

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Biblical Revelation—The Foundation of Christian Theology*, by Clark H. Pinnock. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971.) 256 pages with bibliography and index. \$4.95. Reviewed by Robert L. Saucy, Talbot Theological Seminary, La Mirada, California.

In a day almost completely dominated by theological skepticism it is refreshing to read someone convinced that there is a sure foundation for faith. As the title indicates, this work concerns the question which is primary to every theology—its epistemological base. Pinnock is convinced, and it might be added, he presents strong evidence which should be convincing to others, that the only firm foundation for Christian theology is the revealed truth of God which has been preserved for us in Scripture.

The approach is biblical and theological, bringing together the doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and theology with the stated thesis that “our understanding of revelation radically affects our view of Scripture (its medium and witness) and, in turn, our conception of the character and role of theology” (p. 16). In the presentation of these doctrines there is a deliberate disclaimer to originality, in fact, a healthy warning is issued against valuing theology for its novelty. Rather the purpose is to adduce the reasons which underly the historic position in terms of the contemporary climate of thought.

The discussion opens with a brief survey of the crises of authority in modern theology which is seen to be the result of a rejection of biblical infallibility. “Having spun free from the controls of biblical revelation, theology has been reduced to wandering in the wastelands of subjectivity” (p. 13). The only way out is the recognition of a divine revelation which has been mediated to man in a form with meaningful truth content. The Bible teaches that this has been done through God’s historical acts and an accompanying interpretive Word. Each without the other would be inadequate; both are necessary for the conveyance of truth.

Inspiration refers to the miracle by which the Spirit preserves and conserves divine revelation. “The Bible is the witness to and the graphical residue of the divine act-word event, the locus in which God’s revealing activity now takes place” (p. 35). The historic position of verbal-plenary inspiration is maintained with the demand for inerrancy as the proper conclusion of an inductive study of the teachings of Christ and the other

biblical writers on the Scriptures. Inerrancy must, however, be interpreted relative to what the text by objective analysis intends to teach. This, of course, requires some hermeneutical acumen, but Pinnock evidences the conservativeness of his thought by rejecting such explanations as the infallible use of fallible sources, the limitation of inerrancy to revelational matters or to matters of faith only, and writing forms which convey historical or literary deception, such as myth made to look like history and pseudonymity. Nevertheless, the difficulty of agreeing in every instance on the exact intended teaching is pointed up when the question is left open of whether literalness is intended in the serpent speaking of Genesis 3.

In the reviewer's opinion an unnecessary concession concerning biblical cosmology is made in this regard. We are told that "...the biblical writers pictured the natural order of the world in modes of expression current in their day...Infallibility does not update the writers' view of the physical cosmos where this is unnecessary" (p. 72). Does this imply that the Bible includes outdated and therefore erroneous cosmology? There are better interpretations which do not necessitate this suggestion.

The discussion of the character of Christian theology is a highlight of this generally superb work. The task of theology is nothing more nor less than the articulation of the revealed data of Scripture. Typical of Pinnock's thought and aptness for expression is this statement demanding the norm of the Bible. "The loss of the *sola scriptura* leads to a new sacerdotalism (the church is the matrix of the tradition), a new clericalism (the scholar applies his epistential gnosis to the text on our behalf), and a new mystical agnosticism (a faith tailored to survive even if God is not there)" (p. 111). Multiple-sources theories for theology involving reason, tradition and experience are rejected on the ground that in practice *one* source is always given preference and that according to the mind of the theologian. Particularly rewarding in a day tending toward experience at the expense of doctrine and creedal expression is the defense of systematic theology. The demand for a nondoctrinal theology is said to be "a veiled attack on the content of the gospel, and an attempt to reduce it to a contentless (and harmless) experience" (pp. 138-139).

Along with the primary themes of revelation, inspiration and theology, the discussion includes a good summary of the history of the doctrine of the Scriptures, a brief study of some of the phenomena of Scripture and a short chapter on hermeneutics. Those who reject the high view of inspiration are said to be in reality defectors from a long history of absolute confidence by the church in the authority of the Scriptures. The reasons allegedly demanding the recent dissent are shown to be evasions of the plain teaching of Scripture. Regarding the problems of phenomena, Pinnock demands that their study be approached under

the doctrine of inspiration which is clearly taught. Careful study is capable of providing legitimate explanations to most problems and those incapable of present solution are held open for more light with sufficient evidence that time has been on the side of the interpreter who is willing to wait for more data.

The demand for an empirical rational apologetic for the inspiration of the Bible throughout the work points out a constant need. Not all will agree, however, with the sharp contrast between this approach and what is termed fideism. With the recognition of the absolute necessity of the enlightenment of the Spirit for faith the issue cannot be left, it would seem, with an either/or stance.

