbell Morgan Library Series." Baker Book House has published at least eleven titles in this library of homiletical and devotional reflections on portions of Scripture. Though the language and style of Dr. Morgan are somewhat dated, he often provides a pointed insight for the contemporary pastor. In sum, these studies contain very little exposition, but a good deal of mature reflection by a widely-revered theologian of a previous generation.

Dean O. Wenthe

NEW TESTAMENT WORDS. By William Barclay. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1974. 301 pages. Cloth. \$3.95.

William Barclay recently retired from the chair of Divinity and Biblical Criticism at Glasgow University. The present volume was originally published in Great Britain in 1964 without the index, the latter having now been supplied by the Westminster Press. *New Testament Words* is designed as a companion volume to the *Daily Study Bible*, a series of commentaries on the books of the New Testament in seventeen volumes.

Included in this volume, which contains nearly seventy key words of the Greek New Testament, are word studies found in Barclay's *A New Testament Wordbook* and *More New Testament Words*, neither of which is now available.

The eminent British Biblical scholar here makes available for the general reader the background and significance of major New Testament words and explores for his readers what a word meant for the writers of the New Testament as well as for the first recipients of their writings. Barclay traces the meaning of the words chosen first in Classical Greek, then in the Septuagint when found there, then in Hellenistic Greek and the papyri. Thus the general reader here has at his disposal the true meaning of these words and fine points which are not always reflected in current translations of the New Testament.

We agree with the *London Times Literary Supplement*, which asserted about this book: "Dr. Barclay's enthusiasm is infectious, and he gives to the layman an interesting introduction to the Greek language."

Raymond F. Surburg

THE EVANGELICAL FAITH. By Helmut Thielicke. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1974. 420 pages. \$10.95.

With his sermon books and *Theological Ethics* Thielicke has established a solid reputation. With the present volume, his prolegomena, he ventures into the field of dogmatics; volume two will cover the doctrines of God and Christ; volume three, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and eschatology.

In the author's own view "this first volume of a systematic theology will attempt clearance work in a cluttered situation," clutter largely brought about by the fact that "the present intellectual and spiritual situation is marked by a distinct dualism." Secularization, too, has been

such a serious threat to the Christian church in our day, "that the emancipated world no longer understands, and refuses to listen to, the Christian message" (p. 11). Thieliicke hopes that his prolegomena will somehow be especially relevant to a world which, as he sees it, no longer struggles with Luther's burning question of how to find a gracious God, but cynically asks, "Does God exist at all? If He does, where is He?"

Because Thieliicke grapples with and seeks to counter these philosophical trends of our day at their roots, his prolegomena is different from the usual run. Generally his approach and stance may be described as conservative. Yet, while he recognizes that we need the Bible "for the documentation of revelation" and that it "contains historical matter," he skirts for the most part the knotty questions connected with higher criticism, slaps down verbal inspiration (p. 36), and opts for a kind of Barthian position on the Word as the address of God which needs to strike and encounter man in his existential need today. Thus Thieliicke too, like many theologians in our day who try to march in tune with historical-critical methodology, has difficulty at times in saying where the Word of God is located.

Instead of describing the issue today in terms of "liberal" over against "conservative" theology, Thieliicke prefers to see it as Cartesian over against non-Cartesian. Much of what we call liberal today (Schleiermacher, Bultmann, Tillich, *et alii*) is simply a case of variations of Cartesian (and Kantian) philosophizing. By itself his well-documented study of this phenomenon establishes the book's worth and value. That which purportedly is theology Thieliicke shows to be little more than elevated, sophisticated, anthropologically-structured philosophy—whether from Schleiermacher, Lessing, Bultmann, Tillich or any of their ilk. Such "inquiry into the act and possibility of faith," based as it is on Cartesian principles, "hardly leaves time for the content of faith," Thieliicke concludes with accurate punch. In fact, by their "continually sharpening knives [they] no longer have anything to cut" (p. 52f.). What kerygma is left when the salvation events of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost have all been surgically cut away? While Thieliicke, however, faults men like Bultmann for their refusal to be held by the Biblical text, he himself, quite inconsistently—but like many others in our day—feels himself safe in accepting the historical-critical methodology, even though it has worked such havoc with Biblical authority. With the same kind of inconsistency he seeks to defend what he calls the right or Biblical use of myth in God's delivery of revelation. He even claims Luther for his side in so doing, at which point he's completely off base. In no way, no matter how he defines myth, can he claim support from Luther! In fairness, however, it must be added that Thieliicke comes down hard on demythologizing of Bultmann's kind, stating that "the Bible, and especially the New Testament, is poles apart from the world of myth" and that "between the Gospel and myth" there is the sharpest structural antithesis (p. 88). His dissatisfaction with conservative theology is that it is not moving with the times, is reactionary, and repristinationist—as he thinks; yet his chapter on the Holy Spirit (chapter VII) shows an excellent dependence upon the Lutheran Confessions.

The second major part of Thieliicke's volume is largely focused on theology's task in the midst of a world, which, as he says, finds "God

is a problem." By all odds this half of the book is his most intricate and involved, as he picks out and picks apart the philosophical presuppositions on which the God-is-dead theology has drawn. He probes the idea and its various proponents, recent and not so recent, at such length that no stone is left unturned. In fact, as he lays this disturbing "theology" to rest with penetrating argument and with vast references, he risks exhausting all but the most intrepid of readers. His final call, in the book's appendix, is for Christians and the church to address the world meaningfully, urging that "from the broken walls of this perishing world the praise of Christians sounds forth" (p. 403). Indeed, may the church never weary in its task of evangelizing the world! However, the church's kerygma, which the New Testament presents in such limpid way, is not always so clear and unambiguous in Thielicke's exhortation to the church.