Although the author modestly hopes for a usefulness in this work of persuading those in the historic tradition not to defect rather than converting the committed existentialist theologian, this book cannot be ignored by any with a pretense to open-mindedness. That the well of evangelical thought has not run dry, as claimed in the rationale for this study, is adequately demonstrated.

*As The Spirit Leads Us.* Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan, editors. (New York: Paulist Press, 1971.) 250 pages. Reviewed by Watson E. Mills, Averett College, Danville, Virginia.

The spread of the neo-pentecostal movement has been tremendous. Since an April Sunday morning in 1960 when Dennis Bennett, then pastor of a thriving Van Nuys, California, Episcopal Church, resolutely told his congregation that he had experienced speaking in tongues. This event made public the kind of thing which had been going on in protestantism in secret for some time, and overnight, reports of similar experiences were reported.

Kevin and Dorothy Ranaghan wrote *Catholic Pentecostals* in 1969 which officially signaled that the catholics were not without those seeking charismatic renewal. Those involved, say the Ranaghans, "are not inclined toward biblical fundamentalism or excessive emotionalism, and, further, they seem to be able to balance eschatological expectations with the concerns of socio-political involvement. Yet they constantly call attention to the need for all Christians to be aware of the reality and power of the Holy Spirit as the source for all successful life in Christ" (p. 1). The editors believe that between 10,000 and 30,000 catholics are involved in this movement toward spiritual renewal, while Morton Kelsey believes that some two or three million Americans will speak in tongues in this century alone. Such figures are at least "impressive."

The present volume is not a continuation of their previous book, but rather it is a collection of essays from a diverse cross-section of catholic writers with charismatic leanings. The reader is exposed to the thought

of eleven "pentecostal catholics" on such subjects as prayer, worship, witness, ecumenism, et cetera.

The uniqueness of the volume lies not in its content as much as in the fact that here catholic writers take a neo-pentecostal position. This is itself indicative of the new inroads being made by this movement. Perhaps more than some protestant writers with strong anti-liturgical basis, these writers represent a tradition which is steeped in forms of worship which have remained essentially unchanged for years. They react not to a formal liturgy, but to the notion that their own Christian experience lacks a positive dimension. *As the Spirit Leads Us* is a volume well worth reading and digesting. The time has long passed for a constructive stance on the question of spiritual renewal within the church. The larger question of ecumenism lurks in the background, not to mention basic Christian brotherhood. Perhaps this little book will be innovative of greater things to come which hopefully will end in mutual acceptance, understanding, and tolerance.

*The Right, the Good and the Happy*, by Bernard Ramm. (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1971.) 168 pages and bibliography. \$5.95. Reviewed by Norman L. Geisler, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

This work, according to the author, "...is not a handbook of solutions for all possible ethical problems which Christians face. Its purpose is to introduce students and pastors to ethical discourse and to get them *moving* in the direction of Christian ethics." Dr. Ramm confesses, "In some instances the author has set the issues down for the student to decide for himself; in others he has taken sides" (p. 12). Although not everyone will be satisfied with this procedure—some may even criticize it as a "cop-out" on the tough problems—Ramm does carry on a meaningful and often very practical dialogue on most of the difficult ethical issues by means of this format.

The book is divided into two parts. The first section (3 chapters) deals with general ethical theory and the second part (2 chapters) treats specific topics ranging from Tobacco to Transplants and including Sex, Suicide, and the Senior Citizen in between, along with a host of others.

The work is not too "weighty" for laymen. It usually defines well difficult terminology. The book does suffer, however, from the lack of an index of any kind. It does have a moderate and selective bibliography.

It was disappointing to this reviewer that Ramm does not discuss the difficult issue of the conflict of ethical norms nor the problem of what is relative and what is absolute in Christian ethics. He does have a helpful analysis and critique of Fletcher's situational ethic (p. 61 f.).

It was also disappointing to see that Ramm opted not to give his

views as to whether suicide, mercy-killing, or war are ever right. However, he does have a brief but helpful discussion on what would be an unethical suicide (p. 122) and what would constitute a just war (p. 140) according to others.

Professor Ramm is sure to stir some racial reaction to his view that even though there are no biblical injunctions against it, nonetheless, racial intermarriage is objectionable on psychological grounds (p. 121). Then too, Ramm seems to overstate his case on conscience when he states that it dictates "...varies enormously from person to person..." (p. 25). In this regard he could have profited by C. S. Lewis' work in the first part of *Mere Christianity* and in the *Abolition of Man*, especially the appendix in the back on the commonality of the great moral codes of mankind.

On the issue as to whether "ought" implies "can" Ramm follows the Reformed tradition (which answers "no"), ignoring the clear implication of scripture and logic that responsibility implies the ability to respond, if not on one's own then at least by God's enabling grace.

In another connection this reviewer would like to ask why, as Ramm suggests, it is "...impossible...for Scripture to speak, on all possible moral situations" (p. 21). Are there really "Problems of an ethical nature which have never heretofore existed...?" One might argue from Ramm's own hermeneutics that Scripture provides the principles which can be applied to all possible ethical situations. Was not Jesus tempted in *all* points as we are? Is he not the moral example for all that we face? In this connection how can Ramm contend that Paul is silent as to what a passionate young man should do about his lustful tendencies. Was it not Paul who wrote, "Flee youthful lusts."

Space does not permit a more comprehensive analysis of the book, but a few more things may be briefly noted. Ramm does not give credit to Heraclitus as the fountainhead of the natural law theory, tracing it only to the Stoics (p. 37). Then too, is there such a "deep cleavage" between biblical and philosophical ethics as the author suggests? (p. 66). Ramm omits the significant revision of the largely outmoded emotivistic ethics by Charles L. Stevenson (p. 72) and forgot that Sartre's wife, Simone de Beauvoir, wrote a book on Sartre's ethics to fill in the gap left by Sartre's unfulfilled promise to do so (p. 73). Ramm does have a helpful treatment of abortion, although he implies in two places (pp. 90, 93) that an embryo is merely a sub-human "tissue."

All in all the book is a practical and helpful, though brief, presentation of many of the basic issues facing the contemporary Christian by a thoughtful and widely read evangelical thinker. In the words of the title, I commend it to those who desire to find the "happy" life by discovering the "right" and in doing the "good."

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS OF BIBLE HISTORY.** By Jack P. Lewis. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971. 199 pages. Price: \$3.95 (paper). **THE PHILISTINES AND THE OLD TESTAMENT.** By Edward E. Hindson. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971. 184 pages. Price: \$3.95 (paper). Reviewed by Cyril J. Barber, Head Librarian, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

These two non-technical studies will be of interest to all Bible students.

In *Historical Backgrounds of Bible History* Lewis presents archaeological material that is directly related to specific Bible characters. This extra-Biblical material deals with the lives and exploits, labors and experiences of men like Shishak and Pharaoh Necho, Shalmaneser V and Esarhadon, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, Omri and Pekah, Uzziah and Manasseh, Darius the Mede and Ahasuerus, Quirinius and Sergius Paulus, Archelaus and Agrippa I, and many others. The archaeological and historical material is arranged in such a way that by turning to the particular Bible character the reader can have at his fingertips all the relevant material dealing with this specific personality. This unique arrangement facilitates study. Lewis' personal study is extensive, his material presented with discernment, and the scope of his work extends from early Egyptian contacts with Palestine in the third millennium B.C. through to the New Testament era.

*The Philistines and the Old Testament* is part of Baker's Studies in Biblical Archaeology, and has been prepared by the director of the Center for Biblical and Reformed Studies, St. Petersburg, Florida. It is designed to demonstrate from history and archaeology the significant place that the Philistines have occupied in the early history of Israel. Without making his scholarly research obvious, the writer provides insights from archaeological findings to clarify and illuminate many Biblical passages involving the history and culture, religion and practices of Israel's neighbors. Numerous hand-drawn maps are interspersed throughout the text, and these illustrate military campaigns and the migration of people mentioned in the Bible.

These books are both conservative in their general orientation, and can be read with profit by all who are interested in Biblical archaeology and Bible history.

**JESUS—WORD AND PRESENCE: AN ESSAY IN CHRISTOLOGY.**

By Peter C. Hodgson. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971. pp. xiv plus 304. \$9.95. Reviewed by Gordon R. Lewis, Professor of Systematic Theology and Christian Philosophy, Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, Denver, Colorado.

Purposing to move through and beyond interpretations of God's absence, of which the death of God theology and theologies of the future are expressions, Peter Hodgson offers a creative phenomenological inter-

pretation of the experience of God's Word and presence in Jesus. The professor of theology at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, Tennessee, affirms that the power of his book is not an explanation of the means or mode by which the future God is present. God is present in the phenomenon of language, not its propositional content. And God's Word and Presence are best seen in the communication of Jesus.