E. F. Klug

THEOLOGIE IM WIEDERSPRUCH. By Ernest Lerle. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, 1974. 39 Seiten. 2 Mark.

In 1953 Dr. Lerle published his *Kritik an Bultmann* (Critique of Bultmann) in which he showed the fallacies and negative effects Bultmann's demythologization program has had for New Testament theology and for Christian theology.

In *Theology in Contradiction* he is primarily concerned with the views of Willi Marxsen, one of the recognized proponents of redaction criticism. This monograph has three short but important chapters. Redaction criticism is a child of form criticism and while both advocate different views about the New Testament, they have this in common that they make impossible a theology which is faithful to the revelatory teachings which God has given through the inspired New Testament authors.

In the first lecture (pp. 7-19) Lerle takes up the matter of the perspective from which the New Testament is now interpreted in Germany. Lerle has worked out a very useful scheme to show where Marxsen and many other scholars stand today. God, in His unlimited kingdom, is placed at the top of the diagram. Directly beneath this is a pyramid, having three parts. At the top is the cross, in the center the Bible, and at the bottom the believing and confessing church. On the left of this pyramid, Lerle has placed other religious founders and religious prophets. To the right he has put ancient philosophers and rabbis. Beneath the latter is a box labeled theological methods. Theological methods influence both the philosophers and rabbis as well as the understanding of the message of the cross and the Bible. On the left-hand side of the pyramid in another box are the theories about Jesus and about the proclamation of early Christianity. Redaction criticism and tradition criticism are depicted as affecting the understanding of the Bible. In the bottom of the pyramid is the believing congregation which is influenced by the Bible.

Modern critics, whether using demythologization, form criticism, tradition criticism, or redaction criticism, are operating from a perspective that does not do justice to God's revelation as contained in the Bible, because it does not permit the Bible, properly interpreted by the historical-grammatical method, to have its true influence on the believing and confessing church. By questioning the clear statements of the text, the critical

approach is robbing the church of the true picture of Christ and what He did.

Lerle's book is written in a dialogue form. A problem is stated and illustrated from the writings of one of the post-Bultmannians, especially from Marxsen's writings, and then the fallacies and weaknesses of the position are shown. The author uses down-to-earth illustrations and effectively shows the illogical stance defended by Willie Marxsen.

Lecture 2 deals with the views about the Bible as set forth in Marxsen's *Das Neue Testament als Buch der Kirche* (The New Testament as Book of the Church). Lerle refutes the following positions of Marxsen: the church created the New Testament, the church determined which books were canonical and which were not. The church, it is said, first had a recognized canon only after the time of Athanasius' Easter sermon. The church, Marxsen contends, was uncertain as to which books really belonged to the canon. Thus he raises the old question of the *homologoumena* and *antilegomena*, a question that Martin Chemnitz examined in *Examen Concilii Tridentini* (Part I, loc. I, sections VI, XVIII), so that Marxsen is not telling the Lutheran Church anything new. The weaknesses and dangers inherent in Marxsen's book are effectively pointed out.

In the last lecture of his critique, Lerle shows how modern German theology is in contradiction with true Biblical Christianity. Lerle discusses the true meaning of "theology," defined by him as "Die Wissenschaft vom Glauben." The perspective from which the post-Bultmannians operate and the methodology they employ prevent the formation, setting forth, and inculcation of true Biblical theology. At the heart of the problem of post-World War II theology is the employment of the historical-critical method, a method which does not permit an interpreter to take a stance from within the Bible but operates from without.

Those of our readership that read German will find this brief monograph useful and helpful in its analysis of the detrimental effects which modernistic theology has had and is having for true Christians and believing congregations that want to be truly Biblical.

Raymond F. Surburg

UNDERSTANDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD. By Georgia Harkness. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974. 173 pages. Cloth. \$6.50.

Georgia Harkness has been a pioneer among women as theological authors in America in the present century. The apron lists ten books published by Abingdon Press alone, not including her major study on Calvin and other books. Her teaching positions have included the Pacific School of Religion, Garrett Theological Seminary, International Christian University at Mitaka, Japan, Union Theological Seminary in Manila, Mount Holyoke College, and Elmira College.

It is an interesting sign of the times that the author should call herself an "evangelical liberal" and that she should publish a book on the kingdom of God. In a day when the evangelical movement is following on the heels of the ecumenical with Lausanne 1974 (recalling Lausanne 1927) and there are signs that the World Council of Churches would like to include the evangelical movement, Georgia Harkness renders yeoman service by showing how evangelism can be maintained in the light of all

the critical fictions of modern Biblical scholarship! To this reviewer it is an unacceptable attempt.

In the first chapter the author assesses the dilemma in which we find ourselves. In the second she surveys the movement of thought concerning this matter in this century. In chapter 3 the author offers her own understanding. This is followed by what Jesus believed about the kingdom, a discussion of the intertestamental period, and "The Kingdom in the Parables." The last two chapters turn to "the message and the service of the churches in the present world."

It is devoutly to be hoped that the enlightenment of the "enlightened" will prosper, and that those "now far from the kingdom" may find the renewal they are seeking.

Otto F. Stahlke

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