On a leave to do the research on this book at the University of Tübingen (1968-69), Hodgson did not consider his approach coterminous with the quest for the historical Jesus (Ebeling and Pannenberg) nor with present experience of Christ (Bultmann and existentialism in general). Christology, Hodgson maintains, must move dialectically between these poles and in both directions simultaneously. He seeks to hold the critical-historical and practical-responsive dimensions of Christology in balance. So the quest for the historical Jesus is not held to be a matter of the legitimation of the faith, but of its interpretation, and the present responsibility of faith can be interpreted only by reference to the historical Jesus. Faith, as he sees it, is not subject to any proof or legitimation of any sort. It is the gift of God empowering man to a new mode of existence.

The dialectical theologians, Hodgson insists, never sufficiently explored the concept of God's "Word." He seeks to radicalize it philosophically with the help of Heidegger and recent phenomenology of language, and theologically with the help of Ebeling and the so-called new hermeneutic. Hodgson's word study of *dabar* in the Old Testament finds it meaning a dynamic event, a happening-word, the coming-to-speech of God himself. Language is the means by which the future calls us forward and the instrument by which history happens. He has missed the mark of much biblical evidence in the following negation: "We are not to think of communication as the transmission of objective content, as though the basic purpose of word were statement or assertion. Rather, as communication, word is an event of encounter." Language not only has no content, it also has no referent! "Language does not *point to* a world but *constitutes* the world of man's experience" (98).

Hodgson thinks he has avoided the hypostatization of words by eliminating any metaphysical or metahistorical existence in another world and by denying a mystical identity between human speaking and divine reality. Human words are not univocally God's words, nor merely analogous to God's words. The relation is designated homologous (the same word). The Logos comes to expression in human speaking. The power of being is not from another supernatural sphere. "It is the same word as human words—when these words signify an authentic hearing, re-saying, and answering of the creative, unconcealing, gathering word" (102).

Within the experience of language itself men encounter a "finite transcendence." At the point where word becomes authentic speech, it is the means by which (1) understanding is gained from the past and the

future comes, (2) we move across spatial distance in communion and sharing, and (3) transcendence is thus experienced, a "finite transcendence" (102). The claim that this is God's Word is one that allegedly "follows" from the peculiar message and experience of Christian faith, not one that can be advanced by formal analysis itself. So without need for justification, he asserts that God is presence, the dynamic unity of future-past-present accomplished by word. God is personal, but personhood consists of the event of being gathered into presence by the word. And God is revelation: the revealing, unconcealing, self-communicating God who speaks and *is* in his speaking. Hodgson's God is not omnipresent. Not all that happens in the world is revelation. Language is often used to tear apart, to conceal, to destroy. Revelation is only present in words which gather, open and create.

Hodgson's Christology does not include a discussion of the person of Christ as such. "There is no person 'behind' the word; word is the event by which the person 'happens.'" Displaying an irresponsible ignorance of biblical data and orthodox scholarship, Hodgson makes the following statements: "Jesus advanced no direct messianic claims on his behalf" (137); "It is not at all clear in *what* sense Jesus spoke of the Son of Man, if at all" (138); "Thus a Christological interpretation of the person of Jesus cannot be based on what Jesus may have said or thought about himself" (138); "Jesus did not explicitly claim *exousia* on his own behalf, nor did he suggest that it could be legitimated by some future event, like the resurrection from the dead" (159); "Jesus never claimed to be speaking on behalf of God" (167).

Hodgson cannot learn of Jesus from the content of his words, but points to his acts and especially his verbal acts (phenomenologically). Jesus' words are significant, not cognitively, but functionally. He spoke a liberating, truthful, salvific words. Jesus placed high value on his words, as Hodgson properly notes, but that value rested upon both their content and their healing usefulness, not the speaking apart from the concepts. It is not simply the act of speaking that reveals the heart of a man, but the ideas expressed.

The divinity of Jesus, Hodgson says, is not a divine hypostasis but filial humanity. The concept "son of God" does not refer to a preexistent divine persona which enters into hypostatic union with the human nature of Jesus. Rather, it refers to the humanity of Jesus as it is completed in perfect obedience and self-dedication to the Father (200). Hodgson thinks he proposes a less abstract view of Christ's person than the conjoining of the properties of the two "natures" in one "person" by replacing this relation of *homoousion* with a relation of *homologia*. "The homology in Christ is comprised by the concurrence of the word of God (the power that gathers into presence and constitutes personhood, although it is not itself personal agency) and definitively faithful human speech" (147). But the correspondence of two things can be considered only if *each* can be known. Since no man can know God's Word apart from human words, one wonders



how Hodgson can meaningfully claim that they correspond or are homologous.

With the loss of a personal God, of course, is the loss of free grace. "Man is not saved by the descent of a cosmic redeemer," Hodgson says, "but by having his heart claimed for God and restored to righteousness through the ministry of Jesus." Such an either/or is tragically unnecessary. Salvation becomes a matter of human achievement apart from supernatural grace. "To be a son of God means to be obedient to God and to assume responsibility for the world which is God's creation and man's inheritance" (202). Jesus was a man who maintained his sonship, whereas we have forfeited ours. But Jesus may not have been sinless. That Jesus came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" admits of the interpretation that he in fact sinned. This is "arguable" in the light of his cry on the cross of God-forsakenness and his becoming sin for our sake (212).

The risen Christ is present with us. But how? If we may hold the homological structure of Christian speech and action, then we may say that Christian mission, when it is true and faithful, brings to speech the *same* word and the *same* deed that came to speech in Jesus, and that in this sense Jesus himself is present in the practice of mission, indeed as its chief agent or as 'the head over all things'" (220-221). Belief in the resurrection has its epistemological basis in the present rather than the past. The resurrection is an historical event in its present modality, not as an historically observable past fact" (232). God raised up Jesus to stand with us. "God's being is presence" (257). Jesus is present in the preaching of the word. Beyond that he is present wherever and whenever a free, truthful and salvific word comes to speech—whether within the Christian community or beyond its domain, in the language of piety or in the discourse of the world" (262). Jesus' personal presence is not a matter of physical immediacy, effective historical influence, or psychological immediacy. His "personal presence occurs when recognition is evoked by means of word, including also verbal action or enacted word" (267). Neither does the presence of Christ occur by an imitation of what he said and did. Jesus is present in terms of a responsible correspondence to his being as presence producing a new language, a new mode of existence, and a new praxis. Four modes of his one presence may be distinguished: word, act, community, and world (286).

Competent as this work is from the standpoint of the phenomenology of human language, it is woefully inadequate as Christology. It dismisses the cognitive content biblical words were intended to convey and any knowledge of the ontological realities designated by them. Words intended to be verbal vehicles of truth concerning reality have become an end in themselves. Hodgson becomes so preoccupied with the analysis of the words that he fails to learn of the transcendent, living Lord of the universe, a genuine incarnation, an objective atonement, and a factual resurrection.

Hodgson achieved his purpose of going beyond the death of God

theologies and the theologies of the future. But he has much farther to go in order to establish the ontological foundation necessary to sustain the true significance of Jesus' word and presence for believers today.

*SYMPOSIUM ON CREATION III*, edited by Donald W. Patten, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1971, 150 p. (paperback) Reviewed by R. Laird Harris, Covenant Theological Seminary.

This paperback symposium by six men on the subject of evolution and creation represents the viewpoint of the Creation Research Society, although it is not an official publication of that organization. The contribution to the book are quite varied in subject matter and also, it seems to the reviewer, in value. Some of the chapters are detailed in scientific treatment; others are quite general or historical.

The first contribution is by W. H. Tier of England. The approach is entirely philosophical arguing from alleged types of *nephesh* and distinctions between soul and spirit and power and energy. The argumentation and Biblical support seem to be highly questionable and add little to the discussion of the problems involved.

Quite otherwise is the work of S. E. Nevins who has done his basic study and field work in geology. His discussion of "The Stratigraphic Evidence of the Flood" is worth the price of the book. His claim is not novel—that the extensive stratigraphic rocks of earth were laid down by Noah's flood. He argues that the type and enormous number of fossils, the extensive areas of deposition, the character of the rocks, etc., indicate the work of a widespread flood. One gets the impression from numerous quotations of standard books on the subject that older views are being re-examined today. This is good and Nevins seems to challenge successfully some older positions. It is a question, however, if his answer pointing to Noah's flood is securely established. There may have been many successive floods of which Noah's was the last. Also, the data he gives on slumping and erosions of the ocean floors may point to hitherto unappreciated types of sedimentation going today. Much of what has been thought to be erosion and deposition by rivers may have been largely completed by ocean currents and mud slides on the ocean bottoms much more rapidly than ever dreamed. These ocean bottoms, if later uplifted, would have presented a basic stratigraphy which has only been modified by terrestrial processes.

Frank W. Cousins chapter on the evolution of the horse and of birds is also worth reading. He follows G. A. Kerkut's interesting discussion in *Implications of Evolution*. Cousins shows that the diagrams of horse evolution appearing in so many textbooks are misleading and based on evidence that may be taken in several ways. The connections of alleged early and late types is questionable. The early *Eohippus*, also called *Hyracotherium* may rather be connected with the little *Hyrax* of which the Biblical coney is a representative. His handling of the *Archaeopteryx* bird fossil is equally good. It is allied with true birds and not a link between